

Criterion 2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

2.A - Integrity

Actions taken by the institution's governing board, administration, faculty and staff demonstrate adherence to established policies and procedures.

Argument

UCA dedicates itself to integrity in its mission and as a core value. The actions of the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students follow established policies and procedures rooted in our commitment to ethical conduct, respect, accountability, and public trust.

Board Policies

Charged with the management and control of UCA, the Board of Trustees establishes general policies that serve the university's best interests and comply with state law. These [Board Policies](#) are organized into eight "series."

- Series 100 establishes the official history of the university and its role and scope.
- Series 200 governs the duties of the Board of Trustees.
- Series 300 governs academic and faculty affairs under the authority of the provost.
- Series 400 ensures campus safety and proper use of campus property.
- Series 500 governs personnel, including hiring practices, employee benefits, workplace conduct, and grievances.
- Series 600 governs financial services, including investments, student fees, institutional expenditures, travel reimbursements, and scholarships.
- Series 700 governs student affairs, such as student residency, academic integrity, student organizations, and campus health services.
- Series 800 governs athletics, including programs, events, affiliation, and support groups.

While Board Policies broadly manage the university, many specifically ensure ethical conduct, respect, accountability, and public trust. For example, Board Policy (BP) [201](#) establishes the board's standards of conduct and conflicts of interest. It requires members to maintain "high standards of integrity," act honestly and fairly, and "err on

the side of caution” regarding potential conflicts of interest. Board members must annually file a statement of financial interest with the State of Arkansas and a conflict of interest form with the university. Members must recuse themselves from board actions involving conflicts of interest. For example, Board Member Curtis Barnett—CEO of USAble Mutual Insurance Company (BlueAdvantage)—recused himself from a July 2022 vote selecting Blue Advantage to administer the university’s health care plan.

Two offices—the Office of Internal Audit and the Compliance Office for Finance and Administration—assess the implementation of UCA policies and procedures to verify compliance, maximize effectiveness, and prevent fraud and abuse.

Internal Audit

BP [213](#) creates an Audit and Finance Committee consisting of three members of the board “to assist the board in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities by reviewing financial information..., the systems of internal controls..., the audit process, and the financial operations of the university.” The Audit and Finance Committee meets at least four times per year, prior to regularly scheduled board meetings.

The policy also establishes the Office of Internal Audit (OIA) which reports directly to the Audit and Finance Committee. According to its [charter](#), the OIA provides independent, objective assurance and consulting services to enhance and protect the university’s operations and value through a systematic evaluation of the university’s governance, risk management, and control processes. The responsibilities of the OIA include:

- Developing and executing an annual risk-based internal audit plan approved by the Audit and Finance Committee.
- Conducting objective examinations of evidence to provide independent opinions and conclusions regarding university functions.
- Communicating audit results, significant risk exposures, control issues, and governance matters to senior management and the Audit and Finance Committee.
- Following up on engagement findings and corrective actions to verify that management has effectively implemented them.
- Maintaining a quality assurance and improvement program that conforms to the Institute of Internal Auditors' (IIA) professional standards.

To ensure policy adherence across the university, the Board of Trustees grants the OIA unrestricted access to all functions, records, property, and personnel. The office uses this authority to perform regular compliance assessments, evaluating whether established systems effectively enable adherence to institutional guidelines and applicable laws. By operating independently and reporting directly to the Audit and

Finance Committee, the OIA provides an unbiased layer of oversight that flags policy deviations and holds the university accountable to its established standards.

Compliance Office for Finance and Administration

The [Compliance Office for Finance and Administration](#) fosters a culture of compliance and ethical conduct by ensuring departments in the Division of Finance and Administration establish and follow operational standards, internal controls, and risk management processes. The office proactively aids departments in refining operating procedures, maintaining separation of duties, adapting to updated regulations, and resolving audit issues. Additionally, the office oversees non-athletic scholarship processes, chairs the Scholarship Committee, drafts scholarship policies, verifies student eligibility, and compiles state compliance reports like the Arkansas Department of Higher Education Series 30 Report. Annually, the office completes a review of the University's compliance with the Gramm-Leach Bliley Act (GLBA) and Red Flags Rule, ensuring staff reflect any regulation changes in the current documentation and reporting for these programs.

