Assurance Argument

University of Arkansas at Monticello

Review date: 2/10/2025

1 - Mission

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

1.A - Core Component 1.A

The institution's mission is articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.

1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.
2. The mission and related statements are current and reference the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.
4. The institution's academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

Argument

The University of Arkansas at Monticello (UAM) is a state-supported institution and a member of the University of Arkansas System. As a regional institution, UAM primarily serves the educational needs of southeastern Arkansas but has programs that reach far beyond its traditional service area. The UAM mission aligns with the Role and Scope Statement established by the statewide coordinating board, the mission of the University of Arkansas System, and UAM's distinctive purpose.

The Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) establishes appropriate Role and Scope designations for each public higher education institution in consultation with representatives of the colleges and universities and is charged with reviewing these designations periodically.

The AHECB intends the Role and Scope Statement to be concrete, specific, and to distinguish one university from another. The statement typically discloses the nature and range of the institution's responsibilities and activities; the geographical service area; disciplines in which programs are provided; levels of degree offerings; dominant characteristics of the student clientele; other constituencies to be served; and emphasis areas.

The Role and Scope of the University of Arkansas at Monticello is as follows.

1. Audiences

   The University of Arkansas at Monticello (UAM) is responsible for serving:

   - Residents of southeast Arkansas who have completed a high school education and are seeking

a college degree or continuing professional education and residents of the state through specific degree programs and services.

- Employers in the region in both public and private sectors—school districts, health care providers, local governments, and private employers including the agriculture and forest products industries.
- Regional economic development interests and entrepreneurs.
- The community and area by providing a broad range of academic and cultural activities and public events.
- Area K-12 schools seeking college general education courses for advanced students.
- Two-year college transfer students.

2. Array of Programs and Services

   UAM serves these audiences by providing:

- Certificate and associate programs in applied technologies including nursing and selected allied health fields.
- Baccalaureate programs in arts and humanities, the natural sciences, and social sciences appropriate to a teaching institution with a predominantly undergraduate student body.
- Baccalaureate programs in the professional fields of forestry, education, community services, nursing, business, and human services (e.g., social work and criminal justice).
- Master's program.
- Services specifically designed to meet the needs of regional economic development (small business development, support for entrepreneurs, problem-solving).

3. Special Features:

- An open admission university.
- Forest Resources program.
- UAM College of Technology campuses in Crossett and McGehee provide education in associate, certificate programs, and the Arkansas Heavy Equipment Operator Training Academy offers training and certification for timber and construction equipment operation.

UAM is the only four-year university in the state with the specific designation as "open admission." The two previous HLC Visiting Teams noted the deep support of the UAM community for this mission despite -- or perhaps because of -- the inherent and significant challenges of open admission.

1.A.1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.

UAM Mission:

The University of Arkansas at Monticello is a society of learners committed to individual achievement by:

- Fostering a quality, comprehensive, and seamless education for diverse student learners to succeed in a global environment;
- Serving the communities of Arkansas and beyond to improve the quality of life as well as generate, enrich, and sustain economic development;
- Promoting innovative leadership, scholarship and research which will provide for

entrepreneurial endeavors and service learning opportunities;
- Creating a synergistic culture of safety, collegiality and productivity which engages a diverse community of learners.

The mission is predicated on and is in compliance with the Role and Scope set by the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board. It has been in place since 2016, when it was revised in response to the recommendation of the 2014 HLC Visiting Team that the university develop a more focused mission statement. It, along with a restatement of UAM's core values, was developed in consultation with faculty and administrators across all campuses, supported by the UAM Executive Council and the UAM Board of Visitors, and approved by the System President and the Arkansas Division of Higher Education.

1.A.2. The mission and related statements are current and reference the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development and religious or cultural purpose.

A 2021 university-wide "Vision UAM" project used forums and workshops with students, staff, and faculty from all three campuses and residents of the region in a reexamination of UAM's Mission and Vision statements. The project was part of ongoing strategic planning and is described in more detail in 5.C. The Mission Statement, still aligned with UAM's Role and Scope, was left unchanged, but the Vision Statement was revised, reflecting the shared understanding of all of UAM's constituents. Both statements permeate UAM's daily operations, its Institutional Learning Outcomes, and its strategic planning.

1.A.3. The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.

UAM's Mission Statement, Vision Statement, Core Values, and related statements clearly articulate the following:

- its nature (an open admissions institute of higher education)
- its scope (the offering of credentials ranging from certificates of proficiency to master's degrees)
- its intended stakeholders and beneficiaries of the institution's services (primarily residents, businesses, and public schools of southeast Arkansas).

