

UCA Faculty Affairs II Committee Recommendations  
HLC Monitoring Report – Governance/Communication  
University of Central Arkansas Faculty Senate  
November 16, 2011

**Committee Charge:**

UCA's Faculty Affairs II Committee has been charged with reviewing and making recommendations to the Faculty Senate concerning governance/communication problems identified by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Monitoring Report (24 May 2010). The committee will examine UCA policies directly related to governance/communication, e.g. shared governance and transparent communication. In particular, the committee will heavily focus on UCA's concern for a clearly-defined structure (organizational and administrative) and the need for well-defined roles and responsibilities related to governance/communication as cited in the 2000 HLC Report (2010 HLC Monitoring Report, Assurance Section, p. 3).

**Recommendation 1**

*Communication procedures should be clearly defined and coordinated in accordance with the UCA Mission Statement.*

**Problem**

"The [HLC] team found scant evidence that the mission statement played a meaningful role in university-wide, formal decision-making over the past decade" (HLC Monitoring Report, Assurance Section, p. 13).

**Possible Solution**

Require all university-wide committees to rephrase their respective committee description to reflect a clear understanding of and commitment to the UCA Mission Statement.

**Recommendation 2**

*Formalize and institutionalize governance/communication practices into procedures that are clearly and widely understood.*

## Problem 1

“Ongoing speculation [about how decisions are made at UCA] can contribute to making it more difficult to build trust and confidence in leadership decisions and actions” (HLC Monitoring Report, Assurance Section, p. 13).

## Possible Solutions

1. In an effort to ensure shared governance and transparent communication, UCA should create and implement a web page that would serve as an indexed archive of ALL university-wide committee meetings’ minutes. The archive page would serve as a central location for committee minutes, and would provide a key-word search function to allow the user to be informed as to how various university committees are addressing a similar issue. In addition, a centralized archive page would serve the following purposes:

- A. Build confidence and trust in leadership decisions and actions
- B. “Encourage campus leadership to communicate its decisions to assure campus constituents that all campus units have qualified representation on the president’s leadership team” (HLC Monitoring Report, Assurance Section, p. 14).
- C. Help ensure the integrity of data as UCA “enter[s] into a more data-driven decision-making process in the future” (HLC Monitoring Report, Assurance Section, p. 17).
- D. Enhance “the creation of additional systematic processes for the ongoing collection of community needs data, in order to facilitate responding to those needs in a timely fashion” (HLC Monitoring Report, Assurance Section, p. 29).
- E. Assist in UCA’s “review of its internal operating policies and procedures to insure fairness and perception of fairness, transparency in governance, and integrity in general” (HLC Monitoring Report, Advancement Section, p. 8).
- F. Promote “full transparency on budgeting and accounting as benefits a public institution” (HLC Monitoring Report, Advancement Section, p. 13).

2. Recommend that all university-wide committee chairs review the proposed committee minutes web page with keyword search in order to know how other university committees are addressing similar or related issues. This proposed procedure would prevent over-duplication of tasks, clarify how issues are defined in different committees, and promote transparency in decision-making.

## Problem 2

“Faculty representatives [and Steering Committee] believe there is good communication at and below the level of the deans, but that communication does not seem to travel any further upward” (HLC Monitoring Report, Assurance Section, p. 13).

## Problem 3

“Participants at an open meeting during the [HLC] site visit reported the new administration withheld information from the Budget Advisory Committee and did not listen to the Committee’s concerns” (HLC Monitoring Report, Assurance Section, p. 13).

## Possible Solution to Problems 2 and 3

Recommend an agreed and implemented policy requiring administration to consider and document in meeting minutes evidence of having clearly addressed *questions, concerns, and learning outcomes* expressed at and below the level of the deans (HLC Monitoring Report, Assurance Section, p. 13 and 14). The proposed policy change would serve two purposes:

- A. Directly addresses Problems 2 and 3
- B. Requires administration to give an evidence-based response to learning outcomes presented below the level of the deans (HLC Monitoring Report, Assurance Section, p. 15).

## Recommendation 3

*Clearly define and consistently apply a university-wide definition of the issues: global, diverse, and technological.*

## Problem

“[T]here is no focused campus-wide assessment on the UCA’s organizational effectiveness on these issues” (HLC Monitoring Report, Assurance Section, p. 27).

## Possible Solutions

1. Recommend the UCA Mission Statement and ALL university units reflect an understanding of and a willingness to implement policies/procedures in accordance with an official university-accepted definition of the issues: global, diverse, and technological.

2. Conduct regular university-wide assessment on how well the university/its units meet their commitment on 'global, diverse, and technological' and reporting to university/unit administrators.