Becoming One of the Top Metropolitan, Community-Engaged, Research Universities among the 16 Member States of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB): University of Arkansas at Little Rock Preliminary Roadmap
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Background

The United States Higher Education System has experienced fast and profound changes in the last two decades. Many forces, threats, and challenges are responsible for these changes including a consistent decline in public and state support, changing student demographics, increased accreditation regulations, outcome-based accountability systems, increased competition, an expanding role for higher education institutions, and ever-evolving technology demands.

More than 23 years ago, the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) effectively positioned itself to face existing external forces when it embarked on academic reorganization. In addition, the University responded to the higher education landscape by becoming a leader in online education in Arkansas.

In 2013, a confluence of events has created a new opportunity for UALR to assess the manner in which it is fulfilling its mission and determine if changes are warranted. The events creating this self-assessment opportunity include the following:

- A new Dean for the William H. Bowen School of Law was selected in January 2013.
- During 2012-13, there was an Interim Dean in the College of Professional Studies, the Dean of College of Education and the Dean of the Ottenheimer Library retired, and the Dean of the College of Science was named Provost at Central Michigan University.
- Significant leadership changes occurred within the UALR senior leadership in 2012-13 with the retirement of three Vice Chancellors in the areas of Advancement; Educational, Student Services and Student Life; and Information Technology Services.
- In fiscal year (FY) 2011, 44.94 percent of UALR budget came from state appropriations. This year (FY14) only 38.98 percent of the budget is being funded by state general revenue. In fact, FY11 was the last year when a higher percent of UALR’s budget was funded by state appropriations than by tuition and fees. An added concern is the University’s drop in enrollment (as it is measured by semester student credit hours or SSCHs) since fall 2012 which means a reduction in tuition and fee revenue.
- A significant number of faculty members have taken advantage of the early retirement plan offered by the institution during the last two academic years.
- An increase in public expectations has occurred regarding UALR’s contributions to the economic, social and cultural development of the City of Little Rock, the Central Arkansas region, and the state of Arkansas.
In light of UALR’s recent challenges and opportunities, Chancellor Joel E. Anderson launched an academic and administrative restructuring effort in the spring and summer 2013 in which the campus-community engaged in deliberations around two questions. Is there a different academic and administrative structure that will better position UALR to thrive and fulfill its mission in the 21st Century? Are there any process revisions, academic initiatives or organizational changes required for UALR to serve its students more effectively?

This document presents recommendations on academic restructuring and a proposed administrative structure for academic affairs that will better support the achievement of UALR’s academic vision that was shared at the Fall 2013 University Assembly. The proposed administrative structure places student success at the center of Academic Affairs efforts and endeavors.

The Process

As requested by Chancellor Joel E. Anderson in his memorandum to the Provost dated February 13, 2013 (see Appendix 1), an academic restructuring process was developed in collaboration with Faculty Senate President Laura Smith-Olinde. The process included widespread participation across campus to review and rethink how UALR is organized to deliver its academic mission. The process was expected to yield recommendations and outcomes to accomplish the following:

- Enhance interdisciplinary collaboration to facilitate UALR’s timely response to the changing needs of the city, state and nation in terms of curricula, community engagement, and research.
- Create an efficient academic structure that will result in cost savings allowing UALR to match available resources to strategic priorities.

On March 1, 2013, the Provost shared with the UALR Community the document entitled Academic Restructuring Process (ARP) (included as Appendix 2), which detailed the process for gathering feedback and recommendations that are the basis for the sections, Revise Organizational Structure for Academic Colleges and Create a Comprehensive Structure for Academic Affairs, of this roadmap.

As part of the feedback process, three primary task forces were created—the Faculty Task Force (FTF), Chairs’ Task Force (CTF), and Academic Restructuring Steering Committee (ARSC). The ARSC considered recommendations from the other two task forces, town hall meetings, and stakeholder interviews and presented a final report to the Provost (see Appendix 3) on August 15, 2013.

Since receiving the ARSC report, the Provost has met with the leadership teams of all UALR colleges with the exception of the College of Business and the Law School. In the case of the College of Business, the Provost met with the dean of the College of Business and the directors of the Institute for Economic Advancement (IEA) and the Arkansas Small Business and Technology Development Center (ASBTDC) to discuss administrative restructuring that could possibly affect these units.

ARSC recommendations related to the Graduate School considered feedback from UALR Graduate Coordinators, but the ARSC did not consult with Graduate School administrators and staff. Thus, the Provost also met with the Interim Vice Provost for Research and Dean of the Graduate School to seek
feedback and input on these recommendations. The Graduate Council submitted to the Provost a response to the ARSC report (included as Appendix 4) and the Provost met with the Graduate Council at its request.

The Provost also considered feedback submitted to her by electronic mail from March 1 to September 26, 2013, and accommodated a number of individuals who requested face-to-face meetings.

At the same time that the task forces and steering committee were working throughout this past spring and summer, the Deans Council, Academic Affairs staff, and faculty representatives devoted a considerable amount of effort to answer the question - What is UALR’s academic vision?

As stated by the ARSC, the “structure serves the vision.” Therefore, the organizational structure recommendations included in this document are aimed at supporting and facilitating the accomplishment of UALR’s vision.

The Vision

By the year 2020, UALR will be “One of the Top Metropolitan, Community-Engaged, Research Universities among the 16 Member States of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB).” This shared vision is based on the 2005-2006 UALR Strategic Plan Fast Forward and its 2011 revision. Furthermore, this vision operationalizes UALR’s mission which was adopted by the Faculty Senate in 1988 (see Appendix 5) and has guided the development of the many strengths that currently characterize the institution.

To define the path needed to achieve its vision, UALR must recognize its unique situation. The University is experiencing a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity with three interim vice chancellors, three interim academic deans, an interim dean of the Library and an interim Vice Provost for Research and Dean of the Graduate School. Furthermore, there are many external forces and threats affecting UALR. The institution is facing competition from both in-state and out-of-state universities including public, private and for-profit institutions.

Those who employ its graduates are saying that UALR can do better in meeting their expectations. They are asking UALR to ensure that its graduates have broad knowledge across disciplines and fields, teamwork competencies, better oral and written communication skills, and an understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures and backgrounds.

Finally, UALR’s state funding, which directly and indirectly depends on student success, has been affected by the low student retention and graduation rates. UALR has a changing student profile that the institution does not fully understand, but it must in order to improve its student success rates.

This restructuring opportunity puts UALR in an enviable position. The University can capitalize on natural attrition and create an administrative infrastructure that will strengthen the institution, lead to the realization of its vision, and reverse the enrollment decline.
Realizing the Vision

To realize UALR’s vision, the P^4 model presented in Figure 1 is proposed. Under this model, UALR will:

- Define the profile of the faculty and staff needed to accomplish its vision.
- Reengineer the processes affecting its core activities so they are friendly, effective and efficient.
- Align its academic, research and support programs with the University’s vision.
- Establish strategic public-private and public-public partnerships that will make UALR the institution it aspires to be.
- Create the physical, technological and organizational infrastructure to facilitate the vision.

