University of Central Arkansas

Strategic Plan

Approved and recommended by the Strategic Planning and Resource Council April 1, 2011

Adopted by the Board of Trustees May 6, 2011

Table of Contents

Change Log

2012-02-24   updated last sentence of mission statement

2013-02-06   Strategic Goals and Objectives, 2012–2017, added to this document

I. The Strategic Planning Process and Committees, 2010–2011

A. Process

At the beginning of the 2010 Spring semester, acting on a directive from President Allen Meadors, the University of Central Arkansas initiated work on a Strategic Plan to guide the University over the next three to five years. The first stages of this process were the appointment of the members of a Strategic Planning and Resources Council (SPARC) and four related task forces (see section I.B, below, for membership lists), followed by a series of introductory meetings of these groups facilitated by Dr. David McFarland, of Penson Associates, who served as consultant throughout the development of the Plan. During the rest of the Spring semester and into the Summer, these committees, soliciting input from the entire University community, worked to develop a series of documents necessary to understanding the needs of the University that would inform the subsequent development of the Strategic Initiatives that are the heart of the Plan.

The committees completed their respective tasks and SPARC officially approved these documents – Planning Assumptions, Driving Forces, Institutional Distinctiveness, Vision, Mission, and Core Values – in late Summer and early Fall 2010, at which time they were posted for public viewing and comment on the University's Strategic Planning website (<http://www.uca.edu/strategicplan/>). Early in the 2010 Fall semester, Dr. McFarland facilitated a two-day stakeholders' meeting during which the full University community discussed these documents and worked to develop a set of strategic goals based on the information they contained. With these goals in place and approved by SPARC and the task forces, various members of these groups spent much of October and November holding forums with each of the University's six colleges, all non-college-affiliated academic units, and all administrative units to gather ideas on specific initiatives aimed at advancing the strategic goals. In the interests of complete transparency and omnidirectional flow of information, which had been high priorities throughout all the earlier stages of the process, the forum facilitators immediately posted the results of each meeting on the Strategic Planning website so that everyone on campus could peruse and comment on them.

This phase of the process culminated in another campus-wide meeting facilitated by Dr. McFarland on November 22, 2010, during which all attendees worked to prioritize the literally hundreds of initiatives the forums had generated (those who were unable to attend were invited to submit their priorities via e-mail). The results of this meeting were immediately posted on the Strategic Planning website for further comment. Over the next three months, various groups, including SPARC and its task forces, the Council of Deans, the Executive Committees of the Faculty Senate, and the Student Government Association, analyzed the results of the November 22 vote; and each group prepared a draft list of ten initiatives that, in their view, were both clearly high priority and financially feasible. On February 24, 2011, SPARC and its task forces met to synthesize these drafts and approve a single list of Strategic Initiatives; that list is the centerpiece of this Strategic Plan

B. Committees

1. Strategic Planning and Resources Council

Chair..Michael Schaefer
Communications Chair ....Venita Jenkins
Recording Secretary..Carol Daves

Coordinator .... Carl Frederickson
University President .... Allen Meadors
Provost .... Lance Grahn
Faculty Senate .... John Parrack
Faculty Senate .... Lynn Burley
Faculty (CLA) .... Clay Arnold
Faculty (COE) .... Tammy Benson
Faculty (Unaffiliated) .... Jimmy Bryant
Faculty (CNSM) .... Patrick Desrochers
Faculty (CHBS) .... Art Gillaspy
Faculty (COB) .... Victor Puleo
Faculty (CFAC) .... Bruce Hutchison
Staff (Professional) .... Larry Burns
Staff (Custodial) .... Dan Gortney
Staff (Secretarial) .... Kathy Felkins
Dean .... Neil Hattlestad
Director .... Gary Roberts
Director .... Larry James
Athletic Director .... Brad Teague
VP Advancement .... Shelley Mehl
VP Finance/Admin .... Diane Newton
VP Student Services .... Ronnie Williams
VP University and Government Relations .... Jeff Pitchford
Board of Trustees .... Bobby Reynolds
Student (SGA) .... Meghan Thompson
Student (SGA) .... Cody Wilson
Student (SGA) .... John Welter
Community .... Bob McCormack

2. Core Ideas Task Force (Mission, Vision, Values)

Co-Chair .... Brad Teague
Co-Chair .... Tammy Benson
At-Large .... Larry James
Faculty .... Bill Lammers
Faculty .... Jennifer Deering
Staff .... Judy Corcoran

3. Planning Assumptions Task Force

Co-Chair .... Lance Grahn
Co-Chair .... Art Gillaspy
At-Large .... Gary Roberts
Faculty .... Kim Hoffman
Faculty .... Rahul Mehta
Staff .... Lindsay Grifford

4. Institutional Distinctiveness Task Force

Co-Chair .... Shelley Mehl
Co-Chair .... Jimmy Bryant
At-Large .... Rollin Potter
Faculty .... Kevin Browne

Faculty ....David Kim
Staff..Cheryl Lyons

5.   Driving Forces Task Force

Co-Chair..Diane Newton
Co-Chair..Pat Desrochers
At-Large..Timothy Atkinson
Faculty ....Patrick Carmack
Faculty ....Lisa Christman
Staff..Marvin Williams

II. The Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan comprises six *Foundational Documents*, six *Strategic Goals*, and a set of *Strategic Initiatives* aimed at advancing each goal.

