

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

*Tuesday, August 18, 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. The hall was nearly full, and the level of conversation high.

*II. Review of minutes*

The president overlooked the review of minutes of the April 23, 2009, meeting of the University Assembly. No actions were taken at the April meeting, so the minutes provide only a summary of reports and remarks. A copy is posted on the Faculty Senate web site <<http://www.ualr.edu/facultysenate/assemblyminutes>>.

*III. President's comments*

Ford brought the Assembly's attention to the coming year. He said it might fairly be called the "year of reaccreditation," noting parenthetically that he'd only recently learned "North Central" is short for "the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. He's happy to call it "North Central.") Our reaccreditation by North Central is only one of many that will be going on this fall.

We will perhaps see record attendance this fall. We have the new Engineering and Information Technology building coming on line. The Office of Transfer Student Services is up and running.

Ford reminded the faculty of the six areas of responsibility reserved to faculty. The Faculty Senate's legislative authority shall include but are not limited to the following:

1. Admission requirements
2. Curriculum and courses
3. Degrees and requirements for degrees
4. Calendar and schedules
5. Awards, honors and honorary degrees

## 6. Interpretation of its own legislation

He also reminded the Assembly of the dual responsibility faculty have in our jobs as teachers. They must certainly assist and encourage students in their studies toward a degree. It is also their job to evaluate and judge students, to serve as the keepers of the standards of the university and our respective disciplines. Ford observed that sometimes this calls for decisions that have significant consequences.

Ford summarized quickly the matters on the Faculty Senate's agenda for the coming year. He mentioned the ongoing work of Roles and Rewards II, the jointly appointed task force working on these issues as they apply to non-tenure-track faculty and staff in academic units. Also on deck is another Senate review of proposed policies on tenure and promotion. The task group working on the rank of university professor will come forward with a recommendation.

Finally, Ford spoke of the Senate's commitment to laying the groundwork in the coming spring for a process to revisit the baccalaureate degree at UALR. That will be broad, deep, and time-consuming work—work last done more than twenty years ago—and it won't be completed quickly. He expressed his hope that we might be done in 2013-14. Several issues have arisen in the last few years and been held for discussion during this fuller process of reconsideration, such as the minor requirement, the number of hours required for a degree, and, certainly, questions related to the university's core curriculum itself. Revisiting the core every twenty years or so, Ford opined, may not be out of line.

Having laid out the work of the Faculty Senate, and acknowledged that of the Staff Senate and Student Government Association as well, Ford reminded the Assembly that he's in the second year of his second term as president. He announced his resolve not to serve again. We need, he said, new leadership to emerge, and he encouraged those present to think about what roles they would be willing to take on.

Ford closed by saying he had long ago learned that in every talk, there should be one central take-away point. His, he said, accompanying it with a swell graphic, was this: "I am a lame duck. That's what I want you to remember."

The provost asked if the president needed a motion on that. The president ruled him out of order, to laughter and applause.

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

Dave McAlpine introduced his codirectors of ATLE, Carol Thompson, and Steve Edison. He invited faculty to visit the ATLE office, open from 9 to 4 Monday through Thursday, and 9 to noon on Friday. Faculty are most welcome to drop by any time.

Thompson talked about the mission of the Academy and spoke of the importance of creating and sustaining a rich dialogue about teaching. She articulated a student-centered philosophy, how students and teachers work together to construct a learning environment in the classroom. She folks to the newsletter, which has current and archived copies available on the [website](#).

Steve Edison said how delighted he is to be part of this group, and how he has no idea how he got here, given the nature of his student evaluations.

Three hundred eighty-five people participated in the teaching demos last year. Some of you may be catching Ken Bain on Channel 62. Shadow and Share continues, as do periodic tabletop discussions.

On September 29 will be this year's first teaching demonstration, with others scheduled for October and December. In October, they're bringing new faculty back in to ask how its going. Surveyed incoming faculty. The teaching-fellows program is underway, with details on the [website](#).

## V. Remarks by Provost David Belcher

The word of the month is “Meemaw.” Last month, Sandra Robertson became a grandmother. Also want to tell the Assembly about an experience he had in late June. On vacation in Croatia this summer, he ran into, entirely by coincidence, a student with a degree from UALR. She said Edison was her favorite prof of all, and ran to get a present for the provost to bring back to him.

