



UNIVERSITY OF
CENTRAL
ARKANSAS™

FACULTY
SENATE

Faculty Senate Meeting 9/25/2025

Minutes

Chris Craun, Secretary

Call to Order, 12:47 PM

Present:

President Davis, Provost Hargis, Senate President Dunlap, Vice-President Thomas (Zoom)

At Large Senators: Mukherjee, Spivey, Rosenow

CAHSS Senators: Mayhew, Burley, Craun

CHBS Senators: Downey, Rose, Jamerson

COB Senators: Appiah Otto, McCalman

COE Senators: Couture, McClellan, Buchannan

COSE Senators: Yarberry, Johnson, Naumiec

Honors Senator: Frank

Notice of Virtual Approvement of Minutes for 09/09/2025

15 Ayes

3 Abstentions

Minutes Approved.

President's Comments:

1. Health Plan costs continue to rise substantially across the state and the nation, and we have seen an average of 22% statewide in premium increases. UCA's administration is recommending a 7% increase for premiums to the board, which is possible because of the steps that we are taking to manage our self-operated health insurance program. President Davis pointed out that similar increases in earlier years have helped to moderate what are often abrupt sizable premium increases at other institutions. This information is being shared prior to action by the Board of Trust at their October meeting because we did not want our UCA employees to fear there would be much higher premium increases.
2. UCA continues to respond and adjust to new statutory requirements and will continue to work through the coming months. While the state's ACCESS bill is in implementation, other elements such as federal rules and guidance are very much still in development and, in some cases, still in search of interpretation by USDOE and other actors. While guidance and interpretations are still developing as we and other universities make changes, it is important to note that we will comply with state and federal laws, acknowledging that the procedural impacts of legislation are dynamic and ongoing. We should expect continuing recalibration of our procedures and policies over the next several years as actual state laws and various federal elements continue to shift.
3. Though we normally talk about shared governance as what happens within the bounds of UCA, we have to also accept that shared governance includes the State's authoritative role in establishing laws and policies. Partners in that work include our Board of Trust, our accreditor, the Governor, the legislature, USDOE, programmatic accreditors, and others. Relative to ACCESS, it is our role to work together to ensure the implementation of these statutes and policies for our students. While fall 2025 was largely built prior to ACCESS and other rules being finalized, spring 2026 will be the first semester where classes and programs are created, approved, and enrolled with full knowledge of legislation passed in 2025. Therefore, the process of compliance may feel particularly pressing at this moment. We will all work together to press on and work collectively to make spring 2026 both compliant and successful.

Provost's Comments:

I want to begin with two important announcements.

1) The UCA Foundation is currently requesting grant proposals from members of the faculty for Foundation funding. The fall 2025 deadline for applications is Friday, November 7, 2025. Information and application materials are available at uca.edu/foundation/faculty-grants, and please contact Chad Hearne if you have any questions.

2) I want to speak directly to the ongoing compliance work required under the Arkansas ACCESS Act. This legislation has fundamentally changed our operating environment, and compliance is not optional. Without it, we risk our ability to serve students and continue functioning as an institution.

In July, the Board of Trustees meeting was focused on reviewing institutional policies, committee structures, and other operational elements for alignment with state law. This next phase of compliance work includes a comprehensive review of courses, focused on course titles, course content, and course descriptions. This work must be completed over the next two weeks before registration begins for the Spring 2026 semester. Some key items to remember:

(A) State Law Requires Our Action – The Arkansas ACCESS Act has changed our operating environment. Compliance is not optional—without it, we risk our ability to serve students and continue functioning as an institution.

(B) Shared Governance Remains Central – Faculty, Department, and College leadership remain vital to this process. Deans have been asked to coordinate course reviews within their respective Colleges and to work with Chairs/Directors and faculty to ensure that course titles, descriptions, and content are aligned with the law.

(C) Transparency Protects Us All – Deans and Chairs are already working with departments and faculty on course reviews, with emphasis on Spring 2026. This is a time to review all courses, ask questions and make necessary adjustments. The timeline is driven by enrollment cycles and our mandate to be compliant with state law.