Hiring Processes

The [Faculty Handbook](#) and [Staff Handbook](#) detail hiring procedures that comply with Board Policies on hiring (BP [503](#)), equal opportunity (BP [502](#)), and nepotism (BP [514](#)). Human Resources provides [guidelines and workflows](#) for hiring managers and search committees, as well as an applicant tracking system, PeopleAdmin, to manage the process of filling positions, from posting on our [jobs site](#) through the hiring of the final candidate. To ensure equal opportunity compliance, UCA's compliance officer must approve all full-time position interviewees. The compliance officer has the authority to add applicants to the interview list if needed. Over the past six years, UCA filled 397 of 430 open faculty positions (from 6,078 applicants) and 1,087 of 1,333 staff positions (from 10,874 applicants).

Employee Training and Compliance Requirements

BP [418](#), BP [419](#), and BP [426](#) establish policies and procedures related to the Protection of Minors or Campus, Sex Offender Notification, and Title IX Sexual Harassment. The Office of General Council introduces these policies and other compliance responsibilities during [new staff orientation](#).

All employees, including faculty, staff, graduate assistants, and student workers, must also complete annual training to manage risk and ensure compliance. The university's [employee training statement](#) defines the responsibilities of the university, supervisors, and employees for completing required training, while Human Resources publishes current training requirements on its [website](#) and monitors completion. Required training is available online through Vector Solutions, which also offers more than 200 optional

seminars. Departments may assign additional training specific to their operations, including HIPPA, Red Flag laws, and OSHA.

UCA reinforces these requirements through HR reminders and supervisor follow-up. Over the past six years, these efforts have increased completion of mandatory training, with more than 95% of faculty and staff completing the required seminars during AY 2025-26. This combination of clearly defined requirements, accessible training, centralized monitoring, and supervisor follow-up helps ensure that employees understand and comply with institutional policies and applicable requirements.

Safety and Emergency Management

Under BP [420](#), the [UCA Police Department](#) (UCAPD) maintains a safe, secure, and [bias-free](#) campus. The department actively protects the university community through regular patrols, crime prevention programs, and personal safety services, such as managing safety alerts, distributing opioid reversal kits, and offering self-defense classes. Beyond emergency response and crime investigation, UCAPD also manages and enforces BP [421](#) (Traffic and Parking Regulations) and engages as required under other specific Board Policies, such as BP [405](#) (Alcohol on University Premises), BP [406](#) (Free Speech), BP [418](#) (Protection of Minors on Campus), BP [419](#) (Sex Offender Notification), BP [423](#) (Roller Skates, Rollerblades, Skateboards and other Coasting Devices), BP [506](#) (Drug-free Schools and Campuses), and BP [507](#) and [707](#) (Firearms Possession). The UCAPD also coordinates public awareness campaigns like [Brake for Bears](#), and publishes safety recommendations on its website along with [victims' rights](#) under Arkansas law (Laura's Card) and the [Clery Annual Security and Fire Safety Report](#) in compliance with the Jeanne Clery Campus Safety Act.

The UCAPD also manages UCA's [Emergency Operations Plan](#) and Building Emergency Plans (BEP). The Emergency Operations Plan guides an all-hazards response and recovery effort, ensuring UCA remains disaster-resilient and minimizes disruptions to our people, assets, and infrastructure. Every building on campus must have a BEP. UCA's [BEP Development Guidelines](#) provide a comprehensive framework for campus Building Administrators to design, maintain, and implement customized safety plans tailored to their specific facilities. Building Administrators assess risks, vulnerabilities, and hazards, then integrate this data into detailed building descriptions, evacuation routes, and lists of critical operations. The guidelines establish explicit roles for emergency personnel—including Department Emergency Coordinators and Building Emergency Teams—who facilitate urgent communication, direct response protocols, and manage occupant accountability during incidents. Furthermore, the BEP incorporates standardized campus safety instructions for various emergency scenarios such as fires, severe weather, and violent acts, alongside mandatory appendices like facility floor plans and evacuation maps. To keep plans practical and operational,

administrators must undergo [annual training](#), conduct annual reviews, submit updates to UCAPD, and lead routine occupant training using real-life scenarios to resolve procedural weaknesses.

2.B - Transparency

The institution presents itself accurately and completely to students and the public with respect to its educational programs and any claims it makes related to the educational experience.

Argument

As a public comprehensive university, UCA commits to transparency in carrying out its educational mission to ensure the public's trust and institutional accountability. The university accurately presents its programs and experiences through its website, syllabi, communication systems, recruiting materials, media, and campus forums.

UCA Website

The UCA website (uca.edu) provides comprehensive access to accurate information about the university's educational programs and experiences. [University Marketing and Communications](#) manages the website, ensuring a consistent appearance and logical navigation through tabs like Admissions, Academics, Campus Life, and Athletics. An "A to Z" index helps users quickly find specific information. Under uca.edu, the following websites provide some of the most relevant information to students and the public about our educational programs and experiences.

