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UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS SYSTEM

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STRATEGIC
PILLARS



2026

Message from the President

Lt. Gen. (Retired) Jay B. Silveria

The University of Arkansas System is a vibrant network of institutions dedicated to serving the people and communities of Arkansas through education, research, and public service. I am honored by the trust placed in me by the Board of Trustees of the University of Arkansas to lead our state's university system as we navigate the challenges and opportunities facing public higher education in the 21st century.

After nearly a year as president of the UA System, I presented this document to the Board to articulate the guiding pillars that will shape our strategic decision-making—both within the UA System administration and across our 21 campuses, divisions, and units—in the months and years ahead.

The diversity of our institutions and the breadth of our geographic reach are among our greatest strengths. We have identified six strategic pillars—access, student success, innovation, stewardship, responsiveness, and collaboration—because they represent shared areas of mission and responsibility across the system. These pillars provide a common framework that allows our institutions to advance their unique missions while working collectively toward systemwide goals. In the years ahead, we will monitor our progress and report



on both our successes and opportunities for continued growth through this lens.

As leaders in public higher education, we bear a profound responsibility to strengthen the economy, health, and cultural vitality of the communities we serve. I am energized by the work before us and confident that, guided by these strategic pillars, the UA System will continue to expand opportunity and deliver meaningful impact for Arkansas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "J B Silveria".

President, University of Arkansas System

Vision

Since the founding in 1871 of Arkansas's flagship land-grant institution, the University of Arkansas System has grown into a dynamic higher education system that continues to broaden its footprint, improving lives and communities across Arkansas and making a global impact. Through education, research, and community outreach, the UA System delivers transformative programs through its 22 campuses, divisions, and units. It maintains a presence in every county in Arkansas, serves more than 80,000 students, employs nearly 30,000 people, and operates revenue of \$4.5 billion. As a vital part of the state's fabric, the UA System is a key driver of Arkansas's economic, educational, and cultural progress.

Mission

The University of Arkansas System is a publicly supported, multi-campus institution committed to advancing Arkansas through education, scholarship, and service. Rooted in the land-grant tradition, the UA System expands access to academic, practical, and professional opportunities, fosters intellectual growth and student success, promotes discovery and public service, and strengthens Arkansas's economy, health, and culture. It remains focused on continuous improvement through resource stewardship, statewide responsiveness, and strategic collaboration across its campuses, divisions, and units.

More Than 150 Years of Growth



The origins of the University of Arkansas System date to 1871, when the Arkansas General Assembly, leveraging the federal Morrill Land-Grant Act, established Arkansas Industrial University in Fayetteville. This institution – renamed the University of Arkansas in 1899 – became the flagship campus and foundation of what evolved into one of the most comprehensive, unique public university systems in the country.

In the decades that followed, the UA System expanded to meet the growing educational, economic, and healthcare needs of the state. Early milestones included the establishment of Branch Normal College in Pine Bluff in 1873, which later became the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB), and the integration of a private medical campus in Little Rock that evolved into the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) – now the state’s only academic health sciences center. Between 1969 and 1972, several key institutions were integrated into the UA System, including the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR), the University of Arkansas at Monticello (UAM), and UAPB. This period of growth culminated in 1975 when the Board of Trustees formally adopted the name “University of Arkansas System,” a reflection of the institution’s expanding scope and statewide reach.

The 1990s and early 2000s marked a period of expansion into community and technical education with the addition of multiple campuses, including Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas (PCCUA), UA Community College at Batesville (UACCB), UA Hope-Texarkana (UAHT), UA Community College at Morrilton (UACCM), Cossatot Community College of the UA (CCCUA), and UA-Fort Smith (UAFS). These strategic additions allowed the UA System to serve a broader and more diverse student population, including underserved rural areas and working adults with education relevant to its region. Further diversifying its portfolio, the UA System added specialized units, including one of the nation’s top residential high schools in the Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences, and the Arts (ASMSA), the University of Arkansas Clinton School of Public Service (UACS), the Criminal Justice Institute (CJI), and an affiliation with the Winthrop Rockefeller Institute. These institutions provide targeted education, leadership, and community service programming aligned with the state’s needs.

