I. MISSION

The mission of the College of Social Sciences and Communication is to apply theory and research to drive social change and inspire human expression, reflection, and interconnection.

We accomplish this mission by:

- Constructing deep and diverse learning opportunities for students in and outside of the classroom;
- Producing, sharing, and responding to disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and community-based knowledge and research;
- Linking to the community through engagement and public service.

In 2016-17, the College of Social Sciences and Communication was home to the following academic units:

Department of Applied Communication

Department of Criminal Justice

Department of Psychology

Department of Rhetoric and Writing

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

School of Mass Communication

School of Public Affairs

The College is also home to public service units collaborating to address the needs of the state:

KUAR/KLRE Public Radio
Arkansas Public Administration Consortium (APAC)

Survey Research Center

The College is home to or closely affiliated with interdisciplinary programs like Non-profit Leadership Studies, Middle Eastern Studies, Gender Studies, and Conflict Management.

II. VALUES

The College of Social Sciences & Communication values excellence in teaching, deep and high impact learning, applied scholarship, and service leadership. We are the “people’s college” and cultivate the critical skills that people need to thrive at home, at work, and in their community.

III. VISION

With our mission in mind, we will do our best to:

Provide a model of positive and productive organizational communication. We will work to live up to our full potential and the promise of our communication fields through collegial, respectful communication in which we are committed to giving each other the benefit of the doubt and focusing on the facts.

Be proactive and guided by our mission. We will work to become a mission-driven college with mission-informed goals and priorities. We will commit to criteria-driven, fair allocation of shared resources to support our priorities, strengths, and strategic opportunities.

Be collaborative. We will work to fully understand our interdependence (within the college and with others outside of the college), share resources to the benefit of all, seek win wins, and value one another’s successes.

Build a culture of trust based on open communication, negotiation and consistency in what we say and do. We will work to create open, fair and transparent processes in the Dean’s office and in all aspects of shared governance including the faculty governance of the college assembly.

Demonstrate a shared commitment to clear, fair, well-articulated criteria-driven promotion and tenure processes. We will work to value everything faculty are asked to do while protecting the time and energy of pretenured and all faculty members to focus
on the core mission of the university – the passion for education, inquiry, and service that brought faculty here.

Support strong, empowered department and school level leaders who take all opportunities to seek and share information, partner with college leadership and each other, and balance advocacy with accountability.

Focus on student learning including ongoing assessment, self-reflection, peer evaluation, and a commitment to high impact practices that reach students with a variety of learning strengths.

Be a partner in enrollment growth and timely graduation. We will work to be a leader in student recruitment and retention and strive for excellence in academic scheduling and academic advising.

Work to fulfill our promise as a leader in the strategic vision for UALR by continuing to excel in community-based teaching and scholarship, interdisciplinary innovation, and in research and creative activity.

Plan, reflect, adjust, improve and celebrate.

IV. HIGHLIGHTS

A. Teaching

Sociology and Anthropology: Dr. Kathryn King was named the college’s top teacher and ultimately won the University-Wide Award for Excellence in Teaching at the university. Similarly, Dr. Neveen Shafeek Amin won the CSSC Faculty Mentor Award at the CSSC Student and Faculty Showcase. In addition, the faculty consistently creates high-impact experiences for students including faculty-led study abroad experiences (e.g., Costa Rica, Romania, and Oman) and research support for undergraduate students such as partnerships with the Sequoyah National Research Center, Toltec Mounds, Little Rock Zoo, and archeological excavations on Oman.

Psychology: The faculty developed an approved proposal to launch the psychology major as an online-only degree through the UA Little Rock online campus.

Criminal Justice: The faculty in the department are leaders in online education offering both a BA in Criminal Justice and an MS degree fully online. Faculty are consistently developing new courses and receiving quality matters (QM) certification.
**Mass Communication:** Last year, the School featured two new faculty members: Dr. Iveta Imre to focus on documentary production and Dr. Christopher Robinson to focus on film studies. Students in the school consistently engage in high-learning experiences. In a class taught by Dr. Amy Barnes, for instance, the class developed and enacted the social media plan for the college. Each week, the students researched and develop social media stories on student success, faculty, and big dreams for the college. Students in journalism also work with faculty to write stories for the Forum, an on-campus publication for the university.

