

# You Belong at the Top!

APRIL 12

## STRATEGIC PLAN

# 2010

*“Strategic planning must connect the institution with its environment, be inclusive and very participatory, be respectful of existing governance systems, and have the active and strong support of campus leaders.”*

—David McFarland ©2009 Penson Associates, Inc.

**UNIVERSITY  
OF  
CENTRAL  
ARKANSAS**

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# CORE VALUES

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*Core values are “[the] fundamental principles that guide the institution in accomplishing its mission. They define the common values of the institution which provide the foundation for all activities.” –David McFarland ©2009 Person Associations, Inc.*

## **COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY**

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

- **Collegiality:** We believe in a productive and synergistic interaction among our students, faculty, staff, and administrators in the pursuit of institutional goals.
- **Partnerships:** We believe in working with the citizens of Conway, Arkansas, the nation, and the world as well as those entities who work with us such as the Arkansas State Legislature and the Arkansas Department of Higher Education to envision goals that serve everyone mutually and work toward change.
- **Environment:** We support a safe, healthy, and attractive environment where our community members can flourish personally and socially as whole beings. We accomplish this through a well-trained police department, prepared to deal with a variety of emergencies; the Student Health Clinic; The Women’s Health Center; the Counseling Center; and a campus beautification plan overseen by the Physical Plant.

## **DIVERSITY**

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

- **Recruitment and Retention:** We actively pursue and seek to retain a diversified student body, faculty, and staff.
- **Support:** We maintain the highest academic quality and ensure that our programs remain current and responsive to the ever-changing and diverse needs of those we serve.
- **Knowledge:** We seek to enhance interaction and understanding among diverse groups and cultivate enriched learning opportunities in a global community.

## **INSTITUTIONAL AND PERSONAL INTEGRITY**

We are committed to the development of ethical and responsible individuals who will have the skills, knowledge, and ability to engage a diverse and changing world. Our commitment extends to all levels of our campus to foster a climate of ethics, respect, responsibility, and trust.

- **Ethics:** We believe in conforming to ethical conduct and principles, including acting with honesty and courage and developing a disposition of trustworthiness.
- **Respect:** We support a community and climate of respect and thoughtfulness among students, faculty, staff, and the people of our community, state, nation, and the world.
- **Responsibility:** We commit to being responsible regarding our commitments at all levels of the institution including academic, fiscal, environmental, etc.
- **Trust:** We value and embrace the public’s trust in all of our actions and words.

### **INTELLECTUAL EXCELLENCE**

We believe in faculty, administrators, and staff committed to intellectual development of students and themselves in the pursuit of democratic and global citizenship.

- **Informed citizens:** We believe in student success and in preparing students to understand complex issues and express informed opinions through writing and speech.
- **Cultural competence:** We believe that students should engage in music, drama, visual arts, languages, literatures, and other cultural activities as they grow in their appreciation for the diversity of ideas and peoples, both inside and outside the classroom situation.
- **Scholarship:** We believe that students and faculty should engage in scholarly endeavors that promote science, the humanities, and the arts.
- **Facilities:** We believe in providing state-of-the-art learning environments that facilitate intellectual excellence.

### **SERVICE**

We believe in sharing our academic resources, cultural resources, and expertise with public citizens, educational institutions, businesses, cultural centers, and public and non-profit agencies.

- **Public Service:** To enable students to integrate into the larger world, we promote a commitment to public service through internships, study-abroad experiences, service-oriented research projects, and service-learning experiences.
- **Constituency:** Faculty and staff strive to reach out to our state and local constituents by sharing their talents through the arts, athletic activities, and informational resources.
- **Partnerships:** We are dedicated to promoting outreach activities, community education, and partnerships with surrounding entities.

# DRIVING FORCES

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*Driving forces are “those select factors or trends determined from the environmental scan which impact most significantly upon the institution. The factors can be demographic, social, economic, political, technological and educational.” –David McFarland © 2009 Penson Associates, Inc.*

## **DEMOGRAPHIC FORCES THAT IMPACT THE INSTITUTION**

Certain kinds of demographics have an impact on our institution; these include...

- The kinds of students who choose to enroll at UCA and why they do so,
- The kinds of students who choose to enroll in summer school,
- Reasons students leave UCA,
- Reasons students choose to transfer to UCA,
- The factors behind an increasing diverse population of students enrolling from other countries.

## **ECONOMIC FORCES**

Certain economic forces have an impact on our institution; these include...

- Competing with comparable schools,
- Reporting research expenditures promptly and accurately,
- Finding varied avenues for funding research and sponsored programs expenditures for students and faculty,
- Managing scholarship spending in light of the new law and the scholarship lottery and to meet academic industry benchmarks,
- Increasing philanthropic giving at a time when state support will continue to decline,
- Assessing how the evolving scholarship lottery will impact higher education statewide,
- Developing a financial recovery plan that will respond proactively to the recent Higher Learning Commission report on our accreditation.

