



UNIVERSITY OF
CENTRAL
ARKANSAS™

FACULTY
SENATE

Faculty Senate Meeting 09/09/2025

Minutes Draft

Senator Craun, Secretary

Call to Order: 12:48 PM

Present:

President Davis, Provost Hargis, Senate President Dunlap, Vice-President Thomas

At Large Senators: Mukherjee, Spivey

CAHSS Senators: Mayhew, Burley, Craun

CHBS Senators: Jamerson, Downey

COB Senators: Appiah Otto

COE Senators: Couture, McClellan

COSE Senators: Yarberry, Johnson, Naumiec

Honors Senator: Frank

Library Senator: LeBeau-Ford

Minutes from 8/18 approved online earlier: (16 - Yes, 1 - Abstention)

President Davis's Comments:

1. UCA Administration and the Board of Trustees continue to observe the ongoing discussion of DEI policies and programs at the State and National levels.
 - a. HLC and other accrediting bodies are continuing to evaluate their standards relative to evolving state and federal laws and regulations. It

is expected that changes will continue - especially relative to state laws in member states. The federal actions related to accreditation will likely bring more changes and perhaps some clarification in time.

- b. The administration and general counsel have reviewed recent state laws and the Board of Trust has approved changes to Board and University policy to comply with state law. With those board policy adoptions occurring in early August to comply with state laws taking effect on August 5th, the further review of other university policies and procedures are being evaluated to ensure they are in-line with Board policy and any applicable state laws. These reviews and changes will be on-going and take time.
- c. There are resources available for consultation to help faculty respond to these issues, so if there are specific questions regarding a class or practice, please reach out to your Department Chair, College Dean, or Faculty Senator. The office of General Counsel has already met with several units and will continue to do so as we work through this academic and fiscal year

2. Faculty Longevity Bonus

- a. President Davis is encouraged that the Faculty Salary Review Committee started the process last year and successfully broke ground on this new program, but with any new initiative, the need for evaluation and tweaking is expected even after just one cycle.
- b. He recognizes and encourages the Faculty Senates' wish that the Faculty Salary Review Committee revisit the scope and general design of the Faculty Longevity Bonus and will look forward to the further recommendations of the committee.

- 3. As we do each fall, the university will undergo the process of consideration of revisions to the current fiscal year budget with a first eye toward fall enrollment and projections for spring enrollment. If revenues allow, there is a priority to begin the process of making adjustments to the faculty and staff that are most significantly below market with a goal within a couple of fiscal cycles to have none of those in the salary study below 90% of target and thus within a competition range by the salary study definitions. If fall enrollment revenue and early spring registrations show favorably, the hope is to have some funds earmarked to make some adjustments in mid-year with a firm plan in place for bringing everyone as close to 90% as possible in FY27. Currently, 116 Faculty and 36 Staff are still below 90% of the market.

4. The President reminded faculty that any plan will necessitate compromise between correcting equity for the impacted employees and making advancements for all UCA employees.
5. Healthcare negotiations are underway with Stephens Inc given the changing costs of healthcare/medications. It is uncertain yet how this will impact UCA's insurance premiums and/or coverages, but updates regarding any changes will be passed on as information materializes.

Provost Hargis's Comments:

1. Thank you to Faculty Senators for their leadership and continuous efforts to make UCA's student experience successful!
2. Strategic Plan: Working groups are staffed and proceeding on their charges. These groups are working to move the goals (discussed in the opening presentation and available on the Strategic Plan Website) towards specific objectives. Further, these groups will designate priority actions, calculate costs and necessary resources, and construct timelines for the next 3-5 years.
3. Requests for nominations for Faculty Excellence Awards will be coming soon via email. Please nominate your deserving colleagues!

Special announcement from Dr. Stephanie Rose: Mobilize Recovery Intervention Conference. UCA is one of ten schools across the country chosen to host one of these events. The conference is scheduled for 30th of September and includes a variety of performances, information sessions, and trainings. See UCA Inform for details.

Constituent Concerns:

1. There were several concerns regarding UCA's implementation of recent State legislation and the President addressed these in his comments above & at the Faculty Senate Executive Meeting. Existing UCA policies, such as the use of the AVID acronym and FYS syllabus language regarding the Diversity aspect are still in effect, but will be reviewed alongside a wider review of the UCA Core to align it with new state guidelines.

