Assurance Argument

University of Central Arkansas - AR

9/29/2016

1 - Mission

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

1.A - Core Component 1.A

The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.
2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. (This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)

Argument

1.A.1. Mission statement development

The mission of the University of Central Arkansas was developed through a university-wide collaboration and is embodied in a series of statements including vision, mission, and core values adopted by the university's Board of Trustees in May 2011. (See Board of Trustees resolution.) These statements were developed over a year-long process marked by extensive input and collaboration among faculty, staff, students, and Conway community leaders. The scope and dimension of this undertaking far exceeded any campus-wide initiative in recent decades. The new mission statement replaced the statement of mission and principles adopted by the Board of Trustees when it accepted the UCA Strategic Framework in August 2004, which had in turn replaced the mission and purposes statement in place since September 1997.

(A 2016 iteration of the Strategic Plan has recently been adopted by the Board of Trustees, for which see Criterion 5.C.3 and 5.S. The 2016 plan is linked here. The 2016 plan maintains the vision, mission, and core values adopted in 2011.)

The mission of the University of Central Arkansas is this:

> 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 its 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.

1.A.2. Academic programs, student support services, and enrollment are consistent with the mission

The mission statement is regularly reviewed through the established process of strategic planning coordinated by the Strategic Planning and Resources Council. The University of Central Arkansas is organized into seven divisions: academic affairs, advancement, athletics, finance and administration, information systems and technology, student services, and university relations, in addition to those offices reporting directly to the president. (See UCA Organizational Chart.) Each division has developed, through their own internal collaborative processes, a mission statement that is consistent with and supports UCA's mission statement. Most units on campus publish their mission statements on their webpage. For example, the mission statement of the Division of Finance and Administration is as follows:

> The mission of Finance & Administration is realized through the personnel reporting to the Vice President to orchestrate the planning, design and implementation of the financial and business service operations of the University. The division is committed to promoting and supporting the University's strategic mission of academic vitality, integrity and diversity.

Likewise, the webpage and strategic plan for the Division of Student Services state the division's mission:

> The mission of the Division of Student Services is to challenge, support, and encourage our students by providing innovative services, programs, facilities, and resources in order to maximize the collegiate experience.

In addition to the divisional statements, the institutional mission is supported by mission statements of the various colleges as well as academic and administrative departments. These statements clearly articulate their alignment with the institutional mission and can be found on their respective websites and in the academic bulletin. Examples of mission statements in the academic bulletin can be found for the College of Business, the College of Liberal Arts, and the College of Fine Arts and Communication. Further, some departments also include their mission statement in the academic bulletin: e.g., Department of Art, Department of Music, and Department of Physical Therapy.

At the beginning of the 2010 spring semester the first stages of mission development were the appointment of the members of a Strategic Planning and Resources Council (SPARC) and four related task forces, followed by a series of introductory meetings. 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 creation of the Strategic 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 on UCA's web site for public review and comment. The university subsequently facilitated a two-day stakeholders' meeting during which the full university community was invited to discuss these documents and worked to develop a set of strategic goals based on the information they contained. The process identified Integrity; Academic, Scholarly, and Creative Excellence; Learner-Focused Environment; Ongoing Improvement and Innovation in Facilities and Technology; Increased External Engagement; and Diversity. With these goals in place and approved by SPARC and the task forces, various representatives held 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.

This phase of the process culminated in another campus-wide meeting in November 2010, during which all attendees worked to prioritize the literally hundreds of initiatives the forums had generated. 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 22nd 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 for the university to undertake immediately in order to meet its six strategic goals.

Beginning with the development of the UCA Strategic Plan and continuing to the present, the focus on strategic planning and implementation of the plan has been concerted and consistent. While implementation of the strategic plan appropriately lies with the president and his executive staff, SPARC has key responsibility for assessing and revising the strategic plan and assuring that on-going planning involves a broad-based constituency.

To ensure ongoing monitoring, review, and revision of the strategic plan, SPARC was restructured in April 2012 to create a SPARC Executive Committee, a Strategic Planning Committee (SPC), and a Strategic Budgeting Advisory Committee (SBAC), with a single Chair serving all three committees. (See Strategic Planning and Resource Council.) This structure was designed to provide stronger integration between the budget and the strategic plan with a resulting increased emphasis on accomplishment of the strategic goals of the university. As the coordinating body between the Strategic Planning and Strategic Budgeting Advisory committees, SPARC is charged with providing an annual summary report of all three committees.

As embodied within its mission statement, UCA 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. At the time of this writing, the university's program inventory includes 84 baccalaureate programs and 59 graduate-level programs offered across the university, and the university annually awards more than 2,000 degrees and certificates. (See UCA Program Counts and Departmental Degrees.) Since 2010, 60 majors/minors were added to the offerings and 20 were removed (see Degree Changes for the list of additions and deletions), supporting the mission at both the university and the individual department/college levels.

UCA's graduation rates grew from 40% for the fall 2005 cohort to 45% for the fall 2009 cohort. (See Six-Year Graduation rates for data by race, ethnicity, and gender.) From 2010 to 2015 there was a slight increase in graduate enrollment from 1,621 students in 2010 to 1,867 students in 2015. Undergraduate enrollment also experienced a slight increase from 9,277 in 2010 to 9,562 in 2015. (See Enrollment by Classification.) Racial and ethnic minorities represented approximately 28% of the undergraduate and 14% of the graduate enrollment in 2015, and females made up 58.8% of the undergraduate student population in 2015. These numbers were fairly consistent over a six-year period. (See Student Diversity.) In-state students comprised a majority of the enrollment ranging from 86-88% over six years. Out-of-state enrollment averaged 7%, and International students averaged 5% during the same time period. (See Geographic Enrollment summary for the number of in-state, out-of-state, and international students.)

Numerous programs are available across campus to support faculty innovation in the classroom including the Center for Teaching Excellence, which provides faculty with workshops, faculty development grants, and service-learning opportunities. The Sponsored Programs Office supports faculty and student research and grant development. Student support across campus is multifaceted.

Five residential colleges provide housing for more than 700 students annually. One measure of effectiveness is higher rates of retention for students participating in a residential college—on average 8.2% higher (year 1 to year 3) compared to other residential students (see a summary of this retention comparison). UCAN (Unlocking College Academics Now) allows students to continue to enroll in college uninterrupted after their 1st academic suspension. Of the 1,916 students enrolled in UCAN from 2005 (the year of the first pilot of the program) through spring 2016, 914 (or 47%) attained at least a 2.0 grade point average, completed all program requirements, and were eligible to enroll the next semester; of those successful completers, 363 have thus far earned a degree at UCA. (See UCAN Annual Report.) The Writing Center provides individual tutoring at no cost to the students and has averaged approximately 1,500 tutorial sessions between 2009 and 2014. This program was expanded to include night sessions beginning in Fall 2012. In addition, tutoring services are available and approximately 1,300 students use the Tutoring Services Center annually. Supplemental Instruction (SI), a nationally recognized program, provides peer-assisted study sessions in selected UCA Core courses. Students that participate in Supplemental Instruction have a 96% course completion rate with a passing grade compared to 74% of those in the same classes that do not participate. The Academic Advising Center has expanded in the past five years to include 10 additional college-specific advisors (for a total of 20 advisors) for freshmen and sophomores.

1.A.3. Planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission

UCA's planning and budgeting priorities align directly with and supports the mission. With the reorganization of SPARC, the role of the SBAC was further clarified to include responsibility for reviewing changes and updates to the university budget in light of the strategic plan; prioritizing and making recommendations regarding new funding proposals to support the university's mission and strategic plan; conducting studies and making inquiries related to university revenues, expenditures, and allocations; and presenting budget-related concerns and recommendations to the president and campus. The SBAC's membership includes faculty, staff, and student representatives from throughout the campus community. The SBAC meets on a monthly basis throughout the year. Alignment of planning and budgeting priorities is addressed in Criterion 5.C.1.

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1.B - Core Component 1.B

The mission is articulated publicly.

1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.
2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

Argument

1.B.1. The institution articulates its mission

The University of Central Arkansas's Strategic Plan (both the 2011 and 2016 versions) clearly articulates the university's mission, vision, and core values in order to create a comprehensive understanding of the purpose of the university. The vision, mission, and core values are all readily accessible through web-based locations including the Student Handbook, Staff Handbook, Faculty Handbook, and the Academic Bulletins. In addition to these documents, the university uses external marketing (billboards, TV ads, etc.), promotional brochures, and other communication avenues (e.g., social media) to reinforce the values, goals, and institutional priorities.

1.B.2. The mission document is current and explains various aspects of its mission

The Strategic Plan explains the mission and how it is emphasized through various initiatives of the university. Since the adoption of the plan, the university has continued to hold regular strategic planning meetings to update goals and produce an annual report on plan implementation. The strategic plan is publicly available on the university's website.

The Goals included in the 2011 strategic plan (as revised) identify the university's areas of emphasis.

Goal 1: Continue to Foster a Culture of Academic, Scholarly, and Creative Excellence

Goal 2: Act with Integrity and Transparency at All Levels

Goal 3: Promote Diversity in All Areas

Goal 4: Develop and Manage the Fiscal Resources Necessary to Provide Ongoing Support for the University's Mission and Strategic Plan

Goal 5: Commit to Ongoing Improvement and Innovation in Facilities and Technology

Goal 6: Increase Engagement with External Partners

Detailed action plans were developed for all goals and objectives identified in the 2011 Strategic Plan.

(As noted, a new iteration of the Strategic Plan has recently been adopted by the Board of Trustees, for which see Criterion 5.C.3 and 5.S. The 2016 plan is linked above and here.)

On May 6, 2011, UCA's Board of Trustees adopted the following 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.

The values of the university, as approved by the board of trustees in 2011 and again in 2016, read:

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.

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.

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.

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.

In 2012, UCA developed an abbreviated version of the mission statement to articulate concisely and clearly the fundamental tenets of the mission: "The University of Central Arkansas dedicates itself to academic vitality, integrity, and diversity (AVID)." The acronym AVID can be found on placards located throughout campus, as well as in the email signature line of a majority of university employees and at the bottom of every page on the university website.

During October 2013, UCA celebrated AVID week. During the week, speakers highlighted the

importance of each AVID component through events open to the public. Speakers included UCA faculty members, Arkansas Supreme Court Justice Jim Hannah, and award-winning psychologist Dr. Paul Wachtel. AVID week received publicity through multiple local media outlets.

On November 20, 2013, President Tom Courtway released UCA's Framework for the Future: A Blueprint for National Leadership and Regional Prominence. This document outlined the major university and presidential initiatives and how they connect back to the vision and mission adopted by the Board of Trustees. This document was released to statewide media, the campus community, alumni, and other major stakeholders and is now housed on the university website.

1.B.3. The mission document identifies the constituents of the university

UCA derives its mission, in part, from the institution's role and scope, as defined at the state level by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE). (See ADHE Role and Scope, 2008.) The ADHE document identifies the audience and programs of the University:

UCA's audiences include the following:

- Residents of the state, particularly those in central Arkansas who have completed high school and are seeking either a college degree or continuing professional education.
- Regional and state employers, both public and private, including school districts, health care providers, local governments, private businesses and community agencies seeking technical assistance and applied research.
- Economic development interests and entrepreneurs in the region and across the state.
- The community and area by providing a broad range of academic and cultural activities and public events.
- Area K-12 schools seeking college general education courses for advanced students.
- Two-year College transfer students.

UCA serves the above audiences by offering an array of programs and services as outlined in the role and scope:

- Baccalaureate arts and science programs in the variety appropriate to a comprehensive, teaching university.
- Baccalaureate programs in the professional fields of journalism, computer and information sciences, education, public administration, nursing and allied health, and business.
- Masters programs in education, business, nursing, allied health and selected arts and science fields.
- Doctoral programs in physical therapy, communicative sciences and disorders, leadership studies, and school psychology. [When additional doctoral programs are approved they are deemed to be added to this list automatically.]
- Services specifically designed to meet the needs of state and regional economic development.

The University's mission, vision, values, and goals align with this role and scope.

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1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.
2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Argument

1.C.1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society

The university's commitment to recognizing and accepting its role in a multicultural society is evidenced by its public statements:

The University of Central Arkansas (UCA) dedicates itself to academic vitality, integrity, and diversity. (Mission)

UCA values 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. (Core Values)

Students, faculty, and staff collaborate to create strong engagements with local, national, and global communities. (Mission)

UCA is an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution. (Human Resources)

UCA publishes such statements throughout UCA's website (mission, vision, and core values statement; various board policy statements; division, academic college, and department pages) as well as in faculty, staff, and student handbooks, and in other key documents such as the Academic Bulletins.

UCA has a plethora of multicultural programs embedded throughout the university: Academic Affairs, curriculum development, Student Services, Institutional Diversity/Community, and International Engagement. Examples follow.

1.C.2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity

Academic Affairs

Academic Affairs sponsors an annual fall-semester First-Year Minority and International Student Dinner and collaborates with Institutional Diversity in holding a Diversity After Hours Reception for

minority faculty and staff. Academic Affairs is proactive in seeking to hire diverse faculty.

Curriculum

The UCA Core program is a cohesive course of study carried through all four years that builds core competencies around four general pillars of knowledge and skills. Diversity is one pillar and speaks to UCA's commitment to help students develop their cultural competence and their appreciation for the diversity of ideas and peoples, both inside and outside the classroom. The curriculum also serves to help students analyze the major ideas, techniques, and processes that inform creative works within different cultural and historical contexts and is assessed in designated courses at both the lower and upper division. (See the Undergraduate Bulletin's description of the UCA Core program.)

Departments and academic colleges offer courses and/or programs that help students understand and interact with individuals from various cultures and religions. Such programs include African and African American Studies, American Indian Literature and Cultures, Asian Studies, Gender Studies, History of Groups in America, International Studies, Latin American Studies, and Religious Studies. UCA also offers a residential college, EDGE—Educating for Diversity and Global Engagement—a living/learning community for students and faculty with a shared interest in liberal arts, global education, and civic engagement. University College offers a first-year course that primarily enrolls African American men and another that primarily enrolls African American women as a means of helping with their transition to college.

(See Diversity Initiatives and Support for a list of diversity-related programs, activities, and organizations across campus.)

Student Services

UCA provides a host of opportunities for students to interact and understand diverse groups and cultivate enriched learning in a global community. The university offers approximately 200 Recognized Student Organizations. RSOs vary from academics/honors and religious to service and special interest, several of which are cultural and/or multicultural. A sampling of diverse student groups includes Students for the Propagation of Black Culture, African Student Association, Minority Mentoring Program (Level 1), and Griot. Seven traditional African American fraternities and sororities are part of UCA's robust Greek community. The Student Government Association, which represents each student classification, also provides social, cultural, and educational activities for students, advocates on behalf of all students, and allocates student activity funds to meet the diverse needs of student organizations.

Institutional Diversity/Community

The Office of Institutional Diversity (ID) serves as the umbrella department for the University's diversity efforts, while the Office of Diversity and Community (ODC) serves historically underrepresented students.

ID collaborates with divisions, academic colleges, and programs on diversity planning, initiatives, documentation, and implementation. Targeted initiatives of this office include the Diversity and Inclusive Excellence Award, the Diversity Strategic Plan, the Institutional Diversity Grant Program,

the Conversations about Diversity Series, and the Leadership Lens Series. The office plans programming to increase the recruitment, retention, and development of diverse faculty. It also cultivates partnerships with external communities, agencies, businesses, and institutions. In addition, the office seeks to increase minority business partnerships with UCA. ID supports the growth of the newly formed Black Alumni Chapter and future chapters for diverse graduates. This office coordinates the activities of the university-wide Diversity Advisory Committee. As a final point, ID assesses the diversity initiatives and service areas that target diverse populations throughout the university.

ODC works in partnership with the campus community to help diverse student populations efficaciously transition into college, fully engage in the college experience, and experience transformation for success after graduation. Key services include inclusion and retention-focused programming, leadership development, academic achievement recognition, the Minority Mentoring Program (Level 2), the Black Male Achievement Challenge and its early arrival program Project X: Demystifying the Unknowns of College Life, the Latino/Hispanic Outreach Initiative, Leadership 101, the Miss Essence Scholarship Pageant, and LGBT+ Outreach Initiative.

The university's diversity website offers further information on the Office of Institutional Diversity, the Office of Diversity and Community, Diversity Enrichment/Training, a wide variety of diversity-related Initiatives and Support, UCA's Diversity Ledger, and associated policies and procedures.

In 2014, the League of United Latin American Citizens Council (LULAC) 750 Little Rock Scholarship Gala awarded UCA with the Latino Education Outreach of the Year Award. At the 2015 League of United Latin American Citizens Council (LULAC) 750 Little Rock Scholarship Gala, UCA President Tom Courtway received the LULAC President's Award for UCA's efforts in recruiting and retaining Latino students. During the 17th National Role Model Conference (9/30–10/2/2016), the university will be formally recognized "as an institution committed to diversity for 2016."

International Engagement

UCA enrolls approximately 600 international students from more than 70 nations. (See International Enrollment for data from 2010-2015.) The Division of International Engagement has a well-structured system of intake (International Student and Scholar Services) to ensure that students become acclimated to their new resident nation and UCA. (See International Engagement webpage.) The Intensive English Program enhances the English proficiency of prospective international students. The division hosts educational and social programming throughout the academic year to connect students to International Engagement as well as to other international students. UCA's international students are also the recipients of scholarships, participate in local volunteerism, are engaged in recognized student organizations, and are among Presidential Leadership Fellows.

One of 350 Confucius Institutes around the world and the 24th Confucius Institute established in the United States resides on UCA's campus. The institute also offers cultural and educational programming for the campus community and sponsors Teach Chinese in Arkansas in public schools across the state. All undergraduate students may seize opportunities to participate in faculty-led summer study abroad programs in countries such as Rwanda, India, France, Italy, Costa Rica, and New Zealand. Moreover, the Schedler Honors College offers Travel Abroad Grants to support dozens of students each year in their pursuit of studying abroad. Another representation of UCA's international engagement manifests through the College Student Personnel Administration program, which oversees an annual study abroad so that its graduate students can experience, first hand, the relationship between theory and practice.

The university hosts an annual "Leaders of the World" conference. This international leadership program brings top leaders together to discuss common challenges and solutions to public policy problems. (See Leaders of the World webpage.)

Athletic Department

The University of Central Arkansas athletic department encompasses more than 300 student-athletes from around the country and around the world. UCA's student-athletes were 63 percent male and 38 percent female in 2014. UCA athletics was represented by 49 percent white/non-Hispanic and 30 percent black/African American, as well as Asian, Hispanic/Latino, native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaskan native student-athletes in 2014. Student-athletes at UCA come from countries as diverse as Australia, Russia, Sweden, England, Taiwan, South Africa, Thailand, China, Germany, Denmark, the Bahamas, Mexico, and others. (See Degree-Seeking Undergraduate Enrollment for data on student-athletes.)

Diversity Advisory Committee

In 2012 (revised in 2013 and 2014) the UCA Board of Trustees approved the formation of a diversity advisory committee, comprising faculty from each academic college, staff from each division, and representatives from the Student Government Association, as well as administrative and Board of Trustees appointments. (See Board Policy 525.) The charge of the committee is to make recommendations about and to promote and maintain inclusive excellence that aligns with the university's core value of diversity. Highlights of the committee's work during academic year 2014-2015 were the identification and labeling of gender-neutral restrooms and composition of a comprehensive campus-wide diversity strategic plan.

The Diversity Plan identifies a wide range of dimensions that speak to core areas of the university, social identity characteristics, and focal/constituent groups. It further adopts objectives—aligned with the university's vision, mission, and core values—with corresponding principles and practices. Each division and academic college will annually report its customized initiatives based on this plan. The communications campaign to inform and collaborate with the campus began in Fall 2015, and the first year of implementation begins in Fall 2016.

Faculty and Staff Employment Practices

UCA is dedicated to attracting and supporting a diverse faculty and staff population. It is the intent and commitment of UCA to create and foster an institutional environment that corresponds to the ratio of minorities in the general population, the total work force, and the high school graduation rate of Arkansas. This commitment is not only a function of moral rightness but is also an investment in human resources and human potential.

The Minority Retention and Recruitment Plan 2012–2017 includes the maintenance and increase of minority full-time faculty at all ranks as well as minority executive administration and professional non-faculty. The aspiration for academic human resources is that UCA's percentage of each race approximates the percentage of degrees conferred by race nationally and master's degrees statewide. The proportion of administrative and professional, non-faculty staff will equal the proportion of

minority individuals with the credentials required for such positions in the relevant labor market. (See Faculty and Staff Diversity for specific numbers.)

Since 2013, UCA has expanded its efforts to recruit, retain, and develop ethnically diverse faculty. This effort includes annual recruitment of diverse faculty at the Compact for Faculty Diversity, an initiative of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). UCA seeks PhD candidates from SREB's diverse doctoral scholars directory and posts all open faculty positions in SREB's job posting service. UCA also works with the Academic Network, a minority faculty/staff application database, to advertise administrative/professional positions. Academic deans and department chairs collaborate with the Office of Institutional Diversity to construct a pipeline for faculty diversity. In addition to the recruitment of diverse faculty and staff, the Office of Institutional Diversity facilitates affinity-resource groups for the retention of African Americans, Asians, Latinos, LGBT+, and Internationals. For the development of diverse faculty and staff, Institutional Diversity collaborates with the Center for Teaching Excellence for instructional enhancement and partners with campus leaders for the Leadership Lens initiative that offers opportunities to learn about the various facets of campus leadership for academic and administrative advancement.

Office of University Training

It is the policy of UCA that all employees (faculty and staff) plus graduate assistants and student workers attend diversity enrichment/training each year. Since 2009, topics have included ethnicity, spirituality, racial understanding, classism, sexual orientation, ageism, disabilities, gender, and understanding the military in an educational setting. Other routine training includes unlawful harassment prevention, LGBT awareness, and Title IX/SaVE Act Awareness. This office facilitated 74 seminars during academic year 2014-2015 involving UCA faculty, staff, and students. (See Educational Seminars for a list of training topics.)

Student Minority Recruitment and Graduation

UCA is dedicated to attracting and supporting a diverse student population. In keeping with its non-discrimination policy in employment, admissions, and other functions and programs, the university considers employees and students based on individual merit. UCA will not discriminate against a person because of gender, race or color, ethnicity, religion, spiritual beliefs, national origin, age, familial status, socioeconomic background, sexual orientation, disability, political beliefs, intellectual perspective, genetic information, military status, or other factors irrelevant to participation in its programs.

