

# STRATEGIC PLAN

FY 2022-2026

ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, MAY 27, 2021,  
UPON THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE STRATEGIC  
PLANNING COMMITTEE, JANUARY 20, 2021



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ARKANSAS™

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# THE STRATEGIC PLAN

For previous Strategic Plans and associated documents, see <https://uca.edu/sparc/archives/strategic-plan-archive/>.

## A. FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS

### 1. VISION STATEMENT

The University of Central Arkansas aspires to be a premier learner-focused public comprehensive university, a nationally recognized leader for its continuous record of excellence in undergraduate and graduate education, scholarly and creative endeavors, and engagement with local, national, and global communities.

### 2. MISSION STATEMENT

The University of Central Arkansas, a leader in 21st-century higher education, is committed to excellence through the delivery of outstanding undergraduate and graduate education that remains current and responsive to the diverse needs of those it serves. The university's faculty and staff promote the intellectual, professional, social, and personal development of their students through innovations in learning, scholarship, and creative endeavors. Students, faculty, and staff partner to create strong engagement with the local, national, and global communities. The University of Central Arkansas dedicates itself to academic vitality, integrity, and diversity.

In carrying out this mission, the university is guided by the following core values.

### 3. CORE VALUES

#### a. Intellectual Excellence

We believe in lifelong intellectual development of students, faculty, and staff. We are committed to the free pursuit of knowledge and continuous growth in learning and teaching.

- **Educated Citizens:** We believe in student success and in preparing students to engage complex issues and express informed opinion through critical thinking, writing, and speech. Given our institution's historical roots in teacher education, this foundation inspires all of our colleges to work together to ensure that our faculty and students collaborate to promote instructional excellence and lifelong learning.
- **Scholarship:** We believe that students and faculty should engage in professional development and scholarly endeavors that promote the creation and application of knowledge in all disciplines.

- **Cultural Competence:** We believe that students should experience cultural activities as they grow in their appreciation for the diversity of ideas and peoples, both inside and outside the classroom.
- **Learning Environment:** We believe that an outstanding physical infrastructure, along with a culture of excellence in all of our endeavors, provides an environment in which our students and faculty can thrive personally and intellectually. We further believe in providing state-of-the-art learning spaces.

## **b. Community**

We value and respect as our greatest asset the people who make up our community – students, faculty, and staff, as well as the people connected to us through ties to our local community and region, the state of Arkansas, our nation, and the world. That is, we believe people are the focus of our institution.

- **Collegiality:** We believe in processes of shared decision making based on productive synergistic interactions among our students, faculty, and staff, and disciplines in the pursuit of institutional goals.
- **Partnerships:** We are dedicated to promoting outreach activities, community education, and partnerships with surrounding entities. We believe in collaborating with the citizens of our region, the state, the nation, and the world as well as those organizations and constituents with whom we work.
- **Safe and Healthy Environment:** We promote a safe, healthy, and sustainable environment where our community members can flourish personally and socially as whole beings with obligations to improve their environment.
- **Service:** We believe in sharing our academic and cultural resources and expertise with the public, educational institutions, businesses, cultural centers, and public and nonprofit agencies, when appropriate. We work to enable students to integrate into the larger world to promote a commitment to public service through experiential education. Faculty and staff serve our state and local constituents by sharing their energy, talents, and experience.

## **c. Diversity**

We are dedicated to attracting and supporting a diverse student, faculty, and staff population and enhanced multicultural learning opportunities. We value the opportunity to work, learn, and develop in a community that embraces the diversity of individuals and ideas, including race, ethnicity, religion, spiritual beliefs, national origin, age, gender, marital status, socioeconomic background, sexual orientation, physical ability, political affiliation, and intellectual perspective.

- **Recruitment and Retention:** We actively pursue and seek to retain a diversified student body, faculty, and staff.
- **Support:** We maintain the highest academic quality and ensure that our programs remain innovative and responsive to the ever-changing and diverse needs of those we serve.

- **Knowledge:** We seek to enhance interaction and understanding among diverse groups and cultivate enriched learning opportunities in a global community.

#### **d. Integrity**

We are committed to ethical and responsible behavior in our own actions and to developing the same commitment in our students, thus fostering individuals who will have the skills, knowledge, and ability to engage positively with a diverse and changing world. Our commitment extends to all levels of our campus to foster a climate of ethical conduct, respect, responsibility, and trust.

- **Ethics:** We believe in acting with honesty, courage, and trustworthiness.
- **Respect:** We support a community and climate of respect and thoughtfulness among students, faculty, staff, and the people of our community, state, nation, and the world.
- **Responsibility:** We commit to being responsible and accountable in our operations at all levels of the institution, including continuous assessment of our academic programs and transparency in our fiscal and operational proceedings.
- **Trust:** We value and continually seek to earn the public's trust in all of our actions and words.