**Applied Communication:** Dr. Kristen McIntyre won the college’s “Willingness to go above and beyond” award for her leadership in assessment, education, and dissemination of best practices in service learning. The department features high-impact practices for students including study abroad to Trinidad and Tobago, internship opportunities in the community such as UAMS, and deep learning experiences such as serving as interns for the Communication Skill Center on campus.

**Public Affairs:** The school in launching 2 new majors in the fall including Community Management and Development and a supplemental major in legal studies. Faculty across the school are leading high-impact learning for students including (a) taking a group of students to Morocco to attend the Model Arab League event, (b) traveling with 14 students to Alliance Management Institute Conference for nonprofit leaderships students, and (c) research such as students’ involvement in the Little Rock Congregation Study.

**B. Research**

**School of Public Affairs:** Faculty members in the school had 11 articles published in a wide variety of refereed journals, including *European Union Politics, Health and Illness: An Applied Approach, The Journal of Peace Research*, and the *Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs*. The *Survey Research Center* also completed over a dozen projects for public and non-profit sector clients.

**Criminal Justice:** Faculty in the department are active scholars who are publishing in the best journals in the field. Last year, these included *Criminal Justice & Behavior*, *Criminology*, *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, *Journal of Crime and Justice*, and the *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. Last year, faculty published 16 peer-reviewed articles.

**Sociology and Anthropology:** Faculty research in the department includes the health of middle eastern immigrants, the indigenous Ainu people of Japan, family dynamics in Mexico, and transnational communities in Micronesia. Last year, Dr. Krista Lewis continued her long-term archeological research projects in southern Arabia, Yemen, and Oman.

**Psychology:** Faculty are publishing in key journals and academic outlets. Dr. Wu, for example, published an article in the *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*. Dr. Corwyn published three peer-reviewed articles and two book chapters, one of which was published in *Developmental Psychology*. Dr. Blevins-Knabe also published a co-edited volume titled “Early Childhood Mathematics Skill Development in the Home Environment.” Finally, Dr. Mastin is continuing to develop his work on the Sleep Hygiene Index.

**Rhetoric and Writing:** Faculty published several edited volumes including “Applications for the Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing” (Behm, Rankins-Robertson, & Roen, 2017), and “Annotated Bibliography of Research in the Teaching of Online Writing Instruction” (Harris, 2017). The department also features over a dozen articles published in academic outlets.

**Mass Communication:** Sonny Rhodes is continuing his many contributions to local outlets including Quills and Pixel and AY Magazine, a 35,000-circulation statewide publication based in Little Rock. Faculty are also publishing in peer-reviewed journals such as *The Journal of International Communication* and *Global Media and Communication*.

**C. Service**

**Rhetoric and Writing:** Last year, Allison Holland won the college’s award for excellence in public service and Dr. Karen Kuralt won the college’s award for community service. In addition, faculty served the university and their community with their expertise. Greg Graham, for example, served as director of the Little Rock Writing Project. Several faculty also served on several boards, including Feminist Formations, the Global Society for Online Literacy Educators, and Just Communities of Arkansas.
Psychology: Faculty serves the university in a number of capacities, including the University Quality Initiatives Committee, the Institutional Review Board, The Academy for Teaching and Learning Excellence, and Development and Assessment for the University Core.

Sociology and Anthropology: Dr. Terry Richards received the Just Communities of Arkansas Humanitarian Award for his service to the Hispanic community. Faculty also serve a range of boards in our community including Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Central Arkansas, Just Communities of Arkansas, Boy Scouts of America, and the Raindrop Turkish Center. Faculty in the department have also been called to lead the campus: Dr. Simon Hawkins as Director of the Donaghey Scholars Program and Dr. Sarah Beth Estes as the Executive Director of the Community Connections Center.

School of Public Affairs: Faculty served the college, the university, and our community in many ways. At the community level, faculty organized multiple events including discussions of the Arkansas General Assembly’s legislative session, pre- and post-election panels, a presentation on the federal budget, and the annual Racial Attitudes Conference.

Applied Communication: Dr. Avinash Thombre completed the LeadAR program, a training program for emerging Arkansas Leaders. The Communication Skill Center presented over 30 workshops on a variety of topics, including effective speech structure, negotiating, and networking. Last year, faculty members delivered trainings and workshops to many for profit and non-profit organizations, including APAC, UAMS, Dassault Falcon Jet, Boy Scouts of America, the National Association of Social Workers, and more.

