

University of Central Arkansas  
Council of Deans  
Wednesday, February 25, 2026  
9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.  
Wingo 214

MINUTES

1. Welcome: The Council of Deans met on Wednesday, February 25, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. in Wingo 214. Provost Michael Hargis presided, and the following members were present: Dr. Stephen Addison, Dr. Tim Bisping, Dr. Kurt Boniecki, Dr. Debbie Dailey, Dr. Michael Mills, Dr. Patricia Smith, Dr. Nancy Reese, and Dr. Tom Williams. Guests: Dr. Amy Hawkins, Assistant Provost of Teaching and Academic Leadership, Mr. Trevor Seifert, Chief Information Officer, Ms. Vicki Parish, CETAL Assistant Director, and Ms. Stacy O'Brien, CETAL Instructor Designer
2. LMS Update: Mr. Trevor Seifert and Dr. Amy Hawkins shared the following updates regarding the university's new LMS system:
  - a. All summer 2025 courses' content will be migrated from Blackboard to Brightspace by March 20, 2026 and all fall 2025 courses' content will be migrated by the first two weeks in April.
  - b. Introductory sessions for Brightspace will occur between February 23-March 20, 2026.
  - c. Integrations with Banner will take place in April and July 2026.
  - d. Information regarding deadlines and launch is available at [uca.edu/cetal/brightspace](http://uca.edu/cetal/brightspace).
3. Action Items
  - a. February 11, 2026 COD Minutes: A motion by Dr. Stephen Addison and second by Dr. Patricia Smith was made to approve the minutes from February 11, 2026 as written. The motion carried.
4. Provost Updates
  - a. Provost Hargis announced that Dr. Debbie Dailey has been selected as dean of the College of Education.
  - b. The Career Services Job Fair will be held Wednesday, March 4, 2026, from 9:00 am - 12:00 pm in the Student Center Ballroom. Members were encouraged to walk through the fair and network with students.
  - c. The LEAD group will be recruiting for next year. An announcement for nominations will be forthcoming. Members were asked to submit nominations and encourage college and unit support for the program.
  - d. Provost Hargis shared the following constituent concerns from Faculty Senate:
    - i. An anonymous concern was submitted indicating that, during annual reviews, department chairs have used this time to discuss a faculty member's retirement plan instead of reviewing aspirations,

goals, and performance. Members were unanimous that this conversation violates labor laws and is unacceptable. They all committed to sharing this feedback with their Department Chairs/Unit Directors in an effort to reinforce legal expectations and coach regarding the purpose and benefits of the annual planning and performance review process.

- ii. An anonymous concern was submitted indicating the practice of nepotism in some departments, noting spouse pairs working in the same departments. Members discussed and were unanimous that spouses can work in the same department, but recognize that a spouse cannot supervise, participate in P&T review processes, and/or function in any way that is inconsistent with expectations outlined in the Faculty Handbook and UCA Board Policy. Members will ensure that chairs are proactively monitoring that spouses are recusing themselves in promotion/tenure procedures. Faculty spouses must also submit information on the annual Conflict of Interest form.
- e. The Faculty Senate appointment processes will begin this spring for the 2026-2027 academic year. Members were asked to prioritize this request in order to begin the year with fully staffed committees.

## 5. Discussion

- a. Budget Review: The University budget will be presented to the Board of Trustees at the May 27, 2026 meeting. Members will receive budget information no later than February 27, 2026 for review. Individual meetings with Provost Hargis and Lori Hudspeth will be scheduled within the next two weeks to review budget portfolios.

## 6. Unit Updates

- a. College of Business
  - i. The college has launched its Executives in Residence program.
- b. Honors College
  - i. Interviews with incoming freshmen will begin on Monday, March 2, 2026 and will last for two weeks.
- c. College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences
  - i. The School of Language and Literature is sponsoring a Global French Studies Symposium & Film Festival on March 13-20, 2026.
- d. College of Health and Behavioral Sciences
  - i. The college is collaborating with the City of Mayflower for a Health Fair at the city's community center.
  - ii. The college is developing their speaker series for fall 2026.
- e. Dr. Kurt Boniecki
  - i. Core Council will be hosting town hall meetings to discuss the revised rubrics for UCA Core.
  - ii. Common course numbering is proceeding and is currently being entered into the university system. Mrs. Suzanne Massey was recognized for her work.
- f. Graduate School/Sponsored Programs

- i. Sponsored Programs is meeting with offices on campus to discuss policy updates surrounding grants.
- g. College of Education
  - i. Dr. Alicia Cotabish and Dr. Phillip Bailey have developed a graduate collaboration extension.
  - ii. ESAU Institute is no longer supported by the state and will be unavailable at UCA.
  - iii. The Bentonville Ignite Program will be holding a fair on May 21, 2026.
  - iv. The college is holding a First Match Day on April 24, 2026. School districts have been invited to interview upcoming residents.
- h. College of Science and Engineering
  - i. The college office is undergoing a reorganization due to the Innovation Campus.
  - ii. The UCA Planetarium upgrade installation is scheduled for April 9, 2026 The planetarium will reopen in May.
  - iii. Two faculty members were nominated for the Arkansas Research Alliance Emerging Research Leader program. One nominee was selected and will be announced at a later date.

#### 7. Important Dates and Information Items

- [2025-2026 Academic Timetable](#)
- [Academic Year 2025–2026 Schedule for Student Course Experience Surveys](#)
- COD Meetings
  - March 11, 2026-SGA Dean for a Day Event - Wingo 315
  - March 25, 2026
  - April 8, 2026
  - April 26, 2026
- March 1, 2026: Mandatory Vector Training Due
- March 11, 2026: Dean for a Day
- March 12, 2026: UCA Day of Giving
- March 13, 2026: UCA Day of Giving Announcement
- March 17, 2026: Campus Talk, 1:30 pm, COB Auditorium
- 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 27, 2026: Board of Trustees Meeting

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 10:30 am