The statements all make clear that UAM exists to enhance quality of life, especially for the communities of southeast Arkansas, but for the state and the region as well.

1.A.4. The institution's academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.

As an open admissions institution with technical campuses, UAM serves a wider range of needs than does a typical university. Accordingly, UAM makes available certificates of proficiency, technical certificates, associate degrees, bachelor's degrees, graduate certificates, and master's degrees. UAM is currently working toward a doctoral program in Forest Resources, epitomizing UAM's efforts to meet critical needs of the region. In this same vein, UAM added an MS in Public Health Nursing in 2022 as a way to address the region's crisis in public health.

Student Services, including academic advising, financial aid counseling, health-care services, mental health counseling, tutoring, and career services are essential to UAM's mission, and are constantly adapting to meet the evolving needs of the students. In August 2020, Mainline Health Services opened a Covid testing center on the Monticello campus followed in 2021 by a medical clinic and a behavioral health clinic which, in conjunction with UAM's offices of student health and counseling, provide holistic on-site health care. The summer bridge program, Weevil Jumpstart, helps the growing number of underprepared students acclimate to college life. More details on these and other student services are given herein in 3.D.1 and 4.B.2.

The institution's enrollment profile is in line with the expectations for an "open access regional institution." UAM remains predominantly an undergraduate institution with 87.63% of the student body coming from within Arkansas. Over sixty percent of the students come from UAM's primary recruiting area of eight surrounding counties. Many students are first-generation students, many come from economically challenged backgrounds, and, unsurprisingly, a large number of students are considered as at-risk and in need of remediation. In response to that challenge, UAM developed the Degree Pathways Program, as detailed in 4.B.2 of this Assurance Argument.

1.A.5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

The University articulates its mission in several venues including the catalog, strategic plan, in recruiting materials, and the website. The mission statement takes center stage on the UAM webpage under the "About UAM" tab. The Strategic Plan is founded upon the UAM vision, mission, and core values.

Sources

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1.B - Core Component 1.B

The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1. The institution's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Argument

1. The institution's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.

UAM's Mission and Vision Statements make clear that the institution serves its communities in a variety of ways with students, faculty, and staff creating opportunities to "contribute to the economy and quality of life in the region, state, and beyond." Within the Delta and the wider community of higher education, UAM strives to serve by:

- Providing affordable, quality undergraduate and graduate education appropriate for southeastern Arkansas, the state, and the region.
- Fostering faculty, staff, and student outreach through service activities.
- Making instruction available through UAM's service area and beyond using all appropriate means of delivery.
- Promoting economic development through collaboration, research, and technical instruction.
- Furthering the intellectual and cultural life of the community and region.

UAM serves Monticello and southeastern Arkansas in its assigned duty of offering college education to area residents. Nearly half of the UAM student body is composed of first-generation students. The Schools of Nursing and Education help prepare personnel essential to the region's health agencies and schools, and they actively consult with those agencies. For example, input from the advisory board of the School of Nursing was critical to the development of the MSN in Public Health program in 2022.

With the state's only Forestry program, UAM prepares leaders for this large part of the Arkansas economy and houses the Arkansas Forest Resources Center and the Arkansas Center for Forest Business. In 2026, UAM's Arkansas Forest Health Research Center will open.

Associated with the School of Business, the Small Business and Technology Development Center provides training and consulting services for local entrepreneurs. The UAM Center for Economic Education is one of the state's six university centers affiliated with Economics Arkansas. Since 1962, Economics Arkansas has been offering resources and professional development training for K-12 teachers and is affiliated with the Council for Economic Education.

The UAM Colleges of Technology at Crossett (UAM-CTC) and McGehee (UAM-CTM) each have an active Advisory Board for the campus, as well as Advisory Committees for their programs, as recent minutes demonstrate. Committee members represent communities and employers, helping to ensure that local needs are known. In 2018, acting upon its Advisory Committee's advice, the Crossett campus launched a new Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration program. Similarly, the UAM-CTM in 2017 developed a certificate program in Diesel Technology to meet another critical need. Both programs have been assessed as viable in the context of the ADHE New Program Review process. Other programs, such as the business technology program in 2024, are also regularly updated based on the advisory committee's counsel.

2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.

UAM is a public university and does not generate financial revenues for investors, related, or parent organizations. Nor does it have financial obligations to investors or outside organizations. From its establishment, UAM's primary identity and guiding purpose was to provide educational opportunity for its students and the region. UAM actively engages with alumni and friends to help enhance educational experiences for its students. UAM also cooperates with other colleges and universities in order to improve quality of life for "the region, state, and beyond."

