

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT LITTLE ROCK  
**University Assembly Meeting**

*Tuesday, April 23, 2009 • 2:00 p.m.*  
*Dickinson Hall Auditorium*

MINUTES

*I. Call to order*

The president declared it to be 2 p.m., called the meeting to order, and welcomed those in attendance.

*II. Review of minutes*

The president called for a motion to approve the minutes of the August 19, 2008, meeting of the University Assembly. Motion made and seconded to approve the minutes as posted on the Faculty Senate web site <<http://www.ualr.edu/facultysenate/assemblyminutes>>. **Motion carried on voice vote.**

*III. President's comments*

Ford pronounced this to have been a full and busy year. He said he wished to speak about the future.

Ford reminded the Assembly about the Faculty Senate having taken up the charge to spend time next year thinking through a process we might use to revisit the bachelor's degree at UALR. We've chosen this deliberate approach at least in part because we don't want to interfere at all with our North Central reaccreditation site visit in the fall.

In the next couple of weeks, Ford observed, the colleges, the Staff Senate, and the Student Government Association will be meeting to elect and appoint members to the committees and councils of the Assembly. He encouraged us to be ready to take on this important work

Ford reminded the Assembly of the new Faculty Student Award program. Any faculty member can award \$200 per semester for four years to any first-time student at UALR, provided the student maintains good academic standing through the semesters. The program can be found on the provost's web site, where faculty can download a simple form to take advantage of it.

Ford noted that many faculty have done yeoman's service throughout the year, and among them he singled out Jeanette Clausen and Ann Lindsay for chairing, respectively, the Undergraduate and Graduate Councils of the university.

Ford also recognized Chris Peterson for his work as athletic director since he came here in 2000 in making sure our fine student athletes have a good educational

experience. Ford noted that we now have a 77.8% graduation rate for all student athletes, compared to a 51.4% rate for Fayetteville 3.08; an 89.3% scholarship graduation rate, as compared to, say, Fayetteville's 49.3%. The overall GPA for all student athletes at UALR is 3.27, having risen consistently every year. He thanked Peterson and his staff for their dedication to academic excellence.

Peterson cited three reasons we're successful: our coaches' recruitment of exceptional young women and men, the support for student athletes on the campus, and the chancellor's commitment and personal investment of time and interest in what's happening with our student athletes.

#### *IV. Report from the Academy for Teaching and Learning Excellence*

Dave McAlpine, one of the three directors of the Academy for Teaching and Learning Excellence (ATLE), gave the Assembly an overview of what ATLE has been up to and some intentions for next year.

The most exciting event for the directors, he said, was moving into new space here in Dickinson Hall. He pointed out that it's our shared space, and not just for the directors.

They do publications of several sorts, and maintain a good [website](#). McAlpine asserted there's lots of excellent information there and in the office, "some of it stolen from the very best universities."

He said ATLE, in its second year, has touched 76% of the full-time faculty, doing so primarily through these paths:

- Teaching demos, in the form of ten-minute classes with feedback.
- Tabletop discussions about hot topics they know are on campus. Held in late afternoon at the Bailey Center, so that cheese and libations are possible.
- Shadow and Share, a program that has paired twenty-six seasoned faculty with new faculty to attend each other's classes and examine practice.
- A gathering every Wednesday from 9-10 in ATLE's office to talk over coffee and sweets. May change the time, but the idea is to meet with
- Bringing Richard Light to campus last year, and Ken Bain this year, the latter event attended by about thirty administrative staff and seventy faculty.

For 2010, McAlpine said, they'd like to honor the provost with a lecture series. That will take money, of course, "which may have something to do with why we chose to honor the provost."

They're thinking about trying to pull together a statewide organization of similar academies to share resources, including speakers.

Also for next academic year:

- Will look at more small group approaches, such as teaching circles, to talk about issues of importance.
- Would love to have a teaching camp, though fiscal belt-tightening might dictate different timing..
- Will continue Shadow and Share and teaching demos.
- Will develop ways to assess ATLE's work.

#### *V. Remarks by Provost David Belcher*

Despite the challenges, the provost said, it has been a very good year. To begin with, in a single year, with just one go at it, we've hired three new deans: John DiPippa to continue as dean of the Bowen School of Law, Tony Chelte to head the College of Business, and Patrick Pellicane to lead the Graduate School. He thanked Deans Brenton and Baldwin, who headed search committees.