There has never been a better time to be at UALR.: Record enrollment. Expanding research agenda. Great growth in extended programs and funding. Fine new teaching faculty. Strategically chosen new degree programs. Exploding alumni program. Excellent athletics program. This litany doesn’t mean everything’s perfect, but the title of our strategic plan describes what’s happening—*UALR Fast Forward*.

What’s encouraging about our record enrollment is undergraduate numbers. He acknowledged Vice Chancellor and Dean of Students Charles Donaldson and his cadre of professionals who work tirelessly to recruit students and retain them. He commended Cleveland James for external recruitment—“we’re going to ride his wave.” Also commended the faculty, and Judy Williams and the Office of Communications, who are doing a fabulous job of getting the word out there.

There are three new deans this fall—Tony Chelte, John Di Pippa, and Pat Pellicane—and two acting deans, Daryl Rice and Christy Drale, whose bosses are temporarily out of pocket.

While UALR is riding a tide of great momentum, this isn’t the time to slow down our efforts. This really is the year of reaccreditations: seven going on, six before Thanksgiving. Five are discipline-based, among them nursing, construction management, audiology/speech pathology, and law. NCATE primarily focuses on Education, AHSS, & Science and Mathematics.

Our campus self-study for North Central accreditation has been ably led by Susan Hoffpauir, with special assistance throughout on editing and formatting from Barb L’Eplattinier, Aaron Baker, and Kathy Oliverio. He thanked team leaders Christy Drale, Mark Funk, and Mary Parker, and the entire steering committee.

Thinks what the site team will find is a thoughtful, engaged campus.

One thing we’ll have to grapple with is the Faculty Handbook. Two sets of problems: errors and new policy not in the book.

New program review and program viability standards are upon us. The standard for program viability used to be a minimum of 3, 2, and 1 graduates, respectively, for bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral programs, and if you didn’t get there, nothing much happened. Now the standard is 6, 4, and 2, respectively, and now there are teeth. There’s a two-year implementation period. We now have raw information about which of our programs do not meet these standards. ADHE is still working to make sure they have all the cognate degrees recognized. (If two degrees include 75% of the same course content, the two degrees can be counted together, for example.) Those who don’t have the graduate count they need have two years to get the number up. If they don’t, then UALR will lose the SSCHs associated with those degrees--they won’t get counted in our funding formula.

We’ll be asking the departments to come up with a plan. Looking for new students in the pipeline and then numbers of graduates. There will be a memorandum of understanding between the university and those departments. He hopes to be out with some detail on these plans quite soon so that the affected departments can know what to expect..

Every year, ADHE will take a snapshot on June 30, so programs can be added.

The program review policy requires essentially that every program on campus be reviewed by some external process every seven to ten years. We are wisely opting for the ten-year cycle. Hoffpauir is our liaison to ADHE

Where are we on retention?

First was our intent to require orientation. Done, and great.

First-year-experience course: Going to take some resources to bring this to conclusion.

Midterm grades: Done by action of the Faculty Senate.

Remedial courses to have enough seats for all the students who need them: Done.

Early declaration of major and enhancements to advising have been combined. As part of this, we've set up the Office of Transfer Credit and Student Services.

Christopher Smith, president of the Student Government Association, and his team have put together a program called "Reach 12,000," to gather twelve thousand canned goods by November to be distributed to people who need it.

The year may seem a little like drinking from a fire hose, the provost said, but we can do it and make the year another memorable one.

## VI. Remarks by Chancellor Joel Anderson

The chancellor welcomed members of the Assembly, especially those new faculty and staff members who are here. Appreciated the provost's remarks. Could have listened to them all day, he said, "and when it got to the viability standards, I thought maybe I was."

Looking back to this time a year ago: we'd become aware of some storm clouds on the horizon: Much greater health care and utility costs. Enrollment was a little down, which gave us a small deficit in tuition.

