UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ARKANSAS™ | **FACULTY SENATE**

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 10, 2026
12:45 pm, Wingo 315

Chris Craun, Secretary

I. **Call to order: Pres. Dunlap, 12:45 PM.**

Present:

President Davis & Provost Hargis

Faculty Senate President Dunlap & Vice-President Thomas

Senators:

At Large Senators: Mukherjee, Spivey, Rosenow

CAHSS Senators: Burley, Craun, (Mayhew-excused absence)

CHBS Senators: Rose, Downey, Jamerson
COB Senators: Appiah-Otto, McCalman, Britton
COE Senators: Couture, Buchannan, (McClellan-excused absence)
COSE Senators: Yarberry, Naumiec, (Johnson-excused absence)

Honors: Frank
Library: Lebeau-Ford

II. **Approval of Minutes from Faculty Senate meeting 1/27/2026.**

Voting: 15 yea votes & 1 abstention. Minutes Approved.

III. **Comments**

a. President Davis
  i. Nothing new to report.

b. Provost Hargis
  i. No new business or news to report.

c. FS President Dunlap

    i. I want to thank the senators for their flexibility regarding today's meeting and for understanding that several of their peers were unable to attend or needed to attend virtually given the closure of Conway Public Schools.

    ii. As we discussed last meeting, the final FS meeting of the Spring Semester conflicts with the Faculty and Staff Recognition Ceremony.

        1. The results of our online survey suggest that the best day to reschedule this FS meeting is April 7th. That change should be reflected in senators' Google-calendars soon.

    iii. We still need a Web-Archivist. Any volunteers.
        1. Sen. Buchannan (COE) expressed interest and self-nominated to serve. Having managed the STEM-Teach website, she is familiar with UCA's web-posting procedures as well as site-design.
        Sen. Buchannan was unanimously approved to serve as the new Web-Archivist with none opposed and no abstentions.

IV. **Constituent Concerns**

1. The faculty application for University Research Council funds (URC grants) for research used to include an application for a summer stipend (that paid faculty labor costs). Faculty receiving URC grants were still eligible to apply for and receive summer stipend funds during the same application cycle.

It appears that at least 2 faculty members were denied summer stipend funds during this current cycle *on the grounds that they had already received other URC funds in the same cycle.*

This poses a problem because many URC projects expect that most of the research labor will be undertaken during summer with a stipend paid for work.

Response from Michael Mills:

Actually, there is no policy prohibiting faculty from receiving both a URC research grant and a summer stipend in the same year. Referencing the URC funding guidebook, the only restrictions on summer stipends are related to teaching load during the summer, the nature of the

work, preference for faculty who haven't previously received stipends, and the repayment requirement if someone doesn't return in the fall.

What is important to note is that these decisions weren't based on a policy against receiving both awards, but rather on the competitive nature of the process itself. Each funding cycle, the URC evaluates applications on their merits using the established rubric, and they also consider factors like the number and quality of applications, available funding, and their stated priority of spreading funds across as many faculty as possible. In any given semester, we might have varying numbers of strong applications competing for limited resources, which naturally affects outcomes. For example, in one semester, the URC may get a few faculty research applications, making the decisions less competitive and many summer stipend applications, making those decisions much more competitive. Again, there is no prohibition against being awarded both, but there is also no guarantee due to the number and quality of the applications.

Moving forward, I'd also love to encourage faculty with questions about the URC process to reach out to their college's URC representative or directly to me. We're always happy to talk through how the process works and can often provide context that might be helpful before concerns escalate to Faculty Senate.

2. Regarding the rollout of the Brightspace LMS: Faculty are receiving invitations to CETAL sponsored, multi-hour trainings. Perhaps this is the right approach for onboarding certain faculty, but there are many who have no interest in sitting through hours long trainings and would prefer to simply learn by engaging directly with Brightspace. When will Faculty receive full access to the new LMS? Giving access sooner rather than later would enable the individually motivated to familiarize themselves with the new platform before the start of the summer semesters. If there are no plans (!) to provide faculty full access to the new LMS well in advance of the summer semesters, I would be curious to know why.