3. The institution engages with its external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

As the area's cultural leader, UAM created the Southeast Arkansas Concert Association in the mid-1970s. This organization serves the contiguous six-county area by providing a variety of public concerts, but its primary focus is bringing musical and dramatic arts directly to area schools through its SMARTS (Schools Majoring in the Arts) program. During the 2023-24 season, SMARTS events reached almost 15,000 schoolchildren. UAM provides its Fine Arts Center as the performance venue for the public offerings, including the hugely popular youth musical presentations, such as 2024's *Peter Pan*. The musical includes dozens of local children in the cast, and area schools bus in thousands of students for the four or five matinee performances in March. From award-winning young artists to regional symphonies and choirs, the SEARK Concert Association provides important artistic experiences to the region, as well as to UAM students and faculty.

Other contributions to the area's musical experiences include public performances by the university's very active choir, band, and jazz band programs. Music students perform on campus in senior recitals open to the public. The marching band hosts regional competitions and participates in area parades. The nationally recognized UAM jazz bands perform at local events, as well as regional competitions, and entertain area students in performances for the SMARTS program. And the Division of Music offers three weeks of Band Camps every summer.

In service to regional school systems, faculty members from the UAM School of Education serve in the Educational Renewal Zone (ERZ). This service partners with the nearby Southeast Arkansas Education Service Cooperative and area schools to provide technical assistance, professional development opportunities, and explore opportunities for communication and collaboration. The ERZ provides a wide range of services to area schools and teachers, including workshops which frequently involve UAM faculty. And the College of Technology at Crossett (UAM-CTC) has a career coach who serves in the Hamburg and Crossett high schools two days each week, as well as on the UAM-CTC campus. The coach works with the school counselors as well as directly with students to

increase knowledge of the skills and education needed for various occupations, and also coordinates career fairs while connecting employers with UAM-CTC faculty.

The UAM-CTC led a project resulting in ten southeast Arkansas counties earning the prestigious status of being ACT Work Ready Communities. Besides being recognized by the governor's office for this accomplishment, the effort has had a very positive impact on the region's struggling economic development.

Annual evaluation of UAM faculty includes noting service to the community. UAM faculty and staff model a strong commitment to a culture of public service and community service. Faculty and staff serve on numerous boards, commissions, and advisory councils at local and state level. Activities include:

- The Southeast Arkansas Regional Science & Engineering Fair attracts students from across the region, and UAM faculty from virtually all departments help judge papers and displays.
- The History program hosts the regional History Day competition.
- Drew County's annual Log-A-Load project, led by Business Office staff, has generated over one million dollars for the Arkansas Children's Hospital.
- UAM-CTM plans the annual OwlFest 5K run/walk.
- UAM-CTC annually participates in the Wiggins Cabin Festival and Chamber of Commerce public events.
- Faculty serve as board members for local hospitals, medical clinics, and public libraries.
- The Athletic Department conducts annual sports camps for children in football, basketball, softball, and baseball, with an average yearly participation of approximately 400 children.
- The Division of Music hosts annual summer band camps for middle school and high school students with an average participation of 151 over the past three years. The average participation for jazz camps was 84 campers over the past three years.
- The University of Arkansas at Monticello hosts an annual summer camp called Kids' University for capable and motivated students who will enter 1st through 6th grades.
- The College of Forestry, Agriculture and Natural Resources hosts the State 4-H Forestry competition, regional FFA forestry competition, regional FFA agriculture competition, Aggie Comeback alumni event, Ag Alumni banquet annual event, Southeast Chapter of Ouachita Society of American Foresters quarterly meetings, STEM mentoring summer camps for underserved high school students, and Drew/Desha cattlemen's association.
- Faculty and students from the School of Business offer clinics and individual income tax assistance as part of the IRS VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) program for taxpayers with incomes below $50,000. In 2024, the program helped prepare sixty returns.
- The program coordinator for the Master of Science in Nursing and clinical coordinator for the School of Nursing was elected Region 4 director for the 2025 Board of Directors of the Arkansas Nurses Association (ARNA).

UAM faculty have lent their expertise in writing grant applications to UAM staff helping to design, fund, and build a local mountain bike trail system. Staff have also established a mountain bike racing team for local youth to compete across the state.

Through their expertise, faculty and staff help build social and educational bonds to strengthen towns and counties in southeast Arkansas. In working with student organizations on service projects, faculty also help to model civic engagement, which is addressed in the next section.