Criminal Justice: Faculty were very active in service for the department, the college, and the university. For example, Dr. Mary Parker served on the Board of Corrections and Dr. Jim Golden served on the Arkansas Commission on Law Enforcement Standards and Training, the commission that oversees all police conduct and training issues for the state. In addition, Dr. Timothy Brown served as Associate Editor for Deviant Behavior.

KUAR/KLRE Highlights from 2015-2016
In addition to UALR Public Radio’s ongoing Corporation for Public Broadcasting Community Service Grant, news and culture station KUAR also lead a Regional Journalism Collaboration grant from the CPB. This two-year $278,000 grant provides a managing editor, two and a half reporters and a partner manager who will oversee fundraising and administration for the project. KUAR’s RJC, Arkansas Public Media, is also collaborating with the other public radio stations in Arkansas: KUAF in Fayetteville,
KASU in Jonesboro and KTXK in Texarkana, TX. The collaboration includes community partners: Arkansas Educational Television Network, UALR’s Anderson Institute on Race and Ethnicity, The Butler Center for Arkansas Studies and El Latino Spanish language newspaper. Arkansas Public Media and its partners are reporting on issues including healthcare, energy and education in Arkansas with a focus on rural communities. This project is significant in a current national effort to increase news reporting collaboration between NPR and its member stations.

Arkansas Public Media was honored for its reporting: Reporter Sarah Whites-Koditschek received a Regional Edward R. Murrow Award from the Radio, Television and Digital News Association for her reporting on the shortage of licensed teachers in Arkansas.

Finally, KUAR News staff collaborated on a course with the School of Mass Communications which welcomed 16 students into the KUAR offices. The students each pitched their own ideas, researched content, wrote and produced their own series of 1-minute programs for the class using station equipment and space, and working with KUAR Content Development Director, Karen Tricot Steward. Four students produced series that were selected for broadcast on KUAR.

Arkansas Public Administration Consortium 2015-2016 Highlights
The Arkansas Public Administration Consortium (APAC) provided high-quality professional development and training to public and nonprofit managers through our signature programs: Certified Public Manager® (CPM), Certified Volunteer Manager (CVM), and Certified Arkansas Planning and Zoning Official (CARPO).

Trainings and Participation

D. Success

College Level Retention and Recruitment Initiatives

Retention
Retaining students and helping them succeed is at heart of the CSSC Culture. This year, we introduced an awareness and outreach campaign under the slogan of “Think the Link,” which was designed to encourage students and faculty to use our student success center. We also improved retention with three main strategic initiatives:
1. **Early Semester Warning:**
   1. We identified students at-risk for dropping out or for poor academic performance early in the term so that appropriate interventions can help the student recover early enough to raise their grades (see Habley, Bloom, & Robbins, 2012).

   2. We intervened with students with red flags including: (a) non-attendance in the first week, (b) poor attendance across the first three weeks, (c) not turning in a first assignment, or (d) not actively participating in class.

   3. We introduced our campaign at the assembly, met with every department, and reached out by email communication to both faculty and students.

   4. We developed an early warning form that faculty can fill out online: http://ualr.edu/cssc/link/.

2. **Midterm Reports**
   1. We encouraged faculty to use midterm progress reports to give students feedback on how they are performing in classes (see Habley, Bloom, & Robbins, 2012).

   2. We encouraged faculty to turn in midterm grades to enable students to know where they stand and drop the individual course if needed.

   3. We communicated with both faculty and students during the appropriate time to facilitate conversations.

3. **Identifying Students on Probation**
   1. We identified students on Academic Probation at the end of a term if their cumulative grade point average (GPA) drops below 2.0 and set up one-on-one meetings with Rachel Jones, our Assistant Dean of Student Success.

   2. We worked with advisors in every academic unit to refer all students on probation to The Link.

**Recruitment**
Recruiting new or existing students in the College is a priority. Last year, we enacted several initiatives for both undergraduate and graduate students.
Undergraduate Students

1. Newly Admitted Students List: We reached out to all new students every week by email with a welcome letter and an elevator pitch for the program of interest. After making contact at the college level, we send the list of students for each department at the Chair level. Chairs were encouraged to call students.

2. All new student orientations + all on Campus recruiting events: we represented the college and our programs at all recruitment events on campus.

3. Transform “undeclared” students to “declared” students. We identified students who are undeclared but interested in our programs and reached out to each student personally to encourage them to declare and provide information as needed to help each student.

We built on those strategies and continued to visit targeted college transfer fairs and high school college fairs. Specifically, we:

1. Continued to get our students to declare their major. For example, we are developing a new space on our link web site to help students (see http://ualr.edu/cssc/declare/).