(D) We Recognize the Effort Ahead – We recognize that this review includes courses shaped by years of intentional labor. While this revision may prove complex, demanding, and sometimes painful, it remains essential to protecting

UCA's ability to serve students and to support the ongoing work of faculty and staff. I thank you for undertaking it.

After Senators posed questions to Provost Hargis and President Davis, two further points emerged:

1. ADHE has not published a document to guide interpretation and implementation of ACCESS Bill requirements. Any guidance from the state will be shared as it is received.
2. Student-selected research topics including independent studies or Honors tutorials are not areas of focus during the current review.

President Davis leaves at 1:25 PM

Senate President Dunlap's Comments:

1. We welcome Senator Buchannan from COE to the Senate.
2. Faculty will likely come to Faculty Senators with questions regarding course changes and compliance with state legislation. Be ready! Part of our purpose is to answer questions or raise them to administration while maintaining the anonymity of the faculty member.
3. Urge faculty to discuss specific course issues with their Chairs.

Guest Presentation #1: Madeline Kimbrell: Employee Wellness Coordinator

She would like to build more relationships with faculty/staff across campus, so please reach out.

Goals for the UCA BeWell Plan:

Reduce health risk and absenteeism

Increase healthy behaviors and productivity

Control costs for UCA's health plan.

Promote practical health choices that improve UCA's employee experience.

Available benefits for qualified participation:

\$20 discount on Health premiums per month.

\$Up to \$100 Bear Bucks loaded onto your Bear Card (now usable at several places off campus such as Harps!)

To Qualify:

Faculty must receive a Biometric Screening and complete the HRA Survey (online) by 10/31 each year to receive the insurance discount

Discount is for the following 12 months after 10/31.

There are Biometric Screening appointments available at UCA Clinic throughout the year.

Qualifying for Bear Bucks is based on a point system:

150 points = \$50 Bear Bucks

200 points = \$75 Bear Bucks

250 points = 100 Bear Bucks

Faculty receive points for completing the required qualification tasks (Biometric Screening + HRA Survey) and for other healthy activities outlined on the BeWell App, which is available for download on UCA's Be Well website: <https://uca.edu/bewell/facultystaff/kasey-jordan/>

Other Resources:

Presentations on Health topics every month that count towards BeWell points.

Health Coaching (via the BeWell App)

Wellness Challenges (via the App)

Employee Assistant Program:

Confidential short-term counseling (10/year) at no cost

Employees, spouses, and Dependents

Information available at <https://uca.edu/bewell/eap/>

Fitness Classes at HPER

Seeking: BeWell Champions

Volunteer to liaison between the BeWell program and your department.

Earn 25 BeWell points.

Applications open until November.

REMINDER: 10/31 is the cut-off for Be Well activities and point-builders. Points for activities after that date will be applied to the following year.

Guest Presentation #2: Graduate Dean Michael Mills and Lasi McGhee, Office of Research Compliance

Lasi McGhee is responsible for directing researchers to the appropriate compliance committees (Radioactive Safety, IRB, etc.). She is also the go-to person for helping fill out the requisite compliance forms.

The new IRB software system is performing well and is a substantial improvement over the old system.

There will soon be a new link on the ORC webpage to a comprehensive list of available research grants.

Three Points of Emphasis for Faculty Regarding ORC Procedures:

1. Data Storage and Security

Records should be stored in a manner that limits access to only authorized individuals and in a way that ensures that all records and documents in the possession of a researcher(s) can be easily traced back to any specific study and/or easily inventoried for an audit.

- **Hardcopy Records**
 - Behind two lock doors (i.e., a locked file cabinet in a locked office)
 - Master lists and other identifying information stored separately from the rest of the records
- **Electronic Records**
 - Password-protected computers and encrypted files
 - Always upload to UCA servers, never store on personal devices

2. Transparency

Make sure you are providing all the information our research compliance review committees need in order to conduct a thorough review pre, during, and post review/approval. We have to ensure that we are adhering to all applicable federal, state, and institutional policies.