2. There is a question regarding the mandatory shift in Faculty pay from 12-month to 9-month during Sabbaticals.
 - a. **The Constituent's question concerned a specific case and the President and Provost agreed to look into that situation to see if relief could be accomplished.**
 - b. **The broader question will require more investigation into HR's reasons behind the shift in pay-roll status. The Provost is aware of the issue and the Faculty Senate is considering the problem.**

2. A constituent expressed concern regarding the presence of UCA's President during the entirety of Faculty Senate meetings.
 - a. **President Davis clarified that he has never, to his recollection, remained through the duration of Faculty Senate meetings and expressed that it was very important for his position and for the Faculty Senate to have some time without the president in the discussions. While he said that he is proud to be able to regularly attend the meetings, a balanced approach is best and readily expressed that he would not stay beyond the time the Senate felt necessary, i.e.—the President's Comments.**
 - b. **There is on-going discussion in the Senate about setting aside some time for Constituent Concerns while the President is present to facilitate answers for issues that are Administrative in nature.**

3. The Psychology Department reached out concerning their desire to adjust a faculty position description to solicit an increased number of applicants.
 - a. **After discussion, the Faculty Senate decided this issue was outside of the Senate's purview. According to the Faculty Handbook, only hiring that would increase the number of non-tenure-track positions require Faculty Senate review. This case does not.**

4. Why do Faculty and Staff have to pay for parking?
 - a. **The answer is that charging for parking is not an uncommon practice and is an important source of revenue. UCA's fee is low when compared to other universities (per the President and Provost), however it was suggested that parking play a role in future discussions of "total compensation." The Senate will keep that in mind for future discussions/negotiations.**

5. A constituent asked whether UCA can adjust (raise) the adjunct pay rate in their college and suggested that it was different based on other colleges.
 - a. **Provost Hargis stated that the base adjunct rate is the same across all colleges with a few exceptions in each. Provost Hargis will review our current pay levels and will follow up with the College Deans.**
6. There was a concern that the 2-inch binder required for Tenure and Promotion applications is difficult to stick to, given the change in Student Evaluation format. Printing 5-6 years of evaluations can easily push the 2-inch limit.
 - a. **Provost Hargis stated that he did not consider the physical presence of an applicant's entire body of evaluations to be required. He suggested applicants use summary tables, create charts, and highlight major themes. The printed collection of evaluations could stay with the Department Chairs (Supplemental Binder). Kurt Boniecki will review the application instructions and adjust the instructions to clarify that option moving forward. Additionally, Provost Hargis pointed to the other forms of evidence highlighted in the Faculty Handbook that can be used to demonstrate teaching effectiveness.**
7. One Faculty Member expressed concern that Blackboard opens a week before classes start—when faculty are just returning on contract. Could we not wait and make online material open the first day of class?
 - a. **Provost Hargis is aware of the early opening, but wants to investigate the history and institutional purposes of the change before responding definitively.**
8. Sabbatical—One Faculty Member had a family emergency that began at the start of a Sabbatical and had to switch to family leave. However, after the emergency was over and the Faculty Member wished to take the sabbatical on a new semester, this person had to reapply from scratch. However, in another case (where a sabbatical had to be canceled last minute), the person was granted a sabbatical without reapplication. Can UCA develop a policy governing these types of situations to ensure fairness and clarity?
 - a. **Because department chairs and deans must evaluate sabbatical applications and determine if it is feasible for the department to meet teaching loads for any given semester while a faculty member is on sabbatical, the application cannot be transferred to**

another semester without reevaluation of the timing. The faculty member can submit the same proposal, but it must be reevaluated for timing. We encourage the constituent to reach out to their representative on the Sabbatical Leave Review Committee (<https://uca.edu/committees/sabbatical-leave-review-committee/>). The committee can discuss having a policy around this matter.