UCA is centrally located in the state of Arkansas. To ensure that enrollment mirrors the diversity of the state, the Office of Admissions reaches out to students throughout Faulkner County and all other parts of the state. UCA also targets two-year transfer students, home-schooled students, and students in Texas, a contiguous state. Each college, as part of its diversity plan, seeks to enhance the diversity of its student body. The Admissions Office and the Graduate School are joining forces with the Office of Institutional Diversity to increase the recruitment and enrollment of diverse undergraduate and graduate students. (See Student Diversity and Diversity Degrees Awarded for enrollment data.)

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1.D - Core Component 1.D

The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Argument

The University of Central Arkansas demonstrates its commitment to the public good through (1) strategic planning, (2) internal actions, and (3) outreach programs and activities developed to benefit our regional and academic communities. Examples and evidence are offered below.

(1) Strategic Planning

Commitment to local, national and global communities is a core element of the UCA mission statement:

Students, faculty, and staff partner to create strong engagement with the local, national, and global communities.

One of the four core values identified in the Strategic Plan specifically addresses 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.

The core value of community is articulated further through the following commitments:

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.

The core value of integrity is involved here, too:

> **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.

The Strategic Plan provides a clear framework for the integration of the university locally, nationally, and internationally. In addition, the university is committed to serving the academic community and by extension the market place where our students will eventually work and serve. The university has a long-standing commitment to the public good as evidenced by service and partnerships with our external constituents. Examples are included in the internal initiatives below.

(2) Internal Initiatives

UCA has several programs in place that support and encourage service to the community and developing citizenship and membership in community. Three of these internal programs are described here.

Service Learning Program
In 2013-2014, UCA began the Service-Learning Program, an initiative to incorporate service learning into classrooms at UCA. Service learning is defined by UCA as "a course-based teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities." (See Service Learning Courses for a list of courses for fall 2014 and spring 2015 and a list of courses and community partners for fall 2015.)

Though the program began in 2013, UCA faculty have historically incorporated aspects of service learning in the classroom. The program was initiated by the College of Liberal Arts in partnership with the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) and the Division of Outreach and Community Engagement. This program invites faculty to participate by studying service learning, which is facilitated by the CTE, a service learning faculty liaison, and a service learning coordinator. Faculty members receive a stipend if selected and subsequently add service learning components to their courses. All six colleges support service learning on campus, and a culture of engagement is building. Annually, UCA recognizes students, faculty, and community partners through three student leadership awards, one Service-Learning Faculty Practitioner of the Year, one Community Partner of the Year, and one Champion of Service-Learning for an outstanding cross-campus advocate of service learning. (See Service Learning website for faculty resources and program information.)

Responsible Living, a course requirement
Beginning with academic bulletin year 2013–2014, students graduating from UCA are required to take two three-hour courses in the category of responsible living, one at the lower division and one at the upper division. These courses have as their learning goal that students "have the ability to address real-world problems and find ethical solutions for individuals and society." See UCA Core. The inclusion of these courses and related assessment of student learning helps ensure UCA produces graduates conscious of the effect their decisions have on their future, the community, and the environment. (See Responsible Living Rubric A and Responsible Living Rubric B.) This responsible living requirement is a result of the revision of UCA's general education program, now known as the

UCA Core. In prior years, the students were only required to take a course in concepts of lifetime health and fitness, which is still a responsible living option. However, now there are 18 options at the lower division and 34 options at the upper division plus a variety of degree-specific upper-division responsible living courses. (See Lower-Division Check Sheet and Upper-Division Check Sheet for courses.)

Faculty Service and the Public Service Award

UCA faculty time is partially devoted to service at many levels (e.g., department, college, university, academic community, and local community). UCA faculty identified 714 different organizations served for a five-year period. (See Faculty Service to External Organizations.) UCA encourages and recognizes service by faculty through a public service award. The Public Service Award Committee is charged with selecting "the faculty member who will be the award recipient for outstanding public service activities as this service relates to the individual's position as a member of the university faculty." Committee members accept nominations and evaluate packets, and one award has been given each year since 1994. Award winners are recognized with a certificate and a cash prize at the annual faculty and staff awards event.

(3) Outreach Programs and Activities

Outreach programs reach beyond the boundaries of our campus and course offerings. In nearly every college, department, and organization at UCA, one can find an element of outreach to our community. While a comprehensive list is beyond the scope of this study, examples are offered in five different categories: classroom related activities, community outreach programs, volunteerism, respect for the public good, and public resources.

Classroom related activities

While some disciplines have a natural relationship with public service (e.g., health-related disciplines and education), many of our faculty members in other disciplines include required or optional outreach activities in their curricula.

- In 2014-2015, more than 50 courses led by nearly 30 faculty members included a service-learning component. The more than 750 students in those classes provided 5,944 service hours to 67 community partners; the value of the work (savings to community partners) is estimated to be $129,520. Some of the partners served include Literacy Action of Central Arkansas, Conway Cradle Care, Faulkner County Senior Citizen's Center, and Boys and Girls Club.

- A College of Business student, Jessica Hopper, created a headband as a "$20 business" project for a class. The project has turned into a business, She Finds Freedom, which raises awareness and financially supports A21, a nonprofit aiming to stop human sex trafficking, with 20% of proceeds ($2 per headband).

- UCA faculty and students from the Management and Marketing department provided approximately 120 pro bono consulting hours to the Arkansas Rice Depot, approximately 90 hours of which were donated by students. These services resulted in a reorganization of their warehouse operations, a redesigned website benchmarked against 60 other food banks, and a student co-authored publication that is currently under review at a peer-reviewed academic journal.

Community outreach programs

Camps, professional development, and community classes are just a few of the ways the University of Central Arkansas reaches out to the community. By providing opportunities for personal and professional growth outside of for-credit classes and seeking degrees, UCA develops community members and, therefore, its own community.

- In summer 2015, UCA offered a number of academic and athletic camps that provided development and enrichment for over 1,000 students from kindergarten through 8th grade. The camps are led by UCA faculty and staff members. Some examples include Bearswrite, Reading Success Center, STEMulate Engineering Academy, Summer Enrichment, UCA Challenge, UCA Super Kids, UCA Community Language School, Pre-Algebra Summer Program, GeoQuest, Steve Campbell Football Camp, Sandra Rushing Sugar Bear Basketball Camp, and UCA Nike Tennis Camp.

- The Community Development Institute (CDI) began at the University of Central Arkansas in 1987, with the goal of equipping community leaders and economic development professionals with the tools and strategies they need to create vibrant, successful communities. Since its inception, 1,795 individuals have participated in the 29 sessions and 880 participants have graduated from the CDI's three-year program.

- Students in UCA's chapter of Beta Alpha Psi tweeted about financial literacy in 2014-2015. Giving tips about savings and debt that were geared toward college students, over 600 students followed them, and, with retweets, some tips reached over 30,000 twitter users.

Volunteerism
Without a specific program or schedule, the faculty, staff, and students of UCA volunteer to help the members and organizations in our community. Services include holding offices or board positions in local organizations, participating in fundraising, organizing drives such as the Christmas Angel Bear Tree to help employee families, or simply providing needed labor for projects. Examples of these volunteer activities are included below.

- Each academic year, faculty serve the community as board members, discussion leaders, guest speakers, and volunteers. For each of the past three academic years, more than 500 public service activities have been reported by faculty benefitting over 700 organizations or initiatives. (See Faculty Service to External Organizations.)

- UCA's Athletic Department and its more than 300 student-athletes participated in 2,142 total hours of community service during the 2014-15 academic year. The projects ranged from Samaritan's Feet, a non-profit organization that helps outfit impoverished children locally and around the world with shoes, reading programs at local schools, tornado disaster relief efforts, hospital visitations, Operation Christmas Child and the Pine Street Backpack initiative.

- On April 27, 2014, the neighboring communities of Vilonia and Mayflower were hit by an EF4 tornado. From May 5-9, students, faculty, and staff traveled together to tornado hit areas to volunteer in a coordinated effort called Bear Boots on the Ground. The project continued every Friday through August 1. A total of 575 volunteers worked 15 days, accumulating 2,690 hours of service for Bear Boots on the Ground.

- UCA began participating in The Big Event, a nation-wide student-led community service project, in Spring 2014. This one day event supports the campus as well as the surrounding community by expressing gratitude through philanthropy and service. In 2015, 353 volunteers provided time and labor for improvement projects that benefited local nonprofits, faculty and

staff members' families, and UCA's campus.

- In 2014, the UCA Bear Essentials Food Pantry was established on campus to assist students, faculty, and staff. UCA is a member of the College and University Food Bank Alliance (CUFBA). CUFBA is a professional organization consisting of campus-based programs focused on alleviating food insecurity, hunger, and poverty among college and university students in the United States.

Respect for the public good
UCA seeks to improve, not just benefit from, the area we inhabit. Examples of programs and activities that are designed to care for our community and its resources are summarized in this category.

- UCA's Physical Plant maintains a recycling program and participates in the Recycling Mania program. In an average week when students are present, UCA recycles 6,605 pounds of materials per week. Their efforts were rewarded with a Keep America Beautiful Recycling Grant in partnership with Coca-Cola that was used to purchase 50 additional recycling containers for campus.

- In the 2013-2014 academic year, UCA Police officers participated in 79 community outreach programs that were attended by over 3,000 participants. Some of the topics included situational awareness, active shooter, self-defense, emergency procedures, alcohol use, drug awareness, "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes," and prescription drug take-back.

Public resources
The University is home to many physical resources that support academics, but are also available to the local community. Nonprofit organizations, primary and secondary schools, other universities, and individual community members are frequent visitors to UCA to use these facilities, some of which are highlighted below.

- In addition to bringing in world class entertainment and lecture series, Reynolds Performance Hall recently introduced *The Main Stage EdUCAtion Series* created for school districts that serve students in Kindergarten through 12th grade. Performances are entertaining and educational, integrating arts into the school curriculum. Educators will be provided with study guides/resources created for the performance that will assist with educational standards for the chosen field, ensuring a valuable out-of-the-classroom experience for students. The first performance, which integrated Literature, Music, Communication, Language Arts and Math, took place on November 17, 2015.

- Reynolds Performance Hall is available to organizations all over the state. Examples include the following:
    - District V ML Future Business Leaders of America Fall Leadership Conference; 750 Students, 50 Teachers
    - High School Honor Band Clinic; 450 students, 50 Teachers
    - District V Future Business Leaders of America Spring Leadership Conference; 1,200 students, 200 Teachers
    - Arkansas State Spelling Bee; 50 Students, 100 Adults
    - Family Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA); 2,000 students, 200 Teachers total for the 2 days
    - State Choral Festival; 4,400 students, 200 Teachers total for the 4 days

- The Jewel Moore Nature Reserve on the UCA campus includes 5 acres of tallgrass prairie and approximately 12.5 acres of woodland. The 17.5 acres of prairie and woodland represent the only remnants of the 2,500 acre prairie that once occupied land now overlain by the city of Conway. Biology Professor Jewel Moore began using the area as an outdoor classroom and study area in 1977, and in 1980, it was designated as the Jewel Moore Nature Reserve. A State Wildlife Grant is currently funding woodland restoration work by UCA students and faculty. The local community is welcome to walk the trails and learn about the biology of the reserve through information signs as well as faculty- and student-led nature walks.

- UCA's athletic facilities are used throughout the year for local and statewide events. The Arkansas Activities Association, the governing body of high school athletics in the state, hosts the annual Arkansas High School All-Star Games (football, basketball, volleyball, softball, soccer, baseball) at UCA in June of each year. The Bill Stephens Track/Soccer Complex hosts events such as the American Cancer Society Relay For Life, Amigo Cup soccer tournament, and the Women Can Run running clinic, among others. UCA also hosts Southland Conference championship events such as the SLC Volleyball Championships, SLC Baseball Tournament, and SLC Outdoor Track and Field Championships. Other tournaments and special events are held throughout the year at Bear Stadium (baseball), Farris Field (softball), First Security Field at Estes Stadium (football), the Farris Center (basketball), and the Indoor Practice Center.

- UCA's 60-seat planetarium simulates the sky visible to the naked-eye onto a 30-foot diameter dome. The facility, which is used for astronomy classes and laboratories, provided 70 free shows in 2014 for school field-trips and monthly public shows that were attended by over 3,000 individuals. A new digital planetarium is a part of the new Conway Corporation Center for Sciences.

- Arkansas Educational Television Network (AETN) is not a part of UCA, but the six-station statewide network has headquarters on the UCA campus and has been a partner for nearly fifty years. AETN's mission is to serve viewers with life-long learning opportunities that educate, enlighten, inform and entertain. More than 320,000 households watch AETN at least once a week. AETN in partnership with the Arkansas Department of Education has delivered over 1 million hours of professional development and is serving more than 35,000 educators in every county of the State.

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1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

Summary

Accomplishments/Strengths

(1) Through the new Office of Institutional Diversity, the new Diversity Advisory Committee, as well as the Office of Diversity and Community and the Office of University Training, there are continuous and focused efforts on diversity and inclusive excellence for students, staff, faculty, and UCA's external constituents. The campus is moving ahead to strengthen the implementation and operationalization of the "D" in AVID, even as it aspires to more comprehensively institutionalize diversity.

(2) The adoption of the university's Strategic Plan, its implementation through the efforts of the Strategic Planning Committee, and its annual review and establishment of strategic initiatives for the upcoming fiscal year and five year period, have placed increased and on-going emphasis on accomplishment of the strategic goals of the university.

(3) UCA's mission statement was developed through broad-based collaboration and consultation with constituency groups during the university's strategic planning efforts. The mission statement, the initial undertaking of the Strategic Planning and Resources Council, provided the foundation for development of the remainder of the strategic plan. As a result, academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profiles reflect the mission, vision, and values in the strategic plan. The mission, vision, and core values have been carried forward into the 2016 iteration of the strategic plan. The university has become highly mission-driven. The acronym AVID can be found on placards located throughout campus, as well as in the email signature line of a majority of university employees and at the bottom of every page on the university website.

(4) The University of Central Arkansas demonstrates its commitment to the public good through its mission and strategic planning, internal initiatives and resources, and outreach programs and activities developed to benefit our state and the region. In addition, UCA has maintained close and mutually beneficial connections with the extended community through scholarship and creative works.

Continuing Concerns

(1) Public resources available to the surrounding community are often housed within specific departmental or program websites. UCA should increase online visibility of our various outreach, educational, athletic, and performing and creative arts through a central platform.

(2) The University should develop and implement a consistent expectation that academic, support, and administrative departments integrate and communicate the fundamental tenets of the University mission statement, AVID.

(3) The University should further institutionalize the abbreviation AVID through ongoing efforts such as AVID week and new faculty and student orientation.

(4) Successful planning hinges on the availability of accurate, reliable, and useful data. The institution must continue to provide the necessary resources to improve and refine access and quality of data used in making decisions. The university always intends to be mission driven and data informed.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

2.A - Core Component 2.A

The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

Argument

2.A. The institution operates with integrity

The UCA the Board of Trustees has ultimate authority in governing the finances of the university. The Board of Trustees comprises seven members appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Arkansas Senate. Members serve seven-year terms, with one member's term expiring January 15 of each year.

Board Policy series 200 and 600 are instructive. Board Policy 200 states:

> The Board of Trustees is charged with the management and control of the University of Central Arkansas. The board shall provide a university program and establish general policies in keeping with the best interests of the university and the requirements of the state law. Members of the board shall have authority only when acting as a board legally in session. The board shall not be bound in any way by any statement or action on the part of any individual board member except when such statement or action is in pursuance of specific instructions of the board.

Of note in this policy is the emphasis that legality is not exhaustive of the Board's responsibility: beyond compliance with Arkansas state law, the Board is to operate with UCA's best interests in mind, which as a university dedicated to the values of vitality, integrity, and diversity assumes a strong focus on ethical behavior. These duties include the following:

1. To evaluate the reports of the president concerning the progress of the university program and finances.
2. To adopt or revise an annual university operating budget as recommended by the president.
3. To contract and be contracted with; to own, purchase, sell, and convey all types of property
4. To accept gifts.
5. To regulate matriculation and set tuition and other fees.
6. To exercise the power of eminent domain, subject to statutory limitations.
7. To issue negotiable interest-bearing notes or bonds, subject to statutory limitations.

Such duties bear with them great fiduciary responsibility to the faculty, staff, and students of UCA, as well as the surrounding community that is intimately tied to the life of UCA. Thus, ethical conduct,

verified through oversight, is paramount to discharging these responsibilities well.

Naturally, policies do not exist in a vacuum, so to ensure all functionaries of UCA operate ethically beyond the simple promulgation of policies and statements of value, UCA enforces these policies according to clearly articulated procedures.

Policy 201 requires that board members disclose any potential conflict of interest:

> Members of the board shall annually submit a statement to the secretary of the board on or before January 31 of each year, disclosing whether the trustee, his or her immediate family member, or any entity in which he or she holds any position of control or holds any ownership interest of 10% or greater, has entered into any contract with the university or whether an immediate family member of the trustee is employed by the university.

In addition, Board Policy 213 creates an Audit and Finance Committee to "aid and assist the university, the board, the Office of Internal Audit, and the Division of Finance and Administration." Finally, Board Policy 214 addresses fraud, maintaining that "Management is responsible for the prevention and detection of fraud, misappropriations, and other inappropriate conduct."

Policy Series 600 deals with specific areas of UCA's financial life, including, but not limited to: 600 - Investments and Collateralization; 601 - Expenditures - Official Functions; 605 - Travel Reimbursement; 606 - Acquisitions - Promotional Items; 607 - Board of Trustees - University Improvement Fund; 620 - Guidelines for Awarding Academic and Performance Scholarships; 621 - Fee Waiver - Military Personnel; 622 - Scholarships – Miscellaneous; 623 - Fee Waiver – Employees; 624 - Authorization to Open Bank Accounts and Execute Signature Cards; and multiple policies regarding myriad fees and the university.

However, the Board of Trustees is not alone in having a voice in how the university handles its funds. In addition to board policy, the faculty has a significant voice in how funds are allocated. The Strategic Planning and Resource Council (SPARC; see web site and defining document) is charged with coordinating efforts between the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC; charged with making recommendations concerning the implementation of the strategic plan initiatives) and the Strategic Budgeting Advisory Committee (SBAC; charged with making funding recommendations that support strategic plan initiatives and the mission of the university). SPARC has a diversified membership representing students and faculty and staff from all backgrounds and at all levels. SBAC is charged with:

1. Collaborating with the Strategic Planning Committee, as part of the Strategic Planning and Resource Council;
2. Reviewing changes and updates to the university budget in light of the strategic plan;
3. Making recommendations, in support of the university's mission and strategic plan, concerning new proposals from unit heads and salary requests from the Staff Senate Compensation Committee and the Faculty Salary Review Committee. Recommendations shall be for the next fiscal year, in addition to a five-year period;
4. Conducting studies and make inquiries related to university revenues, university expenditures, and the general allocation of university funds; and
5. Presenting concerns and recommendations to the president and the university campus as a whole.

SPARC has worked diligently to create an atmosphere of transparency and shared governance. In addition to the structure and policies listed above, SPARC distributes, annually, a shared governance

and communication survey campus wide, the purpose of which is to gauge the atmosphere on campus as it relates to the transparency of all levels of administration from departmental chairs up to the board of trustees. The results are also published on SPARC's website. The surveys for the past four years, from 2011-2012 to the present are currently available and demonstrate marked improvement in transparency across all academic and administrative units, as demonstrated in its annual reports.

Beyond shared governance, the university seeks to be as transparent as is prudent. In this respect, the Budget office provides, open to the public via its website, an annual budget book which outlines university expenditures for the past fiscal year, from athletics to faculty salaries. It also publicizes proposed expenditures and provides workshops on understanding the university budget, providing a much needed educational resource for those faculty and staff who want to be informed and become a constructive part of the financial discussions on campus. In compliance with Arkansas Code Ann. § 6-61-135, Open UCA provides a searchable database of unaudited expenditure data. This database is intended to provide transparency to the people of Arkansas.

Academic integrity is front and center at UCA. On the university's integrity webpage, one can familiarize oneself with the university's academic integrity policy. Board Policy 709 states in part:

> The mission of the University of Central Arkansas commits all members of the university community to acquiring, sharing, evaluating, and communicating knowledge. Such a commitment includes an expectation of academic integrity, an organizational and individual commitment to honesty and responsibility in teaching and learning. By their affiliation with the University of Central Arkansas, all members of the university community are committed to shared responsibility for maintaining the highest standards of academic integrity. Although this policy focuses on academic integrity in course-related work, its basis and context is the commitment made by the entire university community.

This policy also includes reporting procedures for academic misconduct as well as guidelines for punitive measures and links to information on academic misconduct and plagiarism.

In order to assure that our standards are maintained and that there is oversight, UCA also has an Academic Integrity and Discipline Committee charged

1. To hear cases of a serious nature involving student behavior;
2. To hear cases on appeal from the Student Judiciary Board, Greek Judiciary Board, or administrative hearing officer; and
3. To hear cases of academic misconduct and make recommendations jointly to the Provost and Vice President for Student Services.

However, integrity in academics is not simply about avoidance of misconduct; integrity in academics is also about exemplary programs, making sure that one's performance is up to the highest standards expected by our students and the community we serve. In this respect, UCA strives to maintain the highest level of accreditation for its programs (see Table of Specialized Accreditation.) The university is developing and implementing a culture of assessment aimed at continually improving student success. (See Continuous Improvement Process Form.)

In addition, in order to maintain the highest standards and ensure our students receive the best educational experience possible while at UCA, the university is diligently working to promote a culture of assessment. The assessment webpage provides procedures for developing and implementing Continuous Improvement (CI) process plans for every program on campus. Currently, most programs have submitted plans and most are fully implemented. Some are going through a

revision process overseen by the Academic Assessment Committee. In addition, we began assessing the UCA Core across all five areas (Communication, Critical Inquiry, Diversity, Responsible Living, and First Year Seminar) in Fall 2015. In addition, in the Fall of 2015, UCA began the process of hiring a full-time Director of Assessment to coordinate campus assessment activities, and give the process of assessment the dedication it warrants. While, at the time of this writing, this process is still on-going, we are confident that we will have a new Director of Assessment in place before the end of the Fall 2016 term. Filling this position will allow assessment across campus to be more coordinated, data more accessible, and interventions developed and implemented more readily than is currently possible given that assessment duties are dispersed throughout colleges and departments. Our approach to assessment demonstrates our commitment to student learning.