3. Reporting Non-Compliance and Research Misconduct

We welcome any feedback that you have regarding what our office needs to do to make the UCA population feel more comfortable coming to us when they have concerns or if they are uncertain about standard practices

Constituent Concerns:

President Dunlap is going to create a shared document for Senators to drop in constituent concerns as they arise between meetings.

1. All concerns can still be discussed in FS meetings regardless of whether they are in the document.
2. The Executive committee can start looking for answers regarding the documented concerns before the next meeting.

Concerns:

1. **Online programs via UCA online are having to farm out students to local community colleges for a lot of lower division classes. This is a lot of loss in hours for UCA because the lower core is not online. Also, we are advertising online programs when not all courses are online. This is a loss of at least 60 hours per student.**

- Provost Hargis: Thank you for raising this important point about the structure of UCA Online offerings. You are right to note that some lower-division core courses are not yet consistently available online, which can create challenges for students and advisors who intend to complete their program entirely in a virtual format. In some cases, this has led students to enroll at other institutions and then transfer those credits back to UCA.
- To address this reality, many of our current online programs are structured as completion degrees, designed with the expectation that students arrive having already earned an associate degree or

significant lower-division credit. This model has expanded access, but it can also result in a less seamless experience for students who expect a full “start-to-finish” pathway.

- We recognize this concern and see it as an opportunity. UCA has made meaningful progress in expanding our online options, with most upper-division coursework already fully online. The remaining gap is in the 1000- and 2000-level core courses, and expanding these offerings is a clear strategic priority. Several academic units are already working on increasing availability, and this is a central part of our current planning. As we do this work, it is especially helpful when specific pinch points are identified. Please share those with the UCA Online team and with me so that we can work directly with Deans and Department Chairs to explore solutions.
- In the meantime, we are committed to transparency, making sure students understand the distinction between “fully online” and “online-completion” programs. Our long-term goal is to provide a seamless online experience that removes barriers, supports timely degree completion, and delivers the full value of a UCA education. This fall, UCA Online accounts for 11% of enrollment, and that number continues to move upward.

2. 5th year athletes in Grad Programs are not completing or participating in the classes and this impacts group assignments and our graduation completion rate.

From Scott Brezee, Director of Athletic Academic Advising:

- Thank you for forwarding this faculty concern. Please know that any academic concerns brought to our office are taken seriously, and we work diligently in conjunction with faculty, advisors, and coaches to ensure that issues are addressed promptly and with the student’s best academic interests in mind.
- At present, we have 24 student-athletes enrolled in graduate programs. The most common programs are:
 - MA in Sports Management (6 students)
 - MBA in Business Administration (6 students)
 - MS in Health Promotion (4 students)
 - The remaining students are distributed across other programs on campus.

- As a general practice, when student-athletes return to campus predominately to complete their final year of athletic eligibility, we strongly encourage them to re-enroll as post-baccalaureate students. This pathway avoids complications with graduation completion rates should they decide not to finish a second degree program, and it also provides the widest flexibility in course selection to minimize conflicts between academic and athletic commitments.
- We only direct students into graduate programs if, and only if, they specifically request to begin a master's degree. In these cases, we make them fully aware that:
 - Athletic scholarships do not extend beyond the completion of their athletic eligibility.
 - Graduate-level study requires a significant academic commitment and is not intended simply as a means to prolong athletic participation.
- Graduate student-athletes are required to meet with their graduate advisors, as the Graduate School has previously directed our office that academic advising for these students must be led at the program level. Our office then serves as a liaison between academics and athletics for compliance and certification purposes.
- To better address the concern raised, it would be helpful to know more specific details—whether it involves particular teams, programs, or patterns of behavior. While I understand the concern was submitted anonymously, I do not recall any recent issues of this nature being raised directly. We do, of course, encounter individual cases of at-risk academic performance among student-athletes, but in my view those have been isolated rather than program-wide. If I ever became aware of a concern that reflected a broader or systemic issue, I would immediately notify AD Whiting and work toward a reasonable solution.
- Please let me know if you need additional information or if there are other ways I can support Academic Affairs and the Faculty as we review this situation.

