

**Miss UCA Scholarship Pageant Inquiry**  
**Faculty Affairs II Committee**  
*Senators Moore, Ray, Rospert, Schaefer, Isom.*

The following document contains: (1) A statement submitted to the Faculty Senate by Faculty Affairs II committee concerning the Miss UCA Scholarship Pageant, (2) a summary of information supporting our statement, and (3) a compilation of information gathered by Faculty Affairs II committee concerning the issue. The compiled information consists of emailed correspondence between Senator Mike Schaefer and Mr. Larry Burns, member of Miss UCA Board of Directors and Senator Isom and VP Jack Gillean.

**(1) Senate Statement Concerning Charge:**

*We, as a committee, find the objectifying and exploitive nature of the UCA Scholarship Pageant offensive and inconsistent with the mission and ethical integrity of our Institution. The offering of UCA Scholarships on the basis of appearance or academically unrelated talent is an antiquated and sexist practice. Further, we believe the superficial nature of the event has a negative influence on UCA's public image as an institution of higher learning that values and promotes the academic success and character development of its students, regardless of gender or appearance.*

*However, based on our investigation, the transfer of Pageant ownership occurred before the UCA name was trademarked and so any request for formal action to remove the UCA name from the pageant is beyond the scope of the Faculty Senate. Therefore, we do not recommend any further action by the Senate at this time.*

**(2) Information Summary:**

- Pageant was bought by Alpha Sigma Alpha sorority in the early 1990's before the UCA name was trademarked so the rights to the name were not protected at that time and further information concerning the legality issue is not available. (per Jack Gillean).
- The funding for the Pageant is private with the exception of the UCA scholarship.
- The winner of the pageant must meet UCA's eligibility requirements before the scholarship is granted.

**(3) Compiled Correspondence**

- Original Complaint from Faculty Member:

Faculty Affairs II committee was asked to consider the concern brought forth by Senator Rospert at the December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008 Faculty Senate meeting:

*I would like to express my concerns about the annual Miss University of Central Arkansas*

"scholarship" (beauty) pageant. I find it difficult to believe that today, in 2008, we still have such activities on our campus. But I realize that we will have this until all such pageants become a thing of the past. It is even more disconcerting, however, that we at UCA offer substantial scholarship dollars for this event. This year, for example, the prize money is around \$13,000 for the winner (over \$2,000 each for runners up).

I am primarily upset that we still require the "bathing suit" portion of the "competition", which requires our students to take off most of their clothes in order to qualify for the prize money. Even more alarming is the archaic requirement that they wear flesh-colored high-heel pumps while wearing their bikinis (one girl was allowed to wear a one-piece a few years ago, because her body type was not considered appropriate for a two-piece). Bikinis and pumps are not typical beachwear, as a "bathing suit competition" would suggest. Pumps, however, do appear with bikinis when the sex appeal of the woman (or girl) is emphasized (such as in "girlie" magazines and calendars--borderline soft porn). Is this the message we want to send our students? Is this the message UCA wants to send our community? I think it is time we reconsider the format of this event and the messages it sends.

Due to support it gets from very influential individuals, I don't see how we can expect to eliminate this embarrassing activity from our campus. My recommendation to the Faculty Senate is that we demand that at least the bathing suit element be dropped from the proceedings. Under no circumstances should we stand for the display of students' flesh in exchange for money, especially when such display is directly affiliated by name with the University of Central Arkansas.

- Email to Committee Requesting Pageant Information

We are supposed to consider whether the Senate should take a formal position on the Pageant and so we should have information concerning

- (1) the criteria for participation,
- (2) the components of the award for the winner and
- (3) the funding source(s) for the event and the awards.
- (4) I think it would probably be helpful (although not absolutely necessary) to find out if UCA's event/criteria and similar to those at other peer Institutions.

- Email from Senator Schaefer in response to the request for information

According to [www.missuca.org](http://www.missuca.org), "The Miss UCA Scholarship Pageant is sponsored by Alpha Sigma Alpha sorority and is directed by the Miss UCA Board of Directors: Susan Hickey, Mary Tate, Milicent McDonald, Larry Burns, Jennifer Overton, Kacee Sims, and Lindsey Osborne." I know Larry Burns a little bit, so I called him this afternoon and got some answers:

- (1) He's sending me the criteria for participation, which I'll pass along to you when I get them.

