University of Central Arkansas
Civic Action Plan

Vision and Mission

The University of Central Arkansas (UCA) has been home to a wide variety of civic engagement activities and initiatives over the years, and our institutional leadership recognizes the benefits of making these efforts more intentional, strategic, coordinated, and mutually supported across campus. We see a strong foundation for civic engagement activities in the university's Vision, Mission, Core Values, and Strategic Plan.

Civic Action Plan Vision and Mission

The UCA Civic Action Plan seeks to energize and expand the university's focus on civic engagement, including activities and initiatives, new or ongoing, that contribute to producing graduates who are educated citizens, creating partnerships that serve the public good, and developing learning opportunities that promote social responsibility locally and around the world.

The Civic Action Plan supports the vision and mission of the University of Central Arkansas and the following core values:

- **Intellectual Excellence**, including preparing students to be educated citizens who are culturally competent and appreciate diversity
- **Community**, including community partnerships, outreach activities, and public service
- **Diversity**, including learning opportunities for students as members of our global community
- **Integrity**, including an institution, faculty, staff, and student body that are responsible members of our many levels of community

Furthermore, the Civic Action Plan supports the University's Strategic Plan Goal 1A, as increasing civic engagement opportunities on campus will support students' academic and personal success.

Approach

Campus Compact and the 30th Anniversary Action Statement

The University of Central Arkansas joined Campus Compact in 2013 in conjunction with the formal launch of the university's Service-Learning Program, recognizing the importance of joining a national community of practice as we institutionalized academic service-learning on our campus. Since that time, university representatives have participated in and presented at the Gulf South Summit on Service-Learning and Civic Engagement through Higher Education, submitted nominees for Campus Compact recognition programs such as the Newman Civic Fellows, and utilized other Campus Compact resources such as conference calls and grant opportunities.

The university welcomed our 11th president, Houston D. Davis, in January 2017, and President Davis signed the Campus Compact 30th Anniversary Action Statement on May 4th, 2017, making the following commitments:

- We empower our students, faculty, staff, and community partners to co-create mutually respectful partnerships in pursuit of a just, equitable, and sustainable future for communities beyond the campus--nearby and around the world.
- We prepare our students for lives of engaged citizenship, with the motivation and capacity to deliberate, act, and lead in pursuit of the public good.
- We embrace our responsibilities as place-based institutions, contributing to the health and strength of our communities--economically, socially, environmentally, educationally, and politically.
- We harness the capacity of our institutions--through research, teaching, partnerships, and institutional practice--to challenge the prevailing social and economic inequalities that threaten our democratic future.
- We foster an environment that consistently affirms the centrality of the public purposes of higher education by setting high expectations for members of the campus community to contribute to their achievement.

Committee Composition and Responsibilities

The Civic Action Planning Committee was formed in August 2017 and identified as its tasks cataloging existing civic engagement activities, proposing potential new civic engagement activities, and developing mechanisms for better coordinating civic engagement activities at UCA.

The initial membership of the Civic Action Planning Committee drew heavily from a previous campus group, the Campus Election Engagement Project Committee, which met as a working

group throughout the spring and fall semesters of 2016 to coordinate campus voter education and engagement efforts surrounding the 2016 Presidential election, and which had broad campus representation. At an initial meeting, the group generated a list of additional campus and community stakeholders to invite to participate, as well as replacement members as needed. The following is a list of final committee members:

> Peter Mehl (Co-Chair), Interim Dean, College of Liberal Arts
> Lesley Graybeal (Co-Chair), Director, Service-Learning Program
> Clay Arnold, Chair, Political Science
> Angela Barlow, Dean, Graduate School
> Whitney Barringer, Honors College
> Kurt Boniecki, Associate Provost for Instructional Support
> Kaylon Bradford, Office of Diversity & Community
> Katherine Bray, School of Communication
> Brandon Combs, Director, Office of Assessment
> Taine Duncan, Faculty Senate President
> Phillip Fletcher, Director, City of Hope Outreach
> Veneta Fricks, Housing & Residence Life
> Christy Horpedahl, Arkansas Center for Research in Economics
> Emily Lane, Leadership Studies
> Megan McAfee, Student Government Association
> Corey Parks, Center for Community and Economic Development
> Brandon Price, Office of Student Life
> Jayme Stone, Director, Learning Communities/Residential Colleges
> Amy Whitehead, Center for Community and Economic Development