3. I'm writing to bring to the Faculty Senate's attention a safety concern about golf carts on campus sidewalks. This semester, I've seen multiple golf carts going way too fast on walkways where students, faculty, and staff are walking. Just recently, I saw a golf cart flying down the

sidewalk near the library so fast that a student had to jump out of the way to avoid getting hit. It really made me realize how serious this could get. If that student had jumped the wrong way, they could have been badly hurt. This doesn't seem to be just one bad driver. I've noticed golf cart operators from different campus units driving unsafely, and it seems to be happening more often this semester. Since golf cart drivers seem to work for various campus units, I'm not sure who's supposed to be setting rules or making sure people follow them when it comes to speed limits and safety on pedestrian areas. I'd like the Faculty Senate to investigate what policies exist for golf cart use on campus sidewalks, figure out who should be handling oversight and enforcement, push for clear speed limits and safety rules for golf carts in pedestrian areas, and make sure all campus golf cart operators get proper training and are held accountable.

- UCAPD has a golf cart policy that they are now going to review and update as needed. Once the policy is updated, UCAPD will send out a campus announcement/reminder about the policy.

- 4. The overnight study room at the Library has apparently been eliminated. This is a hardship for many students because they planned their class and work schedules around the publicized Library times. While cutting the 24-hr study room may be a necessary hardship, eliminating it mid-semester after students have already built their schedules around it seems unprofessional and punitive to students. Can we not open it for the rest of the semester at least?**

- Dr. Rodney Lippard, Library Director: The library discontinued its overnight hours, including study rooms, prior to the Fall 2024 semester. We are entering our second year without overnight hours. This decision was made after a year of study. I want to assure faculty that we will do everything within our power to avoid making any changes mid-semester, as we are aware of the difficulties this poses for students. Sometimes things happen beyond our control, but we plan our changes to take effect before a semester starts.

- 5. Why is the target for faculty market salary not 100% for all faculty? Setting the 90% threshold is like telling some students that the maximum grade they can earn in a course is 90%, while others can earn**

up to 100%. The student with the lower threshold has less wiggle room and is at a disadvantage if something unexpected occurs because they are at greater risk of receiving a lower grade. In light of the current status of the university, with enrollment, etc., it appears that now would be the best time to put all faculty in the best position possible, since the likelihood of revisiting this with the impending enrollment cliff will probably be viewed as implausible. The constituent also wondered, in the interest of transparency, how was the "within" 90% of market salary determined and who was involved in the decision? The constituent also said it was okay to note that they were below 90% of the market salary for their position, but they have concern for others.

- The 90% came from the company we contracted with to do the market study. They developed their process so that 90% is reflective of a competitive salary in the current market and 95% would be highly competitive. So, aiming to get everyone to 90% is so that all our salaries would be considered competitive.
- The reason we are aiming for 90% and not 100%, currently, is that we have to start somewhere, and our resources are not unlimited. 75% of all "new" dollars right now come from reallocation of existing dollars from other programs. So, to raise any salaries, we have to decide where to reduce funds elsewhere, which is usually a tough decision.
- All that being said, 90% is a starting point for this year, not the end point. The goal is to continue increasing salaries as close to 100% as possible.

6. Why is it difficult for UCA to offer enough distinguished emeritus titles for members of the faculty who spend 30 or more years teaching and researching at this institution? From what I have heard, UCA gives only two or three distinguished emeritus titles per year, though the university does not seem to have any financial obligations for offering such titles.

- There is no official limit to the number of distinguished faculty emeritus titles, and the Distinguished Faculty Emeritus committee evaluates the recommendations, recommends criteria for recognition, and recommends privileges and awards. I would encourage the constituent to speak with the

CAHSS representative on the committee, Matt Taylor, to give their input and ask about the criteria the committee has for the recognition.

7. Why were graduations moved to Fridays? This seems like it would be a hardship for students and their families to attend since they have to get off work.

- Graduations were moved to Fridays because they require a significant number of employees to make them happen. The dates were advertised well in advance in an effort to ensure all students and their families who wished to attend would have time to make arrangements. There was no decrease in the attendance at graduations. The university will re-evaluate the change after a few graduation cycles, but so far it seems to be an overall positive change.