- The [Undergraduate Bulletin](#) details current undergraduate programs, policies, admission requirements, and the UCA Core. The main menu links to all programs, courses, and archived bulletins.
- The [Graduate Bulletin](#) outlines graduate programs, policies, admission requirements, assistantships, and graduation procedures. Users can access fields of study, courses, and archived bulletins from the main menu.
- The [Academic Bulletins](#) website serves as a central landing page for current and past bulletins. It also provides notices and information on [accreditation](#), [non-discrimination](#), [VA pending payment compliance](#), the [definition of a credit hour](#), and the [complaint resolution](#), alongside lists of [lower-division](#) and [upper-division](#) UCA Core courses and courses in the [Arkansas Course Transfer System \(ACTS\)](#).
- The [Student Handbook](#), published annually, guides students through the academic calendar, campus policies, community standards, and grievance procedures. It also lists available campus departments, services, and student committees.
- [Financial Aid](#) provides students and their families with information and guidance on the FAFSA, scholarships, grants, loans, student jobs, veterans benefits, and enrollment requirements. The [College Costs](#) site provides tuition rates and

calculators to estimate attendance expenses.

- [Admissions](#) provides prospective students information on the application process, admission requirements, and campus tours. The site also links to financial planning tools, community information, and regional admissions counselors.
- The [Consumer Information](#) website centralizes institutional data and information on academics, health and safety, and financial aid in compliance with the Higher Education Opportunity Act. It includes forms for information requests and links to submit formal complaints to the Arkansas Division of Higher Education and the Higher Learning Commission.
- [UCA Online](#) serves as a one-stop page for UCA's fully online undergraduate and graduate programs. It highlights UCA's flat-rate online tuition model and links to technical support, financial aid, and dedicated program coordinators. The website also displays UCA's participation in the [State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements \(SARA\)](#).
- [UCA News](#) keeps the community informed with a chronological feed of press releases, academic recognitions, and student achievements, featuring an archive dating back to 2003.
- The [Recognized Student Organizations](#) (RSOs) website helps students find, join, or start clubs across various interest categories. UCA hosts over 260 RSOs for learning, leadership, and community building.
- The [Student Government Association](#) (SGA), as the representative voice of the students, plays a critical role in the university's shared governance. The SGA website posts [meeting minutes](#), fee allocations, officer rosters, and committee details.
- The [Board of Trustees](#) website publicly shares the list of members, Board Policies, meeting notices, and [minutes](#) dating back to 1917.
- [Institutional Research](#) serves as UCA's official data source, transparently sharing enrollment numbers, degrees awarded, and demographic data ([Bear Facts](#)).
- The [Annual Budget Book](#) and [Open UCA](#) ensure fiscal accountability by publicly posting UCA's yearly revenues and expenditures and offering the public searchable access to financial and operational data in compliance with state law.

In addition to the above sites, UCA's websites also include a variety of support services that assist students in navigating our educational programs and experiences, such as [Academic Advising](#), the [Athletic Academic Resource Center](#), [Career Services](#), the [Dean of Students](#), [First Year Experience](#), the [Office of Accessibility Resources and Services](#), the [Office of Student Advocacy and Community](#), [Online, Transfer, and Returning Student Services](#), the [Registrar](#), [Student Success Services](#), and [Veterans and Military Resource Center](#). These services are discussed in more detail in our assurance argument for Criterion 3. The university website is also used to communicate disruptions to university operations, such as inclement weather. Typically, the message

is in the form of an alert banner on the UCA homepage, but separate websites have also been created to communicate ongoing disruptions such as the [COVID-19 pandemic](#). UCA updates certain websites on an annual basis following systematic review processes—including the Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletins, the Student Handbook, Bear Facts, and the Annual Budget Book—and other websites as needed when new information comes available.

Course Syllabi

All students receive syllabi at the beginning of each course that follow the [Course Syllabus Requirements](#) available on the Academic Affairs website. Syllabi must include course descriptions, class meeting times, instructor details, required materials, due dates of assignments and exams, and explicit grading and attendance policies. Furthermore, the document requires the inclusion of critical institutional policy statements regarding academic integrity, ADA accommodations, building emergency procedures, and Title IX, as well as specific language for UCA Core courses and details regarding the Student Course Experience Survey. See [Sample Syllabi](#) for examples.