The answer to (2), at least as of 2007, is that "The winner will receive a one-year tuition-and-fees scholarship to UCA and over \$2,500 in prizes. Scholarships totaling \$2,300 will

be given to other winners during the pageant." The other winner categories in 2009 were Overall Talent, 1st Runner up, Overall Swimsuit Winner, Photogenic Award, 2nd Runner up, UCA Panhellenic Bear Spirit, Overall Interview, 3rd Runner up, Academic Excellence, Overall Evening Gown, 4th Runner up, Early Bird Award, and Producers Award. (I'm quoting press releases here, not Larry Burns himself.)

(3) Larry told me that the Miss UCA Board of Directors pays for the pageant by fundraising external to the University; it costs about \$20,000 a year. The only contribution UCA makes is the winner's one-year scholarship. Some years ago UCA did own and fund the pageant, but, following the lead of other universities, it divested itself, at which point Alpha Sigma Alpha bought the rights to it from the Miss America organization and elected to keep the name "Miss UCA." Larry said that this arrangement is standard on college campuses now: the winner gets the title of the campus, but some entity other than the university owns, funds, and puts on the pageant. That being the case, I think the answer to (4) is that the criteria for the Miss America feeder pageants are ultimately determined by the Miss America organization, not the individual universities or the actual sponsoring groups.

- Scholarship criteria as provided by Larry Burns through Senator Schaefer

- email from Larry Burns:

Dr. Schaefer,

Thanks for calling with your questions. I have attached the scholarship rules. There are rules for the scholarships provided by the pageant board of directors (around \$4,000 a year) and also rules for the scholarship provided by the University.

Please let me know if you have any other questions or concerns. The Miss UCA Board of Directors, as active UCA Alumni, will continue to work with parties who have concerns about the pageant. We often have concerns from students about the pageant and work to dispel many rumors and myths about the pageant.

I have also attached the contract that any contestant must sign in order to compete at the state level. Each pageant board has some leeway in the requirements to compete in local pageants.

Thanks,

LB

- List of Scholarship Rules / Criteria (**attachment 1**)

- Larry Burns' response per Senator Schaefer to the faculty complaint (as reported in Faculty Senate Minutes from December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008)

Dr. Schaefer,

I was just perusing the Faculty Senate website and noticed the letter from one of Senator Rospert's constituents regarding the Miss UCA pageant. I would like to clarify a few things:

(1) There are no requirements about what a contestant wears in the Lifestyle and Fitness Section (which is 10% of the score) of the competition; though, it is customary that a bathing suit and heels are worn. We have had contestants go on to win who do not wear a typical bathing suit. We often have contestants that wear one pieces. Also, there is no requirement that pumps or heels are worn.

(2) Finally, as cliché as it sounds, it is not a beauty pageant. The board goes to great lengths to make sure the lifestyle and fitness section is as tasteful and quick as possible. The max a contestant can be on stage during that round is 30 seconds and there is no final parade as there are with the other sections of the pageant. I just wanted to make sure you and your committee had that clarification...

Larry

• *Larry Burns' response to an invited opportunity for the Miss UCA Pageant Board to further respond officially to the complaint. (February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2009)*

Dr. Schaefer,

I do not think it is necessary to address the committee or the faculty senate. I think I've given you everything I would want to say. Let me know if any other questions come up.

Larry

- Committee's request (March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2009) for information concerning the legality of the UCA Pageant's use of the UCA name and Jack Gillean's response (March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009)

Dear Mr. Gillean,

I really appreciate your quick response to the phone message I left yesterday afternoon and your time discussing this issue. The committee also greatly appreciates your willingness to help us gather information concerning the use of UCA's name by Alpha Sigma Alpha sorority in the naming of the Miss UCA Scholarship Pageant.

Here is the compiled correspondence that we have received / generated thus far in our inquiry. I hope you find it informative.

Lori

Lori,

Thank you for forwarding the material you sent a few days ago. I have also corresponded via e-mail with Larry Burns.