In personnel matters, procedures for hiring, promotion, tenure, termination, and grievance are outlined in detail, as relevant, in the Faculty Handbook, Student Handbook, and Staff Handbook located on the UCA website.

In addition, in order to guarantee that faculty, staff, and students are not simply protected from maltreatment and compliant with established policies and practices but also informed and well versed in those values that define UCA, training sessions are routinely provided.

It is the policy of the university that all employees—full time/part time faculty, staff, graduate assistants, and student workers—participate, on an annual basis (based on the academic year), in specified educational seminars. Vice presidents, deans, department chairs, and supervisors are responsible for coordinating the participation of their respective staffs. The four required seminars include

- EEO Laws & Discrimination Prevention for Higher Education (Harassment).
- Preventing Discrimination & Sexual Violence: Title IX, VAWA (Violence Against Women Act), and Clery Act.
- Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention.
- Diversity Benefits for Higher Education Employees.

All seminars are offered online on demand, and face-to-face sessions are scheduled several times each year on campus.

In addition, optional opportunities exist, including the following:

- Team Building Across Cultures
- Uncovering Implicit Bias
- Unlawful Harassment Prevention for Higher Education Faculty, Staff, Student Employees
- Unlawful Harassment Prevention Supervisor Supplement for Faculty, Staff
- FERPA for Higher Education
- Identity Theft Red Flags
- Security Basics
- Performance Evaluation
- LGBT Safe Zone

All of this information is readily available on the university training website.

Associate General Counsel and Compliance Officer, Kandi N. Hughes, and her training and use of Deputy Title IX coordinators is further evidence of our commitment to ethical and responsible behavior as well as our desire for shared decision making and transparency at UCA. (Title IX

resources are made available to the campus online. [Since this argument was written, Ms. Hughes has left the university. Dr. Graham Gillis is serving in the role of Title IX coordinator until a permanent replacement is found.])

Auxiliary functions at UCA include Athletics, Housing (including College Square), Food Service, Student Center, Radio Station, Bookstore, Student Health Services, Post Office, Access & Security (i.e., Police & Parking), HPER, Farris / Recreation Fields. These functions are overseen by the same policies and procedures that guide practices and units across campus and so are held to the same standards and provided with the same level of oversight. Most telling is UCA Athletics' commitment to openness and maintaining the highest standards of the NCAA regulations, and UCA. (See UCA Athletics Annual Report.)

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2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

Argument

2.B. The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public

UCA strives to present itself clearly to the public and make all relevant information accessible, maintaining a comprehensive website with easy navigation and quick access to all information required by the students, staff, faculty, and public at large. Transparency is of crucial importance in creating trust. UCA aims for maximal transparency in its relationship with students, staff, faculty, and public at large.

All programs are presented, as required, in the undergraduate and graduate bulletins (see also the Academic Bulletins landing site). The bulletins contain all policy information as it relates to undergraduate and graduate programs, from general policies and information to fields of instruction and courses. In addition, on the UCA website previous iterations of the bulletins are archived for ease of access for past or returning students, as well as those who may wish to compare past requirements and policies with their current iterations. The UCA website provides multiple access points to this information, from its homepage and Academics tab to the A-to-Z search, making locating this material simple and intuitive. In addition, most departmental homepages provide full lists of courses, requirements, and (often) links to the UCA Core and bulletin. The UCA Core itself maintains a website with links to core requirements, and the Undergraduate Bulletin. Thus from multiple entry points anyone can easily locate and access essential information regarding a program of study. Individual programs also provide other useful data relevant to their respective students, from certification pass rates to job placement information.

Beyond electronic communication, each program offers brochures (trifolds) that include major and minor requirements, course offerings, and other information relevant to students interested in the particular program.

In addition, there are many peripheral programs—a majors fair, for example, undergraduate research days, and symposia—where students have opportunities to learn about the many programs at UCA. The Academic Advising Center (AAC) is also readily available both in its physical location and its internet presence. The AAC collaborates with the Office of the Provost to provide Academic Maps to ensure that students know the recommended pathway to completion as required by good practice (and state law). Many of these plans can form a contract with a student guaranteeing them a degree in four years as long as they do not veer from the plan as outlined in the Academic Map. The Academic Maps are updated annually and are all available online.

With respect to communicating clearly to faculty and staff, the primary documents are the faculty and staff handbooks. However, this does not exhaust the university's communication with faculty and staff. The administration at UCA has sought to improve communication both laterally within colleges

and departments and vertically from faculty and staff up to academic affairs and the office of the president. Yearly surveys are distributed to provide feedback on the flow of information across campus, and administration has been responsive to survey findings.

With respect to openness with the public regarding faculty and staff, both the faculty and staff senate maintain websites. (See Faculty Senate and Staff Senate websites.) On these sites, one can access both agendas and minutes. In addition, one can see the constitution of various committees and sub-committees, some with their own websites including meeting times and places, as well as agendas and minutes. In addition, on each departmental website the credentials of faculty are listed, often with full curricula vitae posted, as well as contact information, both email and office phone numbers, and campus address. Additionally, the university publishes a complete directory of full-time faculty on the Institutional Research webpage under Digital Measures-Instructional Personnel Directory.

Finally, the annual operating budget book is released publicly and includes all faculty and staff appointments and salaries.

The public is, thus, able to access all relevant data pertaining to programs, their accreditation status, and the credentials and even salaries of the faculty and the staff. Providing this information helps to establish a relationship of trust between UCA and the surrounding community.

It is crucial that the university represent itself clearly to students in regard to expense. Thus, UCA strives to be as transparent as is possible about tuition and fees. The Office of Student Financial Aid provides a Net Price Calculator, which is linked as well from the Admissions page and from the Admissions dropdown on the university's home page. The calculator takes into account residency, housing, additional fees pertaining to course of study, and other relevant factors. This same resource page allows a student to calculate estimated financial aid and locate staff with whom to speak regarding financial aid or scholarships.

With respect to control, Board Policy series 200 outlines both university policies and practices as it relates to finances, as noted in section 2A above, but reiterated here as well: Board Policy Series 200 covers 200—Organization and Duties of Board of Trustees; 201—Standards of Conduct and Conflict of Interest; 202—President Search Process; 209—President's Residence Advisory Committee; 211—Reimbursement of Expenses for Official Board of Trustees Duties; 212—Requests to Address the Board of Trustees; 213—Audit and Finance Committee; 214—Fraud.

And, although the results of an internal audit are not necessarily made public, the Office of Internal Audit conducts yearly audits and reports to the Board of Trustees as provided in Board Policy 213.The internal audit website contains information regarding the audit procedures as well as a hotline one may contact if fraud is suspected. Audited financial reports can also be located on the website of the Arkansas Legislative Audit. Finally, the role of SPARC, noted above, as well as its relationship to SPC and SBAC guarantees that there is transparency in fiscal and planning measures at UCA, with representation from across campus.

UCA is fully open regarding its accreditation and accreditors, as noted above in section 2A. In addition, individual accredited programs disclose specific information regarding pass rates, placement, and so forth. By way of example, note Occupational Therapy graduate outcomes and exam pass rates.

Providing this level of information is not merely about public relations and good marketing, but also instills a sense of trust between UCA and its programs, its current and future students, and the public, illustrating that we have demonstrative evidence predictive of the students' future success.

In all aspects, UCA seeks both transparency as well as ease of accessibility in terms of how it communicates with its communities.

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2.C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.
4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

Argument

2.C.1 The governing board's deliberation reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution

Several documents stand as testimony to the vision the Board of Trustees have for the future of UCA. First, consider the Framework for the Future. On November 20, 2013, President Tom Courtway detailed the plan in remarks at his formal investiture as president of the university.

> The plan will leverage the university's strengths, allow it to best meet evolving student expectations, and address infrastructure needs on the Conway campus.

> The strategy, titled, Framework for the Future – A Blueprint for National Leadership and Regional Prominence, is organized around three primary goals:

>> 1. Become one of the top regional universities in the South.

>> 2. Create a campus that attracts and retains the best students, faculty, and staff.

>> 3. Maximize external relations effectiveness.

Part and parcel with the Framework is the Strategic Plan (2011). In this plan, which has recently undergone assessment and revision by the Strategic Planning Task Force, the university has outlined its strategies for achieving its long range goals. (For the Strategic Plan [2016], see also Criterion 5.C.3 and 5.S. See May 2016 meeting minutes of Board of Trustees for adoption of the 2016 Strategic Plan.)

2.C.2 The governing board considers the institution's internal and external constituencies during decision-making deliberations

The minutes of the Board of Trustees showcase myriad instances where the Board took direct action or instituted policies that reflect the Board's commitment to UCA's mission and shared values, a commitment to academic vitality, integrity, and diversity. A few examples may suffice: In May of

2014, the Board adopted revisions to Policy 709 on Academic Integrity (first adopted in February 2010 and revised in 2013 and 2014). In August of 2013 the Board revised its Free Speech Policy 406, Policy 418 on the protection of minors, and Policy 525 on Diversity and the Diversity Advisory Committee. In May of 2014, in a significant move, the Board approved revised language for the university's non-discrimination policy that added as protected classes sexual orientation, familial status, political beliefs, genetic information, and military status (Board Policy 502). These groups had not previously been recognized in the university's non-discrimination policy, and adding them was a significant step in acknowledging, respecting, and embracing diversity at UCA. In August of 2014, the Board adopted revisions to Policy 511, the Sexual Misconduct Policy. In all of these examples, we witness the Board adopting, revising, and/or implementing policies that strengthen academics on campus; support a vital, engaged faculty; maintain clear oversight of financial as well as other aspects of university governance and conduct; and support and promote diversity at UCA.

In all deliberations, the Board of Trustees is governed by Policy 212, which affords people the right to address the board. The policy outlines the procedure for how to apply to address the board. Of note is the fact that the Student Government Association, the Faculty Senate, and the Staff Senate are regularly present and address the Board on all relevant matters. For instances of these interactions one may note Creation and adoption of Employee Benefits Program Policy, 12/2012 (Policy 526); Creation and adoption of Children in the Workplace Policy, 05/2012 (Policy 518); Approval and adoption of revised Drug-free Workplace Policy, 08/2014 (Policy 505). In terms of finances and allocation of resources, as noted above, SPARC has a strong advisory role.

2.C.3 The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence

Again, as reflected above, Board Policy Series 200 speaks to conflicts of interest and fraud. These policies together secure the independence of the Board by ensuring that all potential conflicts are made public and that Board members are not in a position to benefit, and thus intentionally or unintentionally be influenced in their decision making, by monetary considerations which may at times be at odds with what is best for the university. Board members serve by appointment of the governor, and thus another layer of oversight is provided since they are beholden to an external authority.

2.C.4 The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution

For detailed illustration of how duties are delegated across the university, one may see the organizational chart. In addition, the Faculty Handbook clearly elucidates roles and responsibilities across the university.

Sources

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2.D - Core Component 2.D

The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

Argument

2.D. The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth

UCA's Board Policy 406 on Free Speech clearly proclaims the university's commitment to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth. The policy states in part:

> The University of Central Arkansas believes in academic freedom and free speech.

> The University believes that the right of expression is as necessary as the right of inquiry and both must be preserved as essential to the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge and truth.

> The area adjacent to the southwest corner of Ferguson Chapel, not to exceed 50 feet in any direction, is hereby designated as a limited public forum. On a first-come, first-served basis, individuals or organizations may utilize this designated forum for free speech purposes, without registration, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

In addition, the UCA Faculty Handbook supports the same ideals through assurances such as the following:

- Chapter 1: Core values (based on UCA's strategic plan)

    We are committed to the free pursuit of knowledge and continuous growth in learning and teaching. (p. 2)

    Our commitment extends to all levels of our campus to foster a climate of ethical conduct, respect, responsibility, and trust. (p. 3)

- Chapter 3: Guiding principles

    The common good depends upon the uninhibited search for truth and its exposition. (p. 11)

    ▪ … the teacher should be free from institutional censorship or discipline…. (p. 11)

    ▪ Academic freedom is essential to free inquiry and applies to both teaching and research. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. The teaching aspect of academic freedom is fundamental to freedom in learning. (p. 11)

    ▪ A faculty member is entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing *the subject material of the course*…. (p. 11)

▪ Freedom and reasonable economic security are indispensable to the success of an institution in fulfilling its obligations to its students and society. (p. 12)

- Chapter 7, I.A: Academic Freedom Committee (p. 73)

The UCA Student Handbook provides similar assurances, including reference to the Free Speech policy. The relevant passage reads: "The University of Central Arkansas is totally committed to academic freedom and free speech. The purpose of this regulation is to provide fair and reasonable regulations and guidelines regarding the rights of the individual assembly and free speech while maintaining order and access to the campus of the University of Central Arkansas."

Sources

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2.E - Core Component 2.E

The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, students and staff.

1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.
2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.
3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Argument

2.E.1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure integrity

Integrity in research and scholarship means maintaining strict control over copyright and being diligent against all forms of academic dishonesty, including but not limited to plagiarism. UCA has been consistent in maintaining a culture that promotes integrity in research and scholarship as well as monitoring efforts by faculty, staff, and students to guarantee that all members of the UCA community are acting ethically. In order to educate our campus community and other interested parties about UCA's expectations for integrity and ethical behavior, these expectations are communicated through Board policies, the Student Handbook, the Faculty Handbook, and the UCA Sponsored Programs website.

For example, UCA's Board Policy 709 on Academic Integrity states: "The mission of the University of Central Arkansas commits all members of the University community to acquiring, sharing, evaluating, and communicating knowledge. Such a commitment includes an expectation of academic integrity, an organization and individual commitment to honesty and responsibility in teaching and learning...Violation of the expectation of academic integrity is considered to be academic misconduct." Further, it defines cheating, plagiarism, and fabrication, and it outlines potential consequences for such offenses.

2.E.2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information sources

A statement of the policy is also expected in every course syllabus. (See course syllabus requirements.) In addition, the Divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Services collaborate in publishing information about academic integrity and misconduct, with explanations and examples intended to help students make informed decisions about how they conduct themselves in their academic work, including the use and presentation of information. Consistent with all of this, students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources, and the institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Students are made aware of all policies regarding academic dishonesty through the UCA Student

Handbook. However, students aren't alone in needing to be reminded about academic dishonesty; all members of the UCA community are held to the highest standards. Thus, the UCA Faculty Handbook outlines faculty responsibilities as they relate to academic dishonesty. So, for example, in dealing with academic dishonesty and classroom misconduct, the handbook states: "Faculty should inform students of the penalties for academic dishonesty and classroom misconduct at the beginning of each term. The University regards all acts of academic dishonesty as deserving severe punishment. Punishment for such acts may include receiving a failing grade … and/or being dismissed from the University" (Ch. 4, §VI).

With specific reference to research, scholarship, and all forms of creative activity, the handbook states in part: "When professional misconduct is suspected in the context of these activities, it will be investigated through procedures specified in the university's Policy for Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct." But important in maintaining integrity in this process is making sure that there is a clear grievance procedure not only to ensure prosecution and disciplinary measures if needed, but also to protect faculty and promote the integrity of the process. Thus, in chapter 7 of the handbook, the creation and functioning of the faculty grievance panel is outlined.

Further information includes resources located in the Sponsored Programs website, including the **Policy** for Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct, which states in part: "It is the goal of the University of Central Arkansas to maintain an atmosphere of honesty and trust in which the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge can occur. Integrity in research and scholarship is a fundamental value upon which the University is founded." The policy continues: "A responsibility of the University of Central Arkansas is to establish and enforce policies and procedures that deal effectively and expeditiously with allegations or evidence of research misconduct…." And, again, in order to maintain integrity in the process there need to be safeguards in place, and so we find **Procedures** for Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct which states in part: "These procedures are intended to guide institutional officials responsible for assessing allegations, conducting inquiries and investigations, and reporting the results to the appropriate agencies." Finally, another resource in place to guarantee the highest standards of research and scholarship at UCA is the Office of Research Compliance, whose website includes key committee memberships (IRB and IACUC), training, application forms, and templates for consent, assent, and permission.

2.E.3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity

In general, the university promotes integrity through various policies including, but not limited to, Board Policy 409 – Copyright Ownership: Electronic Distance Learning ; Board Policy 410 – Intellectual Property and Technology Transfer; as well as instruments and information created by academic affairs, including Academic Integrity Violation Form; Everything you need to know about plagiarism, Examples of Academic Misconduct. Finally one can locate the following codes of ethics on the UCA website: ADE Rules Governing the Code of Ethics for Arkansas Educators and UCA Professional and Ethical Conduct Policy.

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2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Summary

Accomplishments/Strengths

(1) The University of Central Arkansas (UCA) strives to live according to its shared values, presented in its mission as a commitment to Academic Vitality, Integrity, and Diversity (AVID). In addition, faculty, staff, and students are well versed in university policy and relevant law by means of university training seminars both on campus and online, as well as through relevant documentation available in both physical and digital formats.

(2) The Board of Trustees communicates university policies through its regular, public meetings and up-to-date website and demonstrates its commitment to UCA's shared values through its continued revision of UCA policy as well as its enforcement and oversight of all relevant functionaries on campus.

(3) The Strategic Planning and Resource Council (SPARC) has worked diligently to create an atmosphere of transparency and shared governance.

(4) All the evidence presented above documents both UCA's progress as well as its continued commitment to integrity in all facets of its organizational structures, personnel, and practices.

Continuing Concerns

The university must continue in its efforts to create an atmosphere of transparency and shared governance across all academic and administrative units.

Sources

There are no sources.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

3.A - Core Component 3.A

The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.
3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

Argument

3.A.1. Courses and programs are current and require appropriate levels of performance

The university continually strives to ensure that courses and programs are current. Many of the university's professional programs are accredited by specialized agencies and organizations recognized by the US Department of Education, and regular review of such programs is governed by the standards, practices, processes, and timelines of their accreditors. See the list of accredited programs and accrediting bodies. Academic programs that are not accredited by appropriate professional organizations are reviewed by external evaluators on a ten-year cycle, with regular internal monitoring between external reviews as reported in the home departments' annual reports.

Program reviews for existing academic programs—whether accredited or non-accredited—examine appropriate inputs, outputs, and outcomes with the intent of assuring the university, its students, and the public of healthy, sustainable, and academically vital programs of study. This effort includes an internal process (managed by the university and its academic programs) and an external process (with required reporting to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education and various accrediting agencies). UCA's Existing Academic Program Review processes comply with Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) Policy 5.12. See Criterion 4 for more specific information on the EAPR (Existing Academic Program Review) process.

For accredited degree programs, required levels of performance, primarily in the form of student learning outcomes, are generally defined by the accrediting organization. For non-accredited degree programs, the required student learning and performance outcomes are defined by departmental faculty, departmental chairs, and/or program directors. Program review and the assurance of appropriate levels of student learning and performance are closely connected. The university's Academic Assessment Committee oversees a comprehensive review of assessment plans

for all degree programs. Such program assessment plans are reviewed by members of an academic department or program, and any proposed revisions are submitted for review and approval by departmental faculty, departmental chairs, and/or program directors. Typically, revisions focus on aligning curriculum content with current best practices within an academic field or on process-based improvements.

3.A.2. The institution articulates learning goals for all programs

The University of Central Arkansas currently offers a total of 150 degrees and certificates, including certificates of proficiency, technical certificates, associate degrees, bachelor's degrees, graduate (post-baccalaureate) certificates, master's degrees, post-master's certificates, specialist degrees, doctoral research degrees in research, and doctoral professional practice degrees. The requirements for each of those degree programs are articulated in the undergraduate and graduate bulletins. The Graduate Student Learning Outcomes are articulated in the graduate bulletin. Additionally, each degree-granting program identifies specific student learning goals for respective degrees in their Continuous Improvement (CI) process plans, as part of the institution's assessment process. CI process plan documentation is submitted and reviewed annually.

The University's general education program (UCA Core) identifies four specific skill areas—Diversity (D), Critical Inquiry (I), Communication (C), and Responsible Living (R)—that are introduced in lower-division general education courses and again addressed in specified upper-division courses. The UCA Core is designed to help students develop the knowledge and skills necessary for critical inquiry, effective communication, and responsible living in a diverse and changing world. Learning outcomes are identified for each skill area and assessed annually, at both the lower- and upper-division levels. (See UCA Core for the program's mission, goals, and outcomes.)

3.A.3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all delivery modes

The University of Central Arkansas delivers courses across diverse modalities using the same instructors used in conventional classroom settings, and the institution uses the same blend of faculty ranks across most modalities. (The primary exception is for instructors in high school-based concurrent enrollment courses, for which see Criterion 3.C.2.) Thus, in essence, across delivery format all courses are essentially identical apart from the incidental necessities arising from delivery methods.

In accordance with standards of HLC and other accreditors, the same course-level assessments are applied to each course across modalities.

Sources

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3.B - Core Component 3.B

The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.
2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.
4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.
5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

Argument

3.B.1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels

In summer 2012, UCA established a General Education Task Force, and the provost charged its members (faculty members from each college) with re-evaluating the university's general education program and designing an updated program—renamed the UCA Core—built explicitly on the university's mission of academic vitality, integrity, and diversity. The task force considered two fundamental questions as part of their work:

1. What are the skills, competency areas, and attitudes that UCA seeks to develop in every graduate of the university?
2. How can we effectively and sustainably assess those skills, competency areas, and attitudes?

The Task Force began by considering UCA's 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 its 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.

Closely allied to the UCA mission statement is the mission of the UCA Core, which is "to help students develop the knowledge and skills necessary for critical inquiry, effective communication, and

responsible living in a diverse and changing world."

3.B.2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements

The UCA Core is designed to enable students to develop their knowledge and skills over time, not as a set of boxes to check but as a progressive and cohesive experience in which students are engaged in critical inquiry, effective communication, responsible living, and diversity in lower-division courses and then presented with opportunities to refine and apply their skills in upper-division courses. Through the establishment, implementation, and continual assessment of the UCA Core, UCA aims "to develop curious, knowledgeable, articulate, and ethical people who are prepared for greater success in future learning and who are willing and able to make effective contributions to their communities."