   Response from Amy Hawkins, Assistant Provost of Teaching and Academic Leadership:
   I empathize with faculty navigating so much uncertainty related to the migration to Brightspace, and we in CETAL are committed to providing frequent, detailed updates through UCA Inform and our website at uca.edu/cetal/brightspace.

Due to the way Brightspace requires IT to associate each individual course with the appropriate faculty member(s) as instructors, we do not have the option to offer Brightspace to all faculty all at once. Instead, our first priority will be migrating courses for faculty who are teaching in Summer 2026. We are also prioritizing access for those who have registered for one of the 60 or more training sessions we are offering ([link to register here](#)) as we need access to participate in training. This prioritization allows IT to gradually move courses over in a manageable way and helps us pair access with hands-on support instead of leaving faculty to navigate Brightspace alone. Over 200 faculty have already registered for training, which is very encouraging.

Rest assured that Fall 2026 courses will also be prioritized and moved over as soon as possible (and at the latest by the end of May). Additionally, those who requested Brightspace sandboxes in the Spring 2025 semester still have access there; however, the interface will look slightly different than the interface we are using starting in Summer I 2026.

Any and all questions about this migration process are welcomed and can be directed to Amy Hawkins in CETAL and Tonya McKinney in IT.

Discussion during the senate meeting spurred President Dunlap to request that CETAL create an open sandbox so that faculty could at least interact with the platform menus and controls outside of their class-materials. Tonya McKinney agreed that this was in the works and will let the senate know once it is open.

3) I was recently told by a healthcare professional who contacted our insurance that UCA ELECTED to not cover services related to allergies and asthma. My daughter has a severe dairy allergy, and we have been informed that UCA's insurance will not cover inhalers or any of the treatments needed to address. I just want to look further into this to see what can be done to help me take care of my daughter's medical needs. Any information would be helpful as I look more into this.

Two senators mentioned that they or their partners used inhalers and had recently experienced no problems getting them refilled using UCA's insurance.

However, the constituent's experience was disconcerting, and President Davis (with the Constituent's permission) gathered the necessary details to pursue this issue and see what the problem is.

V. **Senate Committee Reports (Pres. Davis left the meeting at 1:02 PM)**

Committee on Committees: (VP Thomas)

Please continue working on the SOPs and contact VP Thomas with questions.

I would like to thank President Dunlap and her forerunners for creating the giant university committee spreadsheet. Just to give you an idea of how much work is involved, there are 65 hyperlinked tabs and over 600 committee members. I am working on improving its layout and structure.

President Dunlap urged senators to take the Committee on Committees more seriously and to seek committee members who understand the value and importance of their service, because these committees impact UCA's daily operations and faculty experiences.

Faculty Affairs Committee: (Senator Yarberry)

We are currently considering two issues:

Issue #1: Where do Visiting Assistant Professors (and their clinical equivalents) fall among UCA's faculty—do they need their own representation in the Senate or are they already covered by Full-Time faculty senators?

Discussion ensued regarding whether VAPs are currently eligible for senate service

In response to questions regarding the Faculty Handbook, Secretary Craun has inserted the following sections into these minutes for review/discussion.

Chapter 2, section IV, B. Faculty Association The faculty of the university are organized into a faculty association. Faculty elect representatives to the Faculty Senate, which serves as the official representative body of the faculty association.

Chapter 2, section VI. Faculty Senate Constitution

ARTICLE I. MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION OF THE FACULTY

Section 1. The Faculty Association shall include those full-time employees of the university who **hold faculty rank** as described in Chapter 3 of the Faculty Handbook and those full-time employees of the university who have teaching included as a responsibility of their appointment.

Section 2. The Faculty Senate, hereinafter referred to as the senate, shall serve as the representative body of the faculty of UCA.

