UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ARKANSAS™ | FACULTY SENATE

Minutes
Tuesday, 27 Oct 2026
Wingo 315

Present:
Provost Hargis
FS President Thomas

Senators:
At Large: Rowley, Rosenow
CAHSS: Craun, Spivey**,** Burley
CHBS: Downey, Jamerson, Jenkins
COB: Fang, Britton, Horpendahl
COE: McClellan, Buchannan, Couture
COSE: Johnson, Yarberry, Naumiec
Honors: Franks
Library: Lebeau-Ford

I. **Call to order:** FS President Thomas. 12:46 PM

II. **Notification of Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from Faculty Senate meeting, held 13 Oct 2026, approved by tacit consent and posted to Faculty Senate webpage.

III. **Comments**

A. President Davis

President Davis was away on business

B. Provost Hargis

Two quick announcements:

1) The search for the next Dean of the College of Health and Behavioral Sciences (CHBS). The search is underway, and the search committee has been established with representation from the college and is chaired by Dr. Tim Bisping, Dean of the College of Business.

The university has engaged Parker Executive Search to assist with the national search. Parker previously supported UCA's presidential and provost searches and brings particular expertise in health sciences leadership searches, making the firm well suited to support this effort.

2) Preparations for the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) visit in Spring 2027 are still underway. We have finished feedback forums

for each of the four criteria. Thank you to all who participated! Draft reports for each of the criteria have been shared with the campus here: https://uca.edu/accreditation/criteria/

The university's external HLC preparation consultants will be on campus November 10–11, 2026, as part of the institution's continued preparation for the March 2027 reaffirmation visit. The consultants will meet with the Faculty Senate on November 10 as part of their campus engagement.

C. FS President Thomas

I wish to thank all the Senators because I know all the committees are actively engaged in your charges. The executive committee continues to work on the Faculty Senate file structure and governing Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).

I want to especially thank Senator Buchannan's efforts as Web-Archivist to standardize the appearance of committees on our website! This was a heavy lift.

IV. Invited Guests: None

V. Constituent Concerns

1) Lewis and Manion Halls lack hot water. This concern was brought through the online submission site. Please see Appendix A at the bottom of these minutes for the full text.

2) There is a water leak under the street at the corner of Western and Bruce Street. It is on the north side of the Math building. It has been reported, but is still leaking. It needs to be fixed before freezing temperatures arrive.

A. The concerns regarding hot water availability in Lewis and Manion Halls, as well as water surfacing at the intersection of Bruce and Western Avenues, have been shared with Kevin Carter and the Physical Plant team. Physical Plant previously reported the intersection issue to Conway Corporation and will follow up again given the continued concern. Physical Plant has confirmed that Lewis Hall has hot water service. In Manion Hall, water does become warm, but it can take up to two minutes. Although the water heaters in Manion are new, the hot water recirculation pumps are not operating properly. Physical Plant is working to make adjustments to improve hot water delivery.

3) There is a request for information or comment. An October 16 article in the Arkansas Democrat Gazette, entitled "Board seeks boost in fiscal '28" reported that the state Higher Education Coordinating Board recommended

revenue increases for multiple universities, but that UCA was not mentioned. The article mentions that the Board recommended no increase for other named universities, but again–UCA was not listed. Do we have any information about this?

A. We will forward this question to President Davis when he is back.

4) UCA is apparently behind in paying its vendors. My department is starting to receive calls from credit recovery agents. What is going on and what can we do?

A. Provost Hargis: The university's Accounts Payable office has experienced significant personnel turnover, which has affected the timeliness of some payments. The Finance Division is actively interviewing for two front-line Accounts Payable positions and the director position. Currently, other UCA employees with AP experience are covering these positions as well as their own. They are trying to process the back-log. Please pass any issues for specific vendors directly to Jeremy Bruner (jbruner@uca.edu)so we can triage these appropriately and move those accounts to the front of the line for processing.

5) Faculty in the College of Education recently received notice from the Council of Deans that we are not to administratively withdraw students. Can you explain why and provide the appropriate procedure for faculty who wish to remove students that are mathematically incapable of passing a course due to performance or attendance?