According to UALR’s senior academic leadership, the most effective way to implement the proposed model and realize the institution’s vision is to build on the institution’s unique characteristics and increase enrollment to 20,000 by 2020. UALR is a great institution with many strengths—the proposed approach is to fine tune, build, and capitalize on those things that no other institutions in the state can claim. In this way UALR will become a destination.

UALR’s Uniqueness. The average age of UALR undergraduates is 27.8, there are 69 countries represented in its student body, 22.5 percent of UALR students are African American, 2.1 percent Hispanic, and 2.4 percent Asian. This makes UALR’s student demographics the most unique in the state—its students are older and the most racially diverse among Arkansas universities. In addition, UALR serves a greater proportion of transfer students than any other university in the state.

Located in the center of the state and the capital city with the largest concentration of population, UALR also enjoys a unique location. It can boast of three of the largest school districts in the state (Little Rock, North Little Rock, and Pulaski County Special School District). The metropolitan area offers the benefits of a presidential library, a legislature that is in session annually, plenty of restaurants, nightlife, cultural events, many hospitality venues, and the largest urban park in the nation (Burns Park in North Little Rock). The city also has major modes of transportation that include a river, major railroads and two major interstates that intersect. Moreover, Little Rock sits in the middle of the state’s health care industry.

UALR also has the unique distinction of having both a major military base (Little Rock Air Force Base) and the country’s only National Guard Education Center at Camp Robinson located in its back yard, North Little Rock. This represents a significant pool of students that no other Arkansas university can claim.

In terms of educational opportunities, Little Rock has a research university (UALR) with top-shelf faculty and staff, a medical school with a teaching hospital, a two-year college with 13,000 students, and a four-year HBCU (Philander Smith College) within a 10-mile radius of the campus.

In summary, UALR has location, location, location.
The following six strategies take advantage of UALR location and are designed to enhance and expand the institution’s uniqueness. The first four strategies address how UALR interacts with its community and stakeholders, because without community and regional support, the University’s vision will be difficult to realize. The different aspects of the P4I model addressed in each strategy are included in parentheticals.

1. Align academic programs with the needs of the city and region. (Programs and People)

2. Align research programs with the needs of the city and region. (Programs and People)

3. Implement high impact programs that take advantage of UALR’s location. (Programs and People)
   - This strategy will explore requiring students to engage in learning experiences that make UALR unique. If adopted, it will be necessary to include programs such as: undergraduate research; cooperative education, internships and externships; study abroad; service learning; leadership training; entrepreneurship; and interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary education. It is possible that students would select a number of these high impact programs in order to meet degree requirements.
   - The goal of this strategy is to enrich the undergraduate educational experience through APPLIED learning which will give UALR graduates a competitive edge when seeking their first job or applying for graduate school, and ultimately succeeding in life.

4. Establish A Community Connection Center – C³. (P4I)
   - UALR community connections are strong. There are several faculty and staff on campus who consider it a primary responsibility to be engaged with the community and they deserve recognition for all they continue to do in helping others solve pressing problems. Moreover, UALR has a wealth of expertise about which the larger community is not always aware. Through the establishment of a Community Connection Center, UALR will have an opportunity to highlight its relevance in the community it serves.
   - C³ will be a one-stop shop for the community, modeled after land-grant cooperative extension divisions, which will provide the community access to students, faculty, and staff expertise. The Center will serve businesses and industry, community organizations and government agencies. In addition, it would allow for the coordination of the dozens of outreach programs UALR offers. These outreach and community engagement programs could make the institution unique if UALR determines a way to coordinate—not duplicate—efforts and leverage its resources so that it gets the most impact.

5. Develop and Implement a Communication Strategy to Promote Academic Programs. (Processes)
6. Make Student Success a K-Beyond 16 Endeavor. (P²I)

- This strategy represents what UALR ultimately wants to achieve—student success not just in elementary and middle school, not just in high school for college and career preparation, and not just success in higher education whether at the bachelor’s, master’s, or doctoral level. Rather, UALR should contribute to the success of its neighbors and extended community beyond K-16, and assist them in having personal and professional success after they leave UALR. This should be the ultimate testament to all that UALR does (see Figure 2).

- The successful implementation of this strategy will require the development of partnerships with the K-12 system and technical/community colleges to provide alternative pathways to four-year degrees and the workforce. Moreover, UALR will need to establish closer partnerships with local, national, and international employers to understand their expectations. This will lead to additional educational opportunities for UALR students and enriched research and professional experiences for the faculty. Finally, through partnerships with local and regional communities, UALR will be able to assist in solving their most pressing challenges while the faculty and students are afforded a “real-world” laboratory in which to experiment and learn.

- Most importantly, making student success a K-beyond 16 endeavor will involve the adoption of an academic philosophy that takes full advantage of UALR’s location as a distinctive and unique characteristic. This philosophy must focus on taking the University to the community and bringing the community to the University, using the community as its classroom and laboratory. It must focus on serving the professional development needs of the community through continuing education. Finally, it must integrate UALR outreach programs into the educational experiences of the undergraduate and graduate students. In this integrated approach, research and discovery informs teaching; teaching involves service or community/industry engagement; and service shapes, inspires and informs research and discovery (see Figure 3).

20,000 Students by 2020. UALR’s 2005 Campus Master Plan Update provides for the expansion of academic and support space to accommodate enrollment growth to 20,000 students. Furthermore, an analysis of SREB Metropolitan Four-Year 1 and Four-Year 2 institutions (Table 1) reveals that 12 of the 14 universities have enrollments greater than 20,000 students. The only two universities with less than 20,000 students are the University of New Orleans, a highly selective institution, and the University of North Carolina-Greensboro with an enrollment of approximately 18,000 students. These findings strongly suggest that UALR should increase its enrollment to 20,000. If UALR reaches this level of enrollment by 2020, it can finance the path to becoming One of the Top Metropolitan, Community-Engaged, Research Universities among the 16 Members of the SREB.
Seven strategies are proposed by Academic Affairs to accomplish this goal of 20,000 students by 2020. The first strategy is also included in the “UALR’s Uniqueness” strategies and the second is very much related to Strategy 3, above.

1. Make Student Success a K-Beyond 16 Endeavor. (P4I)

2. Establish Retention and Recruitment Goals Tied to High Impact Programs. (Programs and People)

3. Establish a Student Support Center. (P4I)
   • The proposed Student Support Center could include a hotline for assisting students who need relatively routine information as well as those who need an advocate to intervene on their behalf. It could be modeled after the ombudsman concept that some universities implemented years ago.

4. Strategically Target Underrepresented Student Populations. (Programs and People)
   • This strategy includes not only those students typically categorized as underrepresented, but also prospective adults with some college course work but no degree. This population has many options to complete a college degree and they are exercising those options in large numbers.

5. Reengineer all UALR Processes Affecting Students. (Processes)
   • The purpose of this strategy is to make it easier for students to obtain accurate advising, register, complete courses and graduate.

6. Align Faculty Annual Evaluations and Promotion/Tenure Guidelines with Achievement of the Vision. (Programs and People)
   • In some cases, there is a lack of consistency between departmental promotion and tenure practice and UALR’s published promotion and tenure policy. This can create confusion for faculty, junior faculty in particular. For example, it is difficult for junior faculty to focus on service/community engagement and technology transfer/commercialization when the most weight in promotion and tenure decisions go to research. Therefore, it is important to align departmental guidelines with the UALR’s vision.