2. Developed new brochures and advertisements for the college and its programs.

3. Featured our new CSSC Student Ambassadors at recruitment events on and off campus.

4. Created productive relationships with Deans, Chairs, and Faculty members in connected disciplines at Pulaski Tech, ASU-Beebe, the College of the Ouachitas, and the University of Arkansas Community College at Hope – Texarkana. We will meet with people one-on-one, share relevant information, and develop 2+2 agreements.

Graduate Students
We saw an opportunity this year to promote our graduate programs. With that in mind, we led several initiatives:

1. Closing the Gap (Summer)
   Last summer, we sought to close the gap with graduate students who were admitted into a graduate program, but not registered for fall classes. We contacted
students from the college level, provided names of students, and actively worked to get those students registered into fall courses.

2. Identify Target Size for Programs and Strategies
We met with every graduate coordinator in the college to identify target size for each graduate program and to develop a partnership to implement strategies for growth.

3. Creating Processes and Practices that mimic our strategies at the undergraduate level
In the last several years, we have created intentional processes to increase recruitment at the undergraduate level (see points 1 through 3 above). This year, we moved toward replicating those processes at the graduate level.

4. Grow Graduate Enrollment
Our primary strategy is to recruit students who are enrolled at UALR. Many students do not know about the available graduate programs in the college. To do so, we (a) contacted graduating seniors and (b) had our student ambassadors develop and present 8-10 minute presentations across 3000-level courses in the college to plant the seed for graduate school.

V. ASSESSMENT

1. Describe your assessment activities for this academic year.
Assessment efforts in the college are led by the 2016-2017 CSSC Assessment Committee, which include the following members:

Kristen McIntyre, Department of Applied Communication (Chair)

Kwasi Boateng, School of Mass Communication

Michael Craw, School of Public Affairs--MPA

Sarah Beth Estes, Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Olaf Hoerschelmann, Associate Dean, CSSC

Robert Lytle, Department of Criminal Justice

Brian Ray, Department of Rhetoric and Writing
Margaret Scranton, School of Public Affairs

Elisabeth Sherwin, Department of Psychology

Given the university’s emphasis on building continuous improvement through strong assessment plan design, the committee accepted assessment reports AND/OR assessment plans for review as many programs are involved in program assessment overhauls. Complete assessment plans as well as assessment reports are loaded on the CSSC assessment site.

The CSSC Assessment Committee met throughout 2016-17. As there were no assessment funds to distribute, the committee focused its energy on planning for review of assessment reports and plans.

As in the preceding years, the process included primary and secondary reviewers for each report or plan submitted to the committee for review. The CSSC Assessment Committee solicited reports and assessment plans in late March and concluded its review by mid April. Additionally, the committee reviewed UALR Assessment Academy drafts of new assessment reporting forms, assessment reader review forms, and assessment plan templates, offering feedback on the utility and design of both the forms and template.

A comprehensive spreadsheet was created for committee use to track 2016 program reports, assessment plans, as well as reader reviews. The spreadsheet was shared with committee members as well as department/school chairs in order to 1) access program report and plan reviews and 2) provide the opportunity for programs to add notes regarding the development of respective program assessment as well as the activity of listed programs.

The chair of the CSSC Assessment Committee reviewed the reports and plans along with the committee’s feedback in an effort to understand 1) where department assessment processes currently stand, and 2) what opportunities exist for the college assessment committee to support and inform best practices in the continued development of program assessment in the CSSC. This report has been shared with the committee and is housed on a college web portal for assessment (along with the final reports and assessment plans for the CSSC’s academic programs).
2. Discuss notable outcomes related to student learning outcomes for this academic year.

A total of 10 assessment progress reports and a total of 7 assessment plans were submitted for review (see Table A). Each report and plan submitted received written feedback from a pair of assessment reviewers comprised by membership from the college assessment committee. This feedback followed the standard report review form provided on the Assessment Central website. Of the 10 reports submitted and reviewed, 8 received a qualitative rating of ‘meets expectations’ or higher. One report received the rating of ‘exceeds expectations’ and one received the rating of ‘needs development/revision’. Of the 7 plans submitted and reviewed, 6 received a qualitative rating of ‘needs development/revision’. One plan received the rating of ‘exceeds expectations’.

