

University of Central Arkansas
Council of Deans
Wednesday, January 28, 2026
9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Zoom

MINUTES

1. Welcome: The Council of Deans met on Wednesday, January 28, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. via Zoom. Provost Michael Hargis presided, and the following members were present: Dr. Stephen Addison, Dr. Laci Lyons (for Dr. Tim Bisping), Dr. Kurt Boniecki, Dr. Debbie Dailey, Dr. Michael Mills, Dr. Patricia Smith, and Dr. Darshon Reed (for Dr. Nancy Reese). Guest: Dr. Joe Thomas, Department of Computer Information Systems & Analytics and UCA Faculty Senate.
2. Guest: Dr. Joe Thomas, UCA Faculty Senate and Computer Information Systems & Analytics: Dr. Thomas shared information regarding service animals on campus and in the classroom. Members received a draft of the guidelines for review. Upon approval, the guidelines will be shared with faculty. Dr. Thomas requested meeting members individually to discuss the laws and guidelines for service animals in the classroom. Members will submit building information and direct contacts to April Gunn and she will share the information with Dr. Thomas.
3. Action Items
 - a. January 14, 2026 COD Minutes: A motion by Dr. Stephen Addison and second by Dr. Patricia Smith was made to approve the minutes from January 14, 2026 as written. The motion carried.
 - b. January 18, 2026 Graduate Council Items: A motion by Dr. Michael Mills and second by Stephen Addison was made to approve Graduate Council items from January 18, 2026 as presented. The motion carried.
4. Provost Updates
 - a. Innovation Campus: The Board of Trustees approved the lease for the new Innovation Campus. Provost Hargis recognized Dr. Addison and his team for their work in creating this opportunity for students and the community.
 - b. Instructional Continuity Plan: Members discussed the Instructional Continuity Plan. Faculty must be mindful of those students who may not have internet access to log into class. Members discussed policy language and will submit comments and suggestions to the Provost.
 - c. Due to several conflicts and student success challenges associated with the early start of classes this spring semester, a recommendation will be submitted to the Board of Trustees to alter the Spring 2027 start date.
5. Discussion
 - a. Student Success, Attendance Policies, Shared Expectations: The Provost led a discussion regarding establishing an excused attendance policy for

student athletes, band members, and other students who represent our campus. Members discussed the need for a policy that defines an excused absence that will be universal for all instructors. Members suggested that the policy should also include professional development and health-related absences. The Council will revisit this during their next scheduled meeting.

6. Unit Updates

- a. College of Science and Engineering: The Innovation Campus has received positive feedback. Upper-level courses will be offered in Fall 2026 and lower-level courses in Spring 2027. Dr. Boniecki requested information for submission to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. The information must be submitted by May 1, 2026.
- b. College of Health and Behavioral Sciences: The college has received positive press for their Prevention Recovery Program. The program is being used as a model for other institutions.
- c. Graduate Office: Last week's recruitment workshop was very successful. Workshops will continue and faculty are encouraged to attend.
- d. Honors College: The deadline for scholarship applications from incoming high school students has been extended to February 4, 2026.

7. Important Dates and Information Items

- [2025-2026 Academic Timetable](#)
- [Academic Year 2025–2026 Schedule for Student Course Experience Surveys](#)
- COD Meetings
 - February 11, 2026-SGA Dean for a Day Update
 - February 25, 2026
 - March 11, 2026-SGA Dean for a Day Event
- February 4, 2026: Academic Affairs Leadership Team Meeting
- February 20, 2026: Board of Trustees Meeting
- March 1, 2026: Mandatory Vector Training Due
- March 11, 2026: Dean for a Day
- March 12, 2026: UCA Day of Giving/March 13, 2026: Announcement
- April 1, 2026: Annual Evaluations Due
- April 14, 2026: Faculty/Staff Recognition Celebration
- April 23, 2026: UCA Research Symposium
- April 30-May 1, 2026: Commencement
- May 18-20, 2026: Dean's Retreat
- May 21, 2026: Board of Trustees Meeting

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.