



UNIVERSITY OF
**CENTRAL
ARKANSAS™**

FACULTY
SENATE

**Faculty Senate Meeting
02/24/26**

Minutes: Chris Craun, Secretary

I. Call to order: FS President Dunlap

Faculty Senate photo at 12:45, so call to order at: 12:57pm.

Present:

President Davis & Provost Hargis
FS President Tori Dunlap and VP. Thomas.

Senators;

At Large: Mukherjee, Spivey, Rosenow

CAHSS: Burley (excused past 1:30), Craun, Mayhew

CHBS: Rose, Downey, Jamerson

COB: Appiah-Otto, McCalman, Britton

COE: Couture, Buchannan, McClellan

COSE: Yarberry, Naumiec, Johnson

Honors: Frank

Library: Lebeau-Ford (excused absence)

II. Notification of Online Approval of Minutes from Faculty Senate meeting 2/10/2026

Ayes: 16 with 2 abstentions, Minutes Pass.

III. Comments

A. President Davis

- 1) As you probably saw, the Board of Trustees in last week's meeting approved changes to the 2027 (January-December) academic calendar to avoid the same early and condensed start to the spring semester that we experienced in January. UCA will start the 2027 Spring semester on Jan. 14 and going forward, aim to position the first day of classes the Thursday before Martin Luther King Jr day. This is already the case for the

future schedules in 2028 and 2029. The academic calendar committee will work toward that goal in future years.

- 2) Work has begun between UCA, the Conway Development Corporation, and UACCM on the preparation of the UCA Innovation Campus for fall 2026 operation. There will be more detailed updates in the future, and the university intends to have a major update by the end of the Spring semester as part of the May Board of Trust meeting.
- 3) Chief of Staff, Amy Whitehead, is going to present some proposed retirement options to the Faculty Senate today. I appreciate her work to walk through some options changes, but I would like to clarify that these changes do not make any adjustment to our retirement package or cut anyone's level of benefits; they simply offer new options for your consideration as well as save significant fees for all individuals and for the university.

B. Provost Hargis

- 1) We are in the midst of launching our new Learning Management System (Brightspace). We have over 400 faculty signed up for training over the next few weeks. UCA Faculty who teach summer courses will be the first trained. ALL interested Faculty should have access to the system by the end of Spring break. That will give everyone time to explore and practice before full implementation Summer 1.

C. FS President Dunlap

- 1) The Senate needs to talk about scheduling elections for next year's senators, as well as votes on proposed Constitutional amendments. The semester is passing by quickly!

Pres. Davis left the meeting 1:04

IV. Invited Guests

A. Amy Whitehead, Chief of Staff, for information on retirement plan updates

- 1) Jerri Worthington (Human Resources) may begin attending Faculty Senate meetings in order to respond to Faculty Concerns dealing with HR issues or benefits.
- 2) UCA has a Retirement Committee (see documents at end of Minutes) which serves as a co-fiduciary for our retirement plan alongside One Digital (a retirement consulting firm).
- 3) There are no problems with our plan. It is performing well, but we have some strategies to make it perform better—specifically to improve our score on the “Protection” indicator

(see documents). This indicator reflects the safety of a participant's investment as they near retirement and begin withdrawals.

- a) We are shifting our participants to RetirePlus Pro accounts. This plan sets a "target-date" for retirement and then shifts investments from greater to less risk based on a person's proximity to that target date. The default target date is based largely on age, but there is also a survey (provided by TIAA) to help the system customize your date and growth needs based on your personal retirement goals. This is the "set-it-and-forget-it" option.
 - i) UCA is going to reset everyone into an age-appropriate target-date fund, **BUT you may still opt-out** (even after the fact) and either keep your investments as they are now or select another option.
 - ii) RetirePlus Pro accounts also include a "lifetime Income" option which helps set up a long-term annuity of payments.
- b) There has also been an update to the Core Investment Menu with additional stocks and funds available for integration into your portfolio.
- c) You will also have the option to enter a self-directed brokerage window where participants can select their own investments. Members may place up to 95% of their retirement assets into these hand-selected investments. **It is suggested that you only choose this option if you are investment savvy or have a personal investment adviser.**
- 4) As this process unfolds during the Spring, faculty can expect:
 - a) Clear step-by-step communication from Human Resources
 - b) Group information sessions explaining details of the changes
 - c) Opportunities to meet individually with a TIAA representative.