Chapter 3, section III, B: 2, F (Non-Tenure-Track Appointments)

Full-time continuing non-tenure-track faculty members are eligible for all privileges extended by the university to regular professional personnel except where otherwise specified, including such programs as retirement and other employee benefits, leaves of absence, professional travel, and other privileges outlined in this handbook. **Full-time continuing non-tenure-track faculty members are eligible for full participation in the affairs of the university, its component institutions, and its departments and administrative units in accordance with university policy.**

(Chapter 3, section IV) C. Non-Tenurable Ranks—Non-Continuing Faculty

1. Visiting Lecturer

The visiting lecturer rank is reserved for the temporary hire of full-time faculty to meet programmatic needs. A visiting lecturer must meet the minimum teaching qualifications as described in 3.II.E. and have the training and experience necessary to meet the programmatic needs of the position.

The term of a visiting lecturer will be for no more than one year. Visiting lines must be requested by the academic unit each year. The number of terms of a visiting lecturer is not to exceed any federal, state, or accreditation requirement.

2. Visiting Assistant Professor

The visiting assistant professor rank is reserved for the appointment of fully

credentialed faculty members who might otherwise qualify for the rank of assistant professor but who are hired to meet temporary programmatic needs. A visiting assistant professor must hold a terminal degree in the discipline or have equivalent experience (see 3.II.E.).

The term of a visiting assistant professor will be for no more than one year. Visiting lines must be requested by the academic unit each year. The number of terms of a visiting assistant professor is not to exceed any federal, state, or accreditation requirement.

There will likely be further discussion on this issue in future meetings. Some senators raised an ethical issue about expecting or urging service duties on

Visiting Faculty.

Faculty Affairs—Issue #2: Faculty salary review process and result.

Since the Senate requested a review and update of the faculty pay scale, a review was subsequently performed, the committee feels that we should close the loop by gathering faculty opinions about the process and the result. These opinions would then be passed on to help shape future reviews or suggest further actions.

Therefore, the committee is crafting a survey to:

      Collect faculty views regarding the clarity of the Faculty Salary Review process

      Discover common concerns or questions

      Gather suggestions for future reviews.

This proposal generated a good discussion and the senate is looking forward to seeing the survey draft.

Academic Affairs Committee: (Senator Frank)

Our signs are ready to be picked up. Plan is to attach the QR code + any necessary language. They will be clipped on at first, but we will make them more attractive later.

The committee will meet on Friday to award the Spring Faculty Empowerment Grants.

Faculty Advocacy and Engagement: (Senator Lebeau-Ford)

We met with Amy Hawkins from CETAL to get suggestions for how this committee can work to support faculty mid-career and late-career development. The committee is working on a survey regarding Faculty priorities related to morale, inclusion, camaraderie, etc.

Sen. Burley expressed support for the potential of these efforts to improve the involvement, appreciation, and support for faculty in the later part of their careers.

We also discussed how the Faculty Welcome Committee fits with this committee and expect to make some suggestions soon.

We also reviewed the current criteria for the Teaching Excellence Award with an aim to allow for the inclusion of faculty teaching online. Senator Britton solicited ideas from all

senators (and their constituents) regarding any additions or alterations to the Teaching Excellence Award.

VI. **New Business**
None.

VII.   **For the Good of the Faculty**
Applications for the Faculty Senate Foundation Scholarship which supports students involved in public service are currently being evaluated by the FS Executive Committee.

CAHSS is excited to share that Dr. Adele Okoli from the UCA School of Language and Literature has been elected to the Modern Language Association's Forum Executive Committee on Literatures of the United States in Languages Other Than English (LOTE). Okoli will be serving a five-year term, in coalition with colleagues across world languages, in organizational capacities and advocacy for the study of multilingual literatures of the United States. The five-member executive committee includes scholars, pedagogues, and administrators working in Spanish, Arabic, Wolof, Pulaar, Quechua, Portuguese, and (with her addition) French and Kreyòl.

Founded in 1883, the Modern Language Association is one of the world's largest professional organizations for the promotion of the study, teaching, and understanding of languages, literatures, and cultures, with over 20,000 members based in over one hundred countries. Dr. Okoli presented her research at the MLA Annual Convention in Toronto earlier this month.

VIII.   **Reminders and Announcements:**
   a. Faculty Senate meetings are now held on the second and last Tuesday of each month.
   b. Next regular meeting on Tuesday, February 24, 2026, at 12:45pm

IX. **Senator Yarberry moved to adjourn. 2:33pm**