This is what I can tell you. I can find no record in the minutes of the UCA Board of Trustees of any discussion about this issue. It appears that whatever transfer occurred, it was done administratively. I have no records from that era to refer back to in an effort to discover what was done.

Larry Burns believes that either the Miss UCA Pageant or Miss Arkansas officials have some documentation about the matter.

As I mentioned to you in our phone conversation, the university filed for and received trademark protection for the marks "UCA" and the "University of Central Arkansas." Thus, the university owns those marks and controls how they may be used. This protection was obtained by the university after (later in time) the rights to the pageant were transferred away. Therefore, I am not sure how the earlier transfer of the right to use the name and the trademark protection interact. It will probably depend on the nature of the transfer that occurred in the early 1990s. As I indicated, I do not have any documentation on that issue.

At this point, there are no other avenues of which I am aware to research the issue. If someone can obtain the documents by which the transfer occurred, that might provide guidance on the issue.

I hope this is helpful to you.

Jack Gillean

## **Attachment 1**

### **Miss University of Central Arkansas Scholarship Rules**

As a contestant in the 2009 Miss University of Central Arkansas Scholarship Pageant, I understand that I must:

1. have successfully completed one (1) semester as a full-time student (12 hours) at the University of Central Arkansas.
2. have a Cumulative Grade Point Average of no less than a 2.5 on a 4.0 scale.
3. be currently enrolled as a full-time student or enrolled for only those courses needed to meet degree requirements at the end of the current semester and an application for graduation has been properly filed with the institution at the time of the 2009 Miss University of Central Arkansas Scholarship Pageant.

#### **Provision and Use of Scholarship Money provided by the Miss University of Central Arkansas Pageant**

1. Scholarships awarded to contestants participating in the 2009 Miss University of Central Arkansas Scholarship Pageant may be used for undergraduate or graduate school tuition and fees or textbooks purchased ***only*** at the University of Central Arkansas.
2. All scholarship money awarded to Miss University of Central Arkansas 2009, runners up, or other named scholarship winners will be deposited into the recipient's University of Central Arkansas student account in the Spring 2009 semester unless the contestant informs the executive director otherwise.
3. Scholarship money may be used for tuition and fees during Summer semesters. The recipient must notify the Executive Director if scholarship money needs to be held for use during 2009 Summer terms.

4. If a scholarship winner does not attend the University of Central Arkansas during the 2008 Spring Semester, her scholarship will be held in the Miss University of Central Arkansas Scholarship Pageant's Scholarship Account for a maximum of 2 years. After this time, unused scholarship money will be forfeited to the Miss University of Central Arkansas Scholarship Pageant.
5. Scholarship money used to purchase textbooks will be reimbursed by providing an itemized receipt. Receipts must be submitted to the Miss University of Central Arkansas Scholarship Pageant in order to receive reimbursement. Reimbursement will be made for the amount on the receipt only.

#### **Use of Scholarship Money provided by the University of Central Arkansas**

1. Scholarships awarded to contestants participating in the 2009 Miss University of Central Arkansas Scholarship Pageant may be used for undergraduate or graduate school tuition and fees only at the University of Central Arkansas.
2. Miss University of Central Arkansas is given a one-year (two semesters) scholarship for tuition and fees.
3. The University provided scholarship will be the first reduced when stacking limits have been reached.
4. The maximum scholarship will be for 21 hours each semester.
5. The minimum academic scholarship rules, as determined by the Board of Trustees of the University of Central Arkansas, will apply to this scholarship. (Currently: The student must complete 30 hours in the fall and spring semesters and maintain a yearly GPA of 3.25. The student must have a 2.5 at the end of the first semester for the scholarship to continue into the second semester.)
6. Miss UCA must complete significant work towards their platform, must make at least three documented public appearances each semester, must maintain an acceptable public image while representing the University, and should work with the administration of the University and the Miss University of Central Arkansas Scholarship Pageant Board of Directors to advance the image of the University.

7. Failure to meet these requirements will result in the loss of the scholarship and can result in the loss of the title of Miss University of Central Arkansas 2009.

Contestant's

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_