The Civic Action Planning Committee was divided into five subcommittees, aligned to each of the five Campus Compact action statement commitments, to begin work towards completing the tasks identified. The first four subcommittees identified existing civic engagement programming and proposed potential new activities for the Civic Action Plan, while the fifth subcommittee worked to align the expectations for a civically engaged university to the institutional Vision, Mission, Core Values, and Strategic Plan, as well as develop mechanisms for providing institutional oversight of and accountability for the completion and execution of the Civic Action Plan. As committee work progressed and actions were identified that overlapped action statement commitments, subcommittees were combined.

Committee meetings addressed the following topics and tasks:
- Understanding the action statements, commitment, and civic action planning process
- Benchmarking other institutions' Civic Action Plans

- Goal setting and visioning for the Civic Action Plan
- Brainstorming of additional committee members
- Setting a timeline for drafting the plan
- Understanding the civic engagement vision of university leadership
- Assigning subcommittees
- Contributing to baseline data collection
- Discussing the committee's vision and mission for the Civic Action Plan
- Generating a list of actions for fulfilling the action statement commitments
- Combining actions into categories and defining each category

Civic Engagement Defined

The Civic Action Planning Committee used the following definitions to guide our understanding of civic engagement:

> Excerpts from *Civic Responsibility and Higher Education* (2000)*,* edited by Thomas Ehrlich, provide two definitions.
>
> "Civic engagement means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes."
> - *Preface, page vi*
>
> "A morally and civically responsible individual recognizes himself or herself as a member of a larger social fabric and therefore considers social problems to be at least partly his or her own; such an individual is willing to see the moral and civic dimensions of issues, to make and justify informed moral and civic judgments, and to take action when appropriate."
> - *Introduction, page xxvi*
>
> Another relevant quote comes from Michael Sandel's book, *Justice* (2009).
>
> "If a just society requires a strong sense of community, it must find a way to cultivate in citizens a concern for the whole, a dedication to the common good. It can't be indifferent to the attitudes and dispositions, the 'habits of the heart,' that citizens bring to public life. It must find a way to lean against purely private notions of the good life, and cultivate civic virtue."
> - *Page 263*

Given these definitions, a civic engagement activity is one that engages members of the university community in reciprocal partnerships both within and beyond the university to make a positive difference in the quality of life of a community and contribute to the common good. To

further operationalize this definition, we imagine that civic engagement activities will do at least one of the following:

- Support the university's infrastructure for civic learning and reciprocal partnerships
- Prepare students for a life of active citizenship through curricular and co-curricular learning about issues of public concern
- Recognize and work to address social inequalities in our communities, including our campus community

Framework for a Civically Engaged University

The framework of a Civically Engaged University is part of an institutional effort at UCA to provide all students opportunities for participation in experiential learning activities.

We see the following **Expectations for a Civically Engaged University** as fulfilling Commitment 5 of the Action Statement:

> All students have the opportunity to participate in at least one civic engagement activity, and all faculty and staff have support for participating in institutional efforts and initiatives that serve the public good. This will involve the institution offering a significant number of civic engagement activities, including both academic and co-curricular.

Categories for Activities

- Partnerships for the Public Good (Commitments 1 and 3)
- Education and Civic Engagement (Commitment 2)
- Challenging Social Inequalities (Commitment 4)

From the above categories, we developed the following outcomes:

- Students, faculty, and staff will build and maintain partnerships for the public good.
- Students, faculty, and staff will integrate education and civic engagement.
- Students, faculty, and staff will create opportunities to challenge social inequalities.

Key Activities

The activities below are intended to capture the breadth of programs and stakeholders on campus that are currently engaged in civic engagement or will engage in civic engagement activities in the future. These programs and stakeholders may or may not have civic engagement as their primary mission or responsibility.