A. Provost Hargis: The concern regarding administrative withdrawals was acknowledged. This issue has been discussed in Faculty Senate on multiple occasions and from a variety of perspectives, and recent changes in federal financial aid requirements make consistent application of university procedures particularly important. Faculty members play an important role in advising and mentoring students regarding academic performance and strategies for success in their courses. However, faculty members do not have independent authority to administratively withdraw students from courses based on nonattendance or concerns about academic performance. Such actions may carry financial aid consequences and must be handled through appropriate university procedures. When an administrative withdrawal may be warranted, faculty should first consult with their department chair, who can coordinate with the dean and Registrar's Office as appropriate. Concerns involving disruptive classroom behavior or student conduct should be directed to the Dean of Students Office.

Students with questions regarding financial aid eligibility, federal

loans, or the consequences of enrollment changes should be referred to the Office of Student Financial Aid. Faculty should not provide individualized advice interpreting federal financial aid requirements or private loan terms.

6) I have a question regarding UCA's policy for students who do not receive timely financial aid for whatever reason. Several have reported being cut off from the cafeteria meal plan. Is this a standing policy that if students lose financial aid that covers a dining plan it will be cut off?

   A. The university maintains a drop-for-nonpayment policy that may result in students being removed from registered courses and experiencing interruptions to services, including campus dining, when financial obligations have not been satisfied. The university recognizes the potential consequences of these actions for student persistence and academic progress. Accordingly, the Student Accounts team makes extensive efforts to communicate with affected students, establish payment arrangements, and resolve outstanding balances before and after enrollment actions occur.

   B. These efforts involve coordination among Student Accounts, the Registrar's Office, Financial Aid, and Enrollment Services. When students resolve outstanding obligations, the university works to facilitate reinstatement when appropriate and consistent with academic requirements.

   C. The university remains committed to administering its financial policies responsibly while minimizing disruptions to students' academic progress. Students experiencing payment difficulties should contact Student Accounts directly to discuss available options.

7) A constituent has a concern about the approval of FS minutes. According to this constituent, Robert's Rules recognize Tacit Consent for meeting minutes, but only for approval in person, not over email. Email voting is also acceptable, but *tacit approval* should be in person.

   A. **President Thomas and Parliamentarian Yarberry will look into Robert's Rules and double check this. We will shift policy if necessary.**

8) The UCA Fresh Start program allows students who have failed in their early career at an Arkansas university to start over as a Freshman at UCA after sitting out of college for two years. This is a helpful program, but the information and guidelines for students are difficult to find and unclear. We should make this information more accessible to students and parents.

A. The Provost acknowledged the concern and indicated that it would be referred to Associate Provost Kurt Boniecki and Vice President Kevin Thomas for review. Drs. Boniecki and Thomas will coordinate with the appropriate university offices and shared governance bodies to review the existing policies, identify areas requiring clarification, and determine whether additional guidance or policy revisions are warranted. The goal is to ensure that students, faculty, and academic advisors have a clear and consistent understanding of the available options and how they are administered.

VI. Faculty Senate governance extract for senatorial review before next meeting:

A. Item**:** Faculty Senate By-Laws:

ARTICLE II. PROCEDURES FOR FILLING PARTIAL-TERM VACANCIES AFTER REMOVAL OR RESIGNATION

Cont.
Section 3. A Senator seated in a regular election begins their term on the date of the first called meeting after the end of spring classes or May 1, whichever comes first; a Senator seated in a Special election begins their term on the date of the first meeting they attend.

Section 4. If a Senator is removed or resigns after completing one or more years of their term, a Special Election will be held.

Section 5. A Special Election follows the same balloting procedures as a regular election.

B. **No one proposed any action on this section.**

VII. Senate Committee Reports

A. **Committee on Committees**

Chair McClellan: We continue working and I want to thank all the committee members for their continued effort. We are crafting language on our survey of UCA committees and also examining how elections are handled to improve the process. In addition, we continue to flesh out the Committee on Committees SOP document in light of last year's shift to Spring elections and appointments. This year, we will not recommend that any of the existing committees be dissolved.