7. Establish a Predictive Modeling Approach for Allocation of Resources. (Processes)

By implementing these strategies that focus on UALR’s uniqueness and achieving 20,000 students by 2020, the University can be One of the Top Metropolitan, Community-Engaged, Research Universities among the 16 Member States of the SREB. In this process, UALR also can transform the community, achieve national recognition through graduates who are leaders, innovators and responsible citizens, and create an environment in which faculty can flourish and become leaders in their fields.
Recommendations

- **Develop a Student-Centered Culture**

The ARSC’s final report recommends establishing a culture of change at UALR. The report states that “establishing a culture of change has direct benefits and can net immediate results.” Like most complex higher education institutions, UALR has some silos that no longer serve a useful purpose. There is a need to stop thinking that overall student success is someone else’s responsibility. UALR’s best chance for facing its challenges and realizing its vision is to embrace student success as the responsibility of every member of the UALR community.

The ARSC’s final report states that “high public goals and accountability encourage innovation and priority setting. It makes obvious what is more important and less important as far as funding and time allotment.” The following action plan to develop a student-centered culture at UALR was created in light of these statements.

1. **Establish a partnership between the Academic Affairs Unit Heads and the Provost’s Office staff.**
   - A partnership will be developed through working sessions with the Unit Heads schedule every six weeks. These sessions will include a discussion of case studies that will allow them to share tools and knowledge, and empower them to be change agents in their units. The Associate Vice Chancellor (AVC) for Faculty Relations and Administration also will work with Unit Heads to provide additional support required for institutional transformation.

2. **Create a Faculty Fellows Program**
   - Through a competitive process, three faculty members will be selected to serve a two-year term as a Faculty Fellow in the Office of the Provost. Fellows will be charged with creating and coordinating initiatives that help develop a student-centered culture at UALR. As part of this transformational process, the Faculty Fellows will work to enhance the sense of community among UALR students, faculty and staff.

3. **Revise the faculty and staff reward/incentive system.**
   - The faculty reward/incentive system will be revised as indicated in Strategy 6 under *20,000 Students by 2020*. The Associate Vice Chancellor for Faculty Relations and Administration will lead the effort to review the staff reward/incentive system.

4. **Require that the annual goals for all who report directly to the Provost include, “Partner with the Provost’s Office to develop a student success-centered culture in your unit.”**
5. Offer professional development opportunities for Academic Affairs staff on customer service.

6. Create a task force with members of the DRG Recruitment and Retention Subgroup to work on the development of a customer service culture.

7. Host Faculty Lunches with the Provost.
   ✷ Every two weeks, the Provost will have lunch with a different group of faculty (up to 20) with the goal of providing faculty an opportunity to share their ideas and concerns on the transformation process.

8. Create a Faculty Advisory Board to the Provost
   ✷ A board consisting of two representatives from each college or school as well as the library will be formed. College deans will nominate candidates and the Provost will select the representatives. The board will meet monthly and consider topics and agenda items suggested by the membership or the Provost.

9. Conversations with the Provost
   ✷ On a quarterly basis, the Provost will hold open conversations focused on student success with students, staff and faculty. There will not be a formal agenda for these conversations.

   • Explore Different Academic Advising Models

   Academic advising was one of four important issues identified by the ARSC and a subcommittee was formed to address the issue. (Appendix 2 of the ARSC’s Final Report.) Its analysis was sweeping and recommendations focused on a system of professional advisors based in each college and a formal system of faculty mentorship to supplement professional advising.

   Very preliminary estimates show that the cost of implementing the ARSC recommendation could be as high as $400,000 per year. Given the significant investment that might be required and considering input received from faculty and staff, it is recommended that a task force be appointed to consider two different systems of professional advisors: the one recommended by the ARSC and one in which professional advisors will be housed in a central location. No matter which of the two alternatives are recommended by the task force, the system of advisors will be supplemented with a formal system of faculty mentorship.

   The proposed Academic Advising Task Force will be chaired by the AVC for Student Success and will include faculty, student and staff representation. The charge to the group will include consideration of the impact to the current and proposed advising systems if UALR moves forward with the implementation of the meta-majors and the requirement for students to declare a major after a stipulated number of credit hours. The Task Force should also consider the Sample Path for Advising recommended by the ARSC and the section on final career
planning. The final recommendation from the Academic Advising Task Force will be submitted to the Provost by January 15, 2014.

• Remove Barriers to Interdisciplinary Collaboration

As per Chancellor Anderson’s memorandum on academic restructuring, one of the expectations for the process is to enhance interdisciplinary collaboration and facilitate UALR’s timely response to the changing needs of the city, state and nation in terms of curricula, community engagement, and research.

The ARSC in their final report concluded that it will be very difficult to meet this expectation with the academic restructuring alone. Specifically the ARSC stated, “Academic reorganization is the first step, but structural change will be meaningless unless accompanied by other substantive procedural change. That is, unless we make it easier for faculty to do interdisciplinary work, engage with the community, and serve the students, academic reorganization will amount to little more than moving boxes on an organization chart.”

The ARSC recommended that to begin the process of change at UALR, the barriers to interdisciplinary collaboration must be removed. The action plan outlined below is designed to remove these barriers and its implementation should begin immediately.

1. Implement at least three more programs within the next eighteen months to foster interdisciplinary collaboration following the model of the *Interdisciplinary Approaches in the Undergraduate Programs* (see Appendix 6).

2. Develop a funding model that moves consideration of SSCHs away from programs and departments to the university level and also considers program contribution to student success.

3. Make Unit Heads accountable for interdisciplinary collaborations.

4. Establish improvement in interdisciplinary collaboration as a goal in college reorganization.

5. Identify and act on existing university policies that represent barriers to team teaching.

6. Partner with the academic deans to foster the creation of faculty groups around topics of importance to UALR’s urban mission.

7. Reward faculty involvement in interdisciplinary collaborations.

8. Conduct an in-depth analysis of the ARSC recommendation regarding the creation of a Division of Interdisciplinary Teaching and Research.
• **Reengineer UALR Data Processes and Systems**

According to the ARSC, “UALR has not taken advantage of user-friendly technology with the availability of real-time click on reports. This is a strategic disadvantage that prevents proper goal-setting and hurts recruiting and retention.” The Committee’s solution is that “UALR must reallocate the large resources that are already devoted to technology services towards collecting the right data and making it user-friendly and immediately accessible. Reports should be just a click away, and critical information with action needed should be flagged for immediate action.”

The Committee’s assessment of data availability and generation is accurate. Hence, the plan outlined below.

1. Create an Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) under the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost. The OIE should house all UALR staff who gather and report data and should report to the AVC for Academic Programs and Institutional Effectiveness.

   Currently, conflicting data is generated by the Office of Institutional Research (OIR), Graduate School, Testing and Student Life Research, and Enrollment Management. Consolidating all data-related efforts under one office will allow for coordination, common language and definitions, and the ability to leverage resources for increased efficiencies.