In 2015, the UA System launched Arkansas’s first fully online public university, which merged with Grantham University in 2021, forming University of Arkansas Grantham — an online institution focused on serving adult learners with affordable, workforce-aligned programs. Most recently, UA - Pulaski Technical College (UA-PTC) and UA Rich Mountain (UARM) joined in 2017, followed by East Arkansas Community College (UA-EACC) in 2024. Though regulatory approvals are ongoing, the boards of North Arkansas College in Harrison and the UA System approved the two-year institution joining the system in 2025.



UA System Administration

Under the authority of the Board of Trustees of the University of Arkansas, the University of Arkansas System administration, located at the UA System – Cammack Campus in Little Rock, exists to lead, align, and empower its institutions in delivering on the shared mission of advancing education, research, health, and service throughout the state. While the campuses, divisions, and units are responsible for day-to-day operations, program delivery, and community engagement, the UA System administration provides the strategic infrastructure and leadership necessary to ensure that individual efforts collectively support the broader goals of the UA System.

The UA System administration works to align institutional strengths with statewide priorities. It is responsible for setting systemwide vision and direction, facilitating collaboration across campuses and units, and ensuring that policies, resources, and accountability structures are in place to support both institutional autonomy and unified impact. Key roles and responsibilities of the UA System administration include:

Strategic Vision and Priority Setting: The UA System administration articulates a cohesive vision that reflects the long-term interests of Arkansans and leverages the unique assets of each individual institution. It sets systemwide priorities to guide coordinated investment, innovation, and growth.

Coordination and Integration: As a central hub, the UA System administration fosters alignment across institutions, encouraging shared services, collaborative initiatives, and streamlined operations where appropriate. This coordination maximizes efficiency and enhances the collective effectiveness of the institutions.

Policy Leadership and Governance Support: The UA System administration supports the Board of Trustees of the University of Arkansas in its governance role by developing policy recommendations, conducting strategic analyses, and ensuring compliance with legal, ethical, and fiduciary responsibilities across all campuses, divisions, and units.

Advocacy and External Relations: Representing the UA System at the state and federal levels, the UA System administration is a central voice in policy discussions, budget negotiations, and public engagement. It builds and maintains relationships with government officials, business leaders, media, and other stakeholders to advocate for public higher education in Arkansas.



“ This balance of centralized leadership and decentralized execution allows the UA System to be both cohesive and responsive – capable of statewide impact while remaining locally and centrally grounded. ”

Resource Stewardship and Oversight: The UA System administration leads budgetary planning, audits, capital project approvals, employee benefits, and risk management to protect its long-term financial health. It ensures that each institution operates transparently, efficiently, and in service to the public interest.

Thought Leadership: Through research, convenings, and strategic partnerships, the UA System administration leads discourse on the future of higher education in Arkansas. It identifies emerging trends, champions innovation, and encourages cross-institutional learning that elevates the UA System as a whole.

While the UA System administration provides strategic leadership and infrastructure, it does not manage the daily operations of individual campuses, divisions, and units. Each entity retains the authority and responsibility to fulfill its unique mission, meet the needs of its community, and pursue institutional priorities within the broader UA System framework. This balance of centralized leadership and decentralized execution allows the UA System to be both cohesive and responsive – capable of statewide impact while remaining locally and centrally grounded.

i Future goals and direction can be distilled into the following six pillars that the UA System strives to achieve.