University Centers

- **Definition**: University Centers provide targeted data, research, and programming to support campus and community initiatives. University Centers included in this civic action plan are those that respond to community needs with specialized expertise.

Community needs may be local, regional, national or global in nature, and resources provided may include technical assistance, public policy analysis, community-based research, capacity building, and lifelong learning.

- ○ *Examples: Arkansas Center for Research in Economics, the Center for Community and Economic Development, and the Confucius Institute*

Academic Engagement

- **Definition:** Academic Engagement is defined under the Civic Action Plan as the institutional framework for providing intentional curricular processes that develop the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes necessary for students to lead lives of active citizenship and contribute to addressing issues of public concern.
    - ○ *Examples: Service-Learning Program, Study Abroad/Domestic Study Away, Internships, PhD in Leadership Studies, Honors College, Arkansas Collegiate Model UN, and the Citizens Academy*

Faculty and Staff Development and Support

- **Definition**: Faculty and Staff Development and Support are programs and resources that bolster institutional capacity 1) to promote quality of community and institutional diversity, 2) to develop and execute the programs and initiatives outlined in the civic action plan, and 3) to recognize the value of civic engagement work of students, faculty, staff, and community partners
    - ○ *Examples: Institutional Diversity Grants, Service-Learning Seed Grants, the Women in Academic Leadership Learning Community, and initiatives from the Center for Teaching Excellence that support civic engagement and learning*

Campus-Community Civic Engagement Programs

- **Definition**: Campus-Community Civic Engagement Programs are programs, projects, and initiatives that bring together campus and community stakeholders and resources with the explicit purpose to explore what it means to be an active citizen and community member, engage participants in shared reflection and learning about issues affecting our neighbors and communities, and support participation in local, state, national, and global communities.
    - ○ *Examples: CitiZine Project, Conway Conversations, and the Women's Leadership Network*

Student-to-Student Organizations

- **Definition:** Student-to-Student Organizations support the mission and vision of UCA and the Civic Action Plan. Student-led Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) feature several ongoing community outreach and philanthropic initiatives. Community-focused RSO initiatives develop civic learning, civic action, and social responsibility.

○ *Examples: Social Justice League, SGA Community Engagement, PRISM, Greek Life, Veteran Students Association, and Non-Traditional Student Organization*

Volunteerism, Philanthropy, and Direct Benefit Programs

- **Definition:** Volunteerism, philanthropy, and direct benefit programs support Civic Action's vision of a university actively challenging the detrimental effects of social and economic inequality. These programs allow the university and surrounding community to practice and promote social responsibility by creating partnerships with local institutions, establishing and increasing accessibility to university programs, and encouraging awareness and/or direct aid for the immediate alleviation of resource insecurity.
  - ○ *Examples: Food Recovery Network, Big Event, Bear Boots on the Ground, Greek Life philanthropy requirements, Aramark/Swipe Out Hunger, Bear Essentials Food Pantry, and the Career Services WOW Clothing Closet*

Student Access & Success Programs

- **Definition:** Student access and success programs provide research-based initiatives that address pervasive, systemic social inequities in educational access and attainment. Programs move underrepresented populations, first-generation students, and under-prepared students toward academic success and college completion. These initiatives include programs designed to close achievement gaps, secondary school partnerships for college preparation, as well as bridge, transitional, and second-chance programs that provide high-impact support. Additionally, we endorse programs that educate, tutor, and coach toward social responsibility and lifelong learning.
  - ○ *Examples: Black Male Achievement Challenge (BMAC), Project X, Summer Start, Unlocking College Academics Now (UCAN), Upward Bound, Office of Student Success, Department of Student Transitions, and Gateways to Completion*

Key Partnerships

- **Definition**: The university will pursue, develop, and sustain key partnerships that promote civic engagement that reciprocally benefits students and community partners. Opportunities to engage in long-term partnerships with broad campus engagement will be identified through ongoing assessment of institutional, student, and community needs and interests.
  - ○ *Examples: Arkansas Educational Television Network, City of Hope Outreach, Faulkner County Juvenile Court, and the Gusangira Project (Service-Learning in Rwanda)*