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1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

1. The institution encourages curricular or cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.
2. The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.
3. The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.

Argument

1. **The institution encourages curricular or cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.**

Foundational to UAM since its establishment as an Agricultural and Mechanical School in 1909 has been its goal to produce students who can succeed in their professions and who will serve the region as informed citizens and leaders. Community service, career success, and leadership are woven into the Mission Statement.

UAM offers a variety of courses that speak to citizenship, especially in Political Science. Other programs, including Social Work and Criminal Justice, include courses covering democratic principles, public policy, and social justice. The Institutional Learning Outcome of Teamwork, which is assessed in a number of courses across the UAM campuses, includes dimensions related to productive citizenship.

Regarding cocurricular activities, UAM offers students a wide variety of activities and organizations on all three campuses. Student groups, both those attached to schools, such as the Student Nurses Organization, and independent groups, including fraternities, sororities, and religious groups, participate to a greater or lesser degree in community service. Sixteen Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) are service-related clubs. These organizations include, for example, the Ambassadors, a group of students with strong leadership and communication skills who represent UAM to prospective and incoming students and to the community. Participation in the Student Government Association helps students learn leadership skills as they work together to discern the need for and promote improvements. In these groups, students learn important lessons about being involved and productive citizens, as well as gaining leadership skills.

Internships in Criminal Justice, Social Work, and Education provide rich experiences in service and help students develop professional skills for later success. Many programs offer capstone courses that teach skills for workplace success. Of course, UAM's two Technical Campuses, which focus on preparing students for employment, incorporate both professional and "soft" skills in virtually every course of every program.

Finally, the Office of Student Engagement offers to students a variety of educational programs and workshops ranging from study skills to preparing for job interviews, described more fully in Section 3.D.

2. **The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.**

In fulfillment of its mission to serve southeast Arkansas, UAM's student composition closely mirrors the demographic makeup of the region. 2020 US Census data shows the eight-county region to be 60.8% white, 29.5% Black, and 5.8% Hispanic. Data for Fall of 2024 shows the UAM student body to be 54.3% white, 30.8% Black, 9.6% Hispanic, with 4% identifying as two or more races. In fact, UAM has a higher minority student makeup among state four-year schools that are not HBCUs.

UAM also deals with economic and social diversity. In the decade leading up to the 2020 census, UAM's surrounding area lost 10.4% of its total population, and the economy of the region, largely rural, remains one of the worst in the nation. Educational attainment and household income lag behind the nation and the state:

2020 Census Data	United States	Arkansas	UAM Surrounding Area
% having a Bachelor's degree or higher	34.3%	24.7%	10.8%
Median Household Income	$75,149	$56,335	$43,937
Persons below poverty level%	11.5%	16.8%	22.92%

Annually, the University publishes its Minority Recruitment and Retention Report with updated information about the racial, ethnic, and gender demographics of the student population. The report also details how UAM provides financial assistance to minority students, as well as data on the University's minority faculty and staff. The University's Minority Recruitment and Retention Five-Year Plan provides a deeper level of detail regarding the strategies and initiatives to recruit and retain minority students, faculty, and staff. Both reports give information regarding academic and faculty support, social and cultural programs, financial aid support, and promotion of University-wide diversity programs.

Learning to live inclusively and to treat one another in an equitable manner are part of UAM's very DNA and essential to the UAM student experience.

Valuing diversity is a component of the UAM Mission. Diversity is one of UAM's five Core Values. UAM's revised Vision Statement lifts up advancement of diverse and vibrant communities as key to UAM's identity. The University's Institutional Learning Outcomes also include Global Learning and

Teamwork.

Putting this philosophy into practice in this demographic reality involves several offices and divisions on campus.

Student Engagement coordinates the organization and activities of the RSOs. There are six historically Black Greek-letter organizations affiliated with the National Pan-Hellenic Council. These groups traditionally cooperate and coordinate with academic units to provide events celebrating Black history. The Office of Housing and Residence life has an RSO designed to help create a more social and welcoming atmosphere within the residence halls. This group provides event programming for residential students at all the living spaces on campus, tailored by the resident advisors for their particular dormitories. Campus groups with special interests are as varied as bass fishing, investment club, and the student athletic advisory committee.

3. **The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.**

One of UAM's Core Values notes that "We embrace difference by cultivating inclusiveness and respect of both people and points of view and by promoting not only tolerance and acceptance but support and advocacy." The UA System makes available training modules, delivered through Blackboard and Workday for all students, faculty, and staff, including courses on Title IX and being able to identify bias, harassment, and other forms of discrimination.

