



UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT LITTLE ROCK

University Assembly Meeting

Thursday, April 24, 2014 • 2:00 p.m.

Dickinson Hall Auditorium

MINUTES

I. Call to order

Assembly President Andrew Wright called meeting to order at 2:03 pm.

II. Review of minutes

The minutes of the August 15, 2013 meeting of the Assembly were reviewed. R. Cheatham made a motion to approve the minutes. P. Tschumi seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote.

III. Election of New Assembly President

President Wright turned over the meeting to Provost Toro, the Vice President of the Assembly to oversee the election of the new Assembly President. President Wright served the remaining term of former Assembly President Laura Smith-Olinde, who left the University last spring. He is nominated for the next 2 year term for the office of President by the Committee on Committees. Vice President Toro opened the floor for other nominations from the floor.

Hearing none, P. Tschumi moved to approve by acclamation Andrew Wright's nomination which was seconded. The motion passed by voice vote.

IV. Remarks by the Provost: Zulma Toro

Provost greeted the Assembly with thanks to all for coming this afternoon. It has been a REMARKABLE YEAR. It is possible to change the organizational structure of an institution of higher education in 14

months. It has been 15 months since I arrived. Chancellor Anderson did not tell me all of what was ahead when I signed my offer letter. Both times that I have had Arkansas bosses (Chancellor Anderson and former Chancellor White of UAF) they have asked me to almost make miracles happen. Colleagues, you have made it happen. Let me express my gratitude for your commitment, dedication, and hard work in moving us toward becoming one of the top metropolitan, community-engaged, research universities among the 16 member states of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB).

The names you have seen on the screen in the front of the auditorium include all of the Faculty Excellence winners and those who have been awarded tenure and/or promotion this year. In reading all of the information about all of these, I was astounded at our excellent faculty, and am honored to be your provost. My sincere congratulations.

Today, people are asking for the hurricane/tornadoic winds to slow down. This Puerto Rican stopped in Kansas on her way to Arkansas/UALR and brought hurricane and tornadoic winds. They are almost over, at least for the time being.

I want to comment on several initiatives... our timeline is 2013-2014 to 2020-2021 for how long we have to accomplish UALR's vision. In 2013-2014 we approved the comprehensive structure for academic affairs. This brought student affairs and academic affairs together to support our students. This structure allows us to consolidate data-related efforts under one office; better quality data will be available to allow us to make informed decisions. We have gone from 6 colleges and 1 school to 5 colleges and 1 school. Thank you for helping in this process. The transition teams deserve special recognition. The Operational Task-force played a key role in this process.

The Search Committees for the 5 new academic leaders are progressing on our searches. We already have scheduled interviews for 3 of the 5 searches. The College of Arts Letters and Sciences named finalists are (announced here for the first time): Shearle Furnish of Youngstown State University in OH; Johnny Payne of the University of Alaska Fairbanks, AK; and Daniel Suson of Purdue University Calumet in Hammond, IN. They will be on campus in late April and early May. The finalists for the dean of the College of Education and Health Professions are Ann Bain of UALR, Jimmy Ishee of Texas Woman's University, TX, and S. Rex Morrow of Purdue University North Central, IN. They will be on campus in late April and early May. Finalists for the dean of the Graduate School are Vann Newkirk of Alabama A&M University, Jie Chen of the University of Idaho, and David Devraj Kumar of Florida Atlantic University. They will be on campus in May. You can view application materials for all candidates at [ualr.edu\academics](http://ualr.edu/academics) (menu on left has links).

We are accepting nominations for Interim Associate Deans for the new colleges, who will have 1 year appointments. Nominations will be accepted until tomorrow. 21 individuals have been nominated already for 6 positions.

The Core Council is busy with the new Core Curriculum. As of April 15, 13 courses have been approved. We will have a skeleton core. We have a deadline of January 2015 to get our Core in place.

Interim Vice Provost for Research and Dean of the Graduate School Paula Casey has addressed the decline in graduate enrollment. She has taken initiatives to develop the applicant pool. The report as of April 21 is there has been a 75.8% increase in applications compared to last year. Now we must convert the applications into enrollment. The quality of these applicants is higher than the typical applicant, if we base it on their prompt completion of the submission process.

Student success must be our top priority. Many initiatives have been and are being implemented including: 4 Living Learning communities, Summer Bridge Academy, Revised developmental writing program, online degree audits available for students and new faculty mentoring program.

Quality Initiative – several faculty members have been working to develop a decision support system with the goals to demonstrate UALR's Academic, Economic and Societal impacts which will help improve decision-making on campus. Will also serve as an alternative pathway to Higher Learning Commission re-accreditation. Quality Initiative includes 3 groups: Metrics, Systems, and Analytics. The Metrics group has been working on identifying a set of metrics which will be shared at the beginning of the 2014 fall semester. An outcome will be the implementation of a data warehouse – we will be able to get consistent numbers when we ask for data.