Communication Systems

The university uses a variety of systems to communicate information directly to students. All students receive a university Gmail address ending in @cub.uca.edu, which serves as the primary means for faculty and staff to contact students. The [Cub Hub](#) platform sends a weekly email to all students containing relevant news and announcements that fit specific [guidelines](#). Additionally, the Division of Enrollment Services and Student Success uses Slate, a customer relationship management (CRM) system, to correspond with current and prospective students and manage UCA's online application for admission. Regardless of the instructional delivery method (i.e., on campus, online, or hybrid), all course sections have a shell in UCA's learning management system (LMS), D2L Brightspace, that allows instructors to post syllabi, course announcements, assignments, and students' grades, as well as message students directly from the LMS. The LMS also includes [New Bear Central](#), a set of three online orientation modules for new students featuring information about academic advising, paying for college and financial preparation, campus life, and academic and student services resources. In the event of an emergency, such as an active shooter or dangerous weather, all students, as well as faculty and staff, receive an automatic text alert to their mobile phone through the UCAAlert System. The UCA community can also download the [SafeZone mobile app](#), which connects them with essential campus safety resources, emergency assistance, location sharing for first responders, and emergency notifications via text and email.

Recruiting Materials

In addition to its website, the Office of Admissions and Enrollment Services distributes various recruiting materials to prospective students, including the [Undergraduate Viewbook](#), the [Transfer and Returning Student Guide](#), and the [Honors Viewbook](#). Recruiting materials are sent by mail and distributed at a variety of on-campus recruiting events such as scheduled campus tours, [transfer Fridays](#), and [preview days](#), as well as at off-campus recruiting events across Arkansas and surrounding states. Recruiters also distribute one-page descriptions of specific academic programs to interested students, such as [Computer Information Systems](#), [Criminology](#), [Engineering Physics](#), [Middle-Level Education](#), and [Pre-Physical Therapy](#). These publications are updated annually to ensure the academic programs and information are current and accurate.

Media

UCA uses a combination of broadcast, print, digital, and social media to keep its students, alumni, and the general public informed. These outlets include official university publications designed to highlight campus achievements and connect with alumni, and [award-winning](#) outlets that provide hands-on experience to students studying journalism and communications. Examples include:

- [Channel 6](#), UCA's educational television station available to the local community, provides students with a broadcast platform to produce "News 6," a daily live newscast. Along with local news, the station broadcasts UCA sports, local events, and globally syndicated independent news programming like *Democracy Now!*.
- *The Echo*, the student-run newspaper, provides a weekly print edition during the fall and spring semesters, as well as daily updates on its website ([ucanews.live](#)), covering campus issues, university life, editorials, features, and sports. The publication serves as a primary source of campus news while allowing journalism students to hone their reporting and editing skills.
- *The Scroll*, UCA's annual student yearbook, captures the history, events, and culture of the university each academic year. Student reporters, photographers, and designers collaborate to document student organizations, academic achievements, and campus life.
- [UCA Magazine](#), published twice a year by the university's Division of Advancement, keeps alumni and the public up to date with major campus developments and inspiring stories.
- The [UCA Annual Report](#) serves as a comprehensive overview of the university's accomplishments each academic year, including a letter from the president, enrollment data, new programs, updates on university initiatives, highlights of academic achievements, news about campus life and athletics, and summaries of fundraising and major gifts.

Additionally, the [Office of Media Relations](#) manages external media outreach and distributes official university news. The office develops news releases and story pitches

highlighting campus achievements. It also handles media inquiries, processes FOIA requests, coordinates media visits, advises departments on public relations, and issues official emergency statements.

On-Campus Events

The university communicates information to prospective, incoming, and current students through a variety of on-campus events. [Preview Days](#), including Bear Necessities Day, [Bear Facts Day](#), and Distinguished Scholars Day, provide high school students and their families opportunities to visit campus and learn about our academic programs and support services, while [Transfer Fridays](#) provide similar opportunities for students at two-year colleges and other institutions. [Summer Orientation and Academic Registration](#) (SOAR) prepares incoming students for the transition to UCA through in-person advising sessions, presentations, and workshops led by university staff and the [Student Orientation Staff](#) (SOS). Every August before the first day of classes, new students participate in [Welcome Week](#), which includes an opening convocation, college meetings, and full schedule of fun and informative activities to get students engaged on campus. Welcome Week is followed by [New Bear Beginnings](#), a series of information sessions designed to help first-year students.

In addition, the Office of the President hosts periodic Campus Talks which provide updates from the UCA president and the presidents of the SGA, Faculty Senate, and Staff Senate to the UCA community. During [Fall Convocation](#) at the beginning of each academic year, the Staff Senate president, Faculty Senate president, provost, and UCA president address the faculty and staff about plans for the coming year and the future direction of the university. The UCA president and, as needed, the vice presidents also report on university activities and initiatives at each regularly scheduled [meeting of the Board of Trustees](#), which is open to the public.