B. Mike Casey and Senator Rhonda McClellan, LEAD representatives, to discuss the LEAD program and encourage application. (Application form at end of Minutes)

- 1) Applications for 2026-2027 LEAD program open March 2nd. Please invite potential candidates to apply. Meetings are typically held face-to-face on Wednesdays 1-4pm, once per month. Each year's cohort is capped at twenty-five, so this is somewhat of a competitive application process.

V. Constituent Concerns

Two constituent concerns were received in the online form. Both were given anonymously but included information in the text of the concern that could make the constituent identifiable. Additionally, both included information that makes them personnel concerns and possibly legal concerns. In the interest of protecting the constituent and others individuals identifiable in the concerns, President Dunlap briefly summarized the concerns here:

1. This constituent is concerned that annual reviews are not being conducted appropriately by their chair, including discussion of topics that do not pertain to the constituent being reviewed and questions from the chair that are inappropriate for an annual review.
 - a. **The Provost will share the summary of this concern with the appropriate Dean. The Senate also directs this constituent to the Faculty Handbook, Chapter III: Section XI. Faculty issues that *have previously been brought to the attention of your immediate supervisor and the Provost* may be submitted to the Faculty Grievance Committee if a satisfactory resolution is not found. Details may be found at: <https://uca.edu/committees/faculty-grievance-committee/>**

2. This constituent is concerned that nepotism is occurring in their department's hiring practices and that the faculty handbook does not address nepotism in hiring. Given the information provided in the complaint, the Faculty Senate response is as follows:
 - a. **The summarized concern has been shared with the Provost who will share it with the appropriate Dean and reiterate proper hiring procedures and policies with the Council of Deans.**

 - b. **The faculty handbook does have a section on nepotism that encompasses hiring:**
 - i. **Chapter 3, II, B, current page 12, Nepotism:**

No UCA employee shall vote, make recommendations, or in any way participate in decisions about any personnel matter that may directly affect the selection, appointment, retention, tenure, compensation, promotion, termination, or other employment status or interest of a close relative in accordance with state law. For the purposes of this policy, "close relative" is defined as husband, wife, mother, father, son, daughter, sister, and brother.

 - ii. **Additionally, UCA has a board policy regarding nepotism: [Board Policy 514](#)**

iii. Finally, while the Faculty Senate lacks direct input into Human Resource issues, we are keen to direct Faculty to appropriate avenues. It is our hope that the Provost's actions will rectify any short-comings, but in situations like these where a faculty member might feel uncertain about approaching an in-house authority figure there is an anonymous complaint form that will report matters to the Secretary of UCA's Board of Trustees, the State of Arkansas' Office of Administrative Audit, and President Davis. The link for that anonymous form is here:

UCA.edu/hotline.

3. Constituent Concern – submitted by Senator Mayhew (CAHSS) and lightly edited to remove identifying information (pronouns and salary numbers).

This concern was brought to me by a colleague who is retiring this year. They received a letter from Human Resources on December 5th, 2025 letting them know that they were one of the 84 employees on campus that were below 85% of their identified market salary as identified by the market salary study.

The opening paragraph of the letter reads “UCA's Board of Trustees adopted a revised operating budget for 2025-2026 that includes additional funding for market salary increases for employees that are below 85%. The second paragraph states “Effective January 1, 2026, your new annual base salary will be \$XX, XXX, an increase of \$X,XXX. This adjustment brings your salary to 85% of your market rate.”

The wording of the letter led this colleague to believe they would receive the full \$X,XXX increase during this academic year. In reality, they are receiving half of that because the raise was not effective until January 1st. The fact that they are retiring means that they won't realize that full salary increase.

The question: was the intent to raise those 84 salaries for the full 2025-26 academic year in order to bring them to up to 85% of market rate, or are they just getting the short end of this salary increase because they are retiring in May?