9. Navigate is gone. Slate is not implemented yet. How do we track at-risk students and intervene in the meantime?
 - a. **President Dunlap is reaching out to Kevin Thomas for an answer**
10. Honors Faculty are serving on lots of committees per-capita (as many as five). Can we fix this?
 - a. **The number of Unaffiliated Faculty has shrunk with the movement of the Dept of Student Transitions to the College of Education. Currently, Library + Honors faculty number little more than a dozen individuals. According to the Faculty Handbook, some committees require a set representative from Honors and/or Library. On others, Honors and Library provide a representative simply because there are *representatives from each college or department*.**
 - b. **Faculty Senate can urge the Faculty Handbook Committee to address this problem, but the answer will require more discussion/investigation.**
 - d. **The Honors/Library Faculty are welcome to put forth a specific proposal.**
11. How can we better equip faculty to deal with student mental health crises?
 - a. **President Dunlap will invite Dr. Sobel to speak to the Senate about this question.**
 - b. **There were some concerns about changes to faculty liability once they receive training. These questions can be addressed to UCA's Legal Counsel before any action is taken.**
12. A constituent pointed out that the language defining the Faculty Longevity Bonus should specify that it refers to longevity of service at UCA and not service at other institutions.
13. Some College of Education Faculty are at 77% on the Salary Equity Report. Can this be addressed and can UCA prioritize addressing faculty who have

served the longest and are nearing retirement because it would benefit Social Security calculations?

- a. **The intent is to adjust inequities below 90% over the next 1-2 budget years, and that will require the regular budgetary review outlined in the President's Comments above.**
- b. **No, UCA cannot prioritize individual responses to a collective market-salary review. The state has approved market-value as an argument to raise pay. The State has also agreed to merit, but the conditions behind those awards would have to be approved and the current issue (basis for pay raises) is Market Value. Nor can UCA award pay increases based on a person's expectation of Social Security (Ageism).**

14. Some 10 or 11-month faculty did not receive a Salary Review Letter.

- a. **President Davis said that he would investigate these situations to see if this information can be provided to those faculty.**

15. The Department of Student Transitions is now in the College of Education.

Currently, this entire department is staffed with Lecturers. A constituent suggested that such an important department, in a field ripe with research opportunities, should have a sizable number of Tenure-Track positions. Multiple Faculty Members within this department have terminal degrees, but they lack Tenure-Track lines.

- a. **While the Faculty Senate sees the value in this department and always supports increases in Tenure-Track positions, it recognizes that there is a path already in place to request those positions from the Administration.**

16. Are Covid and Flu vaccines still covered on the UCA Health Insurance?

- a. **Yes, both vaccines are still covered by the insurance. Last week there were a couple of people that went for a covid booster and the insurance was declined at the pharmacy. This was due to BCBS not having the updated vaccine codes in the system. The codes were updated on Friday and BCBS reached out to both pharmacies to confirm coverage of the vaccines at 100% for both employees.**

17. What should Faculty do if Federal I.C.E agents enter our building and/or class?

- a. **Comply with any official directives given by these agents while respecting FERPA guidelines (you are unable to provide rosters/grades/etc on your own).**
 - b. **Inform UCA PD and the President's Office immediately.**
- 18. There is an error in the market salary study, the results of which were reported to employees in June: Emails during the process indicated that data was collected in the summer of 2024, suggesting that it came from the 2024/2025 fiscal year at the surveyed schools, but might even be older. The results reported to faculty in June compared that historical data to future UCA salaries, namely the 2025/2026 budget salaries.
 - a. **The salary study utilized data from peer institutions from the 2023/2024 academic year and they were compared to UCA data from the 2024/2025 academic year. The study used the most up-to-date data accessible, but there is always a lag between data being reported from other institutions and UCA's ability to access that data.**

Senate Committee Reports:

Committee on Committee—Chair, Joe Thomas

- a. COB needs to elect a replacement for Joe Thomas on the University Committee on Committees since he is now FS Vice President. He will prod them concerning an election.
- b. The University Committee on Committees also needs a Faculty Senate Representative. Joe Thomas will check whether his presence serving on the committee as Faculty Senate Vice President fulfills this requirement, or whether we need to appoint an additional person.

Academic Affairs Committee—Chair, Adam Franks

- a. Faculty Senate Research Empowerment Grants have a fall application deadline of Oct. 1st. Applications are on the Faculty Senate Website.