2.C - Board Governance

In discharging its fiduciary duties, the institution's governing board is free from undue external influence and empowered to act in the best interests of the institution, including the students it serves.

Argument

Under [Arkansas Code](#) and [Amendment 33 of the Arkansas Constitution](#), the Governor appoints the seven-member UCA [Board of Trustees](#) with the advice and consent of the Arkansas Senate. Amendment 33 ensures board independence from undue political influence, preventing the Governor and legislature from arbitrarily firing members or diminishing board powers. The Governor can only fire a member for cause and with majority board approval. Additionally, the state legislature cannot change the number of board members to gain political control. Members serve staggered seven-year terms, with one expiring each January 14. The board annually elects a chair, vice-chair, and secretary to one-year terms starting the next calendar year. The board holds five scheduled sessions annually, calling special sessions as needed (see the [Index of Board Minutes](#)).

BP [200](#) directs the board to establish general policies serving the university's best interests and complying with state law. To fulfill this charge, the board must operate free from undue external influence. The policy limits individual member power, ensuring the board makes collective decisions free from singular interests. Furthermore, BP 200 removes geographic limitations on member selection, empowering the board to serve the entire state rather than narrow regional interests.

BP [201](#) sets the standards of conduct and rules governing conflicts of interest for the board. It mandates trustees discharge their duties in UCA's best interests, acting in good faith and with the care of "an ordinarily prudent person." The policy outlines strict conflict of interest guidelines to prevent personal or external financial motives from swaying trustees.

To assist the board in fully understanding the best interests of students and the UCA community, BP [212](#) allows the presidents of the Student Government Association, Faculty Senate, and Staff Senate to address the board. While the policy guarantees these presidents can address the board twice each year, in practice, the board allows them to speak on action items at every meeting. Members of the public and UCA community may also address the board after securing approval from the university president or the board.

Trustees complete extensive orientation and training in their first year on the board and then have ongoing education and training throughout their seven-year terms. In their

first year of appointment, the new member reviews the annual committee assignments, divisional liaison roles, key policies, the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act, the Cabinet's role, the organizational chart, and current board and administrative leadership priorities (see [BOT Orientation Agenda](#)). The Association of Governing Boards and the Arkansas Division of Higher Education offer ongoing in-person and virtual training. The university rotates board members through divisional assignments in each of their seven years to broaden their understanding of campus operations, needs, and challenges. Additionally, trustees attend two retreats that serve as board professional development and work and planning sessions including budget updates and activities with university administrators.

Every year, the board carries out its fiduciary responsibilities by voting on the approval of the following action items, as reflected in the [minutes](#):

- Academic calendars, operating budgets, and funding certifications.
- Contracts exceeding \$500,000, property acquisitions, and campus renovations.
- Tuition, fees, room and board rates
- Employee benefits, personnel appointments, and salary adjustments.
- State position requests and legislative audit reports.
- Revisions to Board Policies and the Faculty Handbook.
- Select committee appointments, board expense reimbursements, and resolutions of appreciation.

The university notifies the board of curriculum changes requiring Arkansas Division of Higher Education approval. From November 2020 through May 2026, the board advanced UCA's best interests by executing the following actions:

- Approved Voluntary Employee Retirement Incentive (VERI) plans in fiscal years 2021 ([November 6, 2020](#)), 2022 ([August 12, 2022](#)), and 2027 ([May 27, 2026](#)).
- Authorized joining the ASUN athletic conference ([February 19, 2021](#)).
- Approved revisions to the 2022-2026 UCA Strategic Plan ([February 19, 2021](#), [May 21, 2024](#)), the strategic planning committee ([October 8, 2021](#)), and Key Performance Indicators ([February 17, 2023](#)).
- Streamlined undergraduate admission criteria (BP [310](#)) by establishing a single admission status ([February 19, 2021](#)) and permanently adopting test-optional criteria based on high school GPA ([October 3, 2025](#)).
- Authorized renovations to the Doyne Health Sciences Center ([February 19, 2021](#)), the former Communication Sciences and Disorders building (now the Student Success and Veterans Resource Center), the Snow Fine Arts building, and the Schichtl building now housing the Center for Honors Education and the Center for Global Learning and Engagement ([August 13, 2021](#)).
- Renamed facilities to honor retired university leaders, including the Ronnie

Williams Student Center ([August 13, 2021](#)) and the Thomas C. Courtway Student Recreation Center ([October 4, 2024](#)).