## **EDUCATIONAL FORCES**

Certain educational forces have an impact on our institution; these include...

- Retaining, educating, and graduating Arkansans,
- Improving retention and graduation rates,
- Assisting academically at risk students,
- Preparing students with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to succeed in a global community/economy,
- Increasing focus on enrollment management.

## **POLITICAL FORCES**

Certain political forces have an impact on our institution; these include...

- Meeting public expectations of what a university is and should be,
- Improving the university's public image,
- Teaching according to the recognized standards of the disciplines represented on campus,
- Educating the public on higher education's connection to workforce preparation.

## **SOCIAL-GEOGRAPHICAL FORCES**

Certain social and geographical forces have an impact on our institution; these include...

- Maintaining the mutually beneficial infrastructure between UCA and Conway,
- Maintaining the currently positive town-gown relationship,
- Contributing to and understanding the effects of the continued growth of the region,
- Coordinating on-campus and off-campus housing,
- Meeting transportation needs for a growing commuter class of students, faculty and staff by working with relevant agencies,
- Contributing to the MetroPlan and its long-term objectives and goals,
- Cultivating relationships with new industry; maintaining connections with old industry.

### **TECHNOLOGICAL FORCES**

Certain technological forces have an impact on our institution; these include...

- Updating our Web presence continually to accommodate increasingly interactive and multi-media use by internal and external constituents,
- Finding ways to increase bandwidth for on-campus and off-campus users of the UCA Web site, but especially for faculty and potential students from rural districts (veterans, non-traditional students who work, etc.) who are interested in distance education,
- Upgrading network infrastructure to achieve maximum benefit both through ARE-ON and other infrastructure improvements as other options become available,
- Upgrading older buildings that were wired into the network before the availability of Category 5 cables,
- Encouraging and supporting the state's efforts to involve industry to expand broadband services,
- Streamlining of internal administrative systems,
- Improving ease of use and training for such technological uses as advising, grant accounting, purchasing, etc.),
- Adding functionality to convert more workflows from paper to Banner (e.g., PAFs, student hiring forms, etc.).

## **INSTITUTIONAL DISTINCTIVENESS**

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*Institutional distinctiveness concerns the "important attributes that are currently, or readily achievable, distinguishing strengths. [It includes] horizontal attributes (i.e., institution-wide such as location or regionally distinguished general education program [as well as] vertical attributes (i.e., a specific program or service such as the identified best telecommunications program in the southcentral [sic] United States"*

*–David McFarland ©2009 Penson Associates, Inc.*

### **ACADEMIC DISTINCTIVENESS AND STUDENT-CENTERED EXCELLENCE**

UCA continues to stand out among other colleges and universities in the state because of its innovative, academically challenging, student-centered programs.

- **Addiction Studies:** UCA's Bachelor of Science in addiction studies is the only one of its kind in Arkansas.
- **Clustered Courses:** UCA offers several successful clustered courses which use a variety of approaches that link or cluster classes during a given term, often around an interdisciplinary theme, that enroll a common cohort of students. This represents an intentional restructuring of students' time, credit, and/or learning experiences to build community, and to foster more explicit connections among students, their professors, and different disciplines. Past clusters have included speech courses paired with writing courses, English paired with philosophy, and pre-med paired with pre-nursing.
- **Digital Film:** UCA offers the only Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Digital Film in Arkansas and is only one of four graduate programs in filmmaking in the region.
- **First-Year Experience:** This special course seeks to help students develop intellectual skills and think seriously about attitudes and values while guiding them in finding their place at the university and in an increasingly global society in addition to preparing them for success as life-long learners.
- **Honors College:** The UCA Honors College, the 14<sup>th</sup> in the United States, opened in 1982 and has been a model for other university's Honors Colleges throughout the nation.
- **Leadership Studies:** A newly added program, the Ph.D. in Leadership Studies is also unique to UCA and is the only one in Arkansas. Using an interdisciplinary approach to leadership studies, faculty from a variety of disciplines at UCA will prepare scholar leaders for academic positions and leadership roles in complex organizations found in education, government, and non-profit settings. The program will begin in fall of 2011 and will be administered by the UCA Graduate School.
- **Liberal Arts EDGE Program:** The UCA College of Liberal Arts EDGE Program is for all degree seeking liberal arts students. In the EDGE program students study international relations, comparative politics, languages and literature from all over the world.
- **Occupational Therapy:** The College of Health Sciences is home to UCA's Occupational Therapy program. Established in 1970, UCA's Occupational Therapy program is the only one in Arkansas.
- **Physical Therapy:** UCA's Ph.D. in Physical Therapy is one of the seven such Ph.D. programs in the United States. The Doctor of Physical Therapy is also offered at UCA and 56 students are enrolled annually.
- **Premier Educator Preparation:** UCA offers the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT), which helps students with appropriate undergraduate degrees obtain a teaching license and a master's degree while working as temporarily licensed teachers. The MAT program recently won the Association of Teacher Education Distinguished Program Award. The College of Education is also home to several community service and outreach centers including the Mashburn Center, which helps teachers work with low-achieving students to improve their learning; the Child Study Center, an early childhood program for three- and four-year olds; the Reading Center, a summer program to help students improve their reading and writing skills; the Super Kids Program, a science-based summer program for primary grades; the University Challenge, a science-based summer program for fourth- and fifth- grade students; Summer Enrichment, a program for K-8 special-education students; the Educational Renewal Zone, an outreach initiative to use university faculty expertise to strengthen local schools; and the Arkansas Research Center, a center that uses Arkansas student, classroom, and school data to address timely education issues.

