ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Five-Year Component Plan
The Division of Academic Affairs was tasked to develop goals, objectives, and strategies that focus on the enhancement of academic planning, development, implementation, and assessment at UA Little Rock. Over the past year, the Academic Affairs Strategic Planning Committee developed academic goals, objectives, and strategies through months of discussion in committee and subcommittee meetings, as well as feedback from college assemblies, Faculty and Staff Senate, Student Government Association, and the Graduate Student Association. In addition, we conducted a campus-wide survey to gather feedback from faculty, staff, students, and alumni. We believe the goals, objectives, and strategies below align well with the institutional goals and the mission of UA Little Rock.
COMPONENT GOAL: ACCESS

Increase student access to transformative educational experiences that are affordable, versatile, and relevant.

Academic Affairs

Component Goal 1: Increase the number of competitive, flexible educational options that are responsive to the social and economic needs of the community and to changes in the education landscape.

OBJECTIVE 1: Offer educational programs that support career readiness, advancement, and placement.

- **Strategy 1:** Design a responsive curriculum for marketable, competitive credentials, including embedded, stackable, non-credit, and credit certificates and certifications as well as experiential learning opportunities.
- **Strategy 2:** Incorporate career-readiness components in all programs, both professional and the liberal arts, using tools such as the National Association for Colleges and Employers (NACE) Career Readiness Competencies.
- **Strategy 3:** Create a campus-wide team (Office of Communications, Online learning, Student Enrollment, advisors, faculty, students) to market academic programs.

OBJECTIVE 2: Determine and offer the right mix of online and on-campus course options for both undergraduate and graduate programs.

- **Strategy 1:** Use data on program resources, student demographics, and progress to degree for decisions on scheduling by modality, time, and location.
- **Strategy 2:** Collaborate with Communications, eLearning, and academic units on marketing online degree options.

OBJECTIVE 3: Promote open-access resources and multiple modalities of instruction.

- **Strategy 1:** Increase the use and quality of Open Educational Resources by offering professional development for faculty on OER.
- **Strategy 2:** Expand modes of online instruction to include limited residency and synchronous delivery as well as asynchronous delivery.
- **Strategy 3:** Increase professional development for faculty in online/hybrid/highflex student learning and engagement.

Component Goal 2: Facilitate admissions and transfer processes.

OBJECTIVE 1: Increase admissions flexibility to allow multiple measures.

- **Strategy 1:** Adopt multiple-measures admissions policies.
- **Strategy 2:** Create a formal admissions appeals committee.
- **Strategy 3:** Track student success among students admitted on multiple measures admissions or appeals.

OBJECTIVE 2: Develop a robust Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) program that is consistent across campus and maintains high integrity.

- **Strategy 1:** Work with Faculty Senate Councils and Committees to design an effective policy for PLA.
INSTITUTIONAL GOAL: EXPERIENCE

Improve the student, faculty, and staff experience by cultivating an engaging campus community that promotes diversity, equity, and inclusivity.

Academic Affairs

Component Goal 1: Promote a culture that fosters thoughtful and transparent communication, inclusiveness, and respect for others.

OBJECTIVE 1: Improve communication on campus.
  » Strategy 1: Facilitate respectful discourse, civility, and collegiality among faculty, staff, and students.
  » Strategy 2: Ensure that major projects and central units have communication plans that are clear, concise, timely, inclusive, and accessible.

OBJECTIVE 2: Enhance a sense of belonging among people of various backgrounds, identities, perspectives, and skills.
  » Strategy 1: Increase the number of faculty and staff of color and from underserved groups to better represent the demographics of our student population.
  » Strategy 2: Support faculty by offering equitable and competitive compensation and expanding professional development activities such as Jump Start teaching, research mini-grants, and travel support.
  » Strategy 3: Increase the number of students participating in research, experiential learning, and other co-curricular learning activities that enhance the academic experience through real-world application and engagement.

OBJECTIVE 3: Improve classroom space and technology.
  » Strategy 1: Improve the look and feel of all on-campus classroom spaces.
  » Strategy 2: Assure that all technology supports learning, whether on-campus or online.
  » Strategy 3: Encourage faculty to certify online courses with the eLearning Quality Assurance Standards.

OBJECTIVE 4: Ensure that online students have access to appropriate services equivalent to those used by on-campus students.
  » Strategy 1: Collect data on online student demographics and share with Student Services to assess the current state of support and develop action plans.
  » Strategy 2: Collaborate between eLearning and Student Affairs units to develop methods for offering equivalent student experiences, using a standard such as the Online Learning Consortium’s Student Services Scorecard.
INSTITUTIONAL GOAL: ATTAINMENT

Strengthen educational attainment through academic programs leading to social and economic mobility and the achievement of students’ aspirational goals.

Academic Affairs

Component Goal 1: Improve retention and completion rates.

OBJECTIVE 1: Increase undergraduate retention and completion rates for FTIC, transfer, and adult students, both on-campus and online.

  » Strategy 1: Collect data on undergraduate student retention and time to degree, considering factors such as course-taking patterns, modality of instruction, progress through gateway courses, hours worked each week, family status, and Pell status.
  » Strategy 2: Use student data for decision-making about curriculum, course-scheduling, and faculty development.
  » Strategy 3: Expand funding opportunities for both undergraduate and graduate students to include scholarships, paid internships, paid apprenticeships, and assistantships.
  » Strategy 4: Decrease student debt by decreasing time-to-degree/certificate completion through increasing opportunities for PLA and high school concurrent.
  » Strategy 5: Evaluate results of the Office of Retention Services, and expand resources as appropriate.