- Allocated \$100,000 from the Board Improvement Fund (BP [607](#)) to promote UCA Commitment ([October 6, 2023](#)).
- Authorized a feasibility study for a new multipurpose arena ([October 4, 2024](#)).
- Funded a new \$750,000 UCA Aviation Academy Hangar using American Rescue Plan Act Funds ([May 29, 2025](#)).
- Revised the academic clemency policy (BP [331](#)) to ease the process for returning students and renamed it "Academic Fresh Start" ([October 3, 2025](#)).
- Approved a lease ([January 27, 2026](#)) and renovation plan ([May 27, 2026](#)) for the new UCA Innovation Campus.
- Adopted the UCA 2035 Strategic Plan and authorized the administration to align institutional priorities with its imperatives ([May 27, 2026](#)).

2.D Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression

The institution supports academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of knowledge as integral to high-quality teaching, learning and research.

Argument

Based on its mission and core values, UCA grounds its support for academic freedom and expression in a commitment to intellectual excellence. By valuing the "free pursuit of knowledge," UCA empowers faculty and students to engage deeply in scholarship that advances knowledge across all disciplines. UCA's core value of diversity explicitly embraces a wide range of "individuals and ideas," including varying political affiliations and intellectual perspectives, allowing high-quality teaching and research to thrive in a respectful, open environment.

Academic Freedom

The UCA [Faculty Handbook](#) proclaims that "institutions of higher education are established for the common good" which "depends upon the uninhibited search for truth and its exposition," and that "this search, in turn, depends upon the guiding principles of academic freedom, shared governance, and tenure." The Faculty Handbook further states:

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. Academic freedom carries with it duties correlative with rights. A faculty member is entitled to freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of other academic duties.... A faculty member is entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing the subject material of the course, but care should be taken in introducing controversial matters that have no relation to the subject.

If a faculty member alleges that the termination or non-renewal of their appointment violated their academic freedom under the above policy, the [Academic Freedom Committee](#) reviews the matter.

Free Speech and Expression

BP [406](#) on Free Speech establishes the university's commitment to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth, stating that UCA "believes in academic freedom and free speech" and "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.” BP [406](#) also provides guidelines on how and where expressive activities, such as peaceful assembly or public speaking, can occur without materially or substantially disrupting university operations or violating the rights of others.

This policy defines campus forums as the outdoor area of campus and works in conjunction with other guidelines (like BP [400](#) for the scheduling and renting university facilities) to protect and safely manage campus speech. An [administrative policy on free speech](#) supplements BP [406](#) by

- Recognizing the first floor of the Ronnie Williams Student Center as an additional campus forum area open to the campus community
- Providing a grievance procedure concerning the restriction of free speech
- Prohibiting limits on expression in a campus forum “based on the (1) viewpoint of the expression or (2) reaction or opposition from listeners to or observers of the expression.”

UCA publishes this policy in the [Student Handbook](#) and on the [Ronnie Williams Student Center](#) website, and presents it during [new staff orientation](#).

Beyond protecting free speech, UCA actively encourages and supports the free expression of ideas and creative works through various initiatives and programs:

- Hosted annually by the Schedler Honors College, [Challenge Week](#) brings together students, faculty, and experts to discuss complex global and societal issues, evaluate diverse viewpoints, and explore solutions to real-world problems.
- The Arkansas Center for Research in Economics (ACRE) hosts a [Speaker Series](#) and two [student reading groups](#) each semester exploring the intersection of economics, public policy, economic freedom, and civil liberties.
- The College of Business also hosts the [John W. Allison Entrepreneurial Speaker Series](#) and the [Davis Family Lecture Series](#) to expose students and the community to successful business professionals.
- The College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (CAHSS) coordinates events promoting free expression, including the [Keystone Conversation Series](#), [Quoined Corner Research and Creative Activity Conference](#), [America at 250 Week](#), [UCA Global French Studies Symposium & Film Festival](#), and [Facilitating Pandemic Healing through the Arts](#).
- Programs in [Music](#), [Film](#), [Theatre](#), and [Creative Writing](#) provide their students with outlets to showcase their work, including music [recitals](#), the [UCA Film Festival](#), theatrical [productions](#), the [Arkana Literary Journal](#), [ArkaText Festival](#), and [Vortex Literary Magazine](#).