2. Acquire a tool to create data warehouses and assign its implementation and administration to the OIE.

The ARSC also recommended the adoption of PeopleSoft or a similar system to improve advising, retention and recruitment and that Dr. Duane Roen from Arizona State University (ASU) assist UALR in how to use data to improve retention and graduation rates. In support of this recommendation, UALR should:

1. Develop a detailed plan for the implementation of an early alert system for students at-risk and purchase appropriate software (e.g., Starfish).

2. Implement the early alert system.

3. Become a Collaborative member of the Education Advisory Board. This will provide UALR access to the same system Arizona State University uses to track the academic progress of individual students every step of the way up to degree completion. A more detailed description of the capabilities of the system can be found in the ARSC Final Report (p. 8).

4. Consult with Dr. Duane Roen to take full advantage of the Education Advisory Board system.
The ARSC also identified the need to streamline procedures to allow faculty, coordinators, and chairs more time and attention to student success. There are two areas that require significant time and effort on the part of faculty, chairs, and other related staff—curriculum changes and catalog updating. It is recommended that these two processes be automated through the purchase of software (Curriculog and Acalog) successfully used by hundreds of higher education institutions.

- **Revise Organizational Structure for Academic Colleges**

A total of nine options for college organization were produced in the restructuring process: three by each of the two Task Forces, and three by the Steering Committee. After a detailed analysis of these options based on the criteria in Table 2, three alternatives were considered: Option B of the ARSC (see Appendix 7), Plan 3 of the FTF (see Appendix 8), and Option A of the CTF (see Appendix 9).

A further analysis of the three alternatives revealed that Option B of the ARSC (Appendix 7) and Option A of the CTF (see Appendix 9) included a college that was too complex to manage and/or that would face accreditation issues. These included:

- The College of Health, Education and Social Sciences in Option B (see Appendix 7)
- The College of Health, Education and Community Studies in Option A (see Appendix 9)
- The College of Arts, Humanities, Social Science, and Communications in Option A (see Appendix 9)

The appeal of Plan 3 of the FTF (see Appendix 8) was that a proposed College of Education and Health Professions along with a College of Social Sciences solved these issues of size and complexity. In addition, these colleges represent an organizational structure well-aligned to UALR’s vision.

The recommended structure (see Appendix 10) is a combination of the strong elements of the three alternatives, and meets the objective of having an academic college organizational structure that speaks to UALR’s strengths. The proposed organizational structure includes one professional school (Bowen School of Law) and four professional colleges (the College of Education and Health Professions, the College of Social Sciences and Communications, the College of Engineering and Information Technology, and the College of Business). Additionally, the proposed organizational structure includes a college that will provide significant educational and research efforts that contribute to economic development as well as provide the general core curriculum to UALR students, thereby constituting the backbone of the University (the College of Arts, Letters, and Sciences).

In this proposed structure, four out of six colleges will offer doctoral degrees, which is an important factor if UALR is to become an SREB Four-Year 2 institution. Furthermore, if adopted, this structure will allow UALR to respond more effectively to the needs of the community, be
more easily understood by students and supporters of the university, and present new opportunities for interdisciplinary collaborations.

This proposal involves very little change at the departmental level (see Appendix 11 for the current organizational structure) with the following exceptions: the Department of Earth Sciences moves to the College of Engineering and Information Technology to form a new department including Civil and Architectural Engineering components. This is based on the similar licensing systems shared by the geology and engineering professions. The creation of this new department will help in the development of niche engineering programs such as geological engineering, petroleum engineering, geomatics engineering, and environmental engineering, among others. Additional resources will have to be allocated to the new department to take full advantage of all the opportunities the proposed new department presents. The reorganization of the College of Engineering and Information Technology at the department and program level also presents an opportunity to form a new unit combining Computer and Information Sciences.

The relative lack of proposed changes at the departmental level does not mean change should not occur. Indeed, change at this level is crucial for the realization of the UALR’s vision of academics as interdisciplinary and community-engaged. The following recommendation describes how Colleges will approach the second phase of restructuring and suggests some of the most obvious considerations for departmental mergers that should occur in the second phase of restructuring.

• **Reorganize Colleges at the Departmental and Program Level**

The ARSC Final Report states, “Students relate to the university through their courses, programs, or departments.” The report continues to say that “the academic points of contacts for students must be reorganized so that they and the faculty can fully achieve their potential.” In keeping with the ARSC recommendations, a second phase of the academic restructuring process is recommended with the following goals:

- Increase the effectiveness of departments.
- Increase interdisciplinary collaborations.
- Improve departmental and college efficiency.
- Reduce the overall number of departments, if possible.

To accomplish these goals, colleges will propose new structures that:

- Decrease the rigidity of departmental boundaries through the possible combining of departments/parts of departments. (Examples follow)

  - The College of Education and Health Professions should consider if any programs currently in the Department of Counseling, Adult, and Rehabilitation (CARE) should move to the Division of Education.
The College of Arts, Letters and Sciences should consider:
- Merging the departments of English and International and Second Language Studies.
- Merging the departments of Mathematics and Statistics with Physics and Astronomy.
- Relocating the administration of the Ph.D. Program in Applied Science to the division level and assigning faculty in that department to other appropriate departments.

The College of Social Sciences and Communications should consider:
- Combining Political Science and Public Administration.
- Adding applied components to its program offerings.
- Decrease the rigidity of department boundaries through the possible moving and/or combining of programs/parts of programs. (Examples follow)

Multidisciplinary programs, e.g., Middle Eastern Studies, International Relations, and Gender Studies (see Table 3 for a list of current multidisciplinary programs), were not addressed by either of the task forces or Steering Committee. These programs should be considered in the second phase of restructuring. Colleges will be assisted in their deliberations by a Multidisciplinary Task Force chaired by the AVC for Academic Programs and Institutional Effectiveness.

Colleges should also consider the fit between all college programs and college core values (discussed shortly) to determine if programs might be a better fit in a different college.
- Create opportunities for sharing administrative support.
- Centralize burdensome and inefficient administrative tasks that are currently at school/department/program level.
- Provide formal structures for sharing faculty expertise.
- Present a workable method for managing divisions in the college.

In restructuring, colleges should consider the following:
- What are the core values of the college? How do core values fit with UALR vision? These questions could be difficult to answer for new colleges and definitive answers will not be required before the new deans are in place. However, the conversation should start as part of this second phase.
• How does the proposed college structure recognize/encourage programs/faculty groups that are not discipline-based (i.e., what capacities exist with respect to faculty expertise, regardless of discipline)?

• What strengths cut across departments/programs/groups?
  ➢ How can these strengths be developed into groups/programs?
  ➢ How do these strengths fit with those identified in other colleges?
  ➢ How can these be marketed?

• Are there any opportunities to leverage the course offerings in the college?

• What courses/clusters of courses are marketable? How can these be worked into wide range of programs?

• How does proposed college structure encourage interaction with other colleges? What interdisciplinary or required courses/faculty research collaborations are created? See Appendix 12 for possible interdisciplinary collaborations that capitalize on UALR’s location.

College restructuring efforts will be evaluated, at least in part, according to (1) how well colleges attain some complement of these considerations and (2) how well colleges explain their consideration of these goals/issues. Specifics on the implementation of this recommendation are included later in this document.

