

University of Central Arkansas

Strategic Framework

Strategic Thinking Initiative

2004

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The Strategic Thinking Steering Committee

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The Steering Committee was further advised by a Student Advisory Group and a Community Advisory Group. These groups reviewed and provided written comment on drafts of the Strategic Framework. Along with administrative and faculty review, the suggestions and questions from these advisory groups were useful in the preparation of the *UCA Strategic Framework* as submitted to the president in May 2004.

Submission Letter

03 May 2004

President Lu Hardin
University of Central Arkansas
201 Donaghey Avenue
Conway, AR 72035

Dear President Hardin:

The Strategic Thinking Steering Committee is pleased to present its response to your charge of developing a strategic plan for the University of Central Arkansas. As you requested, the process included campus-wide participation and feedback from a variety of UCA constituents. In the document, we have reaffirmed UCA's commitment to education and have developed new initiatives that will take our university into the future.

Once the University's leadership team approves the document, the strategic plan must then be communicated to all stakeholders involved. The plan provides a coherent framework for the various university units (colleges, departments, divisions) to develop their strategic plans consistent with those of the university.

The committee also supports the development of a marketing plan that will include a publicity document for communication and fundraising in the public and private sectors. Having clearly defined goals and objectives will enable our development office to solicit support from outside our university in the form of donations and targeted program funding.

Finally, the committee strongly believes that this process will be complete when the UCA leadership appoints a person or team to monitor and evaluate the identified goals and objectives and provide quarterly reports regarding the status of the university in achieving the goals of the strategic plan.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to participate in this important process. We welcome any questions or feedback.

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan A. Glenn
Chair, Strategic Thinking Steering Committee

Strategic Framework

History of the University

The University of Central Arkansas was established as Arkansas State Normal School by the General Assembly of Arkansas in 1907, with statewide responsibility for preparing citizens to teach Arkansas children. Summer sessions were started in 1910.

The name of the institution was changed to Arkansas State Teachers College in 1925. By legislative enactment, the Board of Trustees was given authority to grant appropriate degrees. In January 1967, the name of the institution was again changed by the state legislature to the State College of Arkansas, expanding its statewide role to a multipurpose institution. On January 21, 1975, the governor of Arkansas signed a bill granting university status to the institution and naming it the University of Central Arkansas.

The first diploma granted by Arkansas State Normal School was the Licentiate of Instruction, and in 1922 the first baccalaureate degrees were granted. Today the university's comprehensive undergraduate curriculum comprises more than 70 major programs and nine different degrees. A program of study leading to the Master of Science in Education degree was inaugurated in 1955, and the Educational Specialist degree was begun in 1980. Since that time, UCA has developed a variety of high quality offerings in graduate studies, with more than 40 graduate program options and 11 different graduate degrees, including doctoral programs in physical therapy and school psychology. Extension classes were first offered through Correspondence Study courses in 1919–1920 and Study Clubs in 1920–1921. Academic outreach, including extended-learning opportunities for undergraduate and graduate credit and in non-credit courses, continues to play an important role in fulfilling the university's twenty-first century mission.

Description of the University

The University of Central Arkansas is a comprehensive university offering degree programs at the associate, bachelor's, master's, specialist, and doctoral levels. The University offers a variety of undergraduate and graduate programs in the liberal and fine arts, the basic sciences, business, and technical and professional fields in addition to its historical emphasis in the field of education. UCA strives to maintain the highest academic quality by supporting the professional development of its teaching faculty and by ensuring that its curriculum remains current and responsive to the needs of those it serves.

UCA fosters learning and the advancement of knowledge both through research and other scholarly and creative activities and through its support for the personal, social, and intellectual growth of its students. Faculty scholarship—including faculty-student collaboration in a wide range of research and scholarly and creative activities—is an integral part of the teaching-and-learning mission of the University. These activities are encouraged at UCA in many ways, including active support for grant-development, a variety of University grant opportunities for both faculty and students, faculty summer research stipends, sabbatical leaves, reassigned time, and up-to-date technological support. UCA supports student learning and growth by providing comprehensive student services and rich on-campus extracurricular programming, by developing learning communities on campus, and by encouraging students to be learners in a wider community through cooperative and service-learning opportunities and international experiences.

UCA serves its public constituencies with for-credit course offerings, both in off-campus class settings around the state and in other extended-study opportunities; a variety of non-credit leisure and community education activities; and seminars, conferences, workshops, in-service training activities, and consulting services designed to meet the needs of business and industry, public schools, and state and local government.

Vision

The University of Central Arkansas will be the center of learning in Arkansas.

Mission and Principles

The mission of the University of Central Arkansas is to maintain the highest academic quality and to ensure that its programs remain current and responsive to the diverse needs of those it serves. A partnership of excellence among students, faculty, and staff in benefit to the global community, the University is committed to the intellectual, social, and personal development of its students; the advancement of knowledge through excellence in teaching and research; and service to the community. As a leader in 21st-century higher education, the University of Central Arkansas is dedicated to intellectual vitality, diversity, and integrity.

In carrying out this mission, the university is guided by the following principles:

- Teaching and learning flourish where disciplinary integrity and the focused explorations it allows are balanced by the connection-building of interdisciplinary collaboration.
- The search for knowledge entails both interaction and solitary reflection.
- Students accrue the greatest benefits when they master both trans-disciplinary skills—such as communication, critical thinking, and information literacy—and the specific bodies of information and ways of knowing particular to individual disciplines.
- Individual faculty may employ radically different methods in their teaching, scholarship, and other professional practice and be equally effective.
- Embracing diversity—e.g., political, racial, intellectual, cultural—strengthens and enriches a university.
- A vital component of a student's experience in the university is the development of personal and social well-being and maturity.
- A university maintains its viability by sharing the talents and resources of the university with the global community.