The lower-division UCA Core requires 38 semester credit hours, divided among four key areas considered "pillars" of the UCA Core—critical inquiry (20 hours), communication (9 hours), diversity (6 hours), and responsible living (3 hours). (See Lower-Division Check Sheet. See also the Undergraduate Bulletin description of the UCA Core program.) These areas are consciously grounded in the UCA mission statement. During the first year, students must enroll in a first-year seminar course in one of these areas. In addition to the lower-division requirements, UCA students must earn at least three hours of credit in each of those areas at the junior or senior level, and they must also complete a capstone experience at the senior level that incorporates communication and critical inquiry. These upper-division courses can be taken within the student's major, minor, or among designated electives. (See Upper-Division Check Sheet.) The Undergraduate Bulletin designates which upper-division courses in each department satisfy the critical inquiry, responsible living, diversity, and communication requirements. Instructors of lower-division courses began conducting assessment for the UCA Core in fall 2015. Departmental UCA Core liaisons have participated in UCA Core assessment training to facilitate this process and ensure a shared understanding of the assessment rubrics and the purpose of assessment.

Specific learning outcomes in the area of **critical inquiry** include defining and communicating a problem or question, proposing hypotheses, identifying methodologies to test hypotheses, and evaluating results. Learning outcomes in the area of **communication** include developing a compelling central message, devising a clear and consistent organizational pattern, employing timely and relevant supporting material, demonstrating an understanding of context and audience, and controlling syntax and mechanics in written and oral communications. Learning outcomes in the area of **diversity** include demonstrating an understanding of the elements of a worldview, identifying cultural rules and biases, demonstrating empathy, showing respect for cultural diversity, asking complex questions about one's own and other cultures, and applying diverse perspectives to complex subjects. Learning objectives within the area of **responsible living** include demonstrating an ability to connect decisions with consequences, applying ethical theories or concepts in the analysis of problems, and demonstrating awareness of core beliefs that influence ethical decision making.

3.B.3. Every degree program engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; mastering modes of inquiry; and developing skills

Because UCA is committed to the development of the whole student, the UCA Core is structured to provide opportunities for students to build skills in critical inquiry and effective communication,

while enriching their appreciation of the value of diversity and engaging them in explicit considerations of responsible living. The UCA Core extends throughout each student's program of study, including not only lower-division courses, but also upper-division courses in the majors.

Every UCA student will also encounter these emphases—on critical inquiry, effective communication, responsible living, and diversity—in his or her degree program. Each degree program at UCA incorporates opportunities for students to develop and hone their skills in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information and mastering modes of inquiry and creative work. Although the context in which students are asked to put these skills to work varies from one degree program to the next, UCA seeks to equip all graduates with a set of analytical and communication skills that will be transferable, adaptable, and versatile in new situations and changing environments. Moreover, students learn to seek out ways to put their inquiry, analysis, and communication skills to work in solving timely, real-world problems and discovering answers that inform sound decision-making. See examples of critical thinking through student research, labs, etc.

3.B.4. The education offered recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world

The curriculum at UCA prepares students for the diversity of the world in several ways. Under the revised UCA Core, all undergraduate students must complete at least nine hours of coursework in a designated Diversity competency (6 hours in lower-division, 3 hours in upper-division courses). These courses come from a wide range of fields; 36 different programs on campus offer courses in the Diversity competency, coming from all six academic colleges plus the honors college.

Further understanding of our diverse world can come from off-campus experiences, such as study abroad, service-learning programs, and internships. UCA currently offers study abroad experiences in 13 different countries on four continents. (See Study Abroad Courses.) Through service-learning courses, students are also able to come in contact with other individuals and organizations in their own community. In the 2014-2015 academic year, 51 different Service Learning courses were offered at UCA (see Service Learning Courses). These courses partnered with 49 different community organizations to help students connect their classroom experiences with efforts to improve the world around them. In an effort to enhance and expand the service-learning program on campus, a coordinator of the Service-Learning Program has been hired and is located in the Division of Outreach and Community Engagement. (See Service Learning website.) Students also have the opportunity to engage in internships with a wide variety of businesses, government agencies, elected officials, and non-profit organizations. Departments with internship programs document the number of interns each academic year and the placement of interns. See Student Internships for 2015-2016 internships by department and Internship Placements for data on non-profit internships.

3.B.5. Faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge

Faculty at UCA were awarded 411, 467, and 502 research grants and contracts in 2012, 2013 and 2014 respectively. They have been responsible for over 1200 formal academic and professional presentations in each of the last three years. Faculty submissions for publication were also accepted and published 782 times in 2012, 818 times in 2013, and 799 times in 2014. The great majority of publications were academic in nature.

Additionally, students are engaged and contribute actively to their academic disciplines including participating in college-sponsored research symposia; regional, national, and international academic and professional conferences; and publishing research in recognized peer reviewed journals. (See Student Research Forums for examples of student research symposia and the CLA Student Journal.)

It is important to note that UCA currently has five academic learning communities (EDGE, EPIC, HPaW, STEM, STARS), the collective mission of which is dedicated to students' "academic growth," and to encourage "an environment of intellectual risk." Learning communities are in keeping with the institution's mission core values, which state, "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." In these residential colleges (RCs), some classrooms and other learning facilities are located within the residence halls, and members of each RC learn and live together. For mention of the enhanced student success associated with participation in the RCs, see Criterion 1.A.

- EDGE Residential College in Hughes Hall is a living and learning community focused on the themes of active global learning, civic engagement and service learning, and meaningful study abroad. This is the place where a student can make a difference.
- EPIC Residential College includes students from the College of Business, the College of Natural Sciences & Mathematics, and the College of Fine Arts & Communication. Together, these academic colleges have built an innovative living and learning community that focuses on Entrepreneurship, Public Scholarship, Innovation, and Community Engagement. It also teaches students how to work in the real world.
- HPaW Residential College (HPaW is short for Health Promotion and Wellness), serves as a unique learning and community for students, allowing them to work more closely together towards their futures in health professions and behavioral sciences.
- The STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Residential College provides opportunities for starting undergraduate research in cellular or molecular biology, acoustics, aquatic ecology, and other disciplines.
- STARS Residential College in Short/Denney Hall was established for students who are interested in "Living the Arts." Courses and academic programs in STARS are designed to help students express themselves through different forms of art. Highlights of curricular and co-curricular programs in The Stars include the UCA Public Appearances, cultural and educational trips to Memphis and Dallas, live music performances, poetry and theatre performances, art exhibitions in the classroom and lobby, AfterWords (a first-year writing competition), and much more.

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3.C - Core Component 3.C

The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.
2. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.
3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

Argument

3.C.1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty

With a student to faculty ratio of 17 to 1, UCA has a sufficient number and continuity of faculty members, both full-time and part-time, needed to carry out instructional and other duties. For 2015, there were 547 full-time faculty including 90 professors, 140 associate professors, 122 assistant professors, 67 instructors, 76 lecturers, and 52 no rank/visiting faculty. For that same year, there were 188 part-time faculty. (See Faculty Rank for data from 2010-2015.) From 2014 to 2015, the turnover rate was 5.8% for tenured/tenure track and non-tenure-track faculty. For additional information on faculty turnover and faculty headcount over time see the Employee Profile.

As stated in the Faculty Handbook, "The faculty has primary responsibility for advice and recommendation in such fundamental areas as curriculum, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process" (Ch. 3, §I.B).

Specific faculty responsibilities for oversight of curriculum and student performance are outlined in the Faculty Handbook under sections identifying expectations for shared governance, as well as the membership structures and duties of the Academic Assessment Committee, the Undergraduate Council, the Graduate Council, the UCA Core Council, and the Professional Education Council. As part of the curriculum process, each college and department maintains a standing Curriculum Committee, as outlined in the Curriculum Development Process Guide, and curriculum changes and additions are made accordingly through these bodies. Finally, in departments offering heavily enrolled courses, such as College Algebra (MATH 1390), UCA Core biology courses (BIOL 1400, 1401, 1402), the most common UCA Core writing sequence (WRTG 1310, 1320), and University Studies (UNIV 1100), a faculty member is often designated to oversee the course, ensuring instructional

continuity and the establishment of shared learning objectives and assessment measures.

Instructional expectations for students are set forth in the institutionally required syllabi. As published by the Office of the Provost, all faculty are expected to include the following elements, among others, in syllabi:

- instructor contact information
- course description and objectives
- grading policies
- attendance policy
- required and elective course material
- assignments and schedule
- university statements on disabilities and access, academic integrity, building emergency plans, and Title IX disclosures

(See Syllabus Requirements.) Learning objectives and goals for courses offered as part of the UCA Core are also outlined in the Undergraduate Bulletin and through the assessment rubrics developed for each UCA Core area. The program includes the First-Year Seminars, lower- and upper-division UCA Core courses, and a Capstone requirement for all students, each with explicitly stated learning goals and an extensive assessment process conducted annually by faculty teaching the courses and at the departmental level.

All full-time continuing faculty appointments, whether tenured, tenure-track, or non-tenure track, carry expectations in the areas of teaching; research, scholarship, and creative activity; and service. Requirements for academic credential attainment for each rank are outlined in The Faculty Handbook, and the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) offers a series of programming annually that is designed to assist faculty in continuing their own learning and improving their teaching effectiveness. (See an overview of CTE programs and services and the latest CTE Annual Report.)

3.C.2. All instructors are appropriately qualified

The University has clearly established academic credentials for instructional staff that are detailed in The Faculty Handbook, Ch. 3, §IV, "Faculty Rank." Tenure-track or tenured faculty must hold a terminal degree from an accredited institution in an appropriate field; library faculty (tenure-track or non-tenure-track) must hold an appropriate credential from an ALA-accredited program plus specified additional educational credentials. Non-tenure-track faculty, including adjunct faculty, must hold a minimum of a master's degree in an appropriate discipline or equivalent training, as well as current certifications and appropriate credentials (where required), and evidence of (or potential of) mastery of skill and content knowledge in the area(s) of assigned faculty responsibilities. Official academic transcripts must be submitted as part of the hiring process.

Faculty teaching high-school-based concurrent credit (dual enrollment) courses are required to meet the same minimum requirements as faculty employed by the university. The instructor must hold at minimum a master's degree and at least eighteen (18) hours of completed course work in the subject area of the endorsed concurrent enrollment course and may be required to meet additional requirements as stipulated by the department offering the course. Any new appointment in this inscription capacity requires that academic transcripts be submitted for review by the university department as part of the appointment process.

Instructors in consortial and contractual partnership programs (including Radiologic Technology,

Medical Technology, and Nuclear Medicine Technology) are not salaried as University of Central Arkansas faculty members; all such clinical programs, however, are accredited professional programs, and it is expected that faculty meet discipline standards for clinical instructors. Programs such as Radiologic Technology may grant Courtesy Appointments (as adjunct faculty members) to Medical Directors and Program Directors of Affiliate institutions as arranged by contractual agreement. See Radiologic Technology affiliation agreement as an example.

The university also has established practices and approval processes for hiring faculty who do not meet general qualifications within specific programs. See Faculty Qualifications: "Tested Experience" and Other Criteria for these established practices used in the College of Business, College of Education, and College of Health and Behavioral Sciences.

3.C.3. All instructors are evaluated regularly

As specified in the UCA Faculty Handbook, faculty members are evaluated annually by their department chair (see Ch. 3, §VI.A.1, and Ch. 4, §I). Each faculty member submits, in Digital Measures, information relative to his or her teaching, service, and research accomplishments for the previous year. In addition, the faculty member completes a self-evaluation and formulates goals for the upcoming year. Faculty meet annually with the department chair to discuss individual progress.

All UCA courses are evaluated by students each semester (see Faculty Handbook, Ch. 4, §VII). Students use the online system SmartEvals, beginning the 13th week of a regular semester. Faculty are strongly encouraged to include information about student evaluations in their course syllabi. The Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) Committee in 2013 revised the set of questions used for course evaluations.

See also an example of the Faculty Performance Review submitted to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education each June.

3.C.4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines

Documenting professional development activities is one component of the annual evaluation and planning processes of faculty. A recent (August 2016) summary of data from Digital Measures regarding professional development indicated that UCA faculty had participated in a wide range of activities (e.g., conferences, continuing education, seminars, tutorials, courses, etc.). Conferences, workshops, and seminars were the top three activities attended by faculty over the past three academic years. Such activities help faculty stay current in their fields and improve teaching. (See Faculty Professional Development Activities for detailed counts from 2012-2015.)

Academic departments and the library have annual budgets for professional travel. At the beginning of each academic year, decisions at the departmental level determine how this money may best be used to support the professional activities of faculty. In addition, each year the university budgets funds to support faculty research, scholarship, and creative activities. These funds are awarded in accordance with University Research Council guidelines.

The university supports a sabbatical leave program for tenured faculty members who have at least six years of service with the university. Sabbatical leaves are for one semester at full stipend or one

academic year at half stipend. In the case of faculty members on twelve-month appointments, a summer leave may be granted at full stipend. The number of sabbaticals available will be limited by the funds available. Additional leaves may be applied for after each six-year period of service.

The Center for Teaching Excellence serves as a campus-wide resource designed to assist faculty in their continued improvement of teaching and learning through a variety of events, services, and resources, which are offered throughout the year. Instructional improvement grants are administered by the CTE upon review of the Faculty Development Committee. Faculty projects may also be funded through grants awarded by the UCA Foundation.

Beginning in FY 2016–17, $200,000 in annual faculty development funding has been added to the base budget in Academic Affairs. These funds are allocated to academic units based on the numbers of full-time, continuing faculty in those areas.

3.C.5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry

Faculty members are expected to keep regular office hours. These are determined in consultation with the department chair and are posted in various venues—the course management system, office door, etc.—and a required component of any UCA course syllabus includes the instructor's office hours and contact information.

Feedback about faculty accessibility is sought. One item of the university course evaluation form asks students to rate the extent to which individual faculty provided the opportunity for individual assistance.

3.C.6. Support services staff are appropriately qualified

At UCA, every staff position has a specific job description listing duties and qualifications for the respective position. Qualifications include education and experience and vary widely depending on the position and experience required.

All UCA staff members have the opportunity to participate in Professional Development programming through UCA's Training office. Examples of seminars include "Understanding and serving the International Student population," "the Use of Technology in Communicating with Students," and "LGBT Safe Zone training." Each year, all employees of the University, full-time and part-time faculty, staff, student worker and graduate assistants need to complete some mandatory training, including Preventing Discrimination and Sexual Violence (Title IX, VAWA, Clery Act), Child abuse awareness, EEO Laws and Discrimination (Harassment), and Diversity Benefits for Higher Education Employees. See Educational Seminars for programming.

Offices on campus providing student support services make available additional opportunities for professional development and growth. For example, peer tutors working in the Tutoring Services Center have mandatory training prior to the beginning of each fall semester where they review policies and procedures and participate in mock tutoring sessions. Tutors who complete 10 hours of required training sessions and 25 hours of tutoring with an evaluation are deemed CRLA-ITTPC Classification Level 1 certified. (See Tutor Policies and Procedures.) In addition to tutor-specific training, all tutors must complete the mandatory university training that all staff members must participate in (as listed above).

The Writing Center is staffed primarily with undergraduate students who have been recommended by a UCA instructor. They must complete an online application, including a portfolio of their written work and responses to a sample paper and a sample oral presentation. Candidates are then interviewed by the director and assistant director. If approved, students must enroll in WRTG 3315 Writing Center Practicum, a semester-long, three-credit-hour course. Currently, successful completion of the course requires a minimum class attendance of 28 hours, completion of a reflective journal, a Communication in the Disciplines assignment, an exit essay about the nature of tutoring, a minimum score of 90% on a grammar exam, and ten hours of tutoring in the center with the assistance of a mentor. The practicum course is designed, first, to lay the theoretical groundwork of both the composing process and teaching/tutoring writing. Then, various exercises and activities move theory into practice. The director and assistant director observe the practicum students during at least two sessions toward the end of the semester and make decisions about which students will be offered a position in the Center. Additionally, current tutors must attend required in-service workshops which are held once a week on subjects relevant to current issues and practices in the Center. They, too, will undergo observations during the year. Finally, faculty and staff from across campus are brought in to discuss writing and communication in their disciplines and to discuss ways for the Center to serve a more diverse population of students. Writing Center tutors are certified by the College of Reading and Learning Association; typically the Center has tutors on staff who are certified at all three levels (see CRLA standards).

All advisors in the Academic Advising Center (AAC) participate in annual retreats and a wide variety of online webinars pertaining to their profession. New advisors in the AAC spend several weeks shadowing and learning from the current advisors, meeting with departments across campus that provide student support, and having an experienced advisor serve as a mentor to shadow them through their first advising sessions. The AAC also holds weekly staff meetings. AAC advisors participated in two conferences in the last year: the Arkansas Student Success Symposium and the ArkAAN annual conference.

Staff members in departments within the Division of Student Services who are responsible for providing co-curricular experiences for students are also supported in their training and professional development. Each area has membership in its respective professional organization and is funded to attend conferences regularly (e.g., NODA, NACA, NASPA, and ACPA). In addition, students often attend these conferences and are required to present educational sessions alongside professional staff. The UCA Staff Senate also has a pool of professional development funding for which all staff are eligible and encouraged to apply in order to attend professional development events outside of the university setting.

Staff members in the Office of Student Financial Aid participate in regulatory and software training throughout the year by attending conferences/trainings, participating in webinars, and self-study. In-house training for staff is on-going as needed and addresses regulations, policies, procedures, and best practices. October and November are designated as annual training months in which a concentrated series of training are developed and provided to all staff.

While specific professional development opportunities will vary among different departments and functional units, the examples cited above illustrate the importance UCA places on hiring appropriately qualified staff and providing continuous access to professional development opportunities.

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3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.
4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).
5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

Argument

3.D.1. The institution provides support services suited to the needs of students

The institution's Division of Student Services provide a number of programs and services designed to support a diverse student body.

The mission of the Division of Student Services at UCA is to challenge, support, and encourage students by providing innovative services, programs, facilities, and resources in order to maximize the collegiate experience. More specifically, the student services focuses on the following key pillars: (1) Campus and Community Engagement, (2) Scholarship and Life-Long Learning, (3) Diversity and Global Appreciation, (4) Leadership Development, and (5) Personal Health and Well-Being. See the Student Services Strategic Plan.

Departments providing student support services in the Division of Student Services include:

- Campus Recreation
- Career Services
- Center for Leadership Development
- Counseling Services
- Dean of Students
- Disability Resource Center
- Diversity and Community
- Division Strategy and Assessment
- New Student Programs
- Radio Station
- Student Activities
- Student Center
- Student Health Clinic

- Student Life
- Student Wellness & Development
- University Training

Student Services works to ensure that current and prospective students are knowledgeable regarding programs, services, and resources available to them. For instance, the Office of Student Services regularly sends mass emails to UCA students to announce events sponsored by the various departments listed above. Individual departments also communicate events and services via printed materials, webpages, and social media.

Career Services offers an internship program and several annual Career Fairs, which provide students with opportunities for building skills and networking. Campus Recreation facilitates students' physical health and overall well-being through state-of-the-art workout facilities, intramural programs, and its new Campus Outdoor Pursuits and Activities (COPA) office. Student Life and Student Activities offer numerous opportunities to become involved in campus groups, with approximately 200 Recognized Student Organizations on campus, as well as opportunities to attend concerts, talks, and movies on campus. (See Recognized Student Organizations for RSO categories and a list of RSOs on campus.) The Office of Diversity and Community sponsors a Minority Mentorship Program that expanded for Fall 2015.

Because UCA is committed to meeting the needs of our diverse student population, we evaluate and adjust our support services. Feedback from students regarding the quality and effectiveness of support services is elicited through the National Survey of Student Engagement every two years. The Division of Student Services created the Office of Division Strategy to help departments devise measurable plans to promote student success and be able to evaluate them. Departments now create and maintain Continuous Improvement process plans to help them best meet the needs of students. The Office of Division Strategy and Assessment conducted a Campus Climate Survey in Spring 2016 to assess student perceptions; the office plans to administer the survey periodically in the future.

Student Services coordinates with departments such as the Academic Advising Center, Financial Aid, Housing and Residence Life, International Engagement, Office of the Registrar, Office of Student Success, and Veteran Services in other university divisions in order to promote the success of all students inside and outside the classroom.

Additional examples of student services activities and supporting materials can be found in the Division's Annual Report 2014-2015.

3.D.2. The institution provides learning support and preparatory instruction

The Division of Academic Affairs promotes and encompasses all of the functional areas designed to support the academic success of students at the University of Central Arkansas, including numerous programs and services that support learning and academic preparation. Departments or units providing student learning support services in the Division of Academic Affairs include those listed here:

- Academic Advising Center
- Athletic Academic Advising
- Office of Student Success
- Tutoring Services

- Torreyson Library
- Language Learning Center
- Academic Departmental Tutoring (Math, Biology, History, Accounting, etc.)
- Writing Center
- Registrar
- Veteran Services
- Veterans Resource Center
- International Engagement
- Learning Communities
- University College (Developmental)
- University Testing
- Testing Accommodations
- Intensive English Program

Academic Affairs has expanded many of its student support programs over the last several years, including its tutoring services, learning communities, library services, and VA services in an effort to reach a larger and more diverse student population. New programs have also been instituted, including Supplemental Instruction, peer success coaching, summer bridge programs, and centralized academic advising for second-year students.

A more detailed description of several academic support programs provided by the institution follows:

- **Tutoring Services** provides free peer-assisted tutoring for students in all areas of the UCA Core, as well as upper-level math and science tutoring. Tutoring Services has received CRLA International Tutoring Training Program Certification, and the Center, which is located in Torreyson Library, is open to students more than 60 hours per week for drop-in tutoring, computer lab usage, and study hall services. Praxis I math tutoring is also available. (See Tutoring Services Guidelines.)
- **The Writing Center** provides free face-to-face or online assistance to all students in developing written assignments or oral presentations. Writing Center staff consist of the faculty director and assistant director, who supervise peer and graduate student consultants, all of whom must successfully complete WRTG 3315 Writing Center Practicum. The Center also offers Praxis I writing tutoring.
- **Departmental Tutoring** is available for undergraduate students through several departments, including Accounting, History, Chemistry, Biology, Business, and Math. Hours of availability are posted on departmental and Tutoring Services websites.
- **Supplemental Instruction** is offered in several of the high-failure/high-attrition UCA Core courses, including sections of UCA Core biology courses (BIOL 1400, 1401, and 1402), Introduction to Psychology (PSYC 1300), and American Nations I and II (HIST 2301 and 2302). (The mix is adjusted as needs and efficacy become clear.) SI Leaders attend the class along with the enrolled students and facilitate review sessions each week outside of class.
- **The Minority Mentorship Program** seeks to aid students of color in making a successful academic transition to the institution through a peer mentor program that includes sponsored study sessions and study skills workshops. The program is coordinated by the Office of Diversity and Community and begins its outreach to first-year students during "Transitions Week" each fall.
- **Peer Success Coaching** is a newly implemented program offered by the Office of Student Success in partnership with Housing and Residence Life. Peer coaches are available in each residence hall and for walk-in hours in different locations across campus to assist students in identifying and overcoming obstacles and finding resources.
- **UCA Summer Start** offers summer bridge programs for entering first-year students to aid

them in making a successful transition to the institution. Students intending to major in STEM areas are encouraged to attend a "boot camp" that introduces them to studying the sciences through a mock-science course complete with lectures, lab assignments and an exam, as well as tips on note-taking and study strategies. Students requiring developmental coursework may choose to attend Read for Success, a three-week for-credit program through which they complete their reading remediation requirement and a UCA Core course, or one-week programs in math and writing, which conclude with students taking a placement exam.