Disbursement of Funds

Unfortunately, there were no assessment funds available for disbursement during the 2016/17 year. Given that several of our programs rely on funding for nationally normed assessment exams as well as paid stakeholders and other external readers both to promote accountability through assessment and to gain a better understanding of the skills stakeholders value in UA Little Rock graduates, we hope to see a return of strong funding support for these crucial assessment resources.

Continuing to Build a Culture of Assessment as Continuous Improvement

In preparation for HLC accreditation, the university is making concerted efforts to strengthen program assessment with an emphasis on continuous improvement. To that end, six goals have been set forth by the UALR Assessment Academy:

1. Every academic program has a multi-year program assessment plan.

2. Every academic program reports on learning outcomes annually, even those that are accredited by external organizations. Programs may choose a subset of one or more learning outcomes each year as specified in multi-year plan.

3. Coherence between assessment plans and HLC expectations (i.e. must be outcomes-based and not primarily based on inputs or other factors). If disciplinary accreditor does not require learning outcomes data, it must be added to plan. [Since many programs in our college have professional disciplinary
associations, our emphasis will be on aligning programs’ national association language related to learning outcomes and goals with HLC language.

4. Academic program assessment plans align with skills in the major learning outcomes.

5. Academic program assessment plans include process for using data for continuous improvement. These improvements become part of assessment reports.

6. Academic units communicate outcomes to stakeholders.

To help reach these goals, the UALR Assessment Academy implemented the Assessment Mentoring Program (AMP), which worked with programs during the spring semester on developing strong assessment plans. The CSSC had strong representation in this program as two CSSC programs, Criminal Justice and Sociology, participated in the AMP program and two programs served as mentors for the AMP program, Applied Communication and the School of Public Affairs. Additionally, the CSSC had excellent representation in the piloting of the Blackboard Outcomes assessment platform, with three programs, Applied Communication, School of Mass Communication, and Rhetoric and Writing, participating.

In addition to our college’s strong representation in assessment initiatives on campus, it is clear from the emphasis in the committee’s reader reviews that our college is very much engaged in and dedicated to developing meaningful and sustainable program assessment. Many reviewer comments commended programs for clear and measurable learning outcomes as well as thorough curriculum mapping. Additionally, reviewer comments emphasized the importance of moving toward direct measures in the form of student artifacts (papers, presentations, etc.), developing measurable components tied to rubrics for assessing learning outcomes, as well as the necessity of each program having a clear, comprehensive program assessment plan that involves key stakeholders.

Based on the committee’s reviews and follow-up debrief discussion, it was decided that a fall 2017 semester college-wide program assessment plan workshop would best support our college’s continued assessment efforts as well as help programs work toward the goals set forth by the UALR Assessment Academy. Specifically, the workshop will encourage working smarter not harder by aligning non-accredited programs’ existing national association language related to learning goals and outcomes with HLC language.
3. Describe curricular modifications based on this year’s assessment outcomes.

Please see unit reports for more information.

4. If curricular modifications are in process, please present the timeline for completion with progression milestones.

Please see unit reports for more information.

VI. PRIORITIES FOR THE YEAR

In 2017-2018, the college will continue to build on the many successes from previous years and stay on course with our strengths. Working with the leadership team, the faculty and the professional staff in the college, we will engage together to:

1. Create a greater sense of community in the college.
2. Promote teaching excellence and deep learning.
3. Cultivate best practices in student success and retention and strengthen our advising processes.
4. Continue to grow our numbers and our spirit.
5. Boost faculty research and creative efforts.
6. Grow our friends and supporters of the college to expand our development and fundraising efforts.

VII. APPENDIX: FAST FACTS

A. Enrollment (fall census, 1st major headcount and SSCHs)
   1,326 (first majors only)
   24,854 student semester credit hours

B. Retention
   Pending available data.

C. Personnel (number for category, tenure and promotion, etc.)
   In Academic Year 2016-17, the College of Social Sciences and Communication was the academic and administrative home of 73 faculty (63 tenured or tenure track) and 44 staff members.

D. Grants and Contracts
   In expression of our public service and research missions, the staff and faculty of the College of Social Sciences and Communication were awarded a total of $976,624 in grants and contracts from partners including the Corporation for Public
Broadcasting, the Arkansas Department of Human Services, and the UA Little Rock Institute on Race and Ethnicity.

E. Fundraising
The total funds raised on behalf of the College of Social Sciences and Communication in Academic Year 2016-17 was $719,068.17.

F. Other