- a. The intent was to increase the salaries to 85% of the market beginning January 1, 2026. The Board of Trustees' revision of the 2025-2026 operating budget does not retroactively affect the July 2025 - December 2025 budget. As this person will be a UCA employee for half of an academic year after the start date of the salary increase, they will receive half of the annualized increase.**

VI. Senate Committee Reports

The Committee on Committees: communications regarding committee appointments for next year went out to the Deans yesterday. Additionally, VP Thomas has made many improvements to the committee database which should make organizing these committees easier. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are still being tweaked, and the hope is to add step-by-step incremental instructions to Faculty Senate positions and tasks so that future Senators will know what to do and/or what they are signing up to do.

Committee for Faculty Advocacy & Engagement:

Nothing to report at this time, but members are working on revising the Teaching Excellence Award.

Academic Affairs Committee: Staff in UCA's Physical Plant volunteered to place our new lawn signs around campus during our various elections.

We are very thankful for their help!

Faculty Affairs Committee: (Two Items)

ITEM 1: Faculty Salary Review Survey

The Faculty Affairs Committee submitted a draft of a Faculty Salary Review Survey that they intend to administer to the Faculty. (Document at the bottom of these minutes).

An email will be sent to all faculty following the evaluation of the survey to describe the findings of the survey. A Faculty Senate FAQ and the FAQ from HR will be included as an attachment to the email. It is expected that the Faculty Senate FAQ will include information about why the Faculty Senate requested a Faculty Salary Review, where it came from, who was commissioned to do the report, what it means to be 80%, 90%, etc. of their market salary, and provide answers to commonly posed questions that arise from the survey. It would also include information developed from overarching themes determined by the survey. Before we move forward with the IRB, the Faculty Affairs Committee would like input on these survey questions from the Faculty Senate.

After discussion, it was decided to share the survey draft with Dr. John Toth (Sociology) for his expert input regarding question-construction as well as methodology regarding the correct interpretation of survey results.

ITEM 2: See New Business below.

VII. New Business

- 1) The following resolutions were proposed by the Faculty Affairs Committee:

Resolution 1: Amending Bylaw Article III, Section 1 relating to election of Faculty Senate Officers.

Whereas, Article IV, Section 1 of the Faculty Senate Constitution includes a webmaster/archivist as an officer of the Senate, and

Whereas, Article III, Section 1 of the Faculty Senate Bylaws does not mention a Webmaster/Archivist as an elected officer of the Senate,

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

Section 1: Officers are elected in the following order: Vice President/President Elect, Secretary/Treasurer, and Parliamentarian, and Webmaster/Archivist.

Resolution 2: Amending Bylaw Article IV, Section 1 relating to election of Faculty Senate Executive Committee.

Whereas, Article IV, Section 1 of the Faculty Senate Constitution includes a webmaster/archivist as an officer of the Senate, and

Whereas, Article IV, Section 1 of the Faculty Senate Bylaws does not mention a Webmaster/Archivist as a member of the Executive Committee,

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

Section 1: The Faculty Senate Committees and their responsibilities are as follows: The Executive Committee consists of the Faculty Senate President, Vice-President/President-Elect, Secretary/Treasurer, and Parliamentarian, and Webmaster/Archivist. This committee populates and charges the other Faculty Senate Committees, advises the Faculty Senate President, makes recommendations for the consideration of the full Senate, proposes amendments to the Faculty Senate Constitution, makes recommendations to the bylaws of the Faculty Senate, and creates ad hoc committees as necessary to conduct the business of the Faculty Senate.

Resolution 3: Amending Bylaw Article V, Section 2 relating to the release of constituent concerns to the Faculty Association.

Whereas, Article V discusses the procedures for submission of faculty concerns to senate, and

Whereas, Section 2 indicates that submitted questions and concerns will be recorded in the Faculty Senate minutes, and

Whereas, some concerns identify the person submitting the concern or the person the concern was submitted about, and

Whereas, identifying individuals could be seen as a breach of ethics,

Be it therefore resolved that Article V, Section 2 of the Faculty Senate Bylaws be amended to read:

Section 2: Summaries of submitted questions and concerns will be recorded in the Faculty Senate minutes.