Important curriculum development took place in several areas over this year. Among them are these:

- Hats off to the Department of Theater Arts and Dance. They did a complete revision of the BA in theater, and got through the Board of Trustees a new BFA in dance.
- The new PhD in criminal justice is on the road..
- The PhD in integrated technology is coming down the path after extensive work this year.

Equally important was work in curriculum implementation:

- The MS in Accounting.
- The MS in Taxation.
- The graduate certificate in Applied Statistics.
- The PhD in Reading.
- The convergence curriculum in the Department of Mass Communication.
- The BS in Nursing, showing phenomenal growth, with between 450 and 500 majors.

Lots of work on retention, with three especially noteworthy developments:

- Implement mandatory student orientation for incoming freshmen. The provost lauded Charles Donaldson and staff, as well as people in all the academic departments and colleges for enhanced involvement in orientation. Reviews from the summer were remarkable.
- Established the Office of Transfer Student Support Services, a one-stop shop for transfer students. Not only a retention effort, but one of MGTs recommendations for improving “customer service” on campus.
- Developed the Collegiate Success Program, which indeed appears to be a success. Of those who went through, the fall-to-spring retention rate was 78%. For all students, the rate was 73%.

There was lots of effort around reaccreditation across the university. An alphabet-soup bowl of agencies is coming through next year: NCA-HLC, NCATE, ABA, ABET, and others.

We established a joint committee (appointed by the provost and the Faculty Senate) to look at roles and rewards for nontenure-track faculty, chaired by Catherine Lowry.

Progress has been made on two important documents: promotion and tenure policy for the university, and revised IRB policies and procedures.

The Academy of Teaching and Learning Excellence had another fine year, with the coup of bringing Ken Bain here as one notable highlight.

The provost said he would be remiss if he didn't mention his gratitude for the thoughtful, patient engagement of the university community as we have grappled with the uncertainties of the economic environment. People came to budget planning with good faith, and worked shoulder to shoulder for the best outcomes for the university and our students.

We're here for our students, and our success must be measured by theirs. Just in the last week we've had three announcements of note:

- Graduating senior Ryan Bona, from North Little Rock, is one of only two students accepted by the MFA program in Theatre Lighting program at the California Institute of the Arts, the premier program in the nation in this specialty.
- Graduating economics and finance major—and track star—Katarina Lovrantova has been accepted to the London School of Economics, where she wants to focus on the development of third-world and post-communist countries.
- Brandon Hamilton, of Garfield, Arkansas, a philosophy graduate last year, has been notified of a Fulbright award to do research in India on a theory of consciousness advanced in the Hindu school of Advaita Vedanta.

This, the provost reminds us, is what it's all about. This is why we do what we do. And these three represent many others whose accomplishments may not attract press coverage but are nonetheless significant.

These students are examples of why we do what we do. These three represent many others.

Three things for next year:

- 1) Reaccreditation.
- 2) Learning from that process and our own self study. Where should we go as an institution from here? What should our priorities be? What should the undergraduate curriculum look like?
- 3) And another area rapidly maturing: Research and Sponsored Programs. Pat Pellicane and Barbara Rodela have begun helping us understand we need to undergo a thorough review of our policies and procedures relative to sponsored programs and research to be sure we're in good compliance with federal regulations. We'll need the Faculty Research Committee to help shape this development, and the provost encouraged faculty to think about being part of the effort.

The provost said he "just gets prouder and prouder to be part of this institution." He thanked the members of the Assembly for a good year."

## *VI. Remarks by Chancellor Joel Anderson*

The chancellor was wowed earlier this week by the undergraduate research expo. With a range of subject areas from misconceptions of leprosy, the grown of carbon nanotubes, and Whitman and Native Americans, the student work represented was impressive. He thanked faculty as well.

The chancellor agreed with the provost it has been a challenging year, but likes to think most of us got through it without being too immediately touched in our work.

As of this coming July and the new fiscal year, we will be spending \$1M more for health care than last. We saw a slight enrollment decline in August 2008, which took a bit out of revenue. In the fall, the stock market tanked. In October, we saw utility costs go up sharply from budget projections. We've faced up to all those circumstances, and the chancellor is relieved that we got through the year relatively unscathed.

The sky is not falling, the chancellor said, nor shall we be guilty of mere happy talk. The reality is somewhere in the middle. His own family, he noted, has been touched: son lost his job in the downturn. That was the pits. The good news is he got another; the bad news is it's in Tulsa, so the granddaughters are too far away. Perhaps, he said, that's how it is for UALR, too. We'll suffer some real setbacks, and we will weather them.