Co-Curricular Civic Learning

- **Definition:** Co-curricular initiatives in civic learning will support UCA's Civic Action vision of graduates who are educated and engaged citizens. The initiatives provide the information, develop the civic relationships, and cultivate the community-minded dispositions necessary for effective participation in public affairs.
  - ○ *Examples: Citizens Academy, Vote Everywhere, National Study of Learning, Voting, & Engagement, Citizenship & Democracy Week, Arkansas Collegiate Model UN, and Gender Studies Lecture Series*

New Initiatives

- **Gateways to Completion** (G2C): Over the next three years, UCA will participate in the G2C program under the direction of the John N. Gardner Institute, a non-profit organization dedicated to excellence in undergraduate education. The goal of the G2C program is to make evidence-based changes to high-enrollment gateway courses in an effort to reduce the overall percentage of DFWI grades and close achievement gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged students populations at UCA. Ultimately, the G2C program seeks to ameliorate the academic inequalities in higher education that limit the social mobility of disadvantaged populations in the United States. The G2C program will help UCA: 1) gather and analyze data on its high enrollment, high DFWI rate courses; 2) use the data to conduct a faculty-centered self-study to come up with a plan to redesign four or more of these courses; and 3) subsequently implement the plans generated for each of the courses.

- **Vote Everywhere**: UCA was invited to become a Vote Everywhere campus in 2018, and this partnership with the Andrew Goodman Foundation will provide a keystone for co-curricular civic engagement on UCA's campus in the coming years. Vote Everywhere is a national nonpartisan network that identifies and equips student ambassadors on campus to coordinate voter engagement and education efforts year-round and beyond typical election-year efforts, focusing on increasing voter registration on campus and removing barriers to voting. UCA's Vote Everywhere team will focus on strategic partnership building between the Division of Outreach & Community Engagement, the Political Science Department, and the Student Government Association and politically-oriented student organizations to effectively engage campus and community stakeholders.

- **Citizens Academy**: The vision of UCA's Citizens Academy is to create an understanding of and engagement with the public affairs and institutions of the City of Conway, Faulkner County and the state of Arkansas. The goals of the Citizens Academy**:** 1) Educate academy participants (UCA students, staff, and local residents) about local and regional governments' roles and responsibilities. 2) Engage academy participants in a discussion about their role in local and regional public affairs. 3) Develop constructive relationships and lines of communication between academy participants, UCA, and local/regional government. 4) Promote citizen participation in community affairs.

- **Institute for Poverty Studies:** The vision of the UCA-City of Hope Outreach Institute for Poverty Studies is to create a learning environment in which students, faculty and staff, as well as community partners from across the state of Arkansas, can be equipped through research and experiential learning to address poverty on a state, national, and global level. The goals of the Institute: 1) Promote an understanding of poverty and its outcomes.2) Prepare men and women to address poverty within religious, social, economic, and political spheres.3) Produce quality research--qualitative and quantitative--that offers substantive solutions regarding poverty alleviation.4) Facilitate learning opportunities for faculty, students, nonprofits, and local citizens to learn and discuss

poverty alleviations.5) Incubator for nonprofit development and creation for persons seeking to address poverty locally, nationally, and globally.

Outcomes

Data collection is vital to ensuring the efficacy and sustainability of civic engagement at UCA. Data are collected by the institution each semester on various metrics related to partner and project goals, activities, and outcomes. Metrics also include demographic information to assess diversity of students, faculty, staff, and community partners who participate in civic engagement activities.

While we have organized our plan around three broad outcomes and nine key activities, the measures and targets for each outcome and activity draw from the specific examples provided in the previous section of the plan and have been set in consultation with the responsible parties identified in the Implementation section and are not necessarily comprehensive. Additional measures and targets may be added throughout the plan implementation.