Campus Perceptions

During the 2024-2025 academic year, UCA administered the Campus Climate, Safety, and Sexual Assault Assessment to [faculty](#), [staff](#), and [students](#). The surveys measured perceptions of academic freedom and free expression using a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). Mean responses from faculty and staff indicated agreement with the following statements:

- This institution encourages free and open discussion on difficult topics (M = 5.45, N = 352)
- This institution encourages faculty and staff to openly share their ideas (M = 5.52, N = 352)
- Faculty and staff are treated fairly regardless of political ideology (M = 5.48, N = 348)
- This institution proactively implements policies to prevent discrimination related to political ideology (M = 5.41, N = 345)
- I have discussions with people whose ideas and values are different from my own (M = 6.46, N = 350).

Similarly, mean responses from students indicated agreement with the following statements:

- Students at this institution are treated fairly regardless of their political ideology (M = 5.59, N = 515)
- I have discussions with people whose ideas and values are different from my own (M = 6.39, N = 517)
- Students at this institution encourage free and open discussion about difficult or controversial topics (M = 5.46, N = 512)
- Students at this institution are open-minded when it comes to sharing different ideas and beliefs (M = 5.33, N = 511)
- Faculty at this institution value different perspectives in the classroom (M = 5.72, N = 511)
- Faculty at this institution turn difficult controversial topics into constructive discussions (M = 5.78, N = 505)
- Administrators at this institution respect what students think (M = 5.53, N = 507)
- This institution proactively implements policies to prevent discrimination related to political ideology (M = 5.49, N = 508).

Across both groups, mean responses were consistently above the midpoint of the seven-point scale. These results provide evidence that the experiences of faculty, staff, and students reflect UCA's commitment to academic freedom, open discussion, and respect for differing viewpoints.

2.E - Knowledge Acquisition, Discovery and Application

The institution adheres to policies and procedures that ensure responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge.

Argument

Anchored by its dedication to academic vitality, integrity, and diversity, UCA's mission commits the university to acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly. Our core values of intellectual excellence and integrity guide this commitment by encouraging students and faculty to “engage in professional development and scholarly endeavors that promote the creation and application of knowledge in all disciplines” and “to foster a climate of ethical conduct, respect, responsibility, and trust.” Consistent with our mission and core values, the university adheres to the following policies and procedures to ensure academic integrity, ethical and legal compliance, and intellectual property rights.

Academic Integrity

BP [709](#) establishes UCA's Academic Integrity policy which commits all members of the university community “to honesty and responsibility in teaching and learning.” The policy defines academic misconduct to include behaviors such as cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, and unauthorized collaboration. Instructors evaluate suspected infractions in course work on a case-by-case basis and possess the authority to apply course-related sanctions, which can range from a failing grade on a specific assignment to a failing grade for the entire course. Once an instructor's allegation is confirmed by the department chair, it is submitted to the University Registrar to become a permanent part of the student's electronic record, with penalties escalating for repeated offenses, up to expulsion from the university. To protect student rights, the policy details a multi-tiered appeals process. It begins with informal instructor discussions and can escalate to the department chair, college dean, and [Academic Integrity and Discipline Committee](#), before the provost and vice president for student affairs make a joint final decision. The Academic Integrity policy is communicated to students in the [Student Handbook](#) and in every [course syllabus](#).

The Faculty Handbook (Chapter 4. VI.) also makes clear the faculty member's responsibilities regarding student understanding of academic honesty and integrity:

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. The student has the right of appeal pursuant to the procedure set out in the Student Handbook.

Proactively, [Library Instruction Services](#), upon instructor request, provide students customized instruction on research techniques and information literacy. Torreyson Library also offers students resources that can be accessed outside of a formal class, including online help for citing sources, a [Library Survival Guide](#), and 24/7 chat with a librarian. Together, these services help students learn the appropriate ways to locate and cite sources for their assignments.

Additionally, certain professional disciplines maintain specific ethical standards and guidelines that students in those fields are required to learn and follow. For example, all students in teacher preparation programs must learn and abide by the [Code of Ethics for Arkansas Educators](#), which defines the minimum ethical standards for all educators licensed in Arkansas, including pre-service teachers. The School of Nursing [Undergraduate Student Handbook](#) and [Graduate Program Handbook](#) require its students to adhere to an honor commitment consistent with the standards and values of the nursing profession reflected in the [Code of Ethics for Nurses](#) and [The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education](#).

