



OFFICE OF
THE CHANCELLOR

May 6, 2015

Mr. Chris Corbitt ccorbitt@estemlr.net
Mr. Bill Dillard III bdillard@estemlr.net
Ms. Kim Evans kevens@estemlr.net
Mr. Don Marshall dmarshall@estemlr.net
Ms. Mallory Taylor mtaylor@estemlr.net
Dr. John W. Ahlen jahlen@estemlr.net
Vernard Henley Jr. vhenley@estemlr.net

Dear eStem Board Members:

I write to affirm UALR's genuine interest in a partnership with eStem. I fully appreciate the unusual potential for academic collaboration, student recruitment, and community development that an eStem campus within UALR would generate for eStem, this university, and the surrounding neighborhoods.

I see the unprecedented opportunities for interrelationships of faculty, students, staff, and curricula at multiple levels that would be beneficial to both of our institutions in the pursuit of their missions. I greatly appreciate eStem's interest in a site in this part of the city to make it easier to serve the school children in the University District and in southwest Little Rock.

I think it would be a mistake to allow this unique opportunity to pass by. All of us—at eStem and UALR—want to provide a better future for students and for the Little Rock community. We have an opportunity to do that if we can find a way to accomplish the partnership we have been seriously discussing.

The university's interest in the eStem project is part of a much larger vision for developing a pre-K through-career STEM pipeline on the UALR campus. **With the new eStem K-12 schools as the anchors**, UALR is proposing to become a model in transforming STEM workforce development in the state of Arkansas.

Expansion of eStem in partnership with UALR will create terrific opportunities for eStem and UALR to take the lead in STEM workforce development. Moreover, this opportunity for collaboration creates the possibility of a life-changing experience for students in the greater Little Rock area.

The partnership between UALR and eStem will allow students to receive enhanced educational experiences that focus on engagement with college faculty, staff, and college mentors. It will integrate college coursework into the eStem high school curricula, resulting in students obtaining an Associate of Arts in General Studies from UALR simultaneously with their high school diploma. The partnership between eStem and UALR will prepare our graduates to immediately enter the workforce upon college graduation.

If we all agree on the premise of a partnership, I am optimistic we can come to an agreement on the plan.

There are two site options on the UALR campus for the eStem board to consider exploring with UALR. The first option is the renovation of the University Plaza Building. You have heard some preliminary numbers on the potential costs associated with relocating programs from the University Plaza shopping center. The relocation figures are by no means firm. However, we can assume that the total costs for renovation plus relocating programs housed in the shopping center will be in the range of \$35-40 million.

The second option, and one that was previously on the table, is new construction on university property at 28th Street and Fair Park. There is good logic to the notion that private, external funders would be more interested in supporting a new facility with naming opportunities than renovating the University Plaza. Estimated costs for new construction are around \$55 million.

In both of these options, UALR is committed to developing a shared comprehensive case statement about the eStem project and to joining in a quest for the necessary private dollars. Together we will make a stronger case.

I think major funders would see an eStem/UALR partnership as a rare and special opportunity, potentially a new national model, and would be instrumental in helping it become a reality. A number of my colleagues on campus also believe in the viability and efficacy of partnering with eStem to create an innovative new educational opportunity for Little Rock. I believe that we can generate public support and financial contributions to make this happen.

Provost Zulma Toro and I request the opportunity to meet with you, the eStem board members, to discuss further our proposed partnership and to reach a conclusion on the preferred site for the new eStem schools on the UALR campus. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,



Joel E. Anderson
Chancellor

C: Mr. John Bacon, Chief Executive Officer, eStem Public Charter Schools