These three resolutions will be voted on at the next Faculty Senate meeting.

- 2) Senator McCalman formally proposed to move the April 14 meeting to April 7th in order to avoid conflicting with other UCA events. Senator Rose Seconded.
 - a) Discussion revealed that the senate had informally discussed and agreed to this change at the last meeting, but had failed to take/record a proper vote.

The motion was unanimously approved.

VIII. For the Good of the Faculty

Senator Frank has a book coming out on the various meanings accorded to the concept of Chi. The Senate wishes to congratulate him on this success!

IX. 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, March 10, 2026 at 12:45pm
- C. We will also meet Tuesday, March 31, 2026 and Tuesday, April 7, 2026.

Senator Rose moved to end the meeting at 2:41 pm.

Appendix 1: Retirement Committee Update

UCA Retirement Committee Update Selected Updates for Faculty Senate and Staff Senate February 2026

Main questions to answer in today's remarks:

- *Is the plan healthy?*
- *What is changing?*
- *What does this mean for employees?*

Retirement Committee Role

The Retirement Committee's role:

- Make sure the plan follows all legal and regulatory requirements
- Select and monitor investment options offered to employees
- Keep fees reasonable and competitive
- Hire and oversee outside experts
- Recommend improvements to the plan when needed

The committee's job is to act in the best interest of plan participants. The committee members are co-fiduciary's with OneDigital, our retirement plan consultant.

Committee Members include:

- Victoria Dunlap, Faculty Senate
- Sherita Kern, Staff Senate
- Ed Powers, Employee Benefits Advisory Committee
- Amy Whitehead, Chief of Staff
- Bridget Fortenberry, Human Resources
- Terri Canino, Finance and Administration
- Carissa Castleberry, Controller
- Mary Lackie, Advancement, Presidential appointment
- Yiling Ding, Academic Affairs, Provost appointment
- Warren Readnour, General Counsel, ex-officio, non-voting

Overview of Plan Outcomes

The retirement plan is financially healthy and performing well. We see room to strengthen how the plan helps participants manage risk and protect their savings over time, especially as they get closer to retirement.

This insight led directly to the changes described in the next section.



KEY MEASURES	YOUR PLAN	PEER BENCHMARK	BEST IN CLASS
Overall on-track score (Saving, Managing, Protecting)	66% 	42%	64%
Saving	90% 	58%	82%
Managing	84%	82%	90%
Protecting	26%	43%	94%

Upcoming changes to the plan

There will be three main changes:

1. Moving plan participants to RetirePlus Pro (opt-out available) and setting this as the default target date fund
2. Changing the 'core line-up' of funds for those individuals not in a target-date-fund. The new core line-up has funds that have lower fees and better returns.
3. Self-Directed Brokerage Option: This option gives participants access to mutual funds not available or appropriate in the core menu; helps those participants balance their

2

allocation with their outside assets or those who are working with wealth/financial advisors; accommodates religious and cultural obligations and beliefs; and participants can move up to 95% of their retirement assets into the brokerage window.

Change #1- RetirePlus Pro

We are introducing RetirePlus Pro, a new TIAA investment option designed for employees who want a simpler, more guided approach to investing.

RetirePlus Pro Models

What is RetirePlus?

RetirePlus is a TIAA recordkeeping solution that allows plan sponsors and consultants to customize model portfolios that serves as the plan default option (replaces the Lifecycle or Target Date Series)

Why is it important?

Greater personalization – risk tolerance options
Legacy Assets – considered in allocation
Lower Fees – lower recordkeeping and investment fees
Lifetime Income option - TIAA Traditional



**775 TIAA
Institutions**
(5 in Arkansas)



**\$67.9 Billion
Assets Under
Management**



**52
Public Higher Ed
Institutions**
(4 in Arkansas)



**23
OneDigital TIAA
Clients**
\$5B in assets

Do It For Me - Lifecycle Funds vs RetirePlus Pro

What Factors are Considered?