A. Foundational Documents

1. Driving Forces

The Driving Forces identify factors and trends in the external demographic, social, economic, political, technological and educational environment that most significantly affect institutions of higher learning. The University must be cognizant of these as it makes its own plans.

a. Public Forces

- Public expectations of what a university is and should be: workforce preparation and life preparation
- Public image of the university

b. Educational and Political Forces

- University's mission as determined by ADHE
- Inherent obligation to retain, educate, graduate students, including providing assistance for academically at-risk students
- Need to prepare students with the knowledge skills, and dispositions to succeed in a global community/economy
- Need to teach according to recognized professional standards of disciplines

c. Demographic Forces

- Composition of potential incoming student body – traditional, nontraditional (including returning veterans); transfer; African American, Hispanic, international; first-generation, and students of various racial and ethnic backgrounds
- Students' reasons for attending college in general, UCA in particular: geographic, financial, programmatic
- Students' reasons for leaving UCA: financial, programmatic, personal

d. Social-Geographical Forces

- Need to maintain mutually beneficial relationship and shared infrastructure between UCA and Conway
- Central geographical location for state and region
- Institutional contribution to and effects on institution of technological and population growth of region

e. Economic Forces

- Competition with comparison schools (culled from SREB, ADHE, IPEDS data)
- State funding likely flat for foreseeable future
- State-mandated reduction of scholarship spending as percentage of M&O

- Lottery-based scholarship money newly available to students
- Higher Learning Commission report/accreditation requirements

f. Technological Forces

- Need for UCA to maintain current and adequate information technology systems for academic and administrative excellence

2. Planning Assumptions

The Planning Assumptions describe projected internal institutional conditions important to planning, including enrollment, campus demographics, resources and facilities, curriculum and instruction, and administration. The Driving Forces and Planning Assumptions logically overlap, as articulated in the full statements below.

a. Administrative Assumptions

- UCA must adapt to flat or declining state funding for its operation and infrastructure even as demands increase in many areas:

  - The need for classrooms, laboratories, office space, research space, and student services will increase.
  - The demand for student services will increase.
  - Deferred maintenance will need to be addressed.

  Therefore, alternative sources of funding, including grants and private giving, must be increased.

- UCA must increase emphasis on assessment of effectiveness and the linkage between budget allocations and annual goals. The accountability of the institution to the public must continue to be a high priority.

b. Students and Enrollment Management

- There will be an increase in enrollment of diverse populations, international, and non-traditional students. Therefore, demand for student services and student development programs especially for diverse and non-traditional students may increase.
- Increased emphasis will be placed on enrollment management:

  - Overall enrollment may increase.
  - Competition for students will increase because of students' buying power with lottery scholarships.
  - Strategies to raise student retention and graduation rates must be a priority.

c. Academic Development and Programs

- UCA will continue to be a premiere undergraduate institution with a strong emphasis on learning, teaching, and scholarly endeavors; and a high-quality graduate institution within selected fields. Therefore:

  - Demand for a variety of instructional delivery models will continue.

- Demand for an experiential learning environment (student research, internships, study abroad, service learning, etc.) will increase.
- Academic programs will emphasize multicultural proficiency, global perspectives, and technological fluency.
- Demand for tenure-track faculty and more diverse faculty will increase.
- Demand for more academic resources (technology, professional development, research and travel support) will increase.
- Assurances of student learning (program and course assessment, general education assessment, accreditation requirements) will be a priority.
- Academic programs must be responsive to workforce demands.
- Aligning academic initiatives, goals, and values with our structures must be a priority.

d. Institutional

- UCA will continue to play an important economic, educational, and cultural role in the local, regional, and state community:

  - Increasing private giving, grants, and contracts is a priority.
  - Partnerships with corporate and public entities will increase.
  - Workforce development and academic outreach opportunities will increase.
  - Public events and performances will continue to raise the profile of UCA.
  - Division I athletics will provide UCA with greater recognition and exposure.

3. Vision Statement

The Vision Statement expresses UCA's aspirations for the future.

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.

4. Mission Statement

The Mission Statement articulates what UCA currently does.

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.