UCA recognizes the implications of generative artificial intelligence (AI) for traditional pedagogy and academic integrity. While the university assesses the adequacy of its current academic integrity policy in the age of AI, the Center for Teaching and Academic Leadership (CETAL) has proactively engaged the campus community to build understanding and empower decision making on the ethical use of AI in the classroom. [CETAL's website](#) provides faculty with a wealth of information and resources about AI, including blog posts, syllabus and course assignment strategies, classroom activities, sample prompts, and links to further reading. CETAL also offers an [AI book group](#), and has hosted a highly attended [AI mini-conference](#) every August for the past three years. Additionally, CETAL created a [website with AI information for students](#) that guides students through the ethical considerations of AI use.

Research Integrity and Compliance

UCA's [Office of Research Compliance](#) (ORC) provides administrative support to faculty, staff, and students to ensure ethical, safe, and legally compliant research practices. To manage this broad mandate, the ORC works with faculty oversight committees to handle several specific compliance duties. It supports the [Institutional Review Board](#) (IRB), which holds the authority to approve, modify, or terminate any research involving human subjects. This oversight ensures all human research aligns with the core ethical pillars of beneficence, justice, and respect for persons. Additionally, the ORC manages the [Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee](#) (IACUC) to enforce federal laws regarding live vertebrate animals used in teaching and experimentation. IACUC

coordinates protocol reviews and oversees the university's lab safety and controlled substance policies.

Beyond human and animal subjects, the ORC enforces [financial conflicts of interest](#) (BP 320) to prevent personal financial relationships from compromising funded research. The ORC also takes a proactive approach to ensuring research integrity primarily through mandatory education and structured system oversight. Key research personnel must complete standardized online instruction through the [Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative](#) (CITI). This includes specific training for human and animal subjects protection, as well as [Responsible Conduct of Research](#) modules mandated for students funded by the National Science Foundation or the National Institutes of Health. Furthermore, the ORC enforces integrity through rigorous submission and review protocols and post-approval monitoring using the Cayuse HE system, ensuring that no regulated research begins without formal committee sign-off and tracking.

With specific reference to research, scholarship, and creative activity, the Faculty Handbook (Chapter 4. X.) states that:

All members of the university community share responsibility for valuing the breadth of these activities and ensuring that they are conducted in a climate of trust among scholars, researchers, and students and between the academic community and the public. 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.

The UCA [Policy for Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct](#) establishes the formal framework for defining and addressing ethical breaches in research across the university. It specifically defines research misconduct as fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, reviewing, or reporting research, while explicitly excluding honest errors or differences of opinion. The policy applies to all UCA-affiliated personnel—including faculty, staff, students, and visiting scholars—and outlines a structured, multi-phase process (assessment, inquiry, and investigation) to handle allegations. Guided by the Dean of the Graduate School and the provost, the [Procedures for Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct](#) ensure fair treatment, mandate protections against retaliation, and detail coordination with federal oversight bodies for externally funded projects. The policy and procedures are available on the ORC's [Research Misconduct](#) page, which also includes educational resources and links to public online resources.

Intellectual Property

BP 410 establishes the framework for managing, protecting, and commercializing intellectual property to benefit the public, the creator, and the university. Under this

policy, UCA disclaims ownership of traditional scholarly works, such as journal articles, textbooks, artworks, and course materials, allowing them to remain the unrestricted property of the originator. However, the university claims ownership of other intellectual property—ranging from patentable inventions to computer software, video courses, and biological materials—developed by faculty, staff, or students using university funds or facilities. Originators must report qualifying discoveries to the University Research Council, which assesses the university's legal interest and the property's commercial potential. If accepted for commercialization, the property rights are assigned to the Office of Grants and Sponsored Research, which manages patenting, copyrighting, and licensing. The policy outlines a standard royalty income sharing structure for net earnings. Furthermore, it protects creators by allowing them to petition the University Research Council for the return of their intellectual property rights if the university fails to achieve commercialization within two years.

BP [409](#) outlines the intellectual property rights and usage guidelines for online and hybrid course materials to protect the interests of faculty, students, and the university. According to the policy, electronic or digital content created exclusively by a faculty member—such as original syllabi, artwork, or test questions—remains their intellectual property; however, if the faculty member departs the university, UCA retains a non-exclusive right to use these materials for up to twelve months. Conversely, UCA maintains sole ownership of content developed strictly by staff members for delivery support, designated "Work for Hire" materials, and master course documents created by an academic unit for multiple sections. The policy also addresses joint ownership for items produced collaboratively by faculty and staff (such as staff-produced videos of a faculty member), dictating that neither party can distribute the content to non-UCA entities without the other's written permission. Furthermore, BP [409](#) requires faculty to ensure copyright compliance, affirms student ownership of original coursework, and clarifies that UCA's routine server backups do not transfer ownership.