Lifecycle Funds



RetirePlus Series

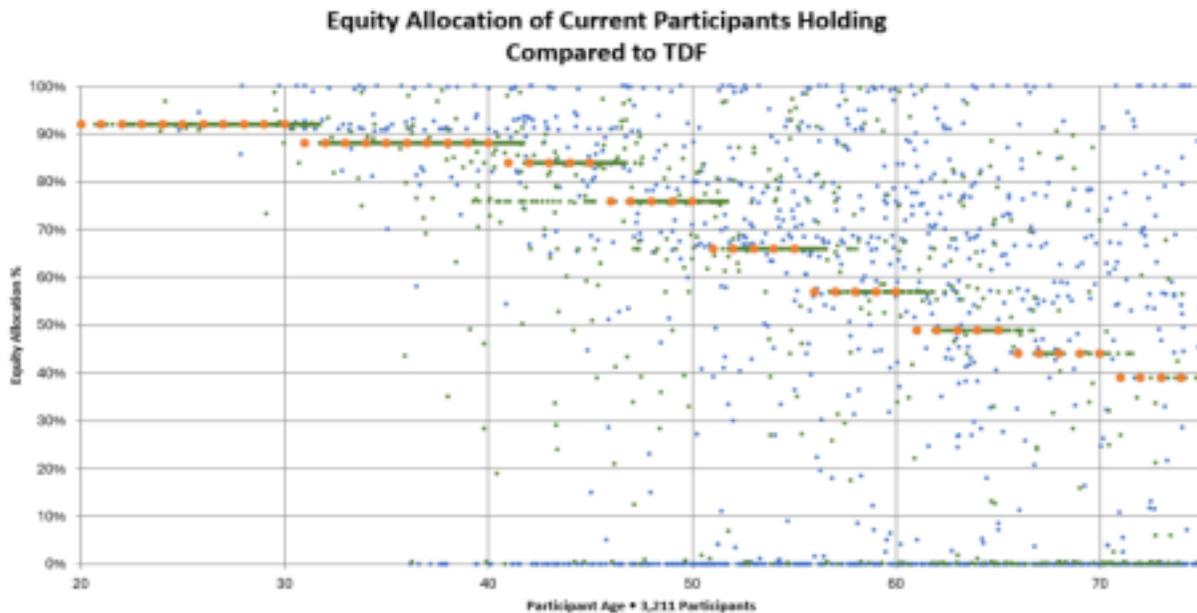


Why this matters:

Many employees prefer a “do it for me” option that adapts as their career and retirement timeline change.

It is also time for a ‘great reset’ of our plan participants.

Scatterplot of All Participant Equity Allocations



Over time, many participants end up invested in ways that no longer match their age, goals, or risk tolerance. To address this participants will be moved into a RetirePlus Pro fund by default. Anyone who prefers to self-direct their investments can opt out.

Why this matters:

This approach helps ensure most participants are invested more appropriately—without requiring them to take action unless they want to.

Change #2: Updated Core Investment Menu

The plan's core investment lineup has been refreshed.

What Changed

- Lower-cost investment options
- Stronger historical performance
- Streamlined choices to reduce confusion

Why this matters:

Lower fees and better-performing funds help participants keep more of their retirement savings over time.