5. Core Values

The Core Values Statement asserts the University community's institutional and ethical standards in fulfilling its mission.

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 non-profit 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.

6.   Institutional Distinctiveness

The Institutional Distinctiveness Statement describes what UCA is and the features that distinguish it from peer institutions.

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, 2012–2017

Revisions recommended by SPARC Executive Committee 2012-09-06 *and adopted by the UCA Board of Trustees 2012-12-07.*

Goal 1: Focus on Integrity at All Levels of Action

A. Act with transparency at all levels of the University, recognizing that if we don't practice and model integrity, we can't meet our other five goals. With that fact in view,

1. Continue support of faculty/staff/student input into decision making, thus improving shared governance.
2. Make decisions based on data, evidence, and appropriateness to the university's vision and mission; make those facts clear so that stakeholders can understand and respect decisions.
3. Ensure that all units continue to share information in comprehensive and readily accessible ways – up and down the University's administrative chain and also laterally (i.e., across departments and colleges and other units), thereby fostering a campus-wide sense of trust, shared purpose, and high morale.

B. Make sure that the current SPARC efforts are pursued, assessed, re-evaluated, and part of ongoing dialogue. As current initiatives are accomplished, move others from campus forums into high priority.

Goal 2: Continue to Foster a Culture of Academic, Scholarly, and Creative Excellence

A. Provide a learner-focused environment for all students.
B. Create a culture of internal assessment through which assertions of excellence are made demonstrable. Each program takes responsibility for meaningfully assessing itself through maintenance of relevant professional and regional accreditation or professional association standards (e.g., NCATE, NCAA), student outcomes, passing and scoring rates on professional qualifying exams (e.g., CPA, teacher accreditation) and exit exams, and through individual college and program strategic planning.
C. Examine admission, growth, recruitment, and retention policies regarding traditional and non-traditional undergraduate and graduate students in relation to university's mission.
D. Implement reliable, sustainable, meaningful student evaluations of teaching, as well as peer-to-peer and other forms of teaching/course evaluation that develop growth and trust. Procedures for student evaluations must be developed that produce a high rate of response.
E. Foster life-long learning by providing faculty and staff with ongoing professional growth opportunities, which require adequate, reliable resources for professional training and participation in conferences and other scholarly meetings.
F. Become increasingly competitive in recruiting and retaining excellent faculty and staff.
G. Promote research, scholarship, and creative productivity among faculty and students.

Goal 3: Develop and Manage the Fiscal Resources Necessary to Provide Ongoing Support for the University's Mission and Strategic Plan

A. Financial indicators (Moody's bond rating, Higher Learning Commission ratios, cash reserves, and other monitored financial indicators) will be maintained at or above established target levels.

B. A fiscally prudent plan will be implemented to provide annual funds devoted to cost-of-living, equity, and merit increases to faculty and staff.

C. Faculty, staff, and student research and development funds will be established or augmented to provide sufficient annual funding for travel, development, and research support..

D. Increases will occur in extramural funding by 42% (from $6 million to $8.5 million) and new private gifts and pledges by 62% (from $4.32 million to $7 million) by 2017.

Goal 4: Commit to Ongoing Improvement and Innovation in Facilities and Technology

A. Develop a comprehensive, centralized strategic plan for Information Technology. This plan should establish a coherent, dependable roadmap for infrastructure and equipment upgrades across campus, including workstation computers and software, faculty and staff computers, and equipment specific to programs, such as lab equipment, video cameras, lighting, stage equipment, art supplies, musical instruments, etc.

Goal 5: Increase Engagement with External Partners

A. Serve the public and UCA's students by partnering with schools, businesses, industries, foundations, and government agencies in enhancing awareness, knowledge, understanding, and application of relevant disciplines.

B. Strengthen communication, coordination, and prioritization of fundraising efforts and needs across campus.

Goal 6: Promote Diversity in All Areas

A. Increase gender and racial diversity as highest priorities, but seek also socioeconomic, ethnic, linguistic, cognitive, intellectual, and age diversity in student, staff, and faculty populations.

B. Enrich global-oriented learning environment.

Archives

B. Strategic Goals and Initiatives, 2011–2016

As noted above, SPARC and various other university bodies, acting on information gathered from a year of meetings with the University community, have identified six primary goals for the University and a number of specific initiatives aimed at advancing each goal over the next three to five years. In approving these goals and initiatives, SPARC recognizes that implementing the initiatives – that is, turning the Strategic Plan into an Operational Plan – will require work by the University's executive staff, deans, department chairs, and other supervisory personnel to assign oversight responsibilities, to develop final prioritization and define specific outcomes in light of funding requirements, and to establish timelines comprising feasible deadlines for all initiatives.

Approved and recommended by SPARC 2011-02-24.

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