Outcome: Students, faculty, and staff will build and maintain partnerships for the public good				
Activity	Type of Change	Participant(s)	Measure(s)	Target(s)
University Centers	Sustainable Capacity Development	Faculty/Staff; Students; Community Partners/Members	Center annual reports	Increased participation in programs and partnerships
Key Partnerships	Sustainable Capacity Development	Campus Departments; Community Partners; Students	Institutional and community needs assessments	Increased number of multi-year, multi-department community partnerships
Outcome: Students, faculty, and staff will integrate education and civic engagement				
Activity	Type of Change	Participant(s)	Measure(s)	Target(s)
Academic Engagement	Policy & Systems	Faculty/Staff; Students	Department and program annual reports	Improved outcomes for participants
Faculty and Staff Development and Support	Sustainable Capacity Development	Faculty/Staff	Department annual reports	Increased number of grants and programs offered

Campus-Community Civic Engagement	Culture	Faculty/Staff; Students; Community Partners/Members	Department annual reports	Increased participation in programs and partnerships
Civic Learning	Policy & Systems	Faculty/Staff; Students	Department and program annual reports; NSLVE	Increased event participation and voter registration

Outcome: Students, faculty, and staff will create opportunities to challenge social inequalities

Activity	Type of Change	Participant(s)	Measure(s)	Target(s)
Student-to-Student Organizations	Culture	Students	OrgSync reports	Increased participation in organizations
Volunteerism, Philanthropy, and Direct Benefit	Culture	Students	OrgSync reports; Department annual reports	Increased participation in programs
Student Access and Success	Policy & Systems	Students	Department annual reports	Improved outcomes for participants

Implementation

Outcome: Students, faculty, and staff will build and maintain partnerships for the public good				
Activity	Type of Change	Responsible Party	Related Task(s)	Status
University Centers	Sustainable Capacity Development	ACRE; CCED; Confucius Institute	Respond to community-identified needs with research, technical assistance, and education	In Progress
Key Partnerships	Sustainable Capacity Development	Outreach & Community Engagement; International Engagement; Specific partner agencies	Identify partnerships with potential for expansion	Planned
Outcome: Students, faculty, and staff will integrate education and civic engagement				
Activity	Type of Change	Responsible Party	Related Task(s)	Status
Academic Engagement	Policy & Systems	Service-Learning Program; Study Abroad Office; Career Services; Academic Departments	Integrate civic engagement into academic coursework through identified learning outcomes	In Progress
Faculty and Staff Development and Support	Sustainable Capacity Development	Office of Institutional Diversity; Center for Teaching Excellence; Service-Learning Program	Create professional development, funding, and recognition opportunities for civic engagement	In Progress
Campus-Community Civic Engagement	Culture	Outreach & Community Engagement	Identify and respond to strategic opportunities for campus and community	In Progress

			members to collaboratively explore civic and community issues and identities	
Civic Learning	Policy & Systems	College of Liberal Arts; Outreach & Community Engagement	Integrate civic engagement into co-curricular programs through identified learning outcomes	Planned

Outcome: Students, faculty, and staff will create opportunities to challenge social inequalities

Activity	Type of Change	Responsible Party	Related Task(s)	Status
Student-to-Student Organizations	Culture	Student Life; Greek Life; Residence Life	Identify and support student-led civic action and social justice initiatives	In Progress
Volunteerism, Philanthropy, and Direct Benefit	Culture	Student Life; Greek Life; Career Services; Student Success	Identify and support student-led initiatives to address needs in partnership with the community	In Progress
Student Access and Success	Policy & Systems	Diversity & Community; Student Success; Student Transitions	Strategically expand efforts to address social inequalities through increased access to and success in higher education	Planned

Communication

UCA's Office of University Relations and Creative Services provides extensive communication support for the institution and will serve as a vital resource throughout the implementation of the Civic Action Plan. University Relations and Creative Services includes such means of communication as the UCA Magazine, Bear Blog, and Bear Tales video series, as well as social media and press releases for on- and off-campus traditional media.

The President's Office, Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and Student Government Association will also serve as resources for disseminating the Civic Action Plan and updates on its implementation, and have already provided forums for sharing the planning process and plan draft with campus and community members at regularly scheduled meetings and campus talks.

Finally, various campus divisions and departments will also be asked to communicate the results of the plan's implementation with their local, state, national, and international networks of stakeholders and participants.