1

Expanded Access to High-Quality, Diverse Educational Opportunities

Background and Context

Access to education is transformative – not only for individuals, but also for families, communities and the state. The University of Arkansas System delivers an array of educational opportunities that serve students at every stage of life across Arkansas. From nationally recognized residential high school experiences in STEM and the arts, to community colleges offering workforce and technical credentials, to regional and research-intensive universities, and fully online programs designed for working adults, the system’s educational portfolio is unmatched in scope and diversity.

Opportunities extend beyond traditional degrees to include certifications, licensures, stackable credentials, and lifelong learning programs that are offered in-person, online, and in hybrid formats. By expanding access across modalities, disciplines, and geographic regions, the UA System is actively working to meet the varied needs of students, employers, and communities throughout the state.

Strategic Commitment

The UA System is committed to expanding and diversifying access to high-quality education – from high school through postsecondary and professional development – ensuring Arkansans can benefit from the resources and expertise of the state’s public higher education system.

Key Actions

- ✓ Promote college-going and program participation and support institutions to effectively manage enrollment to mitigate the impact of demographic changes
- ✓ Expand credentialing pathways in high-demand workforce sectors
- ✓ Improve access to flexible and affordable learning modalities, including online, dual enrollment, evening, and weekend offerings
- ✓ Strengthen partnerships with K-12 districts, employers, and community organizations to broaden education-to-career pipelines
- ✓ Increase financial aid outreach and optimize pathways to affordability for students at all levels

Doctoral Degrees and Professional Education

Master’s Degrees

Continuing Education

Bachelors Degrees

Associate’s Degrees

Technical Certificates

Certificates of Proficiency

High School Diplomas

2

A Systemwide Commitment to Student Success

Background and Context

Student success is central to the mission of the University of Arkansas System and extends beyond access and enrollment to ensuring that every student – regardless of background, location, or academic pathway – has the support and resources needed to reach their full potential. The UA System’s diverse institutions serve a wide spectrum of learners, from high-achieving residential high school students to adults returning for workforce retraining. Success looks different across these populations and includes academic achievement, credential completion, career readiness, personal development and civic engagement.



To support this broad definition of success, UA System campuses, divisions and units offer a comprehensive network of advising, mentoring, tutoring, financial support, mental health services and career development. The UA System works to identify and share effective practices, remove barriers, and foster a culture of continuous improvement and accountability.

Strategic Commitment

The UA System is committed to ensuring that every student who enters its institutions has a clear and supported path to success – from first engagement through graduation and beyond. The UA System fosters a culture that prioritizes persistence, completion, and long-term outcomes for every learner.

Key Actions

- ✓ Support retention and completion across all institutions and student populations
- ✓ Expand holistic student support services, including mental health, academic advising, and career counseling
- ✓ Enhance data systems and analytics to identify student needs and drive timely interventions
- ✓ Support innovation in teaching, learning, and engagement to improve student outcomes across modalities
- ✓ Monitor and report student success metrics across campuses and delivery formats





Advancing Scholarship, Innovation and Discovery



Background and Context

The University of Arkansas System plays a vital role in driving innovation, fostering discovery, and enriching understanding to improve lives, strengthen communities, and contribute to economic and cultural development. UA System faculty, staff, and students pursue research and creative work that spans a range of disciplines, including basic science, applied technologies, policy analysis, agriculture, healthcare, education, the arts, humanities, and social sciences. The system includes major research universities, the state's leading academic medical center, extension programs, and institutes dedicated to industry collaboration and public service. Together, these entities generate knowledge, inspire critical inquiry, inform public discourse, fuel entrepreneurship, and contribute to the cultural and intellectual life of Arkansas and beyond.

The UA System is uniquely positioned to align scholarly and creative excellence with state and regional priorities while contributing to broader national and global innovation. The UA System leadership plays a key role in supporting this work – helping identify strategic opportunities, attract investment, and foster meaningful collaboration across institutions and disciplines.