There has been much more budget management this year than usual, both to handle this year's shortfall and to prepare for the next fiscal year. He echoed the provost's praise for the dean and others who came to the process.

The budget process is far from over this year. One significant piece of info should come soon, perhaps the end of April, when we learn what's happened to state revenue. If it looks like March did, we might face cuts between now and June 30 to cope with it. The Governor's office and DFA hope not, but it's possible. Such a scenario could also result in reductions in what we receive next year.

The Board of Trustees will not be dealing with tuition until June. People are tending to postpone decisions as long as they can, which is a rational choice in these circumstances.

Here's the bad news: raises, bonuses, and implementation of the new classified pay plan are just not in the cards. We are planning to absorb once more the increases in employees' health insurance cost. In 2003, health care cost us \$3.5M. In the coming fiscal year, we will pay just under \$7M. UALR's employees have been paying roughly the same amount over those years, though with some increase in co-pays. The chancellor encouraged comparison of what we're paying for a good health insurance plan with what our friends or relations are.

If we could hold the line through next year, he said, that would be great. He expects, however, that next year will be more like this year, with continuing declines. He said he didn't want to talk about worst cases, but this morning's headline about IMF projections for the world economy being revised downward does not bode well.

Of our very modest increase in state appropriation, \$1.7M is one-time money. Some of the base that was funded out of ongoing revenue will now be funded with one-time money. We should salute the governor and legislators: the coming year will be significantly better than it might have been because they used the state surplus as a kind of de facto rainy-day fund. (The chancellor parenthetically praised faculty members Nickels and Clemmer for their maiden terms as elected legislators.) It also sets up a situation of major concern for the following year, since the one-time money won't be there again.

It seems not a cheerful picture, certainly, but we've come through so far in decent shape, and he sees us going into next year in good equilibrium. We're doing, he observed, a great lot of excellent work whose quality is not immediately dependent on money.

What will it mean to us? Seeing some positions left vacant, as, for example, we held vacant for six months the position of director of financial services. If we manage vacant positions well, we can save a lot of hardship across the board. We want to be fundamentally financially sound whenever this crisis is over, whether that's six months, a year, or two years from now.

On other topics:

- Enrollment was up by 200 students in the spring, which he sees as encouraging, and giving us a reason to think we ought to be at least level in the fall. We've celebrated 53% participation in the campus campaign. Even in difficult times for fundraising, we've gone from \$51 to \$58M since we went public with the "Time for UALR" campaign. The chancellor's hunch is we're going to see larger gifts become smaller and fewer than we had hoped. Still, we're asking people to help us who've never been asked before. We're raising the base of donors.
- A lot of people deserve credit for our student athletes' performance. Put this athletic director together with our coaches, and you've got a strong team to support and encourage student athletes.

Back in the fall, we concluded the ten-year NCAA recertification process, and just got the letter about ten days ago. In the exit interview with the chair of the NCAA visiting committee, one of us asked, "What would you tell a prospective student athlete about coming to UALR?" One site visitor said, "I'd tell them, if you come here, you'll graduate."

The chancellor noted we rejoice in winning both men's and women's Western Division championships.

- If you haven't exited the campus on the south end, go look. Riggs Tractor donated work on sculpting the land. Trees have been planted. Things happen incrementally, and the institution just gets prettier day by day.
- A couple of comments about the legislative session: A state lottery to benefit higher education was put in place. There will be provisions for nontraditional students. The chancellor expressed disappointment that Sen Elliott's bill for in-state tuition for noncitizens didn't pass. Legislation was also passed to establish a common spring break for all high schools across the state.
- The chancellor commented favorably on Ford's initiative to revisit the baccalaureate degree. It's been a little more than twenty years since we've really considered the core of the baccalaureate, and it makes sense to take time to think about how we will undertake it.
- He mourned the untimely death of Dr. Mark Hartmann, a valued colleague. His loss makes us remember how actively involved he was with his students, making learning active and interesting for them.

- Commencement is almost upon us. He suggested that if we ever wonder if the work we do is significant and meaningful to anyone. We just come to commencement. It's an affirming and confirming experience for all of us who work at the university.

In closing, the chancellor thanked all the talented and hardworking people here, who made this a good year, and will make the next one so as well.

### *IX. Open forum*

President Ford called for matters members wished to bring before the Assembly for discussion. None were brought forward.

### *X. Adjournment*

There being no further discussion and no further business to come before the Assembly, the president adjourned the meeting at 3:15 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Judith Faust, Secretary*