• Create a Comprehensive Structure for Academic Affairs

Currently, the Division of Academic Affairs includes the William H. Bowen School of Law, the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, the College of Business, the College of Education, the Donaghey College of Engineering and Information Technology, the College of Professional Studies, the College of Science, the Graduate School and Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP), the Ottenheimer Library, the Donaghey Scholars Program, the Center for Innovation and Commercialization (CIC), the Center for Nanotechnology Science (CNS), the Sequoyah National Research Center (SNRC), and the Center for Arkansas History and Culture (CAHC). The Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences also currently serves as Associate Provost and in that capacity leads the CAHC. The heads of all of these units report to the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost. In addition, three AVCs report to the Provost—the AVC for Academic Programs and Institutional Effectiveness, AVC for Faculty Relations and Administration, and AVC for Student Success. The current organizational structure for Academic Affairs is shown in Appendix 13.

According to a survey administered by the Division of Educational, Student Services and Student Life (ESSSL) to graduating seniors, students are attracted to UALR because of its academic programs. Based on these responses, it can be argued that the heart of the institution must be the Division of Academic Affairs if UALR’s vision is to be realized. A strong division will also facilitate achieving the 20,000 by 2020 student enrollment goal. Therefore, it is recommended that the comprehensive organizational structure presented in Appendix 14 be adopted.
When developing the proposed structure for Academic Affairs, recommendations from the ARSC, the Faculty and Chairs’ Task Forces as well as alternatives for restructuring developed by the Chancellor’s Direct Report Group were considered. Feedback from the Chancellor’s Leadership Group and town hall meetings on administrative restructuring was also part of the analysis.

The recommended Academic Affairs organizational structure is comprehensive and calls for transferring Extended Programs, OIR, most of the Division of ESSL, most of the outreach programs in the Division of Advancement and three areas currently under the Division of Enrollment Management (Records and Registration, the Office of Transfer Student Services and Study Abroad) to Academic Affairs. A rationale for the proposed structure follows.

- **Transfer of Units**

  1. **Extended Programs**

     More than two decades ago, a revolutionary vision for online education was born at UALR—technology was in its infancy and faculty literally learned by doing. Years of dedication and hard work have placed UALR at the forefront in this arena. Furthermore, the strength of the division’s current leadership has positioned the institution to become a full partner in the anticipated University of Arkansas System online initiative.

     Both restructuring task forces and the ARSC recommended the transfer of online programs to Academic Affairs. The rationale for this recommendation is that the only difference between the academic programs currently under Academic Affairs and those under Extended Programs is the delivery mode. All groups based their recommendations on the belief that any academic instruction of UALR students should be “housed” in Academic Affairs.

     Concurrent Enrollment is a program that allows high school students to earn college credit and high school credit at the same time. The courses offered as part of this program are designed by UALR academic departments who also approve the high school instructor for the class. Clearly, this program is academic in nature.

     UALR Benton Center offers two full academic programs, an Associate of Arts in General Studies and the Bachelors of Science in E-commerce, plus the prerequisite courses needed to prepare students for enrolling for all programs on UALR’s main campus. The programs and courses as well as the faculty teaching in the Center, whether assigned to Benton on a permanent basis or not, are coordinated through the main campus academic departments.
The move of online programs, concurrent enrollment, and the Benton Center to Academic Affairs will make it possible to have all academic programs under the same division and will facilitate planning, curriculum development, and assessment processes which ultimately will improve student success.

2. Office of Institutional Research

As discussed under the previous section, Reengineer UALR Data Processes and Systems, moving OIR to Academic Affairs will allow for the creation of the OIE. The increase in accreditation regulations, outcome-based systems required by both the state and federal governments, and changing expectations from the public for higher education have created the need for UALR to have an OIE. UALR is accountable for producing career-ready graduates and educated citizens, creating new knowledge that can be transferred to the market for economic development, and serving its community. Therefore, assessment processes for academic programs and student learning should reside in Academic Affairs.

The OIE will be responsible for the generation of data and analyses needed for faculty, administration, and staff to make informed decisions in a timely manner—a basic requirement for institutional planning and student success initiatives. Furthermore, consolidating all individuals who generate and report data will allow for a more efficient use of resources. The efficiencies gained would allow OIR to assume additional projects and analyses. If a statistician is added to OIR, the proposed consolidation will allow all areas served by OIR to benefit from that expertise as well.

It is important to mention that Academic Affairs has just launched a new project, the Quality Initiative (QI). This is an alternative pathway to seek reaccreditation from the Higher Learning Commission and OIR/OIE will play a key role in the effort.

3. Educational, Student Services and Student Life

The final report of the ARSC recommends that a culture of change be developed at UALR. The 2013 summer bridge program offered by the Division of ESSSL is presented in the report as an example of the change needed. Undoubtedly, the summer bridge program is just one example of what is required for UALR to become a fully student-centered institution, but the wall between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs will have to come down.
By moving ESSSL to Academic Affairs, UALR could accomplish the following:

- Formalize UALR’s commitment to become a student-centered institution. In the proposed structure, all the units that interact with student instruction, support and programming would work together.
- Ensure seamless communication between what are currently two divisions working to ensure student success.
- Expand Student Services success initiatives that have proven to be very effective with a limited target groups and to benefit more students. This would involve leveraging resources to allow for additional capacity and program expansion.
- Create very strong partnerships for initiatives aimed at student success not only while they are at UALR, but from K to beyond 16. The partnerships between faculty and student services experts offered by this structure would be significant in facilitating student learning processes outside of the classroom, especially if the high impact programs described in a previous section are implemented.

By creating the position of Vice Provost for Student Life in Academic Affairs, UALR will integrate academics with student life. This is in keeping with the practices of the current generation of traditional college-age students, the Millennials. They do not compartmentalize the social and academic sides of their lives. Moving ESSSL to Academic Affairs moves the institution to the 21st Century.

As per the previous section regarding the creation of an OIE, it is also recommended that the Testing and Student Life Research unit currently under ESSSL be moved to the OIE.

4. Advancement

Currently, the Division of Advancement includes Government Relations, Children International, University District, Community Engagement, Cooperative Education, and the University District Educational Network.

To realize UALR’s vision to become One of the Top Metropolitan, Community-Engaged, Research Universities among the 16 Member States of the SREB it was proposed earlier in this document that the institution should build on its unique characteristics. One of the six strategies presented to accomplish this goal was to establish the Community Connection Center or C³. This strategy was developed during the Deans Council retreat in July 2013, and was inspired by a recommendation included in the CTF to create a Center of Community Engagement. Moreover, this idea was endorsed by the ARSC in its final report when the Committee wrote, “The concept of a community connection center,
that resulted from the planning exercise of the deans and was announced at the Chancellor’s Leadership Group retreat in early August 2013, was viewed as a positive direction for the possible administration of community engagement functions. The committee is aware that community engagement is a focus in the administrative restructuring discussions as well. The ARSC endorses the idea coming from these discussions of making the community engagement function a key priority under the academic administrative area, with the specific form it might take to be decided as further deliberations occur within the overall restructuring process at UALR.”