UAM publishes many reminders of its commitment to all students, regardless of background or circumstance, to succeed, including at the very front of the Student Handbook and the Staff Handbook. The policy is also listed in the Faculty Handbook. And the theme of "You Belong" is used in many publications.

Besides student organizations, UAM offers campus activities that promote informed citizenship and intercultural respect. International Week annually recognizes UAM's international students with the dining hall offering meals served in the students' home countries. In the Student Success Center, international students display items from their home culture and discuss them with faculty, staff, and other students.

To expose the UAM community to a diversity of ideas, there are lectures and presentations throughout the year, ranging from reports on the archeological evidence of enslaved persons at UAM's historic plantation, to film discussions, to the endowed Winthrop P. Rockefeller Speech. Rockefeller speakers are nationally prominent figures, such as Pulitzer Prize laureate Douglas Blackmon.

Given the demographic and economic challenges of its service area, establishing a climate that respects and values diversity is not just a lofty goal for UAM, but essential for the university's fulfillment of its obligations.

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1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

Summary

The UAM mission grows out of the Role and Scope Statement established by the statewide coordinating board, the mission of the University of Arkansas System, and UAM's distinctive purpose. All UAM annual reports align a unit's mission, vision, and goals with the university's mission, vision, and strategic plan.

The university's mission is clearly articulated and widely disseminated. In addition, UAM's core values are expressed on its website and reflected in the University's Institutional Learning Outcomes. The role and scope of the institution and its mission permeate UAM's policies, procedures, and strategic planning.

UAM's mission and related statements articulate the following:

- its nature (an open admissions institute of higher education)
- its scope (the offering of credentials ranging from certificates of proficiency to master's degrees)
- its intended stakeholders and beneficiaries of the institution's services (primarily residents, businesses, and public schools of southeast Arkansas).

As is evident in its mission, UAM serves a wider range of needs than a typical university, offering certificates of proficiency, technical certificates, associate degrees, bachelor's degrees, graduate certificates, and master's degrees. It is even seeking to offer a Ph.D. in Forest Resources.

UAM's enrollment profile is in line with the expectations for a regional open-admissions institution: many first-generation students, many students from economically challenged backgrounds, a number of nontraditional students, a large number of students in need of remediation. Given this profile, areas such as academic advising, financial counseling, health-care services, tutoring, and academic remediation are critical to UAM's efforts to foster student success, retention, and completion.

The institution's efforts to serve the public are demonstrated in budget decisions, in the offering of cultural events, and in community partnerships. UAM does not have investors or external interests to support.

UAM faculty and staff are active in the community and model good citizenship to students.

UAM partners with and serves the needs of regional businesses and industries, for example, providing most of the public school teachers and health professionals to southeast Arkansas.

In keeping with the UAM mission and core values, multiculturalism, broadmindedness, informed citizenship, and workforce preparation are addressed through both curricular and cocurricular offerings and are an integral aspect of the institution's assessment process.

Faculty and student handbooks set forth the policies and procedures that are part of the culture of the

University. The student handbook begins with the university's Non-Discrimination Policy.

UAM is a vital part of the region's cultural life and economy.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

2.A - Core Component 2.A

The institution establishes and follows policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

1. The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.
2. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

Argument

2.A.1.The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.

The mission of UAM, based on its legislated Role and Scope Statement as written by the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB), and developed by UAM, is set out in Criterion One, and its approval and adoption by the governing boards is related in 1.A.1. The UA System Board of Trustees and the Board of Visitors assure that the University's activities align with the mission.

Any addition of a program or certificate, such as UAM's 2022 Master's in Nursing in Public Health, must be approved by the Board of Trustees and Arkansas Division of Higher Education (ADHE), as evinced by the attached letter. Similarly, restructuring and redefining remedial programs is coordinated by the ADHE, whose policies help coordinate higher education statewide.

2.A.2. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

Guided by the System Board of Trustees and the UAM Board of Visitors, the University operates with integrity and follows fair and ethical policies and procedures in all of its operations.

The University also follows policies and procedures developed by the ADHE, which serves as the administrative staff for the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The Board consists of twelve members who are appointed by the governor. As part of its responsibilities, the staff develops and implements board policies and procedures. Additionally, the ADHE reviews academic programs; administers statewide financial aid programs and contracts with the Southern Regional Education Board for support of graduate and first professional study outside of Arkansas; recommends institutional operating, capital, and personal services budgets; and collects and reports on student and course data as part of a statewide database and academic program inventory for policy studies.