- **Residential Colleges:** Hughes Residential College opened in 1997 and was the first Residential College in Arkansas. Students live and learn in an atmosphere conducive to establishing academic as well as social relationships. UCA now has six Residential Colleges, including Baridon Hall Sophomore Year Experience, Hughes, Minton Hall Commuter College, Short-Denney, State, and STEM (the new RC for students majoring in science or mathematics).

### **BEST UNIVERSITIES-MASTERS INSTITUTION IN THE STATE OF ARKANSAS**

The University of Central Arkansas Ranks 17<sup>th</sup> out of 69 public universities in the category of “Best Master’s Level Universities in the South,” according to U.S. News & World Report’s annual rankings of universities and colleges. UCA is the highest ranked Arkansas public university in the report.

### **FINE AND PERFORMING ARTS**

UCA is home to numerous performing arts and cultural organizations that create a rich and vibrant community.

- **Award-winning bands, choirs, and jazz ensembles** perform throughout the academic year.
- **Baum Gallery**, UCA’s main gallery presents several exhibitions yearly with many world-renowned artists exhibiting their work.
- **Black Box Gallery:** This gallery, located in Schichtl Hall, provides students with performance space (both theatrical and filmed) as well as space for student art work.
- **Community Artists:** Conway is home to several artists who’ve contributed their work to the university and have opened their homes as galleries for the community, including Gene Hatfield and Finton Shaw (who both maintain sculpture gardens at their residences) Pat Larsen, Holly Laws, and Bryan Massey.
- **Conway Alliance for the Arts:** CAFTA is an alliance among UCA, Central Baptist College, Hendrix College and the Conway Public Schools which supports “local artistic endeavors through collaboration, promotion, and development of resources for the betterment of the Conway community” and hosts the Conway Arts Fest every fall.
- **Conway Symphony Orchestra:** The CSO performs five to six concerts annually and is a unique combination of the best professional and college musicians in central Arkansas.
- **Exquisite Corpse Annual** is published by the UCA’s Department of Writing and features experimental poetry, prose and art. It also provides public literary events in Conway and Little Rock.
- **Oxford American**, an award-winning magazine on southern culture, is housed in and supported in part by UCA. *Oxford American* publishes stories about Southern music, art, food and southern culture in general.
- **Reynolds Performance Hall:** Most major concerts and theater productions as well as operas performed “Live at the Met in HD” are held in Reynolds Performance Hall, one of the finest facilities of its kind in the region.
- **Slant: A Journal of Poetry** is published annually by the UCA Department of English and features poets from across the United States with appearances by poets from other countries.
- **The Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre Festival:** The Festival is held annually in Reynolds Performance hall by Arkansas’s only professional Shakespearean company.



- **Vortex:** UCA's student literary journal recently won the Arkansas Media Association's top award for Magazine: General Excellence as it has in past years as well as many, many student awards for writing in poetry, fiction, non-fiction, drama, and art.

### **OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION**

UCA has many organizations on its campus that are indeed unique to UCA and are generally not found elsewhere in the State of Arkansas.

- **Community Schools:** The UCA Community School of Music and the UCA Community School of Languages give music and language lessons to anyone that desires to take lessons. Private lessons are given by faculty and students to members of the community and hundreds of people from across the state participate.
- **Confucius Institute:** The institute is the only one of its kind in Arkansas. Its mission is to promote Chinese culture within Arkansas through cultural training, consultation services, seminars, conferences, language training as well as cultural performances and exhibitions. Additionally, the College of Liberal Arts houses the only Asian Studies Regional Center in the Mid-South.
- **Elementary School Writing Centers:** The UCA Writing Center has implemented the first elementary school writing centers in the nation—one at Mt.Vernon/Enola Elementary School and the other at Westside Greer's Ferry Elementary School.
- **Green Week:** UCA's Environmental Alliance, Student Government Association, and Biology Club teamed up to host the university's first annual Green Week, an open event for the campus and surrounding community that presented informational exhibits on sustainable living.
- **Military Science:** The UCA Department of Military Science is home to the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC). UCA has six other colleges and universities under its ROTC umbrella, including: Hendrix College, Arkansas Tech University, Central Baptist College, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, Henderson State University and Ouachita Baptist University.
- **Stream Team:** UCA recently collaborated with the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission to form a Stream Team at UCA that would test the flora, fauna, and water quality of Stone Dam Creek, the creek that runs through campus, as well as those creeks that act as the watershed for Lake Conway.