See flyer below

- b. Review of grant applications will start immediately afterwards during the Academic Affairs Committee meetings.
- c. A post-grant questionnaire and a summary blurb have been added to the process to gather suggestions for improvement and promotional materials for the website.
- d.

Faculty Affairs Committee—Chair, Faith Yarberry

See Action Item & New Business below

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (new name and charge forthcoming)—Chair, Rhonda McClellan

- a. The committee will take up its charge to develop a new purpose and description for this committee and to propose a new name for the Faculty Senate to adopt.

Action Items:

- A. Senator Yarberry moves to accept resolution A allowing electronic voting to approve Faculty Senate Minutes (see text of the resolution below). No 2nd necessary on a motion from a committee.

Proposal passes unanimously

- B. Similarly, Senator Yarberry asks for confirmation of John Parrack (CAHSS) as a replacement on the Faculty Salary Review Committee.

Proposal passes unanimously

New Business

Faculty Affairs Committee will present a resolution to alter voting procedures for the Faculty Senate, specifically lengthening the duration voting is open and shifting elections away from Fridays. (See resolution below). The resolution will be voted on at the next meeting, so contact your Senators with thoughts or concerns.

Sen. Naumiec moved to adjourn

Sen. Franks seconded.

Meeting Adjourned at 2:31.

Faculty Senate Research Empowerment Grants



Attention all UCA Full-time Faculty: UCA Faculty Senate Research Empowerment Grants are back!

Do you need assistance for organizing and funding your research?
Do you need help covering costs related to conference travel?
Do you need support for inter-departmental research collaboration?

The Faculty Senate has a grant for you!

We are excited to announce a new round of Research Empowerment Grants!
Applications will be accepted until October 1, 2025. Faculty Senate will fund two to three
\$1,500 grants per academic year.

Interdepartmental collaborations are encouraged.

For more details, scoring rubric, link to the application, and to see past winners:

<https://uca.edu/facultysenate/research-empowerment-grant/>

ACTION ITEM A

Resolution to change faculty senate bylaws to allow for electronic approval of minutes

Whereas the Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws does not describe the process for voting on minutes by the Faculty Senate

And, whereas the Constitution and Bylaws does not provide for electronic voting on minutes

And, whereas it is deemed important to disseminate the minutes in a timely fashion to the faculty of the University

It is proposed that a Section 4 be added to ARTICLE VI. POLICY ON ACCESS TO THE FACULTY SENATE section of the Bylaws that states:

Section 4: Voting On and Dissemination of Minutes

- a. Online voting is authorized for ratifying meeting minutes. Voting must be secure and include only those authorized to vote.*
- b. Members must receive proper notice, no fewer than two business days, of the vote and any materials necessary to make an informed decision (like motions, reports, etc.).*
- c. A quorum must be established for the vote to be valid. The motion passes based on a majority or required threshold of those voting, as specified in the bylaws or rules.*
- d. Once the votes are certified by the Secretary, minutes can be shared with others.*

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution: Amending Bylaw I relating to timing of elections and consequently the timing associated with Faculty Association votes on amendments to the Constitution.

Whereas Article I, Section I of the Bylaws requires voting for Faculty Senate representatives to take place on Fridays, and

Whereas Article I, Section 4 of the Bylaws specifies that voting take place between 8:00 am and 4:15 pm, and

Whereas not all members of the Faculty Association are on campus or check email on Fridays, and

Whereas these requirements limit voting opportunities of the Faculty Association on Senators and Constitution amendments.

Be it therefore resolved that Article I, Section 1 and 4 of the Faculty Senate Bylaws be amended to read:

Section 1: Faculty Senate elections will take place according to the following schedule: College and Unaffiliated representatives ~~on~~ during the last full work week ~~working Friday preceding spring break, or the last Friday in March in the event there is no spring break;~~ At-Large representatives ~~on~~ during the second working Friday after spring break, or on the second Friday full week in April in the event there is no spring break; Part-time representatives at the beginning of the academic year.

Section 4: Ballots will be open ~~between 8:00 am and 4:15 pm Central Time on the day of 48 hours during the week of the election. If the Faculty Senate President deems an extension is necessary, the time period will be adjusted accordingly to obtain sufficient votes.~~