Based on the above, it is recommended that Children International, Community Engagement (Service Learning), and Cooperative Education be moved to the new Center. Moreover, it is recommended that two functions be added to this portfolio of activities—the coordination of all outreach programs currently offered by UALR and faculty/staff service to the community. By creating the Center (to be led by a director) and moving the recommended advancement functions to Academic Affairs, the UALR administration will demonstrate its commitment to make community engagement the center of what the faculty do. Moreover, it is a commitment to adopt the academic philosophy described earlier in this roadmap and shown in Figure 3.

5. Records and Registration

A review of the functions and responsibilities of the Office of Records and Registration (ORR), motivated by the feedback received during the first administrative restructuring town hall meeting, revealed that at least 80 percent of these are academic in nature. ORR works directly with faculty, department chairs, dean offices, and students. The following is a list of responsibilities that shows the current relationship between ORR and Academic Affairs:

- Enforce and implement academic policy as established by Faculty Senate and approved by the Chancellor.
- Implement approved degree programs and all academic program modifications.
- Coordinate class schedule development and student registration in classes each semester.
- Coordinate the maintenance and release of students’ academic records.
- Ensure that graduation requirements are met for all students prior to the awarding of a degree.

Moreover, a representative from the ORR is an ex-officio member of the Undergraduate Council, the Academic Calendar Committee, and the Athletics Council where they serve with academic departments on certifying academic
eligibility for NCAA athletes. A representative also regularly attends the Curriculum Committee of the Graduate Council.

It is important to note that the ORR—even when it has identified issues or problems with academic policy and processes—is not allowed to directly address or solve problems related to academic affairs. Every issue must go to the Provost’s Office for action and resolution. If ORR is moved to Academic Affairs, it can be empowered to solve some of these issues without the extra step of seeking approval from the Provost’s Office, which will result in faster service for students and better efficiencies for the institution.

Given the analysis above, it is recommended that the ORR be moved to Academic Affairs under the AVC for Academic Programs and Institutional Effectiveness.

6. Office of Transfer Student Services

The consideration and review of the Office of Transfer Student Services (OTSS) was motivated by the feedback received during the first administrative restructuring town hall meeting. During this meeting, the Director of OTSS publicly shared that OTSS success depends on frequent interactions with academic deans and department chairs and under the current organizational structure these interactions are more difficult than in the past. Based on these and other comments, it is reasonable to conclude that both the Academic Affairs division and the OTSS would benefit from moving OTSS back to its original “home.”

The OTSS was created in spring 2009 and reported to the Provost’s Office until November 2012. It is responsible for creating articulation agreements with two-year colleges, creating relationships with advisors at two-year colleges, making transfer processes transparent, ensuring that the articulation of transfer credit is in keeping with Faculty Senate and University policy, making the application of transfer credit accessible to all students, and significantly improving transfer student degree completion rates. Furthermore, the OTSS must regularly seek approval from the Provost’s Office on academic issues related to the application of transfer credit.

In summary, the primary work of this office focuses on the general education core curriculum, interactions with academic advisors, the matching of two-year programs with those at UALR and the establishment of articulation agreements, and student retention and success. The move of OTSS to Academic Affairs would close the loop on transfer student success, ensure that OTSS has full access information needed for UALR academic program articulation agreements, and make processes more efficient. For this reason, it is
recommended that the OTSS be moved to Academic Affairs under the AVC for Academic Programs and Institutional Effectiveness.

7. Study Abroad

One of the specific recommendations of the CTF is to “review the Office of International Student Services and Study Abroad including recruitment, staffing, international visitors, and increased budget to address serious problems that are currently prevalent in the programs.” This report addresses the Study Abroad element of this recommendation for two reasons.

First, Study Abroad is a credit-bearing, academic offering and one of the goals of the proposed Academic Affairs comprehensive organizational structure is to house all academic offerings under the same division. Second, Study Abroad was under the Provost’s Office until November 2012, so it has been less than one year since this unit was moved outside of the purview of Academic Affairs.

Study Abroad has been identified as one of the high impact programs to be considered under the third strategy proposed to enhance and expand UALR’s uniqueness. As previously noted, high impact programs are designated as such for two purposes: enhance the educational experience offered to the students and improve retention. Unless there is faculty involvement in the design and supervision of the experience and a reflective component that’s associated with the experience, designating Study Abroad as a high impact program will not meet the national standard. Moreover, for Study Abroad to be approved by the faculty as a high impact program, it is expected that faculty will have much to say in the way it is conducted.

Based on the above, it is recommended that Study Abroad be moved to Academic Affairs under the AVC for Student Success. This AVC will be responsible for implementing all high impact programs.

The proposed comprehensive organizational structure for Academic Affairs includes changes in the reporting line for a number of positions, the creation of some new positions in addition to the Vice Provost for Student Life and Director of the C³, and some realignment and expansion of responsibilities for the AVCs. The following is a detailed explanation of these proposed changes.

- **New and Redefined Positions and Unit Responsibilities**

  1. Graduate Dean

      Currently, the senior position charged with oversight of both the University's research program and the Graduate School is combined under the Vice Provost for Research and Dean of the Graduate School. The two task forces and the
ARSC recommended converting the Vice Provost for Research and Dean of the Graduate school into two distinct positions, one for the Graduate School and one for Research. The Graduate Council also submitted their *Response to the Academic Restructuring Task Force’s Proposals for Restructuring of the Graduate School* (Appendix 4), in which the same recommendation is made. In fact, all reports with the exception of the one from the CTF, call for the creation of a Graduate Dean position. The CTF recommends the creation of the position of Director of the Office of Graduate Services. Based on these recommendations, the proposed Academic Affairs structure includes the Graduate Dean position.

Each of the four reports mentioned above recommend an analysis of the operations of the Graduate School. Hence, it is recommended that the Interim Vice Provost for Research and Dean of the Graduate School focuses efforts to accomplish the following:

- Conduct an efficiency analysis of the operations of the Graduate School. This should consider the processes, personnel requirements and skills, and support systems.
- Identify areas for improvement to enhance services to graduate coordinators, current students, and prospective students.
- Investigate best practices in graduate recruitment and evaluate what is needed for UALR to implement these practices.
- Recommend an improved program to serve the needs of international graduate students who require UALR’s Intensive English Language Program. As suggested by the ARSC, this could be used as a tool to recruit graduate students.
- Conduct a feasibility analysis of the FTF’s recommendation to eliminate the Graduate School Associate Dean position. As per the ARSC recommendation, the analysis should consider that the Dean will be responsible for:
  - Advocating for graduate programs, graduate faculty, and graduate students within the UALR community and advocate for graduate programs with stakeholders in the community of Central Arkansas.
  - Providing support to graduate coordinators with regard to the planning and management of graduate programs.
  - Creating and reviewing policies related to graduate programs.
  - Supporting the retention of graduate students.
  - Assisting in the development of new academic programs.
  - Processing graduate assistantships.
The findings of these analyses will be documented in a report due to the Provost by February 15, 2014.

2. Academic Deans

In keeping with the proposed organizational structure for the academic colleges, there would be six academic deans:

- Dean of the William H. Bowen School of Law
- Dean of the College of Arts, Letters, and Sciences
- Dean of the College of Business
- Dean of the College of Education and Health Professions
- Dean of the Donaghey College of Engineering and Information Technology
- Dean of the College of Social Sciences and Communications

3. Donaghey Scholars Program Director

The Donaghey Scholars Program serves 100 undergraduate students and is a recruitment tool for admitting academically talented students to UALR. Furthermore, the program is a model that should be used in the expansion of other solid interdisciplinary program at the University.