Our Arkansas Research Alliance Scholar has been hired in the area of Data Visualization and Big Data. This person will have the position of Donaghey Distinguished Professor and will join us July 1, 2014. The Donaghey Foundation continues to generously support UALR.

Despite financial and budgetary challenges, strategic investments are being made in critical areas. There are 17 areas in which hiring is ongoing including: Art, Accounting, Audiology and Speech Pathology, Biology, Construction Management, Environmental Engineering, History, Management, Music, Nursing, Physics, Psychology, Rehabilitation Counseling, Rhetoric and Writing, School Counseling and Spanish.

Two priorities that we identified to work on over the past year are the development of UALR's additional unique areas and increasing our enrollment to 20,000 by 2020. Several strategies are in place to help us achieve these goals, but are still a work in progress.

To summarize plans for the next year, there will be 13 major initiatives to support P⁴I model. The Honors College Task-force submitted a roadmap for whoever will create the college. It will serve the Chancellor, Bob Denman and me well in our fundraising efforts. Other major initiatives are aimed at increasing enrollment, enhancing student success, and improving community engagement.

I know you are ready for the summer break. Remember, as the main character from Cervantes' Don Quijote de la Mancha said to his friend Sancho, "Deja que los perros ladren Sancho amigo, es señal que avanzamos." – Let the competition bark at us. That is a signal we are making progress.

V. Remarks by the Chancellor: Joel Anderson

This has been a pivotal year for UALR. Congratulations to the Provost and to Andrew Wright for their leadership. Congratulations to those who have reached tenure and promotion and to the Faculty Excellence award winners.

On restructuring, I see light at the end of tunnel. I commend you for your service. I am very appreciative of the seriousness you have shown in working through implementation of restructuring this year. I am looking forward to the recommendations of Honors College Task force; our work will be a good pay-off - we will protect our existing strengths and see vitality in new areas. I look forward to enhanced interdisciplinary programs; also in having better data systems; the colleges will have new leaders. We will be a stronger University.

On the budget - we have significant budget challenges - next year will be the same. We made budget cuts, emplaced a semi-hard hiring freeze, but our students have been minimally affected. Some folks have been outright burdened by the situation, but our students have not been impacted.

There are 2 big budget unknowns. (1) Board of Trustees - will they approve our tuition level? The Board of Trustees committee (tuition) has been putting a lot of time into it thinking about tuition, it is a more active committee these days. The matter is not settled out yet. That level will be important. (2) Fall enrollment numbers - I am hoping enrollment will be at least level; we will do all we can to move those from applicants to enrollees.

Last year, classified employees received a modest raise; non-classified employees did not get one. This year, we are trying to get a modest raise for non-classified employees. The Governor has already said there will be no raises for classified employees.

On eVersity - many details about how it will operate and our relationship with it are not known. I am not withholding. It will be awhile before those answers come out. Our online enrollment is significant. We have a great deal to offer, but a great deal to lose. It is a challenge and an opportunity for us. We have legitimate concerns. In the meantime, to strengthen our position, we need to continue to develop our campus-based online courses and programs. We need to master the learning technology, make existing offerings better, and make a push for online graduate programs and certificates. The audience can be targeted, and the size of (graduate) programs is more manageable.

During the last year, Jeff Walker led a study on Campus Safety. The perception is that UALR is not a safe campus. I am pleased to say we will address and implement each recommendation of the study. A major push is coming this year. It will require new and dedicated funding. We met with student presidents and they were very supportive. They would accept a student fee up to \$25 per hour for safety. We will be requesting a fee from the Board of Trustees. Issues to be addressed are more lighting, a more manicured campus (to create better line of sight), more police, bike patrols, crime prevention -through environmental design. We want to change the negative perception regarding safety. The Green Dot program has been a key part of campus safety. It is fostering a greater sense of community on campus. I hope that more will participate in the Green Dot program.

On Student Success - I want to address one aspect - the front end of student success. Each person can help or hurt our enrollment, which affects budget. Our interactions with students and family members on campus and via phone will impact their choice. We must treat students as royal guests. We should resolve any issue that same day. We should treat every guest as we like to be treated. This past Tuesday orientation day was an opportunity. Not all had a great experience. We do not have a huge endowment

or state budget, but we do have you. Our greatest selling point should be our faculty and staff. The people that we are here to serve are the students. Make sure every prospective student knows you want them to be here.

This year is a time of big change. It has not been an easy year for any of us. Next year there will be a lower intensity. The high intensity of this year is not going to be equaled again next year. [speaking of student success – I hope all of you visited the research/creative expo this past week. We have excellent students]. Very soon, we will be assembled at the Jack Stevens center for commencement. Graduating from college is a significant achievement for our students. For some of them it is an enormous achievement that will benefit them profoundly. How fortunate we are to work at a University where we impact lives year after year. I look forward to working with you in the future.

VI. Open Forum

No questions or comments.

VII. Adjournment

T. McMillan move to adjourn. Motion passed by unanimous voting with feet.