### **SMALL-TOWN YET COSMOPOLITAN ENVIRONMENT**

The beautiful UCA Campus is located near the geographic center of the State of Arkansas in the City of Conway.

- Conway is geographically located in the center of the State of Arkansas, approximately 20 miles from the exact geographic center of the State and lies between Interstate 40 and the Arkansas River.
- The City of Conway is the only city in the State of Arkansas to have three residential undergraduate institutions: Central Baptist College, Hendrix College and UCA.
- The inviting collegiate Georgian architecture that is so prominent at UCA is found on many of the older buildings and on all buildings constructed since 1990.

- When freshmen students move into their residence halls, UCA’s student organizations, led by the Student Orientation Staff (S.O.S.), act as new neighbors and friends to ensure that neither the incoming students nor their parents have to touch one piece of luggage or furniture.
- **(Writing Team’s Note):** Should we add more human interaction rather than just the aesthetics?

# PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

*“Planning assumptions are “statements of projected institutional conditions important as a base to planning [and includes] enrollment and demographics, resources and facilities, curriculum and instruction, and administration and institution.”—David McFarland ©2009 Penson Associates, Inc.*

## **ADMINISTRATIVE**

- A. UCA will adapt to changes (declines) in state funding for its operation and infrastructure.
- Reliance on state funding will decrease.
  - Increasing private giving, grants, and contracts is a priority.
  - Scholarship spending will be reduced.
  - The need for classroom, student services, office space, and research space will increase.
  - The demand for student services (housing, counseling, student activities, law enforcement, orientation, etc) will increase.
  - Deferred maintenance (e.g., student housing has approximately \$20 million in facility needs) will need to be addressed.
- B. UCA administration will increase emphasis on assessment of effectiveness, accountability, and responsiveness to the public (faculty, students, taxpayers, state authorities).

## **STUDENTS AND ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT**

- A. There will be an increase in enrollment of diverse populations, international (e.g. Latinos), and non-traditional students (e.g. returning veterans).
- Demand for student services and student development programs especially for diverse and non-traditional students may increase.
  - UCA should offer extensive and unique living and learning experiences tailored to those populations (through residential colleges, honors housing, etc).
- B. Increased emphasis will be placed on enrollment management.
- Overall enrollment may increase or may need to increase in order to grow net tuition revenue.
  - Competition for students will increase because of students’ buying power with the lottery scholarships.
  - Student retention and graduation strategies are a priority.

## **ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRAMS**

UCA will continue to be a premiere undergraduate institution with a strong emphasis on teaching excellence, research, AND a strong graduate institution within select disciplines (health and behavioral sciences, natural and computer sciences, education, business, etc).

- Demand for a variety of instructional delivery models will continue.
- Demand for a “holistic” learning environment (student research, internships, study abroad, service learning, etc.) will increase.
- Academic programs will emphasize multicultural proficiency, global perspectives, and technological fluency.
- Demand for tenure-track faculty and more diverse faculty will increase.
- Demand for more academic resources (technology, professional development, research and travel support) will increase.
- Assurances of student learning (program and course assessment, general education, accreditation requirements) will be a priority.
- Certain academic programs must be responsive to workforce demands in specific disciplines (health professions, education, etc.).

## **INSTITUTIONAL**

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

- Employment opportunities will increase. **(Writing Team’s Note: Will these opportunities increase at the university? The city? The state? It’s not clear from the above statement on institutional planning assumptions what is meant here.)**
- Partnerships with corporate and public entities (public schools, mental health agencies, etc) will increase.
- Workforce development and academic outreach opportunities will increase.
- Public events and performances will continue to raise the profile of UCA.
- Division 1 athletics will provide greater recognition and exposure, which will result in increased attendance, development, and private giving.

**Notes from the Writing Team:** We would like to see more collaboration among students, faculty and staff and recommend a reconception of academic organizations to make such collaborations more feasible.

Once the Strategic Plan is approved and the mission statement is written and approved, the Writing Team would like to see the statement issued as a card that students, staff, and faculty can carry in their wallets or pockets as a way of re-enforcing that we are earnest in our mission and not just paying lip-service to the ideas it contains.