The program is undergoing a leadership transition. The director of the program for over 24 years is scheduled to retire at the end of this academic year. This provides an opportunity to assess the accomplishment of the program and to plan for the future.

It is time for UALR to build on the success of this program and explore the possibility of establishing an Honors College. It is recommended that a task force be assembled to determine what is needed to make an Honors College a reality. The College will serve to attract the best and brightest who are interested in an educational opportunity that builds on UALR’s unique location.

The task force will have until February 15, 2014 to present its recommendations to the Provost and Chancellor.

4. Benton Center Director

As described under the Extended Programs recommendations, the UALR Benton Center focuses on the offering of general education courses and two academic programs. In the last two years, enrollment has declined and there are indications that a different approach may be needed to make the center successful. To address this situation, the plan included in Appendix 17, which builds on UALR’s vision, is presented for consideration. The plan includes four
main dimensions—partnerships for economic development, academic program expansion, community development and engagement, and facilities. The fact that the proposed plan extends beyond academic offerings is the rationale for having the Benton Center director report directly to the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost.

5. Vice Provost for Research, Innovation, and Economic Development

Currently, oversight of UALR’s research operation is the responsibility of the Vice Provost for Research and Dean of the Graduate School. Under the above section related to the Graduate School Dean, support for creating this new position dedicated to research was documented.

All restructuring groups recommended that the Director of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) report directly to the Provost, while the Graduate Council document clarifies that currently, the research operation includes more than ORSP. Specifically, the research operation includes ORSP, the Graduate Institute of Technology (GIT), Research Compliance, and Export Control. The Graduate Council document stated that this position “could (and probably should) also include the Center for Nanotechnology Sciences, the Center for Innovation and Commercialization, the Sequoyah National Research Center, the Center for Arkansas Center and Culture, and the Arkansas Earthquake Center.”

The following recommendation on the oversight of UALR research operations considers all submitted feedback as well as the needs of the University on its way to becoming One of the Top Metropolitan, Community Engaged, Research Universities Among the 16 Members States of the SREB.

Realizing UALR’s vision will require a strong research operation that supports faculty in their quest for external funding and facilitates the interaction between discoveries in the lab and creative work on the stage and the external community. UALR needs a research operation that is able to forge strategic partnerships with UALR faculty research groups, other research institutions, industry, state and federal entities, and entrepreneurs. The recommended position for Vice Provost for Research, Commercialization, and Economic Development (VPRCED) will be crucial for UALR to build the foundation required to realize its vision.

Moving the CIC and Center for Nanotechnology Science under the VPRCED will signal UALR’s commitment to economic development for the region and state through the transfer of new technologies from the laboratory to the market place. A quick look at the commercialization continuum shows that with the proposed organizational structure, UALR has what is needed to go from an idea
to a start-up by combining the operations of two units—the unit being proposed and the College of Business. The process outlined below demonstrates this point.

- An idea is generated by a faculty member who seeks support from the VPRCED to develop it in the laboratory.
- Once the technology is sufficiently developed, the CIC will perform an assessment to determine commercialization potential.
- The CIC assessment will require a market analysis that will be performed by IEA.
- The money for the start-up could come from an SBIR grant that developed in partnership with the ASBTDC.

The feedback received during the academic restructuring process points to the need for improvements and additional faculty support from ORSP. In reference to this the FTF in its final report wrote “ORSP should conduct a comprehensive efficiency review.” Further, the information gathered also shows that there is a perception that ORSP has not been diligent enough in supporting the research efforts of the faculty in the humanities and social sciences. Finally, some confusion exists regarding the role and function of GIT and its level of support of the UALR research endeavor. In response to this feedback, the Interim Vice Provost for Research and Dean of the Graduate School will be responsible for:

- Conducting an efficiency analysis of the operations of the ORSP. Special emphasis should be given to the pre-award area to determine if current staffing levels are appropriate and the required skill set is in place.
- Identifying areas for improvement to enhance services to the faculty and staff interested in seeking external funding for research with the goal of increasing the current level of support offered to the humanities and social sciences.
- Performing a comprehensive review of GIT operations to determine the most effective way it can contribute to UALR’s mission.

This work will be completed by February 15, 2014 and a report will be submitted to the Provost.

6. Associate Provost for UALR Collections and Archives

- The Ottenheimer Library collects, organizes, and provides access to information resources and library services that enrich and support UALR’s research and teaching mission, foster intellectual development, and promote academic excellence.
• The SNRC collects the written word and art of Native American and creates a research atmosphere that invites indigenous people to make the Center an archival home for their creative work. Importantly, the collections of the SNRC constitute the largest assemblage of Native American expression in the world. The Center also supports the education of both undergraduate and graduate students.

• The CAHC, housed in the Arkansas Studies Institute (ASI), is a partnership of UALR and the Central Arkansas Library System (CALS). The Center ensures that the history of the state is accessible to the public through the collection and maintenance of archival material. It promotes an understanding of the past through scholarly exchange and public dialogue and supports the education of both undergraduate and graduate students.

It is proposed that the Ottenheimer Library, the SNRC, and the CAHC be housed in a new division—the UALR Collections and Archives. Both the SNRC and CAHC are unique to UALR, and if we build on these two assets through the proposed division, the University could have a significant impact on the cultural development of the city of Little Rock, the Central Arkansas region, and the state of Arkansas. Furthermore, housing the Ottenheimer Library and the CAHC in the same division could open the door for important partnership opportunities with the CALS, community organizations, and the K-12 system. This proposed division has the uniqueness and strength to be at the center of the UALR’s educational experience. Finally, the creation of the proposed Collections and Archives division will provide the opportunity to leverage resources and strengthen fundraising.

In the proposed structure, the Associate Provost for UALR Collections and Archives would also have the responsibility for the CAHC. The Director of the SNRC would report to the Associate Provost as would the three directors of the Library—the Director of Public Services, Director of Technical Services and Technology, and Director of Administrative Services.

7. Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Programs and Institutional Effectiveness

The AVC for Academic Programs and Institutional Effectiveness is currently responsible for curriculum; serves as the liaison to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE), UAMS, and the Clinton School; coordinates assessment, program and institutional accreditation, and academic program review; and assists in campus-wide diversity initiatives. It is recommended that this AVC maintains the same responsibilities with the exception of diversity initiatives.
In addition to the responsibilities noted above, the proposed organizational structure would require that the following units report to this AVC:

- Online and continuing education, as well as all current functions of Extended Programs, with the exception of the UALR Benton Center.
- The new OIE described in the Office of Institutional Research section.
- The Office of Records and Registration.

Making student success a K-beyond 16 endeavor will require the development of academic partnerships with area K-12 school systems, technical and community colleges, area military installations, and entities/organizations with large numbers of prospective adult students. In the case of high school concurrent students, two-year college students and graduates, those with military affiliations, and prospective adult students, the goal is to provide alternative pathways to UALR.

In order to achieve this goal, a highly coordinated effort will be required (see Figure 2) and it is proposed that a new unit be created to house concurrent enrollment, partnerships with two-year colleges, the Office of Transfer Student Services, a student support center for veterans and active duty military, and work-based learning.