Strategic Commitment

The UA System is committed to strengthening its scholarly and research enterprise and fostering a vibrant culture of innovation, inquiry, and creativity. It supports and connects scholars and researchers across all fields, aligns efforts with state needs and societal challenges, and expands its collective impact through collaboration, knowledge transfer, and public engagement.

Key Actions

- ✓ Increase research funding and sponsored program activity across all institutions and disciplines
- ✓ Foster cross-campus research partnerships and multidisciplinary collaboration
- ✓ Strengthen support for technology transfer, creative dissemination, commercialization, and industry and community engagement
- ✓ Expand undergraduate and graduate research and creative opportunities
- ✓ Align research and scholarly agendas with state priorities, community needs, and areas of cultural, civic, and economic importance



4

Stewardship of Talent, Resources, and Public Trust

Background and Context

As a publicly funded institution, the University of Arkansas System has a responsibility to steward the financial, physical, and human resources entrusted to it by the citizens of Arkansas. This requires a culture of transparency, efficiency, accountability, and continuous improvement. While UA System institutions serve varied populations with different resource needs, all campuses, divisions, and units are obligated to make strategic, data-informed decisions that maximize value, reduce waste, and ensure long-term sustainability. Stewardship also includes care for the UA System's physical infrastructure, the effective use of technology, and the development of employee programs that enhance the recruitment and retention of a talented and mission-driven workforce.

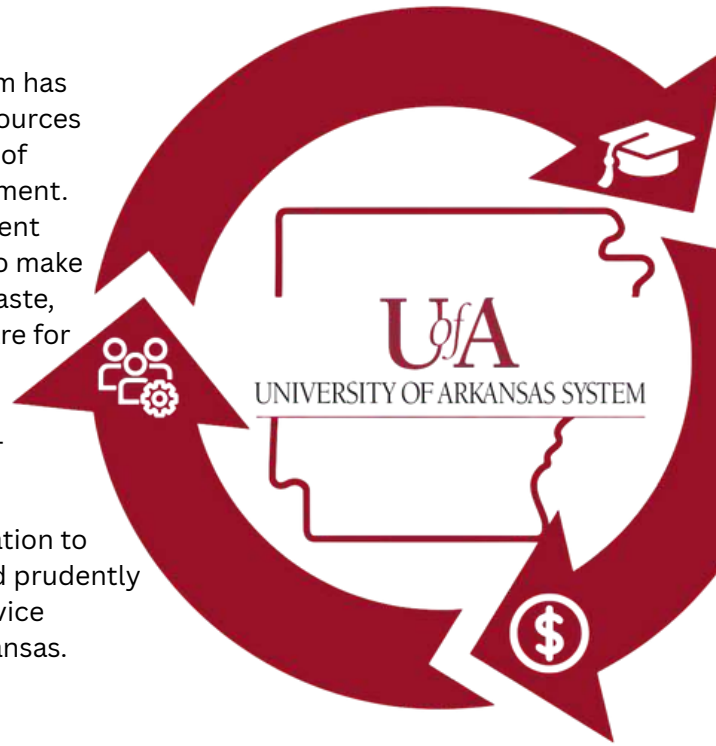
UA System leadership provides oversight, guidance, and coordination to ensure that public dollars and institutional resources are invested prudently in ways that advance the system's educational, research, and service missions while delivering measurable return to the people of Arkansas.

Strategic Commitment

The UA System is committed to the highest standards of stewardship across all campuses, divisions, and units and will ensure that its employees, finances, and physical resources are managed with integrity, efficiency, and alignment to strategic priorities, while also earning and maintaining the trust of its many stakeholders.