The UAM Operating Procedures set standards of conduct for faculty and staff. For example, all full-time faculty and staff must make an annual disclosure of potential conflicts of interest. Other annual disclosures required of employees include declaration of concurrent employment for payments in

excess of certain amounts from another state agency.

The University of Arkansas System Administration provides information for Finance and Administration. The System Office is responsible for coordinating all financial policies and procedures in the UA System including annual budgeting, debt financing, investments, oversight of capital projects, and required financial reporting. The Office works with the campuses in the System to manage the process for the issuance of capital construction bonds, which are general obligations of the Board of Trustees. The Office also works with the System President and the campus chancellors to review annual operating budgets for approval by the board.

Of similar importance for the fiscal integrity of the System is the Internal Audit. This agency carries out approved audit plans including system-wide risk and control assessments; annual campus financial and operational analyses; ongoing assurance testing; and staff support to the audit committee. Reports from these analyses are used in the continuous improvement of business practices. Annual financial statements of the UA System and campuses are audited by an external auditing agency, the Arkansas Legislative Audit. In addition, the Internal Audit is responsible for the operation of the fraud hotline, which all System employees can use to report suspicions of wrongful conduct. A direct link to the fraud hotline is available on the "Contact UAM" website.

In seeking maximum transparency, the System Office of Finance and Administration provides access to financial information on its website, including several years of the University's operating budget, unaudited quarterly reports, and schedules of tuition and fees.

Additionally, UAM's website, in compliance with Arkansas Code 6-61-137, presents a searchable database of unaudited expenditure data. The database is intended to provide transparency of UAM's stewardship of public resources. The data is derived from the general ledger accounting records and not intended to supplement or replace the annual audited financial report. The database is updated monthly and organized by fiscal year and provides "search and drill down" capability.

The Office of State Procurement (OSP) for the State has primary responsibility and oversight for the state-wide procurement of commodities as well as technical and professional services for all colleges and universities. State procurement policies are available on the OSP website. UAM procurement staff have many years of experience with these policies and regularly attend conferences and seminars to discuss updates to policies in procuring goods and services according to these procedures. The University's compliance with these regulations is reviewed annually by the Legislative Audit and also on an ad hoc, periodic basis by the UA System Internal Audit Department. It is UAM's practice to quickly address any findings that may indicate non-compliance with these policies.

UAM is attentive to all fiscal policies and procedures including those from external and internal sources. A list of UAM Operating Procedures pertaining to fiscal affairs is accessible from the UAM website.

All University employee positions are authorized by the Arkansas General Assembly in the campus biennial appropriations act and are designated as academic (faculty) or administrative (non-classified) positions.

UAM is committed to complying with all applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations relative to providing educational and employment opportunities to all persons regardless of their economic or social status. The University affirmative action plan was most recently revised in April 2021. University affirmative action hiring procedures were last revised in March 2023.

Policies related to faculty employment issues such as appointment, promotion, tenure, and dismissal are updated whenever necessary to reflect changes to federal and state law, and are published in the Faculty Handbook. Policies for staff are included in the Employee Staff Handbook.

Both the Faculty Handbook and the Operating Procedures (for Staff) include procedures for filing of formal grievances, which are handled promptly and in accordance with policy.

The Human Relations webpage is another source of information on UAM personnel policies with such as affirmative action, hiring procedures, grievance procedures for academic and non-academic personnel, minority recruitment and retention, Title IX, notice of nondiscrimination, and policies for adjudicating a complaint of harassment or unlawful discrimination.

Annual performance reviews help to ensure integrity of faculty, staff, and administration. Performance reviews are currently conducted for all staff according to State Personnel Policy. Probation policies are in place for employees who receive an unsatisfactory rating.

Faculty, administrators, and staff are evaluated annually. Faculty members are evaluated by their students, faculty peers their unit heads, and the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. The purpose of the evaluation is to improve teaching effectiveness and other aspects of job performance, and to support decisions regarding promotion, tenure, and merit pay. The Faculty Handbook provides a description and a timeline for evaluations, as well as specific policies and forms for self-evaluation and evaluation by the dean. Part-time faculty are likewise evaluated by their students and by their unit heads. Administrators and staff are evaluated annually by their direct supervisors. Concurrent enrollment faculty are evaluated using the same standards as on-campus faculty. In fall 2022, UAM modified the procedures to better ensure consistency in the process, which includes self-evaluations, supervisory evaluations, student evaluations, and site visit evaluations.

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2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.

1. The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.
2. The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

Argument

2.B.1. The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.