Core Lineup

Fund Name	Ticker	Asset Class	Exp Ratio
TIAA Stable Value	N/A	Stable Value	0.24%
TIAA Traditional	N/A	Gauranteed	0.00%
Vanguard Federal Money Market Investor	VMFXX	Money-Market Taxable	0.10%
State Street Aggregate Bond Index K	SSFEX	Intermediate Core Bond	0.03%
Schwab Treasury Infl Protected Secs Idx	SWRSX	Inflation-Protected Bond	0.05%
PIMCO Income Instl	PIMIX	Multisector Bond	0.62%
Vanguard Total Intl Bond Index Institutional	VTIFX	Global Bond-USD Hedged	0.07%
CREF Social Choice R4	QCSSF	Global Moderate Allocation	0.07%
Vanguard Balanced Index Adm	VBIAX	Moderate Allocation	0.07%
CREF Stock R4	QCSTFX	Aggressive Allocation	0.12%
Nuveen Large-Cap Value Institutional	TRLIX	Large Value	0.30%
CREF Growth R4	QCGRF	Large Growth	0.08%
JPMorgan Large Cap Growth R6	JLGMX	Large Growth	0.44%
State Street Equity 500 Index K	SSSYX	Large Blend	0.02%
MFS Mid Cap Value R6	MVCOX	Mid-Cap Value	0.62%
JPMorgan Mid Cap Growth R6	JMGMX	Mid-Cap Growth	0.70%
Schwab ® US Mid-Cap Index	SWMCX	Mid-Cap Blend	0.04%
Undiscovered Managers Behavioral Value R6	UBVFX	Small Value	0.80%
Invesco Discovery R6	ODIIX	Small Growth	0.66%
Vanguard Small Cap Index I	VSCIX	Small Blend	0.04%
American Funds Europacific Growth R6	REERG	Foreign Large Growth	0.47%
iShares MSCI EAFE Intl Idx K	BTMNX	Foreign Large Blend	0.04%
CREF Global Equities R4	QCGLFX	Global Large-Stock Blend	0.25%
DFA Emerging Markets I	DFEMX	Diversified Emerging Mkts	0.36%
Cohen & Steers Real Estate Securities Z	CSZIX	Real Estate	0.75%
TIAA Real Estate Account	GREARX	Real Estate	0.77%

Change #3: Self-Directed Brokerage Option

For participants who want more control, the plan continues to offer a self-directed brokerage window. Participants will have access to mutual funds not available or appropriate in the core menu. Participants may move up to 95% of their retirement assets into this option.

Who This Is For

- Participants comfortable self-directing their own investments
- Participants working with a financial advisor
- Participants coordinating UCA savings with outside investments
- Individuals with religious or cultural investment preferences

Next Steps

Participants can expect:

- Clear, step-by-step communication from Human Resources and TIAA
- Group information sessions explaining the changes
- Opportunities to meet individually with a TIAA representative

No action is required: If you do nothing you will still be in a professionally managed option. 5

Appendix Two: Lead Application



LEAD Application

What is LEAD? LEAD is a series of leadership and higher education seminars. It is free for employees and sponsored by HR Employee Engagement & Enrichment. Participants will build their leadership skills and higher education knowledge. They will develop professionally and personally, and network with experts within and beyond the UCA campus.

Who is LEAD for?

LEAD is for any full-time faculty or staff member, regardless of title, position, department, or length of service.

How much time is required to successfully complete this program?

LEAD participants invest in a monthly meeting Wednesdays (1:00 – 4:00) for a total of seven sessions. 2026-27 dates are: Sept 23, Oct 28, Nov 18, Dec 9 (optional), Jan 27, Feb 24, March 17, & April 21.

What is the selection process and when will I find out if I have been selected?

The selection process is by application only. The LEAD TEAM, composed of staff/faculty from various campus departments, will review the applications to determine the cohort. A cohort of 25 is planned. Those selected are notified via email by May of each academic year.

LEAD Interest Sessions are provided to learn more and ask questions!

March 10 (Tuesday) X-period ZOOM

March 12 (Thursday) 2:00 - 2:30 - RWSC #213

March 13 (Friday) 9:00 - 9:30 a.m. ZOOM

How do I apply? Click the link below to complete the application, or email Charlotte Strickland at chars@uca.edu to access a paper application.

[UCA LEAD 2026-27 Application Link](#)

Who do I contact if I have additional questions? Charlotte Strickland, UCA HR - Employee Engagement and Enrichment, chars@uca.edu.

Faculty Senate Faculty Salary Review Questionnaire

1. What is your role at UCA? (check all that apply)

Check all that apply.

- 12-month Faculty
- 10-month Faculty
- 9-month Faculty
- Tenure Track Faculty
- Non-Tenure Track Faculty
- Part-time Faculty
- Visiting Faculty

2. Process clarity: What questions do you have about the Faculty Salary Review process (e.g., criteria, timeline, communication, outcomes, etc)?

3. Concerns and perceptions: What comments and concerns do you have about the Faculty Salary Review process or it's outcomes?

4. Future improvements: What recommendations do you have for future Faculty Salary Reviews?

Thank You!

Thank you for your time. The Faculty Affairs Committee and the Faculty Senate appreciate your input and will strive to answer your questions and concerns.