- **Academic Success Workshops** are offered every fall and spring semester and are open to all enrolled students. Workshop topics include time management, study skills, literacy skills, motivation, communication skills, and procrastination.
- **Intensive English Program:** The Intensive English Program (IEP) is an academic program in English as a second language for international students. It helps serious students acquire the skills needed to succeed in American colleges and universities. See a screenshot of the IEP web site for more information.

The university adheres to Arkansas requirements in regard to students requiring remediation in Math, Writing, and Reading based on ACT, SAT, or other approved exam scores. Students requiring remediation are admitted conditionally and advised into the appropriate transitional coursework during their summer advising and registration appointment. The transitional curriculum—for the first time this fall completely corequisite with credit-bearing courses—is administered by University College, and faculty in University College work solely with the university's conditionally admitted students in transitional courses and several UCA Core courses.

University Testing Services administers a wide range of academic tests designed to assess student college-readiness and proficiency, including ACT, Compass Placement Tests (transitioning to Accuplacer in the wake of the Compass sunset), CLEP Exams, and TOEFL ITP and TOEFL iBT. Entering first-year students must complete all placement and assessment testing prior to their initial advising and registration appointments, in order to assist academic advisors in properly directing students. Notices regarding placement testing are sent to newly-admitted students as part of the Admissions mailing process and by University Testing. Placement exams are also offered in Spanish, French, and German online through the Department of Languages, Linguistics, Literatures, and Cultures. Students must complete the appropriate online placement exam prior to registering for a language course. University Testing also now manages testing accommodations for students served by the Disability Resource Center.

3.D.3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the need of its students

UCA has centralized freshman and sophomore advising in the Academic Advising Center (AAC). All freshman and most sophomore students are assigned a specific advisor in the AAC depending on their major. The six academic colleges have designated advisors in the center who work with students throughout their freshman and sophomore years and help them transition out to departmental advisors when students become juniors. Juniors and seniors have assigned faculty advisors in their respective majors. Advisors work with students in planning their classes and assist them in mapping out their academic plan semester by semester to graduation. To assist in this process, the institution provides online Academic Maps and DegreeWorks. Additionally, advisors work with students on goal setting and can refer students to appropriate resources on campus.

The AAC is responsible for advising all incoming freshman students during the summer. During

summer registration, each student participates in a mini-orientation. Following that, the students have an opportunity to meet one-on-one with an advisor to define educational goals and plan for the upcoming semester and schedule classes. Advisors also participate in Welcome Week activities and hold small group meetings and one-on-one appointments with their advisees throughout the semester. All students must meet with their advisor at least once during each semester prior to registering for the next term (through their senior year).

The AAC also provides academic advising and guidance for specific populations of students, such as International Students, students in transitional courses, and students living in a UCA Learning Community (Residential College). The center serves as a resource for all faculty advisors on campus and provides training opportunities for departmental advisors throughout the academic year.

Finally, the AAC began last year facilitating an earlier graduate application/audit process for undergraduate students, ensuring that missed requirements (etc.) are identified in time for the student and advisor to address them without delaying completion of the degree.

3.D.4. The institution provides the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning

The **Division of Information Systems and Technology (IST)** provides technology support and services for the institution, including services for students and instructors. In addition to basic office software (Office 365/Office 2016), email (Google), and hardware support for the campus, IST also hosts and supports faculty access to and use of Blackboard, Respondus 4.0, Tegrity, SafeAssign, and video conferencing. A campus-wide technology plan, adopted in July 2015, includes the goal of regular hardware updates for offices, labs, and classrooms.

UCA Online supports online instruction and currently comprises a Director of Online Learning and an Online Program Coordinator.

The **Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE)** has revised its mission to emphasize collaborating with faculty to foster personal well-being and create a learning community that facilitates high-quality teaching and learning. Employing three instructional designers, CTE provides consulting services covering course preparation and planning, course delivery, and student assessment. (See CTE Programming.)

Scientific Laboratories

The **College of Health and Behavioral Sciences** (CHBS) currently maintains 23 laboratories for instructional purposes. These include Food labs and a Nutrition Assessment lab in Family and Consumer Sciences, Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy labs, a Gross Anatomy lab, a Nursing Simulation lab, a human and an animal lab in Psychology, a First Aid lab, and several labs for Exercise and Sport Science.

The **College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics** (CNSM) maintains 34 teaching laboratories in the departments of Biology (16), Chemistry (5), Computer Science (5), Geography (1), Mathematics (1), and Physics (6).

The Lewis Science Center is currently undergoing a significant expansion. The new space will add 50,000 square feet for state-of-the-art laboratories and scientific facilities for students. Improvements will also be made in equipment efficiency and energy use, including LEED certification. The Board

of Trustees has named the expanded section the **Conway Corporation Center for Sciences** in recognition of the $3 million gift from Conway Corporation, operator of Conway's city-owned utility system. The expansion will be completed in January of 2017.

The **College of Liberal Arts (CLA)** maintains two teaching laboratories, one focused on social science and one focused on languages.

Libraries

Torreyson Library is located at the heart of the campus. It is open 130.5 hours per week during the spring, summer, and fall semesters. The two-story facility houses approximately 450,000 print books and provides faculty, staff, and students with access to 137 databases, 110,000 e-books, 50,000 online serial resources, and a Government Documents Collection. The library also provides patrons with use of 100 desktop PCs, 55 laptops for use in the library, printing and photocopying services, a DVD library, a children's library, 29 individual study rooms, 24 group study rooms, two group study rooms with an projectors, and two gender neutral restrooms. A music collection supports UCA Music programs, and the Archives housed in the building include manuscripts, photographs, pamphlets and oral histories. Interlibrary loan services are also available, and library staff and faculty members provide library research instruction classes for students and faculty members across campus. (See Torreyson Library Profile and the most recent Annual Report for a summary and evaluation of resources and services).

In addition to Torreyson Library and its services, enrolled UCA students, faculty and staff also have borrowing privileges at Hendrix College, a private liberal arts institution located in Conway. Students may also obtain an ARKLink card that provides borrowing privileges at all academic libraries in Arkansas.

Performance Spaces

In support of the institution's strong performing arts programs, as well as performances made available to the campus and community, the university has a number of theaters and performance halls. The Theatre program, Arkansas Shakespeare Theater, and the Youth Theater of Central Arkansas use **The Black Box Theatre** in the Snow Fine Arts Center. Music department performances are held in the **Snow Fine Arts Recital Hall** as well as in the **Donald W. Reynolds Performance Hall,** a 1,200-seat, state-of-the-art performance venue that also hosts UCA Public Appearances events and a number of community events. Finally, the 1,000-seat **Ida Waldran Auditorium** in Old Main is available for performances hosted by departments, students, and community members.

Clinical Practice Sites

Fieldwork experience is a vital component of the training in programs such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, nursing, and teacher education. Clinical practice sites include a variety of practice settings such as schools, pediatric community programs, outpatient clinics, adult community day programs, hospital-based acute and rehabilitation centers, skilled nursing facilities/long-term care facilities, specialty clinics, etc. Student teaching sites are available throughout the state. (See Clinical Practice Sites for detailed information on the number, type, and location of sites available for students in physical therapy, occupational therapy, and nursing. See Student Teacher Field Experience for detailed information on the number and location of sites available for student teachers.)

Museum Collections

The Baum Gallery of Fine Art is a 2,300 square foot educational art museum on the UCA campus. The museum promotes student and faculty work, coordinates original exhibits distinctly suited to an academic environment, and brings significant national and international touring exhibitions to Central Arkansas. The museum aims to encourage the appreciation and understanding of art for learners of all ages as well as to inspire the creative insight and growth of UCA students.

The University of Central Arkansas and Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre were selected as hosts for the state of Arkansas for *First Folio! The Book that Gave Us Shakespeare*, a national traveling exhibition of the Shakespeare First Folio, one of the world's most treasured books. The Folger Shakespeare Library, in partnership with Cincinnati Museum Center and the American Library Association, is touring a First Folio of Shakespeare in 2016 to all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico. The First Folio was in residence at the University of Central Arkansas from June 7 to July 12, 2016, in the Baum Gallery, which coincided with the Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre's 10th anniversary season.

The Baum Gallery maintains institutional memberships in the Arkansas Museums Association, the Association of College and University Museums and Galleries, and the American Association of Museums.

3.D.5. The institution provides students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources

All undergraduate students are required to complete three credit hours in writing and research as part of the lower-division UCA Core during their first year of enrollment. Generally this means completing either Academic Writing and Research (WRTG 1320) or Interdisciplinary Writing and Research (ENGL 1320), both of which emphasize basic elements of conducting academic research and using scholarly resources.

Torreyson Library faculty also provide library research instruction classes for students and faculty members in all departments. Classes can be tailored to a specific class assignment or offered as a broad overview of available resources and how to use them. See in particular the Education and Outreach section of the library's Annual Report.

Individual departments also contribute to the effective use of research and information resources through program-specific research design and methodology courses. Examples of such courses include COMM 2313 Introduction to Communication Research, FACS 6335 Evidence-Based Research in Nutrition, FACS 6350 Statistical Methods in Family and Consumer Sciences, HIST 2320 Introduction to Historical Research, MGMT 4341 Quantitative Methods in Management, NUTR 4305 Research in Family and Consumer Sciences, PSCI 2312 Statistical Research, PSYC 3332 Research Methods, and SOC 3320 Social Research Methods. Many other courses across the curriculum could be added to this list.

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3.E - Core Component 3.E

The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.
2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

Argument

3.E.1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the mission and contribute to the educational experience

The university's mission statement articulates the following: "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 provides students with many co-curricular programs that contribute to the educational experience and meet the tenets stated in the mission statement. The following section highlights several co-curricular programs: internships, service learning, President's Leadership Fellows, student research, and study abroad. These programs allow students to gain work experience and leadership skills; assist local, national, and global organizations; and enhance their knowledge and understanding of the world beyond the campus community.

3.E.2. Contributions to the educational experience

Internships

UCA's Career Services Center offers an enriched educational environment through its internship program. Internships are offered through Cooperative Education, an experiential learning activity comprised of a three-way partnership between students, the university, and an employer. These experiences permit students to enhance skills and knowledge obtained in the classroom, solidify career decisions, gain work experience, and develop career-related networks.

Twenty-eight departments offer internship courses that afford opportunities in experiential learning. See Student Internships for information on numbers of student interns by department for 2015-2016. Students intern for a wide variety of organizations: private business, government agencies, non-profit agencies, elected officials, political parties, etc. While some of these internship opportunities are elective courses—for example, internships in Business, Biology, and Community and Economic Development—many are required for the completion of the degree, as is the case for the BFA in Art, the Nutrition and Foods track in the MS in Family and Consumer Sciences, the BA/BS in Journalism, the BA/BS in Public Administration, and the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP).

Various departments also maintain a network of internships that their students can apply for to enhance the knowledge they gain in the classroom. The Office of Diversity and Community provides information on internships specific to minorities: Top 10 Internship Opportunities for Ethnic Minorities. Additionally, several degrees require practicum hours for the completion of the degree, including the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT), the PhD in Psychology and MS in Mental Health Counseling, and the MS in College Student Personnel Services and Administration.

President's Leadership Fellows

The President's Leadership Fellows (PLF) is an organization that offers students the opportunity to gain leadership experience, communication and personal branding experience, and visit with Conway business leaders. Thirty-five students (juniors and seniors) are selected by a panel of faculty and staff advisors to serve on PLF until graduation and to provide feedback to the president and members of the Board of Trustees on their experiences as student leaders at UCA.

Service-Learning Courses

Through service-learning courses, students have an opportunity to serve the community while applying concepts taught in class. In the 2014–2015 academic year, 51 different service-learning courses were offered at UCA. (See Service Learning Courses.) These courses partnered with 49 different community organizations to help students connect their classroom experiences with efforts to improve the world around them. To enhance and expand service-learning at UCA, a coordinator of the Service-Learning Program has been hired and is located in the Division of Outreach and Community Engagement. (See the Service Learning website.)

Student Research

Furthermore, the university enriches its students' educational experiences through faculty-student collaboration in a wide range of research and scholarly and creative activities. These activities are facilitated and supported at UCA in several ways, including the following:

1. The University Research Council's student research fund provides support to undergraduate and graduate students for expenses incurred in conducting and disseminating research and other scholarship or creative activities.
2. The Arkansas Student Undergraduate Research Fellowships (SURF)—administered by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education and coordinated on campus by the Office of Sponsored Programs—provide undergraduates an opportunity to develop a sustained relationship with a faculty member over one to three semesters to carry out in-depth research, scholarship, or creative projects.
3. Travel Abroad Grants (TAG) and the Undergraduate Research Grants in Education (URGE) provide support for student members of the Honors College.
4. The Honors in the Majors program entails faculty-student collaboration on a research or scholarly creative activity and is offered by nearly 30 different academic departments.

(See Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship for a list of students who received SURF awards from 2012-2016. See Student Research Fund for a list of students who received funding to conduct research and travel to disseminate research in 2015.)

Study Abroad and related programs

The co-curricular programs within the Division of International Engagement contribute to fulfilling

the university's mission in the areas of engagement in global communities and diversity. These programs contribute to the educational experience of students by introducing them to the global community (Semester Exchange, Travel Abroad, Confucius Institute), improving language proficiency (Spanish Immersion in Costa Rica, Intensive English Program, Chinese at ECNU), enhancing the understanding of programs of study (Travel Abroad – Theatre in London), and introducing students to international opportunities (Business in Cuba). Study abroad programs vary from year-to-year. In 2015, all six colleges offered at least one study abroad course, with students enrolling in courses across 10 different countries. See data on Study Abroad courses for 2015.

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3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Summary

Accomplishments/Strengths

(1) The university has an established process for assessing program quality through the external review of existing accredited and non-accredited academic programs. The university has an established process for the development, review, and assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for all programs—graduate, undergraduate, and the UCA Core.

(2) The recently revised general education program—the UCA Core—was developed around a clear mission and four competencies that all university graduates should possess: critical inquiry, effective communication, responsible living, and diversity.

(3) The university provides multiple opportunities for students to engage in the four competencies both inside and outside the classroom. In labs, research symposia, conference presentations, study abroad, service learning, and internships, students have the opportunity to put the four competencies into practice.

(4) The university employs qualified faculty and staff. The Faculty Handbook specifically denotes faculty qualifications, responsibilities, expectations, and role in the development of the curriculum, student performance, and shared governance of the university. Likewise, the university has policies and procedures to ensure the qualifications of support staff.

(5) The university offers an array of support services to enhance academic success and the well-being of students and to enrich the academic experience, including academic support, health and wellness, recreational opportunities, and co-curricular activities.

(6) The university supports effective teaching and learning by providing the necessary labs, library holdings, performance spaces, art gallery, clinical practice sites, etc.

Continuing Concerns

(1) The university should continue to find ways to allocate necessary resources for students, faculty, and staff in the following areas:

- Students: study abroad and internship experiences
- Faculty and staff: travel and other expenses for professional development; routine technology upgrades in classroom, lab, and office spaces; and resources for data collection and research dissemination

Sources

There are no sources.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

Argument

4.A.1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews

UCA's 2011 Strategic Plan (as revised)—its vision, mission, core values, and goals—reveals the university's commitment to "excellence through the delivery of outstanding undergraduate and graduate education," continuous improvement and high quality academic programs through "a sustained learner-focused environment," and building and maintaining a "culture of continuous improvement." These values guide the development, continuous assessment, and improvement of the academic programs offered.

The University of Central Arkansas complies with the policy and processes for implementing Arkansas Code Ann. §6-61-214 adopted by the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) and implemented by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE). The code requires that all "public colleges and universities ensure quality academic programs that support

Arkansas's economic development goals: to identify and remove nonviable programs from AHECB approved program inventory and to reduce barriers to graduation" (Policy for the Review of Existing Academic Programs, 2008, p. 7-1). All academic programs must be externally reviewed every 7–10 years to ensure the following goals are met: "1) to establish a process for the statewide review of academic programs, and 2) to identify certificate and degree programs not meeting minimum standards of quality or viability and establish schedules for either resolving these concerns or removing the programs for the AHECB approved program inventory" (Policy for the Review of Existing Academic Programs, 2008, p. 7-2). The university's Existing Academic Program Review (EAPR) processes comply with the most recent amended Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) Policy 5.12

EAPR—whether of accredited or non-accredited programs—examines inputs, outputs, and outcomes with the intent of assuring the university, its students, and the public of healthy, sustainable, and academically vital programs of study. The EAPR Guidelines are located on the university's Planning and Assessment (PandA) website and contain detailed information about timing and processes, schedule, self-study, reviewers, reviews, reporting requirements, and program viability.

Accredited programs communicate their accreditation review schedule to the Office of the Provost. The department completes a self-study according to the accrediting agency's guidelines, arranges the reviewing team on-site visit, and forwards the accreditor's decision and the program response to the Office of the Provost, who forwards all required documentation to ADHE. (See Accredited Programs for program list and accreditor.)

Non-accredited programs, in consultation with their dean and the provost, select external consultants, negotiate with them as necessary, determine a reasonable review schedule, and communicate the review plan to the Office of the Provost. The department completes the comprehensive self-study of the program per guidelines. Following the review, a report and departmental response is submitted to the Office of the Provost, and the combined documents are submitted to ADHE.

Both accredited and non-accredited programs periodically report about progress toward actions or changes required by their reviews. Accredited programs must report progress as required by the accrediting agency; non-accredited programs may report progress in their annual reports.

ADHE makes recommendations to AHECB regarding continued funding—or not—of the program, based on its reviews and its viability status. All programs must meet the requirements for viability set by ADHE.

4.A.2. Evaluation of all credit

Prospective students must submit transcripts from colleges or universities they have attended as part of the process for admission to the university, and the student must have at least a 2.0 cumulative undergraduate GPA. The university evaluates credits from accredited colleges or universities. Every transcript is evaluated by the Office of the Registrar to determine the credit hours that will transfer according to Arkansas law, university policy, or evaluation by the appropriate academic department.

Incoming international students must have their transfer work evaluated by a third party. The university requests that prospective international students use International Education Evaluations, Inc. (IEE). IEE evaluates course work against the University of Central Arkansas' academic bulletin. The university also accepts international transcript evaluations from World Education Services (WES). WES performs the evaluation and provides a U.S. equivalency.

The university also awards credit for prior learning by evaluating students' exam results from the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), Advance Placement (AP) program, and International Baccalaureate (IB) program as described in the Registration and Credit section of the Undergraduate Bulletin. Students may also receive credit by examination in certain foreign languages as evaluated by the Department of Languages, Linguistics, Literatures, and Cultures. Qualified Registered Nurses enrolled in the RN-to-BSN degree completion program of study receive 41 credit hours of nursing courses towards a Bachelor of Science in Nursing for prior education upon completion of all RN-to-BSN requirements based on the provisions of the Arkansas Nursing Education Progression Model. Beyond credit by examination and credit for nursing education, the only other credit accepted for prior learning is for a few approved courses in military training.

4.A.3. Policies assuring quality of credit

The university policy for transfer credit is described in the Admission to the University section of the Undergraduate Bulletin located on the UCA website. The Office of the Registrar uses the Arkansas Course Transfer System (ACTS) located on the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) website for course work taken from Arkansas public colleges and universities. Courses taken that are not articulated in ACTS are evaluated by the academic department chair. Transfer credit is awarded for grades of A, B, or C. The grade does not transfer, only the credit hour(s). The university will accept up to six hours of credit with D grades if the student meets the conditions stipulated in this section of the Undergraduate Bulletin.

A transfer student who has completed the 35-hour State Minimum Core before entering UCA is deemed to have completed all general education requirements (i.e., the lower-division UCA Core) and is not required to take further lower-division UCA Core courses unless those courses are required for a major or minor. Furthermore, state law stipulates that students who earn an approved associate degree (the AA degree) at another Arkansas institution of higher education have completed the State Minimum Core and, upon transfer, enter UCA as juniors.

At the time of this writing, the University of Central Arkansas also had more than 350 degree plan checklists in transfer agreements with 19 of the community colleges in Arkansas (see a sample transfer agreement here; additional discussion is included in Criterion 5.D). These transfer agreements were vetted through the appropriate academic departments at both institutions and provide students at community colleges a clear academic map of transferable courses that meet lower-division prerequisites and requirements of a four-year degree at UCA. (The transfer agreements are also discussed in Criterion 5.D.2 under the heading Enrollment and Student Success.)

Largely in support of the transfer agreement initiative, the university has—through collaboration among Transfer Services, the Office of the Registrar, and academic departments—built out the transfer equivalency tables in Banner and will soon be able to make a significant amount of detail about transfer of credits to any prospective student through implementation of the Ellucian Degree Works Transfer Equivalency module.

The university also has a process in place for current degree-seeking students at UCA to obtain pre-approval of courses they wish to complete at another institution for transfer back to UCA. The current student must complete a transfer credit pre-approval form for undergraduate program of study and obtain the signature approval from the department chair and, if appropriate, the director of the UCA Core and submit the completed form to the Office of the Registrar prior to enrolling in a course at another institution.

4.A.4. Authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs

Curriculum Review: The university exercises authority over the quality of all academic offerings through a closely monitored review and approval process that encompasses all academic levels at the university. Proposals submitted for review must adhere to a specific process outlined in the Curriculum Development Process Guide (CDPG). The CDPG directs departments to the correct curriculum change form and guides departments through the appropriate routing process. This process assures that proposed curricular changes are appropriately reviewed at the department, college, and university levels. Departmental proposals requiring action must be reviewed by the department's curriculum and assessment committee and recommendations for approval go to the department chair. The department chair may recommend approval to the college curriculum and assessment committee which may recommend approval to the college dean. Recommendations by the college dean are forwarded for review by the appropriate university council(s), depending on which curriculum is being changed.