Pres. Thomas asked the CoC to consider creating a guidance document for committee chairs regarding their duties and reporting. The Committee indicated that they are already doing so.

B. **Faculty Affairs Committee**

Chair Rosenow reported on his group's review of the Faculty Senate Bylaws– specifically the use of a coin-toss to settle ties in elections. After looking at our 19 peer institutions, it was clear that each of them used either a drawing of lots or coin-toss in similar situations, so we are in compliance.

Chair Rowley: My group has begun our examination of the published Tenure and Promotion guidelines for each Academic College. We have created a draft information-gathering document which we plan to send to the UCA Academic Council (Department Chairs). However, we will present this survey to the FS beforehand for comment.

C. **Academic Affairs Committee**

We have No report

D. **Advocacy and Engagement Committee**

We are meeting Friday to discuss four applicants for the Fall Semester's Faculty Enrichment Grants. Applicants will receive a response during the following week.

E. **Treasurer Report.**

There are no balance changes, however, per Faculty Senate request, I have included the Memorandum of Understanding regarding the Faculty Senate Scholars Foundation Scholarship. (See Appendix B). To sum it up: FS President and VP are listed as the administrators of the scholarship, but the memo indicates that the selection process is by a committee established by the Faculty Senate. In the past, the FS Executive Committee has acted in this role, but the senate is free to alter that.

1) Multiple senators wondered why we didn't receive many applications. There were also questions about how the scholarship was advertised to students.

   President Thomas agreed to reach out to Chad Hearne, Executive Director of the UCA Foundation and to ask if he would come to FS and offer advice/information regarding how best to reach students.

VIII. New Business: None

IX. Reminders and Announcements:

A. Next regular meeting on Tuesday, 10 Nov 2026 at 12:45pm
B. President Thomas reminded faculty senators that they have been invited to use the UCA Bookstore skybox for this Saturday's homecoming game.

Sen. Horpendahl moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:36 pm.

Appendix A: Constituent Concern–online submission

1. **Received: 10/22/2026 5:32:38**

Please describe your concern:
Why do some buildings, besides residence halls, have hot water while others do not. It is a safety concern.

Do you have a recommendation or solution to address your concern?: None

College or other affiliation: College of Science and Engineering

Response From President Thomas:
Thank you for raising this issue. Facilities issues like this are best handled by the Physical Plant directly, who can address them more quickly than the constituent concern process.

For a building that is currently without hot water, please submit a work order through the Physical Plant Forms and Requests page here or contact them through their contact page here.

The Faculty Senate Constituent Concern form is intended for matters of faculty governance and policy, or for issues that have been raised through the proper channels but have not been resolved as expected. If you have already submitted a work order and haven't received a response, please let us know and we will follow up on your behalf.

Because you noted this as a safety concern, I have also forwarded it to Kevin Carter, Associate Vice President for Facilities, for review.

Appendix B: Extract from the Memorandum of Understanding regarding the Faculty Senate Scholars Foundation Scholarship

2. **ADMINISTRATION** and **SELECTION.** Expenditures from the Fund shall be only with the written approval of the Faculty Senate President and the Faculty Senate Vice President, who shall serve as fund directors, with final approval by the President of the UCA Foundation.

Recipients shall be selected by the scholarship review committee established by the Faculty Senate. The scholarship shall be paid in two equal installments on the dates of registration for the first and second semesters of the academic year, on the conditions that the recipient remains in good academic standing and continues to meet the criteria for the scholarship. The scholarship may be awarded for alternate (i.e. summer) sessions if approved by the fund directors.

3. **AWARD CRITERIA.** To the extent permitted by law, the Fund shall be distributed according to the following conditions:

a. Recipient shall be a rising junior, rising senior, or graduate student.

b. Recipient shall be Enrolled in at least 12 hours for undergraduate or 6 hours graduate.

c. Recipient must have a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA for undergraduate applicants and 3.5 cumulative GPA for graduate applicants.

d. Recipient should demonstrate substantial initiative in and commitment to a social change project. This could include: service-learning, community service organization or project, or volunteer service.

e. Award is non-renewable.