OBJECTIVE 2: Ensure that every student has continuing exposure to high-demand competencies required in the workforce.

  » Strategy 1: Reach out to community and local partners to identify competencies needed in the workplace.
  » Strategy 2: Support the integration of career readiness competencies such as communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, and leadership with the general education curriculum and other requirements such as Skills in the Major (SKiM).
  » Strategy 3: Offer faculty and staff development on incorporating workplace-learning competencies into classes and curriculum.

OBJECTIVE 3: Ensure students in all programs have access to and training on state-of-the-art technology they will find in their chosen career paths.

  » Strategy 1: Audit existing technology.
  » Strategy 2: Increase resources for classroom and technology upgrades.
  » Strategy 3: Provide faculty and staff professional development and training in advanced technology.

OBJECTIVE 4: Increase access to career development resources through collaboration with employer, community, and campus partners.

  » Strategy 1: Set reasonable goals for coordinating campus efforts at career development, assessing student needs and designing appropriate programs.
  » Strategy 2: Collaborate with community partners on offering career fairs and other preparation that leads to successful employment.
Academic Affairs (in collaboration with Research)

Component Goal 1: Increase the number and capacity of faculty, staff, and student researchers.

OBJECTIVE 1: Engage, develop, and reward faculty and staff researchers.
   » Strategy 1: Create a research academy that supports research mentorship, skills training, and professional development.
   » Strategy 2: Work jointly with the Office of the Provost to ensure that research, scholarship, and creative activity and the funding thereof is incentivized at all organizational levels.
   » Strategy 3: Evaluate the impact of workload policies on research productivity and recommend changes.

OBJECTIVE 2: Recruit and develop student researchers.
   » Strategy 1: Incentivize and support faculty recruitment of student researchers through opportunities such as Signature Experience, Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowships, Research Experiences for Undergraduates, and Graduate Fellowships.
   » Strategy 2: Increase graduate assistant stipends to a competitive level.
   » Strategy 3: Increase professional development opportunities for student researchers across campus.

Component Goal 2: Expand our research footprint through increased publication, grant applications, external funding, creative works, and promotion of research findings.

OBJECTIVE 1: Increase external funding by $10 million over the next 5 years.
   » Strategy 1: Incentivize grantsmanship through reduced teaching loads for research-active faculty.
   » Strategy 2: Increase support for proposal development through the use of grant writers.
   » Strategy 3: Increase IDC funds available for matching when required.

OBJECTIVE 2: Increase new interdisciplinary research initiatives across campus.
   » Strategy 1: Develop a Faculty Research Council to help develop campus wide initiatives/grants that are synced with national interests and funding opportunities.
   » Strategy 2: Increase opportunities for researchers across campus to interact in both social and academic settings.
   » Strategy 3: Expand the Collaborative Proposals for Research pilot program to the entire campus.

Component Goal 3: Increase the impact of (our) research through innovation, commercialization, and community partnerships.

OBJECTIVE 1: Increase invention disclosures, provisional patents, and patents.
   » Strategy 1: Increase the technology transfer professional development opportunities for faculty.
   » Strategy 2: Partner with UAF and UAMS to evaluate potential intellectual property.
INSTITUTIONAL GOAL: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Enhance community engagement through partnerships and collaborations involving faculty, staff, and students that address local, state, and regional needs.

Academic Affairs

Component Goal 1: Increase and diversify work-based learning (WBL), which integrates academic learning with practical work experience, to include internships, apprenticeships, cooperative education programs (co-ops), externships, and job shadowing.

OBJECTIVE 1: Partner with employers and the community to assess needs for workplace competencies.

  » Strategy 1: Engage directly with employers from key sectors to understand specific skill and competency needs.
  » Strategy 2: Establish a system for continuously updating the community and employers on how their input has been actioned, fostering ongoing engagement and partnership.

OBJECTIVE 2: Increase resources to implement WBL across the curriculum.

  » Strategy 1: Encourage all academic programs to integrate WBL that responds to social and economic needs and supports career mobility.
  » Strategy 2: Secure resources to assess student outcomes and community impact of WBL partnerships.
  » Strategy 3: Provide faculty development on incorporating WBL in academic programs.
  » Strategy 4: Educate students about the value of WBL and how to engage in WBL opportunities in their academic programs.
Academic Affairs Committee

May Atkins – Program Coordinator, Bachelor of Social Work
Melvin Beavers – Assistant Professor of Rhetoric and Writing and Chancellor’s DEI Fellow
Mark Baillie – Assistant Professor of Chemistry
Ann Bain – Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost
Christine Cotton – Director of Extended Education
andre cummings – Associate Dean Bowen School of Law
Sarah Beth Estes – Dean of the College of Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences, and Education
Erin Finzer – Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
Thomas Forcum – Student Government Association President
Susan Hoffpauir – Associate Dean for the Clinton School for Public Service
Sharonda Lipscomb – Director of eLearning
Louise Lowe – Student Success Coordinator
Joanne Matson – Professor of Rhetoric and Writing and Faculty Senate President
Jess Porter – Director for the Center for Arkansas History and Culture
Elisabeth Sherwin – Chair of the Department of Psychology
Brittany Straw – Director of Career Services
Tusty ten Bensel – Associate Dean of the College of Business, Health and Human Services
Thomas Wallace – Program Coordinator, Information Technology
Larry Whitman – Dean of the Donaghey College of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
Richard Woolridge – Professor of Business Information Systems
Andrew Wright – Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering