RESOLUTION REGARDING THE CLOSURE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ARKANSAS POLLING PLACE

WHEREAS, on January 22, 2018, the Faulkner County Election Commission voted to close the official polling location at the University of Central Arkansas; and

WHEREAS, the University of Central Arkansas was not consulted or informed prior to the Faulkner County Election Commission’s vote; and

WHEREAS, with many students eligible to vote for the first time while enrolled at UCA, and with traditional college-aged students having consistently low rates of turnout, it is important to promote civic engagement on our campus; and

WHEREAS, UCA student leaders and organizations (including the Student Government Association, Young Democrats, College Republicans, Young Americans for Liberty, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc., Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc., and the UCA chapter of the NAACP) have taken on the responsibility of civic engagement by registering voters, educating students on relevant issues, and encouraging students to vote on campus; and

WHEREAS, when encouraging young voters, student leaders used the fact that students could vote on campus as a “selling point” to encourage student voter participation; and

WHEREAS, data from the Faulkner County Election Commission shows that 394 voters cast their vote on campus during the 2016 general election, and 374 people voted on campus during the 2016 primary; and

WHEREAS, the Student Government Association has adopted a resolution urging the Faulkner County Election Commission to reinstate the UCA polling place; and

WHEREAS, civic engagement is consistent with UCA’s vision, which encourages student “engagement with local, national, and global communities,” such as the engagement demonstrated by the Student Government Association’s resolution; and

WHEREAS, the Student Government Association estimates that 975 on-campus students lack access to transportation and may have difficulty getting to a polling place; and

WHEREAS, the closure of the UCA polling location will likely reduce participation in the electoral process; specifically, students who lack access to transportation may not be able to get to a polling location, while students, faculty, and staff with full academic and work schedules may not take the time to vote;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate join the Student Government Association in urging the Faulkner County Election Commission to rescind the January 22, 2018 vote removing the University of Central Arkansas as an official polling place.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate urges the UCA Board of Trustees, President Houston Davis, and other appropriate campus leaders join in our call to reinstate the UCA polling place.