Under UALR’s current structure, the administration and oversight of the high school concurrent student program is housed in the Chancellor’s division; academic partnerships with two-year colleges has fallen into disarray with strained relationships and outdated agreements; and an OTSS that is disconnected from the mainstream of Academic Affairs.

Unfortunately, UALR’s efforts with regard to veterans and active duty military are highly fragmented. The University’s Veterans Affairs Office is focused on the processing of G.I. Bill benefits and reports to the Office of Financial Aid; on the other hand, one staff member in the Provost’s Office serves as a military “ombudsman.” This ombudsman reviews military transcripts and training records, converts military credit to academic credit using ACE criteria, advises students who make their way to the Provost’s Office, and assists military-related students in choosing courses and registering. UALR’s military students deserve a more comprehensive, student success approach that is tailored to their unique needs.

Work-based learning credit is another arena in which several institutions across the state have been engaged for decades. At UALR, a few programs make allowances for work-based learning, but there is a lack of University criteria and consistency for awarding college credit for prior learning. Adult students are
choosing institutions that have established processes for awarding prior learning or work-based learning credit, just as transfer students seek institutions that ease the burden of transfer. UALR has been highly successful in dealing with transfer students through the OTSS and it can be just as successful in attracting adult students who seek work-based learning credit, but we need an area that is responsible for the evaluation and assessment of work-based learning.

The creation of this proposed unit will ensure that regardless of the starting point of an academic path, all students will have access to a culture that nurtures, supports, and guides them from their first day to graduation day at UALR. The University has always served students with non-traditional backgrounds and the creation of this unit will reinforce our commitment to access and success for students from all walks of life.

It is proposed that this new Pathways to UALR unit report to the AVC for Academic Programs and Institutional Effectiveness.

8. Associate Vice Chancellor for Faculty Relations and Administration

The AVC for Faculty Relations and Administration will retain all current responsibilities (see Appendix 13) and will be charged with providing the Unit Heads the tools, knowledge, and support to equip and empower them to be change agents and partners in UALR’s transformational process. In addition, this AVC will assist academic units in the development and implementation of initiatives and hiring processes that foster diversity, in all of its dimensions, within the faculty and professional staff.

9. Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Success

Two new responsibilities will be added to the portfolio of the AVC for Student Success—the design, approval and implementation of high impact programs and Study Abroad.

**Implementation Plan**

Table 4 summarizes the proposed implementation plan. The implementation of the first four recommendations (*Develop a Student-Centered Culture, Explore Different Academic Advising Models, Remove Barriers to Interdisciplinary Collaboration, and Reengineer UALR Data Processes and Systems*) is straightforward. As indicated in the table, the implementation of the first proposed action under the recommendation *Develop a Student-Centered Culture* has started in anticipation of some level of change in the organization. The implementation of recommendations five and six (*Revise Organizational Structure for Academic Colleges and Reorganize Colleges at the Departmental and Program Level*) must to be considered simultaneously.
The second phase of academic restructuring will occur in all colleges. In the Law School, the College of Business, and the College of Engineering and Information Technology, this process will be led by the academic deans. For the three new colleges (Arts, Letters and Science, Education and Health Professions, and Social Sciences and Communications) the Provost will appoint a liaison for each college. The liaison will be responsible for calling the meetings of the new college, facilitating the second phase of restructuring, and coordinating the work that needs to be done for the new colleges to begin operations on July 1, 2014. The liaison will not be eligible to participate in the search for the dean position.

It is expected that the second phase will require more than a year to implement. However, there are two action items that should be completed by mid-January, 2014—decide on department/program mergers and determine how divisions will be managed. The searches for new deans will begin when the colleges have completed these two actions. All colleges will submit a report to the Provost by June 30, 2014.

As shown in Table 4, the colleges will examine space issues from mid-summer to late fall 2014. Following the ARSC recommendation, the Provost will assemble a task force to investigate the optimal location of units and individual faculty to improve communication and foster interdisciplinary collaborations.

For the most part, Table 4 is self-explanatory with regard to the implementation process for the last recommendation, Create a Comprehensive Structure for Academic Affairs. However, there are a few points that deserve clarification.

- The transfer of some of the units from the Advancement Division to Academic Affairs will require that a director for the C³ be selected before the final move takes place. It is recommended that the search for the director begins on October 16, 2013.
- The search for the Dean of the Graduate School Dean could start after February 15, 2014, when the report from Dean Casey is due.
- The ongoing search for the Director of the Donaghey Scholars Program could be affected by the recommendations of the task force exploring the possibility of establishing an Honors College. Therefore, the date for the director position to be filled is subject to change.
- The Vice Provost for Research, Commercialization and Economic Development search could start after February 15, 2014, when the review of the ORSP and GIT operations is completed.
- If approved, the proposed Collections and Archives Division could start operations on January 1, 2014, and the Library could join the unit on July 1, 2014.

Accomplishment of UALR’s Vision

The implementation of the proposed model, P²I, to realize UALR’s vision has started. In fact, the recommendations included in this roadmap for a revised organizational structure for UALR academic colleges along with the creation of a comprehensive structure for Academic Affairs are aimed at creating the organizational infrastructure to facilitate UALR’s path to be One of the Top Metropolitan, Community-Engaged, Research Universities among the 16 Member States of the SREB.
Progress has been accomplished on the implementation of the six strategies outlined to enhance and expand UALR uniqueness and the seven strategies proposed by Academic Affairs to grow UALR enrollment to 20,000 students. Members of the eleven different task forces that have been working in the development of the strategies since July 23, 2013 are presented in Tables 5 and 6.

The tables also show the progress made by each task force. Out of the eleven task forces, nine have submitted progress reports. After some preliminary work, the Predictive Modeling approach team has been merged with the Quality Initiative committees. The work of the teams continues. The progress of the work on the strategy Align academic programs with the need of the city and region will be affected by the implementation of the revised organizational structure for the academic colleges.

As part of the efforts to provide students alternative pathways to UALR, a plan has been developed to establish a strategic partnership with Pulaski Technical College (PTC). In addition, academic collaborations are been developed with the National Park Community College and the College of the Ouachitas. Further, initial meetings have been held with representatives of the United States National Guard Education Center at Camp Robinson with the goal of establishing an academic collaboration.

The roadmap presented in this document is just a starting point in realizing UALR’s vision. However, unless there is a process that allows the institution to assess it progress, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to know what pieces are missing (e.g., strategies, actions or initiatives) and what should be expanded, modified, or eliminated.

Because of this need for understanding and knowledge, it is imperative that an assessment process be implemented. Furthermore, this process must be tied to the QI in order to provide the information needed to make annual, informed decisions on the path towards becoming One of the Top Metropolitan, Community-Engaged, Research Universities among the 16 Member States of the SREB.

In conclusion, it is recommended that the Chancellor appoint a task force with representation from every division of the institution that will work, in collaboration with the QI committees and the OIE, to analyze data and information gathered every year. This group will answer the most important question—Is there a need to make any changes or adjustments to achieve UALR’s vision? This will ensure that the institution is on track to a bright and sustainable future. UALR students, faculty, staff, and supporters deserve no less!