The economic troubles are not done yet. Heard this weekend 25% of mortgages in Arkansas are upside down. *Reader's Digest* is declaring bankruptcy. Across the country, lots of the news is still bad. On our horizon, the July revenue intake was below forecast, and that's not good news. If it continues, it's certain that the governor will be making budget cuts. He remains confident that this will be a better year than last. There are some reasons why: We've made budget adjustments last year that position us well to handle whatever comes along. Lottery scholarships will help us next fall. Every higher education institution in Arkansas, public and private, should feel a bit of a bump in enrollment. There will be reporting requirements, of course. There was good news out of Washington earlier this year about an increase in the Pell Grants. We and other institutions around the state are benefiting from some federal economic stimulus money. Our focus here will be on Fribourgh Hall. You'll also be hearing about a new male minority mentoring program coming from Dr. Donaldson's shop. We're in our third year of a revised admissions policy, with 323 freshman applicants this year deferred—students with an excess of Ds and Fs are being counseled to do other things first and then come back to us. These are students, he said, who otherwise would have been here and left soon with bad transcripts and a less than successful first college experience.

Higher enrollment pays off for us twice, in increases tuition now and in higher appropriated funds later. He hopes to be able to do something about compensation this fall. If he had his druthers, he would do even a small across-the-board raise in base pay. More likely, perhaps, is some kind of one-time compensation. Trustees are predictably chary of making long-term commitments in such an uncertain economy.

Going to have a broad-based plan for getting the resources UALR needs. We are now at almost \$60M toward out \$75M goal. There are a couple of years to go, but it's going to be a bit of a grind. Small gifts are coming in well, but big gifts have gotten really scarce. Fifty-three percent of employees participated in the Campus Campaign, which is wonderful support to be able to bring to prospective donors. Tom McMillan will be heading up the on-campus campaign this year.

The university has hired a full-time person to help folks across the university get access to stimulus money. Lot of applications have come in.

We have benefitted from federal earmarks totaling about \$12M over the last five years. He tipped our collective hat to Bill Walker and Joni Lee for those earmarks in support of several initiatives on campus, including nursing and others.

He spoke of the recent achievement of accreditation of concurrent enrollment programs. We're one of the very first in the state to have accomplished that, under the leadership of Rosalie Cheatham.

Compliance with federal laws poses a growing set of requirements, and is a price we simply have to pay. We have to be on the right side of the law and the federal regulations. We'll soon be posting at least the penultimate draft of new IRB policies and procedures.

Has anyone mentioned we are now a smoke-free campus? He keeps getting questions from the press and others, "What's going to happen when you catch someone violating the ban?" We expect people to comply. There already are policies in place about what to do when people fail to follow the university's rules. They don't for the most part specify levels of punishment. We do in general subscribe to a system that begins with bringing the violation to the person's attention, and if the behavior persists, writing it up, and so forth.

The chancellor presented the university's plans for a new bond issue: Need some for finishing out EIT, for bringing elevators here and there up to code, for revitalizing Stella Boyle Smith Auditorium. The trustees, upon finding that we have several bond issues coming to maturity in the next couple of years, suggested we look to filling that available capacity for debt service sooner rather than later, given the current low interest rates. Now looking at 4.5% cost to us, and we would lose \$1.7M in construction money for every percent that cost goes up.

Even after the new EIT building opens, we'll be short of needed classroom space, according to ADHE. We've been playing catch-up since the seventies, really, but we have considerable need for new specialized classroom spaces.

All of the proposed projects were clearly anticipated by our strategic plan, *UALR Fast Forward*.

The first motion out of the Board of Visitors was to proceed with expanding student housing, which we expect will be cost-neutral.

We are proposing a \$35M issue, with about \$31.6M available for construction. To put it in perspective, that's a good deal less than the new EIT building cost. Priorities are a nanotechnology sciences center; a student services one-stop center (first preference is to go up on the oldest section of the Donaghey Center—may end up doing a new smaller building right by the center because the difference in cost per square footage); a health and wellness building (renovation of existing space); and a health, recreation, and sports complex (east of campus, across Asher).

Talked about various contingencies, including the possibility of getting funding for some of these proposals we have out in the world. The state of Arkansas has not been able to give educational institutions the dollars they need to either build or maintain buildings and improvements. We have to find other ways. We're light on debt service. The Board of Visitors believes we're putting too little money into debt service, which has contributed to our being where we are. The chancellor did say he was not personally too fond of debt, so we're trying lots of things: A \$4/credit hour facilities fee for Fayetteville was approved by the Board of Trustees last year. This year, we've asked them to approve a \$1/credit hour fee for us.

The chancellor believes we're laying the foundation here for better things ahead. He concurs with the provost's sentiment that this is indeed a good time to be part of UALR.

## 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 3:37 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Judith Faust, Secretary*