Proposals for new degree programs must include a Continuous Improvement (CI) process plan (see the Argument for Component 4.B) reviewed and approved by the university-level Academic Assessment Committee.

Curricular changes in the professional teacher education program, both undergraduate and graduate, must be reviewed by the Professional Education Council (PEC). The PEC serves as the advisory body of the graduate and undergraduate professional education program, and in that capacity, reviews all curricular issues related to the education degree programs. Voting members of the PEC are elected from among College of Education faculty and other university faculty involved in teacher education programs. The Arkansas Department of Education also exercises considerable oversight of the professional education curriculum by requiring that the education programs meet Arkansas standards for required curriculum, clinical standards, and licensure requirements.

Proposed curricular changes to the UCA Core (see the Argument for Component 4.B) must be reviewed and recommended for approval by the UCA Core Council.

All proposed changes to undergraduate degree programs must be reviewed and recommended for approval by the Undergraduate Council.

The Graduate Council serves as the university-level committee for graduate programs, with the assigned tasks of reviewing graduate curriculum proposals, initiating and recommending policies related to UCA graduate programs, approving the appointment of faculty to graduate status, and acting as an academic appeals body for graduate students.

Following recommendations from the appropriate university council(s), all proposed curriculum changes must be reviewed and recommended by the Council of Deans for approval by the Provost. Program proposals and certain other matters are further forwarded to the president, the Board of Trustees, and the Arkansas Department of Higher Education for consideration by the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

See Curriculum Councils for the university-level curriculum bodies.

Learning Resources: UCA's library provides a significant repository of both electronic and hard-copy holdings to support every degree program offered by the university. The library offers

- 450,000 books
- 110,000 e-books
- 137 databases
- 50,000 online serial publications
- A music collection that supports UCA's academic music programs
- An extensive collection of government documents
- A Special Collections department for state history archives
- Inter-library loan services with other higher education institutions

Students, faculty, and the local community have access to these offerings seven days a week, with 24-hour access most days. Multiple computers, including laptops available for check-out, plus copier services, increase the opportunities for students to make use of the research facilities. Faculty are given opportunities to request specific publications and databases for the use of their students. (See Torreyson Library Profile and its most recent Annual Report for resources and services.)

Tutoring Services provides free peer tutoring for students in all areas of the UCA Core, as well as upper-level math and science tutoring. Tutoring Services has received CRLA International Tutoring Training Program Certification, and the Center, located in Torreyson Library, is open to students more than 60 hours per week for drop-in tutoring, computer lab usage, and study hall services. Praxis I math tutoring is also available. See Tutoring Center Guidelines for more information.

The Writing Center (also CRLA certified) provides free face-to-face or online assistance to all students in developing written assignments or oral presentations. Writing Center staff consist of peer and graduate student consultants, all of whom must successfully complete WRTG 3315 Writing Center Practicum. The Center also offers Praxis I writing tutoring.

Faculty Qualifications: UCA has established and maintains high standards for its teaching faculty. The Faculty Handbook (Ch. 3) articulates the categories and ranks of faculty positions, including tenure-track, non-tenure-track continuing, non-tenure-track visiting, and adjunct or part-time faculty. Continuing faculty expectations for scholarship, teaching, and service are established in general by the Faculty Handbook and further specified by each department and college. Tenure-track faculty are hired from national searches originated within the respective departments. Non-tenure-track faculty may be hired from national or local searches, depending upon the circumstances and hiring needs. See Faculty Qualifications for additional information regarding practices and approval processes for hiring faculty who do not meet general qualifications within specific programs.

Concurrent Enrollment: Concurrent enrollment is a cooperative program between participating high schools and the University of Central Arkansas through which high school students may enroll in college-level courses prior to high school graduation. Through concurrent enrollment, approved high school teachers teach University of Central Arkansas courses during the regular high school schedule. The course materials, assignments, and grading standards used in the courses must meet the same standards as regular University of Central Arkansas courses.

The University of Central Arkansas has been an accredited member of the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) since 2012 and operates in accordance with NACEP Standards. We are committed to having a quality program that continues to meet all NACEP

Standards.

The mission of the University of Central Arkansas concurrent enrollment program is to provide a challenging college-level experience for high school students who have demonstrated their readiness for post-secondary academic work. By expanding educational access to all individuals who meet academic requirements, the University of Central Arkansas intends to raise the educational bar in Arkansas.

To participate in the Concurrent Enrollment Program at UCA, students must meet the following requirements:

1. Students must complete the University of Central Arkansas Application Form.
2. Students must complete the Concurrent Enrollment Application Form.
3. All students must submit documentation showing they meet the following academic requirements:

   A. Transcript showing a cumulative [high school] grade point [average] of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale.

   B. ACT Composite Score of at least 20 and

      i. An ACT Reading Score of at least 19

      ii. If taking English, students must also have an ACT English score of at least 19

      iii. If taking Math, students must also have an ACT Math score of at least 19

   C. Must meet all course prerequisites.

   D. Recommendation of High School Principal.

   E. Junior or senior classification. Sophomores may be admitted through special permission and principal recommendation.

4. Students who are enrolled in CE courses will be classified as non-degree seeking students.

The concurrent course instructor must hold a master's degree and at least eighteen (18) hours of completed course work in the subject area of the endorsed concurrent enrollment course. Additional qualifications may be stipulated by departments offering courses; these additional stipulations will be specified before partner schools propose instructors for proposed courses.

High schools requesting to teach a concurrent course are supplied with a current syllabus for the comparable UCA course and with additional course-, program-, or discipline-specific requirements, if any, as stipulated by the department in which a course is housed. From this information, high schools develop a syllabus that incorporates the required course content and objectives into the high school course curriculum. Concurrent course proposals are then reviewed by the appropriate UCA department upon receipt of an appropriate syllabus and other course material from the requesting high school. Syllabi for any course included in UCA's general education core must explicitly indicate how the course meets the university's general education objectives for the area the course is intended to satisfy.

All students completing a concurrent course must be assigned a grade, and concurrent enrollment

students are graded using the same criteria applying to all other UCA students. Similarly, UCA withdrawal policies and an equivalent schedule for withdrawal apply to students enrolled in high school-based concurrent enrollment courses.

4.A.5. Specialized accreditation for its programs

Many of the university's degree programs are accredited by specialized agencies and organizations recognized by the US Department of Education. Review of accredited programs is governed by the standards, practices, processes, and timelines of their accreditors and reflect best-practices in program review and use of assessment data for continuous improvement. Currently, specialized accrediting bodies externally review and accredit 65 UCA programs of study. UCA accreditors are publicly listed on the UCA website.

4.A.6. Evaluation of graduate success

Individual departments and/or colleges are compiling information about their graduates related to the outcomes set by each program, and these reports are referenced in our Consumer Information web site and, of course, used in program improvement. Collecting this information for all UCA graduates has been challenging for all the usual reasons—incomplete records of alumni contact information, delayed employment following licensure or certification, delays in returning to school for advanced degrees, and low response rates to surveys.

The university recognizes that this is an area for improvement. The Office of Institutional Research (OIR) has dedicated a new position to research and statistics, and an initiative to survey UCA graduates has already begun, with surveys sent to April 2016 bachelor's degree recipients in August 2016. OIR is working with academic deans to construct appropriate surveys for recipients of graduate certificates and degrees. A web page has been created (see this screenshot) to begin to inform the campus about this new initiative.

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4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

Argument

4.B.1. Goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment

Since 2010, UCA has taken aggressive steps to create a campus-wide culture of continuous improvement. In 2011, UCA revived a full-time Director of Assessment position and established the Academic Assessment Committee to replace the Academic Planning and Assessment Committee; in 2013, UCA added a project coordinator position to support assessment initiatives. The Director of Assessment is responsible for assisting academic and non-academic units in the development and implementation of effective outcomes-based assessment processes that foster continuous improvement. The Director of Assessment also chairs the Academic Assessment Committee. The charge of the Academic Assessment Committee states that the committee "will provide oversight, identify needs, develop recommendations and policies regarding institution-wide assessment of student learning in order to strengthen the university and enhance its accountability."

In 2012, UCA joined the HLC Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning and identified two projects to complete over the next four years. The first project focused on creating processes for ensuring that the student learning outcomes of all degree programs were being assessed and the results were being used for continuous improvement. The second project focused on a major revision of the general education program that resulted in the new UCA Core. Over the course of four years, UCA submitted bi-annual reports to the HLC Collaboration Network and presented the outcomes of both projects at the Academy's meeting in June, 2016. (Project 1, Progress and Impact Report and Poster; Project 2, Progress and Impact Report and Poster.)

The following sections describe UCA's commitment to continuous improvement through the assessment of student learning in the new UCA Core and in all degree programs, and through the regular review of programs for accreditation and state accountability.

The UCA Core: In 2012, UCA embarked on a major revision of its general education program. That year, the General Education Council voted to rename the general education program the "UCA Core," wrote a new mission and values statement, and set competency-based goals to achieve the new mission. In the summer of 2012, a General Education Task Force was created and charged by the

provost to redesign UCA's general education program based on the new mission and goals. The new program would be student focused, meet the Arkansas State Minimum Core requirements, and have a clear assessment plan. On September 4, 2012, the task force presented its recommended redesign to the General Education Council. (See task force recommendations.) During the fall of 2012, the General Education Council solicited input from the campus community, made appropriate revisions, and then voted to recommend a final proposal to the Council of Deans. In early 2013, the Faculty Senate and the Student Government Association endorsed the proposal and the Council of Deans voted to recommend the proposal to the provost; and the provost, president, and Board of Trustees all approved the proposal. Implementation of the new UCA Core began in Fall 2013.

From the UCA Core website:

UCA Core Mission: The UCA Core is designed to help students develop the knowledge and skills necessary for critical inquiry, effective communication, and responsible living in a diverse and changing world.

Core Values: The goal of the program is to develop curious, knowledgeable, articulate, and responsible people who are prepared for life as engaged citizens in their communities.

The UCA Core is a cohesive course of study carried through the student's entire undergraduate career that builds core competencies around four knowledge and skill areas:

- **Critical Inquiry**—the ability to analyze new problems and situations to formulate informed opinions and conclusions
- **Effective Communication**—the ability to develop and present ideas logically and effectively in order to enhance communication and collaboration with diverse individuals and groups
- **Responsible Living**—the ability to address real-world problems and find ethical solutions for individuals and society
- **Diversity**—the ability to analyze familiar cultural assumptions in the context of the world's diverse values, traditions, and belief systems as well as to analyze the major ideas, techniques, and processes that inform creative works within different cultural and historical contexts

The UCA Core is divided into a lower-division curriculum and an upper-division curriculum. The lower-division UCA Core consists of 38 semester credit hours that meet the requirements of the Arkansas State Minimum Core and provide students a foundation in the four knowledge and skill areas above. Freshmen students are required to complete one lower-division course designated as a First Year Seminar (FYS). FYS courses have a maximum enrollment of 25 students, further build students' written and collaborative communication skills, and introduce students to the purpose and goals of the UCA Core. The upper-division UCA Core consists of 6–12 semester credit hours of junior- and senior-level courses intended to build upon students' foundation in the four knowledge and skill areas above. Students may use upper-division UCA Core courses to fulfill major and/or minor requirements, but they may also select from upper-division courses available to non-majors. The upper-division UCA Core also requires students to complete an additional capstone course. The capstone course is intended to further advance students' critical inquiry and effective communication skills within their major disciplines. (See also the Undergraduate Bulletin description of the UCA Core program.)

The General Education Task Force recommended specific learning goals and outcomes for each of the four knowledge and skill areas as well as revised AAC&U VALUE rubrics to assess the progressive achievement of those goals and outcomes. The UCA Core Council (formerly the General Education Council) further revised the goals and rubrics during the 2012-2013 academic year, and then piloted

the rubrics during the 2013-2014 academic year. The UCA Core Council charged a [Rubric Task Force](#) to review faculty feedback from the pilot rubrics and recommend revisions. The task force recommended revisions to the UCA Core learning goals and, in the fall term of 2014, the UCA Core Council approved the following learning goals for each knowledge and skill area:

Critical Inquiry

- **Goal A (Inquiry and Analysis):** Demonstrate a knowledge base to ask more informed questions and learn more complex concepts
- **Goal B (Scientific):** Apply scientific processes to solve problems/answer questions
- **Goal C (Quantitative):** Apply quantitative and computational processes to solve problems

Effective Communication

- **Goal A (Oral):** Use appropriate conventions and strategies in oral communication for various audiences and purposes
- **Goal B (Written):** Use appropriate conventions and strategies in written communication for various audiences and purposes
- **Goal C (Collaboration):** Individually apply appropriate verbal and nonverbal strategies to promote collaboration

Responsible Living

- **Goal A (Ethics):** Apply ethical principles to solve problems.
- **Goal B (Well-Being):** Make appropriate recommendations based on discipline specific knowledge to address an issue or scenario and evaluate the effect that decisions have on well-being of self, others, society and/or environment(s).

Diversity

- **Goal A (Own):** Analyze one's own cultural values and assumptions.
- **Goal B (Other):** Analyze or compare diverse values, traditions, belief systems, and/or perspectives.
- **Goal C (Creative Works):** Analyze creative works within diverse contexts.

Following further recommendations from the Rubric Task Force, the UCA Core Council approved revised rubrics to assess each learning goal. The Director of the UCA Core began training faculty on the use of the UCA Core Rubrics in the spring of 2015, and data was collected using the rubrics from all lower-division UCA Core courses during the fall 2015 term. The data will be analyzed and results reported to the UCA Core Council in the Fall of 2016. Beginning Fall 2016, the UCA Core Council will initiate a four-year assessment cycle of the UCA Core. Each year of the cycle will focus on the assessment of one area of the UCA Core, and the instructors of each lower- and upper-division course responsible for achieving the learning goals in that area will assess using the appropriate UCA Core Rubrics.The following year, assessment data from the prior year will be analyzed and evaluated by the UCA Core Council while another area of the UCA Core is assessed. During the third year, a UCA Core improvement team will develop and recommend any needed curricular or assessment changes. Changes, if any are needed, will be implemented in the fourth and final year of the assessment cycle.

4.B.2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes

for its curricular and co-curricular programs

Assessment of Degree Programs

In 2012, the Director of Assessment and the Academic Assessment Committee began building a thorough and transparent assessment system that promotes continuous improvement of our degree programs. The assessment system includes an online Assessment Guide and new forms for detailing the continuous improvement process for each degree program. The online Assessment Guide introduces academic departments to assessment terminology and best practices, and directs them step-by-step through a continuous improvement cycle. The new Continuous Improvement (CI) process form asks academic departments to provide a detailed program assessment plan including the following:

- Program purpose aligned to (but not a reiteration of) the University, College, and Department missions
- Program goals (typically 2 – 4) aligned to the program purpose
- A description of the closing-the-loop process (how, when, and by whom data will be collected, analyzed, disseminated, and evaluated)
- At least one measurable Student Learning Outcome (SLO) for each program goal
- The assessment activity, measurement, and benchmark used to determine whether each SLO has been met

Complementary to this systematic approach to quality improvement in degree programs, programs with extensive clinical experiences/practica as part of their requirements have developed assessment methods focused on the particular characteristics of their programs' clinicals and practica. See Assessment of Clinical Practice Sites for examples from Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy. Additionally, as these two examples also exemplify, a significant number of UCA programs maintain accreditation by a professional association. See the List of Accredited Programs.

Assessment of Student Services

The Division of Student Services provides various co-curricular programs, services, and facilities designed to support in-class academic success and provide out-of-class opportunities for direct student learning (see the 2015-2016 summary report). The student learning and development accomplished through these activities are a key element of the division's annual Assessment and Evaluation Framework. The division's general approach to assessment and evaluation is grounded in the professional standards of the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS), ACPA's ASK Standards, and NASPA's Assessment Education Framework.

The division's mission is supported by the five goals ("Pillars") of the division: Campus and Community Engagement, Scholarship and Life-Long Learning, Diversity and Global Appreciation, Leadership Development, and Personal Health and Well-being. Each Pillar has associated objectives. Beginning in Fall 2015, a matrix for each Pillar is updated annually, aligning the outcomes of each division area's assessment and evaluation activities with the objectives of each Pillar.

Each area in the Division of Student Services performs at least one of its annual campus Continuous Improvement (CI) process outcome assessments on a specific student learning outcome (SLO). Each department in the Division of Student Services has a mission and set of goals, referred to as Core Services. Each department's CI process plan must document evidence related to one of these goals. In addition to the CI process plan, ten departments have been moved to the SkyFactor BenchWorks assessment tools. These student surveys assess departments on individual CAS professional standards,

applicable national association standards, and benchmark performance against national peers. Each BenchWorks survey assesses multiple SLOs, along with operational standards for the department.

Assessment of co-curricular programs

The university offers various co-curricular activities to enrich the educational environment for students. Several of these programs were highlighted in Criterion 3.E. The assessment of co-curricular programs is not as uniform and formalized as the assessment process for curricular programs. However, assessment of co-curricular activities is taking place across campus. Examples include the following:

Service Learning

The Service Learning Assessment Plan evaluates student learning outcomes, faculty outcomes, and community partner outcomes. Student learning outcomes are measured in three ways. First, student learning is measured by rating six items on the end-of-semester evaluations for service learning courses. Students are asked to rate whether the experience helped them achieve course objectives; to work together to achieve common goals; to understand and appreciate local, national or global diversity; to understand how the academic discipline serves the needs of the community, nation, and world; to understand their role as an engaged and informed citizen; and to understand the importance of UCA's responsibility to address the needs of the community, nation, and world.

The second measure is faculty assessment of student learning using a standard rubric. Faculty assess student learning across four areas: student understanding; diversity; civic responsibility; and communication, collaboration, and community. Faculty assessed each student as basic, intermediate, and advanced for each of the four areas.

Finally, student GPAs are collected for service learning courses offered the same semester as at least one non-service learning section of the same course. In 2015-2016, the average GPA for the service learning courses was 3.21, while the average GPA for non-service learning courses was 3.15.

Faculty outcomes are measured through 12 questions via an end-of-semester evaluation. Likewise, community partner outcomes are measured through 15 questions via an evaluation of their participation in the service learning experience.

For the plan itself and for more detailed information about assessment, see the Service Learning Annual Report.

Internships

Several departments assess their departmental internship programs as part of their Continuous Improvement (CI) process plans. The manner in which internships are assessed naturally varies considerably among the internship programs. For example, some departments, via a senior exit survey, ask students if they participated in extracurricular activities such as internships, service learning, conferences, etc. The plan establishes a benchmark or expected participation level for such activities. Other departments use data from employer evaluations of the intern, internship portfolios, internship papers, and internship coordinator ratings as measures of student learning. The internship coordinator in each such department collects the data and uses a rating form or rubric to assess student learning. The CI process plans for these departments also establish benchmarks or performance expectations. See Internship Assessment for examples of rating forms and rubrics in three departments.

Study Abroad

The Division of International Engagement collects data on students participating in faculty-led, short-term study abroad programs. Students complete a survey of the study abroad experience. Students are asked a series of questions regarding the application process such as program costs and helpfulness of study abroad staff. Several questions assess the study abroad experience such as the quality of the academic program, excursions and site visits, security and safety, and whether the student is more likely to engage in a semester-long exchange because of the study abroad experience. See Study Abroad Student Surveys for selected 2015–2016 data.

4.B.3. Use of information to improve student learning

Beginning in 2016, departments with approved CI process plans are required to report assessment results from the prior academic year using an online SLO Report form. For each SLO in a degree program's plan, the report asks the responsible department to describe students' overall performance on the assessment activity, how the result compared to the benchmark, any improvements to be made to the program or assessment process, and when those improvements will be implemented. SLO Reports are submitted annually, and are reviewed by the Academic Assessment Committee. Improvements are developed and implemented within the departments themselves.

4.B.4. Assessment processes reflect good practice, participation of faculty and other staff members

Beginning in 2013, all academic departments were required to submit a CI process plan for each undergraduate and graduate degree program. Each department's curriculum and assessment committees completed a CI process plan for each degree program. Each plan was then reviewed by the department chair, then the college curriculum and assessment committee, followed by the college dean, and then the Academic Assessment Committee. At each level of review, revisions to the plan could be requested. The Academic Assessment Committee developed a rubric for evaluating CI process plans. The rubric is also posted on the assessment website as a guide to departments. After review, the Academic Assessment Committee either approves, approves contingent upon revision, or does not approve with detailed notes provided to the program for revising the plan to meet assessment guidelines and best practices. Once approved by the Academic Assessment Committee, CI process plans were posted to an online CI process plan library on the assessment website. As of this submission, nearly all degree programs have approved CI process plans posted to the library or are assessing student learning under the auspices of programmatic accreditation.

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4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

Argument

4.C.1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion

According to UCA's Strategic Plan (2011), Goal 1 is "to continue to foster a culture of academic, scholarly, and creative excellence." One of the specific stated objectives is to create and institute strategies to achieve university goals related to student recruitment, admission, retention, and graduation. Similarly, UCA's Strategic Plan (2016) asserts the following as its first goal: "UCA will support and empower students to succeed. Actions to improve retention and graduation rates to the levels already specified by the Board in the KPIs must be UCA's first order of business."

In May 2013, the university's Board of Trustees approved key performance indicator (KPI) targets that include aggressive 5-year enrollment and graduation goals. The enrollment targets for the 5-year period of Fall 2014 through Fall 2018 include an overall total enrollment growth of roughly 20% above the Fall 2013 enrollment and a six-year graduation rate goal of 60% for the Fall 2017 cohort. See current and historical retention and graduation rates published on the UCA web site here.

Also in 2013, the Student Success and Retention Committee (SSRC) replaced the University Retention Committee and produced an Enrollment Management Plan to achieve the enrollment objectives. The SSRC produced a revision to the plan in December 2014 and is currently reworking the plan to ensure that responsibility is assigned, assessment is carried out, and improvements are made.

The 2014 Enrollment Management Plan provides

- a description of the importance of recruitment, retention, and graduation efforts to the mission of the University

- enrollment statistics for the past 10 years
- enrollment goals for the next 5 years
- guiding principles for student success
- a summary of recruitment and retention initiatives
- processes for implementation, leadership, and organizational accountability
- specific recruitment and retention initiatives

The 2014 Enrollment Management Plan also includes

- a timeline for each recruitment and retention initiative
- historical UCA retention and graduation rates
- Key Performance Indicators for the past 5 years and goals for the next 5 years

(The reworked template for the Enrollment Management Retention Plan is linked here.)