Implementation Guidelines

University resources will be allocated in a manner that will carry out the mission of the university and the goals of the plan. To that end, the university strives to provide optimal facilities and infrastructure to support the work of its faculty, staff, and students.

The university's strategic units (academic, administrative, auxiliary) will develop plans that complement the University of Central Arkansas' mission and strategic goals.

A university planning and assessment group will revisit the plan annually to evaluate progress toward stated goals and objectives and to consider revision or addition of goals and objectives.

Measures of performance stated in the plan are illustrative. University planning will be based on performance on stated measures as well as any additional evidence that helps evaluate progress toward goals and objectives.

Measures will provide quantitative and qualitative evidence—e.g., counts, percentages, narratives, documents, etc. Unless otherwise indicated, student-related measures refer to both undergraduate and graduate students.

Strategic Goals

Goal 1: Deliver excellent curricula in general education, in degree programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels, and in continuing education.

- Objective 1. Support the General Education Program in fulfilling its purposes.
- Objective 2. Maintain and improve quality of degree programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels.
- Objective 3. Maintain an active academic outreach program that includes courses taught by qualified UCA faculty members and meets the needs of the community in its content and scope.
- Objective 4. Market and maintain the university's unique position as a teaching institution in the community.
- Objective 5. Develop and implement an academic plan providing guidelines for addition and deletion of programs, resource allocation for existing programs, and other programmatic decisions.

Goal 2: Foster learning and the advancement of knowledge through research and other scholarly and creative activities on the part of both faculty and students.

- Objective 1. Increase support for research and creative activities. [See also Goal 5, Objective 4.]
- Objective 2. Transform the existing Sponsored Programs Office to be a Center for Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity, charged with administering support for faculty work in these areas and with facilitating appropriate technology- and knowledge-transfer to the public and private sectors.
- Objective 3. Increase opportunities for students and faculty to participate in scholarly and creative collaborative endeavors such as research projects, writing for publication, public performances, presentations at professional meetings, exhibitions, and formal mentoring programs.
- Objective 4. Support an atmosphere of collegiality in which faculty have enhanced professional opportunities to interact with one another, with students, and with non-academic professionals.

Goal 3: Create a campus environment that supports students in their intellectual, social, and personal development.

- Objective 1. Engage academics, student services, financial services, and other parts of the permanent campus community in addressing the goal stated above.
- Objective 2. Ensure that faculty and staff roles and rewards structures recognize the value of engagement in addressing the goal stated above.

- Objective 3. Ensure that students understand the university's commitment to the goal stated above and consider themselves involved in its implementation.
- Objective 4. Support intellectual development by an emphasis on high academic achievement.
- Objective 5. Foster a campus-wide community of learners by providing programs/learning community opportunities such as residential colleges, honors college, university college, clustered learning, first-year experience programs, and departmental outreach programs.
- Objective 6. Provide a safe environment.
- Objective 7. Provide an environment to support student health and well being, including physical and mental health, freedom from substance abuse, and programs to promote physical fitness.
- Objective 8. Create a campus that models and sustains responsible environmental practices.
- Objective 9. Develop and implement an enrollment plan which incorporates and reflects market research, demographic trends, allocation of resources, employment trends, and student academic interests and goals.
- Objective 10. Develop and maintain comprehensive retention programs and co-curricular initiatives, including ensured availability of courses and services that meet students' academic, intellectual, social, and personal/individual needs.

Goal 4: Enhance interaction and understanding among diverse groups and cultivate global perspectives.

- Objective 1. Increase the diversity of the student population.
- Objective 2. Retain underrepresented students.
- Objective 3. Recruit and retain increased numbers of international students.
- Objective 4. Attract and retain a diverse body of qualified faculty and staff.
- Objective 5. Provide planned opportunities for interaction and cultural exchange among diverse groups.
- Objective 6. Infuse the values inherent in the goal stated above into undergraduate and graduate curricula.
- Objective 7. Increase the engagement of scholarship, service, and other professional practice at the university in the values stated above.
- Objective 8. Enhance enriched learning opportunities such as internships, travel abroad, service learning, and exchange programs.

Goal 5: Attract and retain high-quality faculty and staff.

- Objective 1. Provide competitive and equitable salaries and benefits.
- Objective 2. Provide long-term stability for the university by maintaining an appropriate number of tenured/tenure-track faculty positions to meet the academic mission of the university.
- Objective 3. Develop and implement hiring, loading, and evaluation systems to allow appropriately flexible faculty emphasis on teaching, research, and service.
- Objective 4. Support the professional practice of faculty and staff—e.g., teaching, scholarship, inquiry, creative endeavor, interdisciplinary activity, and other professional development.

Goal 6: Be a recognized leader in the innovative and intelligent use of academic and administrative technology.

- Objective 1. Integrate technology into curricula across campus—including major programs and general education—and assist students to become leaders in the use of technology in their fields.
- Objective 2. Provide technological infrastructure, technology tools, and support systems that enhance the work of students, faculty, and staff.
- Objective 3. Implement a comprehensive information/communication system that effectively serves multiple purposes and constituencies.

Goal 7: Seize appropriate opportunities for outreach to the public and private sectors.

- Objective 1. Offer resources (e.g., expertise, facilities) to the public and private sectors.
- Objective 2. Establish and increase short- and long-term relationships with entities in the public and private sectors.
- Objective 3. Increase and coordinate both strategic and tactical participation of members of the university community in targeted markets.
- Objective 4. Develop and maintain a comprehensive, accessible, and useful database of private and public funding sources.
- Objective 5. Approach and engage organizations where alumni are employed in collaborating with university outreach initiatives.
- Objective 6. Foster and maintain on-going alumni relations.