Key Actions

- ✓ Develop and manage responsible budgets that reflect strategic priorities and ensure effective use of state funding and tuition revenues
- ✓ Invest in talent, facilities, technologies, and risk management services that directly support mission-driven outcomes
- ✓ Promote a culture of fiscal accountability, compliance, and ethical leadership
- ✓ Provide competitive, affordable health and well-being benefits that attract, retain, and support the needs of faculty and staff
- ✓ Promote continuous improvement in risk management, controls, and governance through internal audits
- ✓ Strengthen transparency and accountability through regular strategic communications about the system's achievements, investments, and return on public funding





Responsiveness to Statewide Needs and Priorities



Background and Context

The University of Arkansas System is unique in its statewide presence and mission, which includes the responsibility to support opportunities and challenges facing Arkansas. This responsibility requires the system to be flexible, proactive, and connected to citizens, communities, industries, and policymakers across the state. UA System institutions serve diverse communities – rural and urban, agricultural and industrial, traditional and emerging – giving the system the ability to support industry workforce demands, public health needs, economic development goals and community growth initiatives across the state. From training the next generation of teachers, physicians, and nurses to developing precision agricultural practices and supporting business innovation through a skilled workforce, responsiveness is a defining trait of the UA System mission.

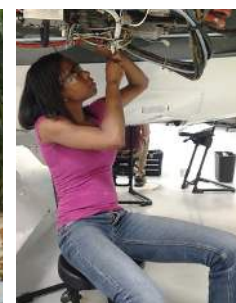
The UA System leadership is a key facilitator in this work – identifying gaps, deploying expertise, and aligning training, academic, research, and service efforts to ensure Arkansas and its citizens innovate and prosper well into the future.

Strategic Commitment

The UA System is committed to being a responsive, solutions-oriented partner to the state and communities it serves. The system utilizes its statewide footprint to connect with external partners in business, industry, and government to accelerate economic growth and seeks to optimize these connections to support immediate deployment of educational, research, and workforce training strategies to drive positive and measurable impact across the state.

Key Actions

- ✓ Build connections with key Arkansas business, industry and policy leaders to meet and project the changing landscape of economic growth and development needs within the system's educational and training assets
- ✓ Regularly assess and respond to workforce, healthcare, and economic development needs across regions
- ✓ Expand partnerships with local governments, industry, and nonprofit sectors using the UA System asset with the most direct geographic connection as the point of contact for all assets within the system
- ✓ Support rapid deployment of educational, health and extension services in response to state-level priorities



6 Collaboration and Integration through Technology and Business Innovation

Background and Context

In a rapidly evolving higher education landscape, collaboration and integration are essential to ensuring long-term sustainability, innovation, and service excellence. The University of Arkansas System, with its comprehensive network of institutions, is uniquely positioned to harness the power of shared technology platforms, business processes, and operational best practices. By working collaboratively across campuses, divisions, and units, the UA System can reduce duplication, improve efficiency, strengthen data-informed decision-making, and modernize services for students, faculty, and staff. Effective collaboration also enhances alignment in critical areas such as cybersecurity, procurement, finance, human resources, data governance, and artificial intelligence.

Strategic use of technology to enable the UA System to function as a connected, agile, and integrated system will be vital to meeting both internal expectations and external demands for accountability, transparency, and innovation.



Strategic Commitment

The UA System is committed to strengthening collaboration and integration across all campuses, divisions, and units by modernizing technology, leveraging data, and streamlining business practices. Through shared systems, services, and expertise, the system aims to operate more efficiently, make smarter decisions, and deliver greater value to the students and communities it serves.

Key Actions

- ✓ Expand shared services and technology to improve operational efficiency, reduce duplication, and enable cost savings
- ✓ Elevate core business processes by sharing best practices and adopting innovative solutions while maintaining unique campus business requirements where necessary
- ✓ Create an integrated data platform to enable systemwide reporting and analytics to facilitate informed decisions across the system
- ✓ Strengthen cybersecurity infrastructure and data governance to ensure systemwide protection
- ✓ Develop a strategy to guide the ethical, secure, and effective use of artificial intelligence across academic, administrative, and research domains

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2404 N. University Ave. | Little Rock, AR 72207

Scan for a digital version of the UA System's Strategic Pillars