The University of Arkansas at Monticello meets its obligation for clear and complete disclosure to multiple audiences across a variety of media. Offering comprehensive information on academics, admissions, campus life, and more, the UAM website underwent significant improvements in 2020 and is updated as programs and faculty/staff change. The website provides essential consumer information, including tuition and financial resources and detailed academic information. Accreditation details are readily accessible, reflecting UAM's commitment to transparency. The institution actively supports student success through various programs, competitions, and community engagement initiatives. From co-curricular activities to community service, UAM fosters a well-rounded educational experience.

UAM's website is the primary source of information for external and internal audiences. The homepage includes a series of dropdown menus for Academics, Admissions & Aid, Life at UAM, Athletics, and About UAM. For items not explicitly listed in the dropdown menus there is a website search box, although this tool will refer only to general topics, and not to exact webpages.

In 2018 UAM contracted with the consulting firm of Simpson & Scarborough to assist with rebranding the website and to help guide the university in the selection of a new web content management system. UAM launched its new website in September 2020. The Student Engagement webpages received a full refresh in fall 2023 to make the accessibility, flow, and style of the webpage more in line with best practices used at other universities.

Consumer information is available in several locations on the UAM website, for example, on the Students Right to Know webpage, the Institutional Research webpage, and the Financial Aid webpage. Prospective students, current students, and their parents can find data and guidance regarding tuition and fees, Cost of Attendance, retention statistics, campus security policies, crime statistics, Professional Licensure Disclosure, financial data (described in 2A), and student financial resources. The University's application packet is an additional source of consumer information.

The University Catalog provides standard academic information including the academic calendar, accreditation information, degree programs, fees and expenses for the year of publication, and degree

progression plans. As of fall 2023, the Catalog is digital and fully searchable. The Academics tab on the UAM homepage has a direct link to a listing of Degrees and Programs. Information on these is included in both the Catalog and in the pages for each program in the Academics section of the website. General requirements for graduation and specific requirements for each degree are laid out in the Catalog. Each college and school has a link under the Academics page that provides information on certificates, degrees, salary expectations, industry growth, program enrollment and retention, program assessment, and unit strategic plans.

The Student Handbook contains information on student rights and responsibilities, student government, student services, and significant federal regulations including the Clery Act, Title IX, FERPA, affirmative action, and financial resources. Policies on residence life, academic appeals, and other topics are also listed. A link to the Student Handbook is emailed to the student distribution each semester, and it can be accessed under the Information for Students tab on the UAM homepage. The Handbook for Concurrent Enrollment Students is accessed under the Academics tab on the concurrent enrollment website.

The website for UAM Alumni informs alumni of special events and opportunities for engagement.

Information related to UAM Accreditation is under the "About UAM" tab on the UAM webpage. The mark of affiliation with the Higher Learning Commission is displayed toward the bottom of most primary UAM webpages. The availability of information described within this section demonstrates that the University is transparent in its operations. Information is clearly listed and can generally be found on several different webpages and through a variety of searches.

A primary source for information related to the different information/statistics of the University is located on the Office of Institutional Research webpage. This page includes University Fast Facts, Institutional Data, and access to information related to the reports published by entities outside of the University.

To enhance accreditation-related information, a full list of instructors and their academic credentials is available as a link from the Catalog site. Departments include a listing of faculty and staff on their webpages, and the institution provides a full faculty and staff directory under academic resources and other locations.

2.B.2. The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

UAM recognizes that although co-curricular involvement may not be one of the measures in the state's formula for "productivity funding," active involvement in campus life can dramatically enhance student success, both during the time in school and also for lifetime service and engaged citizenship. While assessment of co-curricular activities is sometimes challenging and indirect, the Vice Chancellor for Student Engagement is attempting to better gauge how valuable co-curricular activities are. The Spring 2024 semester saw the beginning of work on a new survey tool designed to help capture student feedback and assess Institutional Learning Outcomes at co-curricular events/programs. While the survey tool is still undergoing refinement, it is being beta-tested in the Fall 2024 semester.

The UAM Mission declares that the school seeks opportunities for service learning, and the second strategy for the goal of Student Success lists ways the school can facilitate a "well-rounded

experience" for students. Opportunities for social involvement begins with Residence Life, and include a wide variety of organizations on campus, ranging from Greek organizations to several religious campus ministries.

A lively NCAA Division-II athletic program provides students many ways to participate in sports. The Spring 2024 3.064 overall GPA for student athletes, led by the softball team's 3.73 and the men's basketball team's 3.31, indicates that athletic participation does not preclude the students' academic education.

