



President of the Faculty Senate

TO : Joel Anderson, Chancellor, University of Arkansas at Little Rock
FROM: Andrew Wright, President of the UALR Assembly and Faculty Senate *Andrew B Wright*
SUBJECT: University of Arkansas On-Line
DATE: March 19, 2014

The Executive Committee of UALR's Faculty Senate met to discuss Dr. Bobbitt's March 18th, 2014 memorandum to the System Faculty where he outlines the next step in creating a new On-Line Campus within the University of Arkansas System. The Executive Committee has authorized me to respond to the Board of Trustees and the System President.

We recommend that the new initiative conform to standards of governance and curricular management that are the foundation of all the University of Arkansas system programs. The outline that Dr. Bobbitt has proposed does not clearly describe how faculty will participate. Faculty in every degree program, face-to-face or on-line, must develop and maintain the curriculum, determine admission requirements, and confer the degrees.

According to Board Policy 100.4, "members of the administration, faculty, staff, and students ... shall have representation in the governance of that campus and that the local organization shall be predominantly faculty." The On-Line Campus should adhere to these rules and should be guided by "the principles of sound democratic government" in the development of legislative structures to govern the degrees and the faculty.

One of our main concerns is the use of faculty from existing campuses to offer the courses in the new On-Line Campus. This practice may create a conflict of interest for a faculty member if the offerings at his/her home campus were to compete for students with the offerings at the On-Line Campus. In the case of face-to-face offerings, the barrier of location usually prevents programs at one campus from competing for the same student population with another campus. In fact, place-bound students benefit from duplication. The on-line paradigm is intended to break down spatial barriers, giving rise to the potential for new conflicts.

An On-Line Campus could be a powerful tool to complement existing on-line offerings. For instance, if the On-Line Campus were a clearing house for existing degrees or courses, the on-line offerings that are developed, maintained, and governed at the traditional University of Arkansas campuses could be packaged and marketed in a way that leverage the strengths of the entire system. However, having an identical degree at the On-Line Campus

and at a traditional University of Arkansas campus would be harmful as the two degrees would compete for the same pool of students.

Increasing the reach of quality education to more of its citizens will improve the economic vitality in the state. Quality education is ensured through the quality of faculty who are invested in the programs and students that we nurture. The quality of the credentials that we grant is the strength of the University of Arkansas brand. We hope that each new endeavor, especially an endeavor with as high a profile as an On-Line Campus, will continue to develop nationally competitive programs that enhance the reputation of all the campuses.