

Fifty for the Future & Northwest Arkansas Council Summit
University of Arkansas at Little Rock
August 23, 2012
Chancellor Joel E. Anderson's Welcome

WELCOME

Thank you, Elizabeth. It is a pleasure to welcome you to the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

This is the first day of classes for the fall semester, so we may have some freshmen wander in thinking this is where one of their classes is located. It will be interesting to see how long they stay!

ENROLLMENT

The most frequent question at the reception at the Clinton Presidential Center last night was what's your enrollment? When the dust settles over the next week or so, we expect to once again have 13,000 students enrolled with us.

The beginning of the fall semester is always an exciting time. As I sat on the stage during I Freshman Convocation yesterday, it was so satisfying to look out over the audience and know that there were students who were outstanding in high school and they are going to continue to be outstanding the rest of their lives, enabled by UALR. And there were others there, not outstanding in high school, shy and short of self-confidence, and during their years here many of them will find themselves, and they too will go on to successful careers and outstanding accomplishments, enabled by UALR.

Higher education is a powerful business!

UALR IN MAINSTREAM

If you are unfamiliar with UALR, this university is very much in the mainstream of American higher education. A student will find almost all of the usual majors at the undergraduate level, accredited across the board. We have some 35 master's degrees and 10 doctorates.

Since 2008, we have added \$106,470,422 in major capital projects to the UALR campus. One of our most recent additions is the building you parked beside—our Student Services Center where we have conveniently consolidated student services such as admissions, financial, counseling, etc.

PARTNERSHIP THEME

Partnership is a theme of these joint meetings. It was a theme of Governor Beebe's remarks last evening at the Clinton Presidential Center.

When I became chancellor in 2003 I stated that I wanted "UALR" and "partnership with the community" to be synonymous.

Partnership is indeed a theme at UALR.

You are on the main campus. UALR's William H. Bowen School of Law is downtown in MacArthur Park. The law school library is a partnership with the Pulaski County Bar Association.

The Arkansas Studies Institute is located downtown on Markham Street. That is a joint program with Dr. Bobby Roberts and the Central Arkansas Library System.

In Benton, twenty five miles south of Little Rock, we have the UALR Benton Center—another partnership in which the community provides the facilities for our programs.

We have significant partnerships and cordial relationships with the UAMS, the Clinton School, and Pulaski Technical College.

BYPRODUCTS

All of our academic departments have significant connections with relevant organizations in the community, whether it is our public administration program working with a state agency or our theatre department working with the Arkansas Repertory Theatre.

There are two byproducts of these connections that our academic departments have throughout the metropolitan community. One byproduct is opportunities for internship experiences in workplaces and service learning opportunities for UALR students—one of the advantages of a metropolitan location. The other byproduct is a dynamic, pulsating, university—because cities are restless, dynamic places. Universities like UALR that connect extensively with their communities can't help but also be restless and dynamic.

TWO DISTINCTIVE INITIATIVES

Let me mention two initiatives that are distinctive.

One is our University District Partnership. When we were engaged in strategic planning in 2004, it came to light that within an approximate 20-block radius of UALR, between 1960 and 2000, population had declined 29 percent.

Loss of population is a signal of social distress...often accompanied by deterioration in housing stock, parks, streets, schools, and retail businesses. This university is the anchor institution. It is not going anywhere. We recognized a mutual interest with surrounding neighborhoods to work together to reverse that decline. In some wonderful partnerships with businesses, churches, neighborhood associations, other organizations and groups, and the city, we are hard at work, beginning to gain some traction, in what will certainly be a decades-long effort to revitalize our part of the city.

INSTITUTE ON RACE & ETHNICITY

UALR has embraced the challenge of race, arguably *the* number one problem in Arkansas. Race is a persistent issue, one that is hard to talk about, and it makes every other major problem harder to solve. Thus 13 months ago we launched the UALR Institute on Race and Ethnicity in an effort

to address the issue broadly and on a sustained basis. “You have to face it to fix it,” is our mantra.

MILKEN INSTITUTE REPORT

With the Milken Institute Report in 2004 ranking Arkansas 49th on the State Technology and Science Index, UALR, *in the spirit of partnership*, redoubled its efforts to play the role it needed to play in the economic development strategy of Arkansas.

ENGINEERING

Central Arkansas needed an engineering school 50 years or more ago. The absence has hurt the whole state, one of the negative byproducts of regional competition in Arkansas.

But in 1999 it finally happened, and today our Donaghey College of Engineering and Information Technology is going like gangbusters with highly acclaimed programs in Systems Engineering, Information Technology, and Construction Management, among others. Two years ago, with the Governor present, we opened a magnificent state-of-the art engineering building.

NANO CENTER

Just a few months ago we opened a magnificent research facility: The Center for Integrative Nanotechnology Sciences (“Nano Center”). Under the leadership of Dr. Alex Biris, Nano Center Director and Chief Scientist, this center conducts research, with an eye to commercialization in Arkansas.

Dr. Biris and his team have conducted notable research in nanomedicine, some of it in partnership with UAMS and NCTR—with tissue engineering research being especially promising—research that has been supported by the Department of Defense because of the wounds that military personnel return home with from the battlefield.

In the area of materials, the Nano Center has significant research underway on anti-icing coatings for airplanes. And much more.

And one reason I mention the Nano Center...on the theme of partnership... is that they have been exemplary in sharing their marvelous but frightfully expensive equipment with faculty and students at institutions all over the state—a fact that Governor Beebe and legislators who are aware of it have much appreciated.

If you would like to tour either or both the Nano Center or the Engineering and Information Technology Building, Dr. Biris and Dean Eric Sandgren will be over at 1 p.m. today to take you on such a tour. I encourage you to do that.

AGAIN WELCOME...

Again, welcome to the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. I am confident we are going to have a productive conference. If you need assistance, please let me or other UALR personnel know.