The Office of the Arkansas Governor, the UCA Board of Trustees, and the Office of the Provost set the specific standards for measuring student success. The Office of the Arkansas Governor determines statewide goals for degrees/certificates awarded. The UCA Board of Trustees determines goals for year-to-year retention rates and goals for 4-year and 6-year graduation rates. The definitions, processes, and standards conform to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) standards. The UCA Provost's office determines goals for persistence to graduation rates. The offices/entities currently involved in monitoring and achieving the student success objectives include the Office of Institutional Research, the Student Success and Retention Council, the Office of Student Success, the Strategic Planning and Resource Council, the Office of Diversity and Community, the Office of Financial Aid, and the Office of Housing.

4.C.2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion

To help the university monitor student success in retention, persistence, and completion, UCA's Office of Institutional Research (OIR) collects data, analyzes it, and provides summary reports to the campus. In 2013, the UCA Strategic Planning and Resource Council (SPARC) recommended that an annual Institutional Report Card be prepared to include Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). OIR prepared the first report card in 2013. The report card provides actual persistence, retention, graduation rate, and degrees awarded data for the preceding five years and the goals for those values for five years into the future. The Key Performance Indicators (KPI) are updated annually and published on the UCA website. (See Key Performance Indicators for the most recent report card.)

4.C.3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements

Current data provided by OIR provides an overview of UCA student success. Current initiatives are underway to provide data to assess the effectiveness of specific programs. Examples of these new specific programs include the Supplemental Instruction (SI) program and the 24 programs initiated by the Office of Diversity and Community. The SSRC's reengineered retention plan identifies the primary person responsible for each retention program on campus.

OIR makes its services available to any and all interested bodies on campus. Several entities make

regular use of OIR reports, of course; the Student Success and Retention Council (SSRC) uses the Annual Report Card and other data to identify and assess trends, including areas of strength, areas for improvement, and the overall success of the array of retention, persistence, and completion programs at UCA. To facilitate the link between assessment data and student success efforts, the Director of OIR is a member of the SSRC and, as such, is intimately involved in discussions related to the planning and evaluation of student success initiatives.

The annual report card with its KPIs is a valuable tool to provide an overall evaluation of student success efforts. However, more detailed data and analyses are needed to assess performance of particular groups of students and the effectiveness of individual programs designed to improve retention, persistence, and completion rates. To provide one example, the SSRC initiated an "HLC Workshop Project" to provide more detailed data regarding the 30% of students who begin at UCA but do not persist to the second year. These data will help identify the most important factors in student decisions to leave UCA and suggest intervention strategies to improve persistence.

4.C.4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information reflect good practice.

As noted above, many programs exist at UCA and many are modeled after programs implemented at other universities. It is imperative that UCA assess the effectiveness of these programs on our own campus and with our own students. To provide a second example of collection and analysis of more detailed data, UCA recently initiated a Supplemental Instruction (SI) program whereby trained students who have already taken a particular course provide supplemental instruction meetings with peer students currently taking the course. Data from other universities show the value of SI to student success but, as noted, it is important for UCA to evaluate the effectiveness of its program. Efforts are underway to do just that.

Supplemental Instruction (SI) is offered to students in selected high-failure/high-attrition courses. According to the International Center for Supplemental Instruction, "Supplemental Instruction (SI) is an academic support program that targets historically difficult courses. SI is a non-remedial approach to learning enrichment that increases student performance and retention. SI offers regularly scheduled, out-of-class review sessions to all students enrolled in a targeted course. SI study sessions are informal seminars in which students review notes, discuss readings, develop organizational tools and prepare for examinations. Students learn how to integrate course content with reasoning and study skills" (http://info.umkc.edu/si/faq/, accessed 2016-09-27).

UCA began a pilot SI program under the auspices of Tutoring Services in Fall 2011. Since then, SI has been offered in 42 sections of nine different courses over the last eight consecutive semesters. An analysis of students' grades after participating in SI during the Fall 2014 term demonstrated the success of the program. Nearly all students who attended SI sessions passed the courses in which SI were offered, whereas success rates were considerably lower for students who chose not to attend SI or who enrolled in non-SI sections of the same courses with the same instructors. (See preliminary analysis of the effects of SI.) Tutoring Services (TS) has hired peer SI Leaders each semester through funds accrued from the SGA-approved student fee shared by the Writing Center and Tutoring Services. SI Leaders are paid for 10 hours per week throughout the semester. The TS Coordinator and a graduate assistant attended SI training at The International Center for Supplemental Instruction at the University of Missouri–Kansas City in Fall 2011. The program has grown with support from the Office of the Provost and the departments served. We expect to be able to devote perhaps 50% of a full-time position to coordination of the program in the near future.

As a final example, the Office of Diversity and Community manages approximately 24 programs designed to enhance the success of students from various minority groups. To date, data has not been systematically collected to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs. In consultation with OIR, efforts are underway to determine the type of data that could be collected to assess the effectiveness of these programs. In contrast to the feasibility of collecting data for overall KPIs, assessment of individual programs is often a greater challenge and requires significant workload for UCA personnel. Providing sufficient resources for these assessment efforts must be a priority.

Efforts to improve persistence, retention, and completion can begin even before freshmen students arrive on campus. In addition to current "Summer Bridge" programs, the 2014 Enrollment Management Plan includes a new "College Transition Collaborative (CTC)" initiative. The goal of the initiative is "to promote college persistence and achievement, especially among students from disadvantaged backgrounds, using highly scalable mindset interventions; and to forge collaborative relationships among researchers and higher education leaders. The project involves pre-matriculation online reading and writing activities that address students' worries about belonging."

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4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

Summary

Accomplishments/Strengths

(1) The university has well-established processes for program review and curriculum development.

(2) The university has made significant progress in developing a continuous improvement process for assessing student learning and has devoted two full-time positions (director and project coordinator) to this process.

(3) The university significantly revised its general education program. The resulting UCA Core program builds competencies across four knowledge and skill areas: critical inquiry, effective communication, responsible living, and diversity.

(4) The university developed an enrollment management plan to achieve enrollment objectives.

(5) The university monitors student success. The Office of Institutional Research collects and analyzes data related to retention, graduation, and degrees awarded to produce an Annual Report Card. The report card includes Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Continuing Concerns:

(1) The university should develop better processes for tracking graduates and compiling information about its graduates (employment data, graduate school enrollment, etc.). The university recognizes that this is an area for improvement and has begun to address it.

(2) The university should continue to monitor student success in retention, persistence, and completion. These efforts are particularly important in light of recent initiatives by the Arkansas General Assembly and Governor of Arkansas to hold public universities accountable for student performance and to increase the number of college graduates in the state.

(3) The university should continue to promote a culture of assessment and improve its assessment planning and reporting processes. Some potential ways forward include the following:

- incentivizing faculty professional development in the assessment of student learning.
- encouraging the use of curriculum maps in degree programs.
- investing in software solutions that increase efficiency of assessment processes and the accessibility of assessment results.
- assisting non-instructional units in identifying and assessing co-curricular student learning outcomes.

Sources

There are no sources.

5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

5.A - Core Component 5.A

The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.
3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.
4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.
5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

Argument

5.A.1. Fiscal and human resources, and physical and technological infrastructure

Finance

UCA's report to the Higher Learning Commission in 2010 presented what was termed a "perfect storm" of factors that had seriously compromised its ability to support its educational programs financially. The university's unrestricted net assets had dwindled to a treacherous low of a negative $10,256,948, seriously compromising its ability to cultivate an environment of growth toward achieving its mission. The beginning of the recovery, reported in 2010, has since blossomed into one of the strongest financial positions in the history of the institution. Unrestricted net assets have increased an average of $9,500,000 each year since 2007–08 to their level of $47,215,653 in FY 2013–14 (the most recent audited report). This financial position provides a stable environment for determining base allocations as well as funding for strategic initiatives. Because of these efforts at improving the overall fiscal health, the university has been able to

- Complete two major capital expansions, Bear Hall and the HPER Center, and launch three others (Greek Village, Donaghey Hall, and the Conway Corporation Center for Sciences).
- Invest, between 2008 and 2014, more than $98.6 million into its physical plant, including new construction, deferred maintenance, technology upgrades, property acquisitions, and capital

equipment purchases.

- Increase student undergraduate tuition and fees at a lower rate than any other public four-year university in Arkansas. For academic years 2011–2015, the university had a five-year average increase in tuition and fees of 2.7%. This rate is below the five-year average of all public four-year universities in Arkansas (4.4%) and represents the lowest tuition and fee increase during this time period. Although the university's tuition and fees of $7,889 in 2015–2016 are above the $7,511 average for all four-year universities, the university remains competitive by creating a medium-cost option for students. (For the history of UCA's tuition and mandatory fees and increases compared with those of other Arkansas universities, see Tuition and Mandatory Fees for Four-Year Institutions.)

In doing these things, the university has made fund allocation and the budgeting process more effective to support its operation.

Technology

The Division of Information Systems and Technology (IST) provides a broad assortment of services to both the academic and administrative sides of the university. These services include but are not limited to the following:

- Network management and support
- Help desk services, hardware and software support
- Classroom technology, in collaboration with Academic Affairs
- Multimedia services
- myUCA, the entry site for essential services and resources
- Enterprise-level applications for academic and administrative use

Information technology development is guided by a five-year strategic plan that outlines improvements and remediation needed to sustain and allow the proliferation of a technologically rich learning environment. Some of the key projects outlined in the FY 2014–2020 strategic plan include migration to an Active Directory/Microsoft-based network, replacement and upgrading of campus fiber from dated multimode to modern single mode fiber, upgrading the wireless presence on campus and in the residence halls, and establishment of a secondary internet linkage from UCA to our internet service provider. The university is exploring implementation of a four-year computer replacement cycle, a five-year server refresh cycle, and a secure remote access program for employees who need to work away from the campus.

The main enterprise resource planning (ERP) system used by UCA is Ellucian Banner. This software is fully supported by IST's programmers and database administrators and provides an integrated data platform for the functions of the university—finance, financial aid, human resources, student/academic, and others. The university has several linked applications—e.g., Degree Works, GradesFirst, Adirondack (housing), Boss Cars (UCAPD), and OrgSync (Student Services)—that work with data fed from the Banner system to support essential functions. Business intelligence is delivered to the campus community by leveraging the Argos report writing software and through the use of several programmers in IST and developers in a number of functional areas across campus.

Data integrity and continuity is a major concern for all IST operations. In response, UCA owns and operates an off-site disaster recovery center approximately three miles from the UCA campus. This center houses mission critical data servers that are replicated from the university's production servers in real time, and also provides a stable working environment for up to 20 employees in the event of a

major disaster on the UCA campus. UCA has also embraced a cloud strategy for certain mission critical operations including email and the learning management system. Email communications and online productivity is provided by Google Apps for Education. The university's learning management system is hosted by Blackboard.

The recently initiated UCA Online, led by a Director of Online Learning, provides students the ability to earn some UCA degrees at a distance. Currently, the program supports the delivery of three undergraduate completion degrees, more than ten master's degrees, and one doctoral degree. Faculty developing online courses receive support from three instructional designers located in the Center for Teaching Excellence.

Human Resources

University of Central Arkansas employees numbered 1,977 in Fall 2015, the highest number in the Fall 2010–Fall 2015 period considered here. At the same time, the makeup by employee type of the employee population has remained quite stable over that period of time. Faculty comprised 37% of employees in Fall 2015 (in the period, the high is 39%, the low 37%), graduate assistants 12% (in the period, the high is 13%, the low 12%), and administration/staff 51% (in the period, the high is 51% and the low is 49%). The full-time and part-time faculty percentages have barely moved: 74% full-time and 26% part-time in Fall 2015 (in the period, the full-time high and low were 75% and 73% respectively, the corresponding part-time low and high 25% and 27%).

The largest increase in employee numbers during this period occurred in the part-time staff/administration category (41%). The overall increase in full-time employees was 9.7%, and the overall increase in part-time employees (excluding graduate assistants) was 15.7%. Full-time faculty numbers increased 5.8% overall during the period.

Employee turnover, understood as a percentage of a fall count not returning the following fall, has also been fairly steady during the times measured in our evidence. Average faculty turnover over three years was 6% (2012–2013, 2013–2014, and 2014–2015); average staff turnover during the period 2010–2011 through 2014–2015 was 14% for non-classified staff and 12% for classified staff. (See Employee Profile for specific numbers.)

The report by the visiting team in 2010 identified concerns over the lack of clarity in hiring practices regarding how the university ensures that it hires a diverse and competent workforce. At that time, the entire application process was managed with paper forms, making the task of compiling data on hiring extremely cumbersome. In addition, the role of EEOC compliance was merged with other responsibilities held by senior administrative staff. Since that time, PeopleAdmin, an automated applicant tracking system, has been implemented to manage the process of filling open positions from the inception of the opening through the placement of the final candidate. The system allows full documentation of the hiring process. In addition, a full-time compliance officer position has been created, and this officer must approve all applications as having met EEOC guidelines. This has resulted in the ability to compile data on our hiring practices as well as comply promptly with affirmative action reporting requirements. The compliance officer can now screen a pool of applicants prior to the start of the interview process and must approve the applicant finally selected prior to an offer of employment being made. This enables the university to more confidently affirm that our hiring practices meet the goal of a diverse and competent workforce by more effectively ensuring a diverse pool of applicants. (See also Criterion 5.D.2.) Board Policy 503 establishes the parameters for employment of faculty and staff.

5.A.2. Institution's resource allocation process

Regarding "elective resource allocation," see Criterion 5.A.5 and 5.C.4.

5.A.3. Resources and Mission

As the mission is carried out and as the university's strategic plan is elaborated and implemented, making practical connections to required resources is part of UCA's daily practice. This happens in the university-level budgeting process in two ways: (1) through an annual opportunity for each division and its constituent departments to reallocate existing budget to meet changing needs and (2) through the Strategic Budget Advisory Committee's prioritization of new resources. (For the former, see the Budget Request/Reallocation form; for the latter, see especially Criterion 5.C.1.)

Important Note: The current processes for budget allocations and their support of mission are undergoing review as the recommendations of the university's 2015–2016 Strategic Planning Task Force (SPTF) are implemented in the 2016 Strategic Plan, adopted by the UCA Board of Trustees in May 2016. In particular, the SBAC process for requesting new funding, described in several parts of this Assurance Argument, has been suspended for three years to allow the strategic plan's goals to receive adequate funding. SBAC continues to function as a representative body facilitating budgetary transparency in the university. (See the Strategic Planning Task Force report, p. 44.)

5.A.4. Qualifications and Training

Qualifications

For classified staff positions, the minimum job requirements are set by the State of Arkansas, Office of Personnel Management (OPM). All candidates must meet the minimum requirements established by OPM. However, the hiring manager can list preferred requirements in an effort to reflect the specific job duties of the position. UCA's Office of Human Resources reviews those preferred qualifications when the job is posted and if they are not deemed relevant, the hiring department must revise the requirements. For non-classified staff positions, the requirements are set by the hiring department based on the specific job duties of the position.

The process of establishing job requirements and the job description is reviewed and approved by multiple entities including the department head, university compliance officer, office of human resources, and the responsible vice president.

Further, the Staff Handbook establishes five employment classifications and the hiring procedures for each classification. As part of the hiring process, documents supporting an individual's qualifications for the position may be required. These documents can include resumés, letters of application, veteran's documents, and transcripts.

Faculty qualifications are discussed in Criterion 3.C.2.

Training

The institution's employees are offered a variety of online and face-to-face training opportunities covering mandatory topics as well as a variety of topics that may be of interest to the employee. The Office of University Training provides quality learning opportunities that educate, equip, and encourage UCA employees as they develop professionally and personally. In addition, employees, their spouses and dependents have varying levels of eligibility for the employee fee waiver in order to register for classes from the institution.

Professional development funding and opportunities related to specific roles and responsibilities are provided to many employees directly through their departments. Funds may be allocated from within budgets at the department, college, or division levels. Some areas have begun facilitating opportunities at the division level. For example, the Division of Student Services integrates presentations from external professional development speakers as a part of their Annual Planning Meeting and holds a divisional New Employee Orientation each semester.

Faculty professional development is minimally supported within academic departments but is also supported in other ways, including University Research Council (URC) grants and stipends, special travel allocations, and funds administered by the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE). See Criterion 3.C.4 for additional discussion of professional development support for faculty.

5.A.5. Budget Process

The financial management of the campus is based on a centralized approach with a focus on the university's priorities and on ways in which divisions' and departments' priorities link to and support institutional goals and initiatives.

Budget preparation focuses on the annual operating budget for unrestricted Education and General (E&G) and Auxiliary funds; in 2016 the budget planning process began incorporating a five-year projection by divisions. The budget office and others identify special resource issues, review and analyze budget and resource requests and issues, project costs associated with faculty and staff salary increase scenarios, and forecast benefit program costs.

When there has been growth in a specific revenue source, the incremental revenue has been phased into the university base budget over time to avoid large upward swings in the continuing revenue budget and the associated pressure to build the incremental revenue into the continuing expense budget. This practice makes it possible to maintain very stable budget support to recurring programs, and at the same time it provides a source of funds for supporting non-recurring program investments and capital projects. Under this budget management framework, the university has achieved financial stability and strength.

Throughout each budget cycle, expenses and expenditures are monitored by budget managers at the department and division levels. Controls are built into the Banner finance system that prevent deficit spending and ensure that accounting is consistent and complete.

See also Criterion 5.C.1 and 5.C.4.

The Board of Trustees is actively involved in the university planning and budget process. The Board's Audit and Finance Committee meets quarterly and during the fall and winter meetings reviews proposed tuition, room, and board rates. The full Board reviews the proposed budget elements at their annual budget workshop each spring. Participants in the annual budget workshop also include presidents of the Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and Student Government Association. This is an open

meeting with encouraged attendance of the faculty, staff, and students. The budget for the coming year is then considered for adoption by the board at its May meeting.

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5.B - Core Component 5.B

The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight of the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies— including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.
3. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

Argument

5.B.1 Governing Board

The institution is governed by a Board of Trustees, comprising seven members appointed by the governor of Arkansas and approved by the Arkansas Senate. Board members serve seven-year terms with one member's term expiring January 15 of each year. The Board meets quarterly, with special meetings called as needed.

Each year on a rotating basis, members of the Board are assigned to a campus division—Academic Affairs, Advancement, Athletics, Finance and Administration, Information Systems and Technology, Student Services, University Relations. Throughout the year, the designated board member meets with the assigned division to learn more about its operations.

In 2012 a budget workshop for the Board was added. The workshop is open to anyone wishing to attend and has representation from the senates of the faculty, staff, and students. Presentations include the basics of the university's budget, varying financial information from a historical perspective, and predictive data to demonstrate the basis of the next year's budget. This meeting is set at the last meeting of the previous year along with the dates of the other board meetings.

In 2009, the trustees adopted Board Policy 213 creating a committee of the board to be known as the Audit Committee. The Office of Internal Audit reports directly to this committee of the board. The committee's primary function is to assist the board in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities by reviewing financial information, which will be provided to the legislature and others, the systems of internal controls that management and the board have established, the audit process, and the financial operations of the university. In 2014, the policy was amended to include Finance, thereby becoming the Audit and Finance Committee. Its purpose includes reviewing with the vice president of finance and administration the planning, design, and implementation of the financial and business service operations of the university, including the preparation of operating budgets; monitoring revenues and expenditures; analyzing the university's debt service and capacity; and such other financial matters as the committee may from time to time direct.

5.B.2 Faculty, Staff, and Students (Internal Constituencies)

The primary avenue for direct input in the shared governance of the institution are the three senates: Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and Student Government Association. One key highlight of collaborative decision-making are the monthly standing meetings President Courtway has with all three senate presidents, the chief of staff, and the vice president for student services.

Numerous campus committees, working teams, and task forces include representation of students, faculty, and staff. Responsibilities of these groups vary, with topics such as finance, sustainable environment, student concerns, diversity, parking, library, undergraduate curricula, and classroom behavior to name just a few. Standing university committees are listed in chapter seven of the Faculty Handbook and in the University Committees web site (screenshot). All changes to the Faculty Handbook and the Staff Handbook are subject to board approval.

Since 2013, the presidents of the faculty senate, the staff senate, and the student government association have been given the opportunity to address the board directly prior to the vote on each action item. This provides an avenue for the opinions of the various constituencies to be heard. These officers are also at the table during the budget workshop and the annual retreat to allow their input and engagement into allocation of funds and strategic initiatives of the campus.

Two times each semester the president holds campus talks to discuss issues of interest at that time. These meetings are open forums offered at varied times and locations to allow for maximum participation. Members of the campus community are encouraged to submit questions or concerns ahead of time or at the forum. These sessions are taped so that those not able to attend may be informed. Additionally, the president meets with each college once per semester to entertain questions and have a direct dialogue with faculty.

Students, staff, faculty, and trustees are all represented on SPARC, SPC, and SBAC. This allows for participation of all stakeholders in important decisions about the direction of the campus, the methods by which to reach the goals, and the funding mechanisms to support these initiatives.

The Student Success and Retention Council (SSRC) has representation by all three constituency groups. By undertaking an on-going study of the retention and graduation/program-completion of students, the council proceeds from the belief that the university must provide every student with the information, access to resources and services, and opportunities vital to successful engagement in the UCA community. Further the council has accepted responsibility and accountability for consistently measuring evidence of student success. This is intended to identify a broadly shared understanding by the campus community of its commitments to student success and to assist the campus in prioritizing investments in student success initiatives.

5.B.3 Involvement in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes

The university's long-established curriculum change processes ensure that appropriate structures exist for contribution by and collaboration among faculty, administrators, and students in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes. The Curriculum Development Process Guide (first published in 1994 and subject to considerable change within an overall stable framework since) outlines how courses, requirements, and programs are created, revised, and decommissioned as disciplines themselves change and as the needs of the university's constituents change. The proposal process

most often, but not always, begins with program faculty within a department and then proceeds through the following levels of review and approval: (1) department curriculum committee; (2) department chair; (3) college curriculum committee; (4) college dean; (5) if related to teacher education, the Professional Education Council; (6) if related to the UCA Core (general education) program, the UCA Core Council; (7) Undergraduate Council and/or Graduate Council depending on the level(s) of the curriculum change; and (8) the Council of Deans. Depending on the nature of the proposal, additional levels of review and approval may be required: (9) UCA Board of Trustees, (10) Arkansas Department of Higher Education, and (11) Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Academic changes that may affect student financial aid are reported to the Office of Student Financial Aid through a protocol developed to ensure such communication. (See Criterion 4.A.4 for additional discussion of curriculum processes.)