8. Navigate is gone. Slate is not implemented yet. How do we track at-risk students and intervene in the meantime?

- From VP for Enrollment Services, Kevin Thomas: I appreciate all the support faculty and staff at UCA have given during this transition from Navigate to Slate. Later this week, progress report information and instructions will be emailed to faculty, and our hope is that this process will allow faculty to indicate "at-risk" status for their enrolled students. If there are specific questions about that process, please don't hesitate to reach out to me or Drew Richardson in Enrollment Systems at UCA.
- If the faculty member is asking outside of the "normal" progress report timeline, we are working on ways for that feedback to be entered and should have that up and running well during the spring semester. In the meantime, that feedback can also be communicated to LeighAnn DenHartog so that academic advising can intervene directly or Dr. Julia Winden Fey in Student Success. In the former system, any communication would have gone to these two offices as well.

9. A senator urged the Administration to establish a university procedure for dealing with course alterations or policy changes regarding curriculum undertaken in response to the Access Bill or any other legislation. Clear compliance requires clear guidelines from ADHE and an intentional process involving faculty and educational professionals.

- Provost Hargis emphasized that he desires open discussions in the first instance between Faculty and Chairs—and then up the chain as needed to facilitate compliance collectively.
 - Warren Readnour, Angela Webster, and Jeremy Gillam remain available for consultation during this phase of review.
 - Looking ahead, we will develop consistent structures for review that are informed by both state expectations and by the processes that prove most effective within our institutional context.

10. Longevity Bonus: Free parking for Faculty over 25 years—but language and academic calendar issues mean you don't really get it until year 27.

- Faculty Salary Review Committee will look at this issue.

11. A faculty member voiced an objection to the proposal to change the voting practice for Faculty Senate issues. The faculty member objected to there being a potentially unlimited time to collect votes (and therefore altering the nature of the election). Can we insert some sort of limit on the new proposal?

- Yes, see the altered proposal below.

12. In response to a faculty question regarding the flu shot:

There will be a Staff and Faculty mass Influenza Vaccination clinic in collaboration with the Arkansas Department of Health on **October 24th from 1 pm to 3 pm**. This clinic will be held in the UCA Women's Health Clinic on the 2nd floor. **Employees will need to bring their insurance card with them.**

The Arkansas Department of Health has given us a copy of their consent form and we have made it available in English and Spanish on our website. The employee is asked to print this form on 1 page and have it completed when they come for their injection.

Here are links to the forms:

2025-2026 Influenza Vaccination Consent (English)

<https://uca.edu/studenthealth/files/2025/10/FLUSHOTCONSENTFORM2025ENG LISH.pdf>

2025-2026 Influenza Vaccination Consent (Spanish)

<https://uca.edu/studenthealth/files/2025/10/FLUSHOTCONSENTFORM2025ESPAN.pdf>

Committee Reports:

Academic Affairs:

Oct. 1st deadline for empowerment grants. Decisions on awards will be made at the Oct. 10 meeting.

(Former DBIE) Committee:

Has met and there is great discussion regarding the new scope/purpose of this committee. Current emphases are Faculty Well-Being and Career Trajectory. Committee will present an official purpose statement soon.

Committee on Committees:

Still waiting for COB to name a member to replace Senator Thomas.

Faculty Affairs:

See Action Item below

Action Item (brought through Faculty Affairs)

Proposed Changes to Voting Procedure

Question: Is this about procedure or participation?

Answer: Both.

Question: Given the faculty concern regarding unlimited voting, should we limit potential extensions to 10 working days.

Answer: Yes

Vote to amend motion:

1 Nay and 16 Ayes (Senator Rosenow had to leave for another committee meeting before vote). **Amendment passed.**

Senator Frank moved to vote on full resolution.

Senator Rose Seconded

1 Nay and 16 Ayes. **Resolution passed (see Resolution below)**

Senator Rose Moved to Adjourn: 2:51

Text of passed resolution:

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 during the last full work week in March; At-Large representatives during the second full week of April; Part-Time representatives at the beginning of the academic year.

Section 4: Ballots will be open 48 hours during the week of the election. If the Faculty Senate President deems an extension is necessary, the time period will be extended up to ten working days.