#### **4. INSTITUTIONAL DISTINCTIVENESS**

The heart of UCA's distinctiveness is its campus-wide commitment to providing the strongest learning and living environment possible, founded on a comprehensive array of outstanding academic programs that focus on individual student success. Complementing this atmosphere are the university's beautiful campus; its location in a collegial, vibrant, and affordable community that is part of the state's largest metropolitan area, which provides enhanced intellectual, cultural, and economic resources; and its close proximity to the Arkansas River Valley and the Ouachita Mountains, which offer natural splendor and myriad outdoor activities.

### **B. STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES, FISCAL YEARS 2022–2026**

*Preamble:* The goals outlined below express the foundational commitment made by the University of Central Arkansas (UCA) to the success of its students and its parallel commitment to looking both inward and outward to deploy strategic initiatives to address what we have come to call "grand challenges." Such initiatives engage the university—at every level, from individual members of the university community to departments, divisions, and the university as a whole, often in partnership with organizations and individuals outside the university—in addressing important problems in the state and region. A strategic initiative, for example, may seek to reverse the cycle of poverty, enhance social mobility, alleviate health disparities, improve K–12 education and literacy rates, or reduce recidivism.

In today's higher education environment, our foundational commitments to education and our commitments to meeting grand challenges are intimately related, together expressing the university's dedication to Academic Vitality, Integrity, and Diversity.

**GOAL 1: UCA will support and empower students to succeed, operating from the understanding that a holistic definition of success encompasses many interconnected dimensions of development.**

- a. UCA will provide students with guidance and support necessary to developing the knowledge, skills, and habits necessary for academic success.
- b. UCA will provide students with guidance, resources, and opportunities that enable them to meet their basic needs and maintain their physical and emotional health.
- c. UCA will emphasize diversity, belonging, equity, and inclusion in structuring learning environments and will seek to recruit and retain faculty who reflect the demographic diversity of the student body.
- d. UCA will provide inclusive access to a variety of high-impact educational practices that support students' cognitive, social, and emotional growth.
- e. UCA will support the development and implementation of teaching practices designed to reduce achievement gaps for underserved students.

**GOAL 2: UCA students will have the capabilities to thrive after graduation in whatever avenue suits their path to success.**

- a. UCA will engage students in early career exploration and other programs that enable them as graduates to know where they are going and to be successful in whatever comes next.
- b. UCA will provide students throughout their time at UCA with opportunities to engage in experiential learning—curricular and cocurricular, inside and outside the classroom—with peers, staff, faculty, and the broader community.
- c. UCA will engage with alumni through expanded social activities, ongoing career support, and continuing professional education opportunities.

**GOAL 3: UCA will position itself to address grand challenges while maintaining the stability of the university, the sustainability of quality programming, and equity of access and success for all stakeholders.**

- a. UCA's strategic initiatives will respond to salient issues in the state and region.
- b. UCA will ensure that its strategic initiatives support and promote its foundational commitment to student success, expressed in Goals 1 and 2.
- c. UCA will prioritize attracting and retaining employees at competitive market salaries.
- d. UCA's strategic initiatives will support—and be supported by—the optimization of university resources.
- e. UCA will engage all members of the university community in identifying, supporting, and accomplishing strategic initiatives.

## **ALL GOALS: Enablers of Success**

- a. UCA will renew and maintain its commitment to Academic Vitality, Integrity, and Diversity (AVID).
- b. At every organizational level, UCA will cultivate a culture of accountability, leadership, and achievement.
- c. UCA will fully implement the Resource Optimization Initiative.
  - The university community will continue to refine, coordinate, and structure our financial framework to manage all of our resources effectively and to support our human resources, infrastructure, operating budget, and strategic initiatives. To create this framework, we must streamline our processes, reduce redundancies, and improve the quality, quantity, and access to services throughout campus.
  - The university will identify areas of underused resources that can be redistributed and reinvested into key campus priorities (e.g., student recruitment, student academic support, faculty and staff market and equity raises, faculty and staff professional development, campus technology and infrastructure).
  - Implementation of the Resource Optimization Initiative and related processes will streamline the university budget and financial planning cycle so that strategic initiatives are part of the active budget and review cycle.
- d. Every unit will build metrics to measure progress and success toward meeting goals and objectives.
- e. When applicable, units will actively build awareness of existing internal resources that are currently available to support initiatives (e.g., professional development funds available through Staff Senate or the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Academic Leadership).
- f. Where appropriate, units will work with the Sponsored Programs Office and University Advancement to seek funds to support strategic initiatives.
- g. Where appropriate, units will actively pursue additional revenue sources (e.g., increasing online education, corporate and community partnerships, certificates and professional development).
- h. Units will work to create a structure and culture that facilitates and values long-term partnerships with external stakeholders through a variety of engaged learning opportunities (e.g., internships, research projects).