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5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.
5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

Argument

5.C.1 Resource Allocation

The alignment of resource allocation with mission and priorities is facilitated by budget planning at the institution, division, and department levels. At the institution level, the process for new funding requests is designed to influence decisions at the lower levels and is overseen by the Strategic Planning and Resource Council (SPARC). SPARC is charged with coordinating the efforts of its constituent committees, the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) and the Strategic Budgeting Advisory Committee (SBAC), under the leadership of one executive committee.

While SPC is charged with making recommendations concerning the implementation of strategic plan initiatives (see Criterion 1, 1.A–1.B for an overview), SBAC is charged with making funding recommendations to support those strategic plan initiatives and the university's mission. SBAC membership is comprised of representatives from the institution's academic colleges, Staff Senate, Student Government Association, provost's office, and athletic department; as well as standing committee staff from the Division of Finance and Administration and the Office of Institutional Research. See SPARC for the structure of the council and its constituent committees, and see Criterion 5.A.3 for a note about changes to the SBAC process related to implementation of the 2016 Strategic Plan.

During the annual budget process SBAC reviews new funding requests proposed by each division for the next fiscal year, as well as the succeeding five-year period of the request. All requests must be in the form of an SBAC worksheet that explains how the funding request will support at least one of UCA's strategic plan goals and the specific objectives related to that goal. Each new funding request is then presented to the committee by the corresponding divisional leadership to allow for follow-up questions and clarification. These presentations are publicized and open to the campus community. Subsequent meetings are held by the committee for selection of the top ten initiatives that best support the university's mission, and recommendations are made to the President.

Additionally, the year-end-transfer (YET) process funds divisional capital projects that may not be funded under the on-going deferred maintenance review. See the processes for funding such projects

and a list of one year's YET transfers.

The minutes of each meeting are available in perpetuity on the SPARC website.

5.C.2 Linked Processes

Over the last 10 years, UCA has improved existing processes and, where needed, implemented new processes to formalize its evaluation, planning, and decision making across the institution. As these processes have become established practice, the streamlining and efficiency of how these elements align has been improved. The most apparent example, the alignment of institutional planning and budgeting committees under a common leadership structure, is summarized in 5.C.1.

The institution continues to make progress at the department and division levels as well. For example, there has been a concerted effort to simplify the open sharing of existing data sources. Institutional Research has links to Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and other institutional data on its website. Additionally, Institutional Research has built interactive dashboards as a replacement for the static "fact books" of the past. Similarly, campus leaders are collaborating to better share existing data sources:

- **GradesFirst**: Used for tutoring services, advising appointments, success workshop attendance, etc., GradesFirst also provides a mechanism allowing timely identification of students who need intervention from advisors or other campus resources and services.
- **Mapworks**: Self-evaluation survey to identify at-risk students; provides a repository for RA notes and a tool for student planning and provides for referral to campus resources and services to meet students' needs. Peer Success Coaches are trained to understand and use Mapworks reports in their coaching assignments.
- **OrgSync**: Student organization membership, campus event participation, social engagement.

Criterion 4 addresses formal assessment and evaluation processes, in particular assessment of student learning, but these processes are connected to the evaluation and planning mission of all areas of the institution. The institution's Continuous Improvement (CI) process structure was intentionally designed to allow all areas of campus to share a common framework. Both curricular and co-curricular units can assess student learning outcomes using the CI process plan template, and this template has been adapted to the specific needs of areas outside academic affairs to evaluate operational outcomes. An example is the Division of Student Services CI process.

5.C.3 Internal and External Perspectives

As previously noted, SPARC is charged with coordinating the efforts of UCA's strategic planning and uses both the SBAC and SPC under the same general leadership to accomplish its goals. This common leadership in both the planning and financial areas allows UCA to align its strategic goals and its fiscal goals in one cohesive plan.

Since 2011, the university has engaged constituency areas in reviewing and revising the strategic plan, with an eye to providing the most comprehensive and well-rounded view of the needs of the university. Strategic Planning Forums have involved faculty, staff, and students, and the just-completed Strategic Planning Task Force (SPTF) initiative (2015–2016) brought these constituents together with members of the Board of Trustees and the Central Arkansas community. (See the SPTF Final Report and the new Strategic Plan derived from that report.)

Evidence of this collaborative approach may also be seen in the annual Board of Trustees Budget Workshop (see Criterion 5 A.5) and in the annual planned transfers and "white board" processes (see Criterion 5.C.1).

5.C.4 Capacity / Fluctuations

Planning and Budget Process

The university's strategic plan and the Framework for the Future are the bases for strategic planning at all levels of the institution. Oversight for the strategic planning, budget planning, analysis, and allocation processes starts with the president and university officers reporting to him as well as other key budget staff. Members of this group include the president, the executive vice president and provost, the chief of staff and vice president for university relations, the vice president for finance and administration, the vice president for student services and institutional diversity, the vice president for advancement, and the associate vice president for budget and finance.

The budget staff provides support and analysis for the day-to-day administrative work associated with the budget planning, analysis, and allocation processes. In addition, deans and area financial managers play a major role in the management and administration of the annual budgets, and they are consulted on various budget planning issues and topics during both the development and implementation of the university's annual budget.

The university's budget planning process is an integral part of the ongoing institutional management structure. The president and executive team identify and discuss economic conditions and other factors that could impact the university's annual budget. Trends in economic growth, state funding, potential legislative action, and enrollment are reviewed. Other materials reviewed include peer university tuition, room, and board rates; faculty and staff compensation studies; proposed changes to the university's benefits programs; and undergraduate scholarship policies. Further, the team identifies critical items for the university's upcoming budget and reviews the university's financial forecast of revenues and expenses.

Under the direction of the president, the vice president for finance and administration guides and directs the development of the budget planning parameters including tuition, room and board rate increases, and revenue estimates for all sources of unrestricted revenue. As much as possible, large recurring expenses are anticipated well in advance of their being incurred. Significant annual, recurring revenue increases are set aside to cover the expected new expenses.

From September to October of each year, the division heads work with deans and area directors to review their strategic plans, special programs, budget issues, and other needs and problems. These needs are prioritized and presented by each division head to the Strategic Budget Advisory Committee (SBAC) for review. After all proposals have been reviewed and heard, the SBAC prioritizes the top ten needs based on linkages to the Strategic Plan and provides recommendations on funding priorities to the president.

Linked documents provide a summary of Strategic Budgeting and Financial Status (included as part of the 2013 report submitted in preparation for that year's focused visit), UCA's current financial status as presented in the latest Financial Report Card, a Budget Prep Book, and an Annual Budget document.

5.C.5 Emerging Factors – Technology, Demographic Shifts, Globalization

The university has gone to great lengths to anticipate changes and become proactive in addressing these needs. Several key programs have contributed to UCA's response to these changes including UCA Online, the Division of Information Systems and Technology, and the Division of International Engagement.

UCA Online was developed to address the growing need of UCA to increase enrollment and serve populations that do not have ready access to the campus of a four-year institution. UCA Online offers those students the ability to complete their degrees without extensive travel. Additionally, UCA Online offers extended opportunities for international and out-of-state students to participate in UCA degree programs at all levels, bachelor through doctoral. See the recently updated UCA Online Strategic Design, selected resources for faculty participating in UCA Online, and screenshots from the UCA Online web site, with resources for students.

The Division of Information Systems and Technology (IST) has published a campus-wide technology plan addressing the institution's need to modernize and stabilize its campus infrastructure in order to continue to provide high quality education. The plan includes provisions for updated network cabling, increased wireless capacity, cloud sourcing of strategic applications, and replacement of campus technology equipment. Not only does this plan support the needs of the physical campus, but it also addresses the growing need for the campus to become more agile and adaptive to changing needs of the community. Several mission critical systems have already been cloud sourced (email and the learning management system), and UCA continues to look for ways to provide more remote and cloud-based options for its students, faculty, and staff. (See Criterion 5.A.1 and the Campus-Wide Technology Plan.) Outside of IST, an excellent example of harnessing the possibilities of technology for learning is the College of Education's new and evolving myUCA 1:1 Mobile Learning Initiative.

The Division of International Engagement has secured several partnerships in Latin America and Asia and, both building on and extending those partnerships, sponsors an annual Leaders of the World conference, bringing together academic, community, business, and political leaders in a setting that provides opportunities for education, community development, and international collaboration. The UCA Confucius Institute, similarly, exists to promote multi-disciplinary, multi-domain, and multi-level exchanges and cooperation, in particular between UCA and its partner East China Normal University. (For the Teach Chinese in Arkansas program, see Criterion 1.C.2.)

The university has been able to provide consistent funding for these initiatives, partially through year-end transfers. (See Criterion 5.C.1.)

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5.D - Core Component 5.D

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.
2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

Argument

5.D.1 Evidence of Performance

Strength of Academic Programs and Student Success

UCA's processes for evaluating the strength of its academic programs are developed in the section of this argument addressing Criterion 4.A. Criterion 4.B and 4.C address assessment of learning outcomes and other measures of student success. The university has established key performance indicators addressing student retention, progression, and completion and monitors its overall performance in regard to these indicators annually.

Additionally, UCA recognizes that student success and challenges that impede it must be understood holistically. To that end, the university has for some years used Mapworks as a holistic approach to student success and retention, providing a platform of information that faculty and staff use to identify at-risk students early in the term. Mapworks identifies the "risk" level of students by using a predictive analytics model, which takes into account uploaded data (High School GPA, ACT/SAT scores, first generation, etc.) and the student's responses to an online survey. After completing the survey, students receive a personalized student report that identifies areas of strength and provides suggested actions and campus resources for areas challenging the student. Mapworks was implemented at UCA within the Department of Housing and Residence Life (HRL) with a pilot project during AY 2012–13 and is now used with all first-year students and students enrolled in UNIV 1100, a student success course for conditionally admitted students.

Targeted interventions have been implemented for specific factors from the survey with the strongest relationship to fall to spring persistence and/or fall semester GPA. Mapworks data has also been used in evaluating the effectiveness of departmental practice. For example, analysis from AY 2014–15 revealed that students that participated in five or more HRL events reported noticeably higher ratings on a number of survey variables—Satisfaction with the Institution, Peer Connections, Social Integration, and On-Campus Living Experience—along with lower levels of Homesickness during the spring Mapworks survey. In Spring 2015, the Office of Student Success and HRL partnered to pilot a peer success coaching program, which continued into the 2015–16 academic year and has been identified as a strategic approach to student success within the 2016 strategic plan.

Financial Performance

The university documents the performance of its financial operations in a variety of ways. The most

widely recognized is the annual Audited Financial Statement. Fieldwork by Legislative Audit generally occurs between January and May following the June 30th closing of the previous year. The resulting document contains the Auditor's Report, Management Discussion and Analysis (MD&A), Statement of Net Position, Statement of Revenues, Expenses, and Changes in Net Position, Statement of Cash Flows, Notes to the Financial Report, and limited financial statements of the Foundation. These reports are publicly available on the website of the Arkansas Legislative Audit; see the university's most recent audited financial report.

The Financial Report Card is a brief document the university uses to track the most frequently monitored and accessed financial data. Included on the report card is the Composite Financial Index (CFI) and its supporting ratios. The CFI is considered one of the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and tracked by the Board of Trustees and is, of course, closely monitored by the HLC. Other items of interest on the report card are the internally designated unrestricted/unallocated cash, fund balances for E&G and Auxiliary funds, debt ratios, days of cash on hand, and Moody's rating.

The Strategic Assessment Budget Worksheet is a report intended to document the percent of resources supporting each of the university's strategic goals. The baseline was completed in 2014. A follow-up report will be reevaluated as the 2016 strategic plan is implemented.

Administrative Operational Effectiveness

Administrative and co-curricular units evaluate operational effectiveness with various methods and measurements specific to areas of responsibility. Some of the most common include directly soliciting student satisfaction feedback, internal evaluation fiscal responsibility, and benchmarking performance against peer institutions and national standards.

Gathering student feedback on satisfaction with services and perceived needs allows front-line campus offices to measure internal performance. For these areas of campus, student learning and success is supported through effective administration of their services. For example, areas of campus providing services such as dining, healthcare, activities, and business services use point-of-service or online surveys to gauge their performance. Survey examples: Counseling Center Satisfaction Survey, Student Activities SkyFactor BenchWorks, Student Government Association/Aramark Survey, Student Health Clinic Survey.

Evaluating performance versus external peers is also a valuable tool for many administrative and co-curricular areas of campus. These external benchmarks allow those areas to determine where resources will have the most impact on the student population's experience. The campus activity and engagement offices responsible for student leadership development, fraternities and sororities, student entertainment, career support, and student union (Student Center) use SkyFactor's Benchworks software to benchmark performance against external peers, Carnegie classification, and national Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) national standards. Evidence: see overview of CAS comparison and results for Greek Life.

External Measure: Performance Funding

On January 11, 2011, the governor of Arkansas issued a challenge to the state and to its institutions of higher education by stating: "We can and must double the number of college graduates in Arkansas by 2025 if we are to stay competitive. This is a lofty goal aimed at the future, but we must begin

implementing it today." As one incentive to reach that goal, Act 1203 of 2011 established a framework for replacing part of the "needs-based" funding formula that existed prior to this legislation with a performance funding model. For the entire framework and its context, see the report of the task force created by Act 1203, *Arkansas 2025: Leading in the Global Economy by Investing in Education and Enhancing Accountability*. The model adopted establishes four mandatory measures, ten optional measures, and one compensatory measure for all of which a maximum of ten points may be earned. Achieving a score lower than six results in loss of a portion of funding. UCA has been fully funded under the performance funding model each of the years in which it has been in effect. A new model for funding (currently called "productivity funding") is currently under development; its framework has been approved by the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB), and it will go, it is expected, to the Arkansas legislature when it next convenes in regular session. The new model grows out of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education's *Closing the Gap 2020: A Master Plan for Higher Education in Arkansas and its recently published implementation plan*.

UCA participates actively in the statewide planning processes described in this section and is, thus, able to incorporate external expectations into internal planning.

5.D.2 Learning from Experience, Institutional Effectiveness

Transparency and Inclusion

Lack of transparency noted in earlier evaluations has led to the reinstatement of the Budget Advisory Committee. This committee, since tied to SPARC and SPC, has been renamed the Strategic Budgeting Advisory Committee (SBAC). The committee has met consistently since 2008. Its members' responsibilities include learning about the budget and the budgeting process to understand and communicate with their constituencies. SBAC also hears new funding proposals from the various divisions which are evaluated and prioritized. The prioritized top ten list is submitted to the president for consideration in building the next year's budget. Included as evidence is a document showing the last four years of priorities. (See Criterion 5.A.3 for an important note about changes in SBAC processes related to implementation of the 2016 Strategic Plan.)

Transparency and inclusion also extend to the redirection of budget funds at the end of the fiscal year. The divisions are asked to present to the president and executive staff a prioritized list of needs that can be met with one time funds (see Year End Transfers). Since 2010 this effort has reallocated millions of unspent dollars to be used for prioritized needs, including technology, instructional and classroom equipment, deferred maintenance needs, equipping new facilities, and initial investment for UCA Online.

Financial Weakness

Previous evaluations have also noted financial weaknesses. Tools used to monitor results from changes in strategy are included in the Financial Report Card, the annual Audited Financial Report (see the most recent report and the list of audits available online), the Budget Prep Book, and the Strategic Assessment Budget Worksheet. Data provided by these documents enables the campus to set goals strategically for internally defined unallocated and unrestricted cash, debt ratios, the composite financial index, and other purposes. This data has also enabled the campus to set aside funding for campus strategic initiatives, such as UCA Online, the campus technology plan, lab equipment for the new science building, and property acquisitions.

Diversity

Concern expressed in previous evaluations has refocused the university's attention to diversity as a strength of the campus. Diversity data has informed decisions in recruiting practices for employees and students. The university has appointed a Chief Diversity Officer, established an Office of Institutional Diversity and an Office of Diversity and Community, and created a campus-wide diversity plan. The purpose of these changes is to provide multiple support services to enhance the academic success of students from underrepresented populations in higher education to create an inclusive campus community. These measures promote student success through retention-focused programs, mentoring, leadership development opportunities, and life skills enrichment.

Programming includes organizing and facilitating opportunities to enhance the diversity mission by professional development, community outreach, conferences, difficult dialogues, focus groups, institutes, presentations, restorative justice, seminars, town hall meetings, and workshops. Accountability will be carried out by collecting and assessing data accounting for diverse populations of students, faculty, staff, and administrators with specific attention given to recruitment and retention; persistence and graduation rates; honors enrollment; STEM participation; academic intervention; academic achievement gaps; student leadership development and participation; co-curricular activities (athletic and nonathletic); discipline and expulsion; and other relevant criteria. The Diversity Advisory Committee has recently administered the Campus Climate Survey on campus, and a summary of the findings, when available, will be provided to each college and division diversity committee for use in unit-level diversity planning and improvement.

Fall 2014 marked the first semester that ODC began to work consistently with the director of Diversity Assessment Initiatives to gather the most appropriate data to determine programming effectiveness. Thus far, the outcomes have been positive, while the data also reveal areas where changes will improve results. The initial outcomes have been documented in a report on retention initiatives in the Enrollment Management Plan.

Information related to the activities and those served may be found on the Diversity and Institutional Diversity web pages. For recognition of the university as "committed to diversity," see this Minority Access, Inc., notification.

Enrollment and Student Success

A downward trend in enrollment led to operational changes and the creation of an enrollment plan. This Enrollment Management Plan was developed as part of the university's on-going efforts to engage more fully in comprehensive long-range planning regarding areas critical to the university's mission. As part of these efforts, the university adopted a new mission statement in 2010, and a new strategic plan in 2011. Now the university is working at multiple levels to implement a more strategic approach to managing enrollment, producing its first Enrollment Management Plan in July 2013. The plan was revised in December 2014 and is currently being reengineered by the Student Success and Retention Council.

One element in the university's enrollment management strategy is a vigorous 2+2 transfer agreement initiative. The primary goal of the 2+2 transfer agreement program is to provide Arkansas Community College (ACC) students with the clarity necessary to understand how they can complete an associate

degree and UCA baccalaureate degree in the most efficient manner possible. (See screenshots of the transfer agreement web site.) The intended result is to provide UCA with an increase in the number of transfer students who have already earned an associate degree and are prepared to successfully complete their remaining baccalaureate course of study at UCA.

To date, UCA has entered into more than 100 articulation agreements with 19 of the 22 Arkansas Community Colleges, resulting in the creation of over 350 degree plan checklists available to prospective transfer students. An example of such an agreement is linked here.

While these agreements are a "win-win-win" for students, Arkansas Community Colleges, and UCA, it is clear that the mere availability of these degree plan checklists alone will not achieve the intended result. In order to better meet the needs of this population, UCA has

- Designated two advisors to be the "first point of contact" for all admitted transfer students.
- Developed a process for proactive transcript analysis and pre-advising-appointment credit resolution.
- Initiated regular on-site advisement and registration services at Arkansas State University-Beebe, National Park College, Pulaski Technical College, and the University of Arkansas Community College at Morrilton.
- Begun making presentations in courses at some of the aforementioned colleges in order to educate students about 2+2 opportunities.
- Purchased software to make web-based advising and registration services available.
- Developed a collaborative syllabus evaluation process to continually update the new online transfer course database.
- Implemented a 2+2 identification and verification procedure in order to ensure that degree requirement promises are kept.
- Formed a "2UCA Team," comprised of members of Admissions, Academic Advising, and the Office of the Registrar, the focus of which will be the continuous improvement of all aspects of the student admission-and-registration experience.

Strengthening the ties we have with our Arkansas Community College (ACC) partners will be a critical element in the health of the 2+2 transfer agreement program moving forward. Examples of potential initiatives designed to promote this include

- Initiation of on-campus events, hosted by UCA's colleges, to increase collaboration with ACC faculty.
- Implementation of new, on-site transfer day programs with our largest Arkansas Community College partners.

The 2+2 transfer agreement program, while it responds to a UCA need (more students and more graduates) also recognizes a historical fact: students transferring to UCA having already earned at least 30 credit hours graduate at rates that rival those of native students. These graduates are not represented in official graduation rates, but do, nonetheless, earn degrees from UCA. This fact will become increasingly important as Arkansas public higher education moves to the productivity funding model.

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- 3-resources-b-hr-diversity-0009
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- 5-assessment-c-programs-0027
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- 5-assessment-c-programs-0030

5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

Summary

The University of Central Arkansas has effectively addressed concerns highlighted in its 2010 HLC self-study and in the visiting team report and the action letter on that comprehensive evaluation. The monitoring report submitted in May 2012 and the focused-visit institutional report submitted in preparation for a November 2013 focused visit describe the university's planning and initial implementation of its responses to those concerns. That these stages in the process of response were successful is documented in the HLC acceptance of the Monitoring Report, the on-site team's report on the Focused Visit, the action letter on the focused visit, and the action letter on the Financial Monitoring Report. The current self-study shows the maturation of these responses over the past three years. The university is now implementing of its second strategic planning cycle since 2010.

Accomplishments / Strengths

(1) The university has established its financial position as one of the strongest in its history, providing a stable environment for determining base allocations as well as funding strategic initiatives.

(2) The university's budgeting process—and other governance processes—have become more transparent and useful.

(3) The university is currently implementing a campus-wide strategic plan for information systems and technology and for online learning.

(4) The university's strategic planning processes have made clear a mission and core values that remain at the center of its planning processes and of the implementation of the plans that result.

(5) The university's workforce has remained relatively stable over time, and thoughtful consideration of employee qualifications—for both staff and faculty—allows for thoughtful employment decisions.

(6) At the same time, the university's student enrollment has also shown reasonable stability over the past several years, with some gains in student numbers and no catastrophic drops in enrollment during the time of this review.

(7) The university has clearly learned from its experience and has in particular addressed the planning, diversity, and financial concerns of the past.

Continuing Concerns

(1) An uncertain funding future remains a concern, although the university is involved in statewide discussions and so will be able to influence changes as they develop and adapt to them as they are

adopted by the state.

(2) The university must continue to improve its documentation of institutional effectiveness, particularly in areas not directly related to student learning outcomes.

(3) The university must remain vigilant so that its mission and core values continue to drive strategic initiatives as it responds to the needs of its communities.

Sources

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