Some programs find ways to involve students in competitive activities that make use of their academic work. Natural Resources Management students who are members of the Society of American Foresters (SAF) compete in a national quiz bowl each year. This academic competition began more than twenty years ago and is a component of the national SAF convention. The 2023 quiz bowl was in Sacramento, the second year back after the COVID-19 pandemic. (The 2020 and 2021 SAF conferences were virtual with no quiz bowl in either year.) UAM students have finished in first place twice, and they have finished in the top three in other years. Competing in the quiz bowl not only provides an opportunity for students to test their academic preparation, but student participation in the annual convention also fosters networking with other developing professionals with whom UAM graduates will work in the future.

UAM Collegiate Farm Bureau attends the annual state convention, a diversity conference, the Young Farmers and Ranchers conference along with Farmers Day at the Capitol. Every year UAM has students participate in the Farm Bureau discussion meet at both the annual state convention and Young Farmers and Ranchers conference. The discussion meet focuses on current issues facing producers as well as social issues and trends in agriculture. The Pre-Vet club engages in community events like a Fall Fest and Petting Zoo for the public in which students raise money for local humane societies. The group also goes to a conference every year in which it tours a veterinary school, and the club coordinates an annual trip to Belize to work with the animals of underprivileged Belizeans.

Natural Resource Management students who are members of The Wildlife Society have the opportunity to compete in the Southeastern Wildlife Student Conclave. Students from regional schools meet annually to challenge each other in wildlife-related knowledge and skills. The event provides opportunities for hands-on training and networking opportunities with wildlife professionals. Competitions include a quiz bowl, presentation of research papers, and field events. The UAM Student Chapter of the Wildlife Society has been active since 1973.

Natural Resources students also compete annually in the Southern Forestry Conclave, in which students from twelve other forestry schools of the Southeast compete. The Conclave is a combination of timber sport and quiz competitions, such as log rolling, team sawing, dendrology, and tree measurements. The multi-day event is an excellent bonding and networking opportunity for the students as they camp together and socialize with their peers from around the Southeast. Training for Conclave occurs throughout the school year, fostering bonding, exercise, and forestry skills in team members.

Agriculture students have a similar academic competition experience -- with benefits like those for their classmates in Forestry -- through their participation in the Southern Agricultural Economics Association quiz bowl. In addition, Agriculture students regularly compete in the quiz competitions at the Arkansas Farm Bureau conventions.

UAM formed the SEARK Concert Association in the 1970s as a way to involve the community in the

performing arts activities of the school. The Association regularly schedules five or six programs for UAM and the wider community. Together with the UAM Division of Music, the SEARK Concert Association has co-produced musicals that allow UAM students to use their talents for community activities. The involvement of local children in many productions helps UAM students to serve as role models and teachers. SEARK Concert also provides concerts and other performances to schools in the seven surrounding counties. The UAM jazz bands are regular performers on these excursions.

Since 2018, in celebration of August as National Black Owned Business Month, the Taylor Library's Facebook page has profiled area businesses owned by African Americans. Interviews and photographs are very popular, generating hundreds of 'likes' and shares.

In February, for Black History Month, UAM schedules one week with special events. In 2024, these included "Behind the Big House," an exploration of Arkansas's extant slave dwellings through site interpretation, foodways, and archeological research at the Hollywood/Valley Plantation in Drew Country; Black History Mocha Madness, a fun and relaxing occasion for students; and Black History Trivia Night, a trivia competition for students that also contained an educational component centered on Black History.

Students at both Colleges of Technology have organized and participated in food drives and provided assistance to victims left homeless and/or in need from fires, floods, and tornadoes. Blood drives are sponsored on campus, and students participate in flu clinics and health fairs each year.

Schools and academic programs have student honor societies. In addition to the social aspects, these groups provide leadership opportunities as the societies identify and hold events, ranging from bake sales to service projects. Previously, Phi Alpha Theta (History) has helped do spring cleaning of the county historical museum and a nineteenth-century African American cemetery, and members serve as judges at the regional History Day competition for junior high school students. Some societies encourage and enable students to participate in state or even national conferences, as noted in 3.B.4.

Nursing students, in particular, are active in community outreach. The Student Nurses Association (SNA) has raised money to buy Christmas gifts for residents of the Annswood senior (low income) housing, and senior Nursing students provide weekly classes at the Hope Place pregnancy care facility on topics ranging from infant CPR to breast feeding to car seat safety. On campus, the students staff booths at the annual Wellness Fair. Their efforts were recognized with the 2016 award from the National SNA as Stellar School Chapter.

The faculty, staff, and administration of the Colleges of Technology at Crossett and McGehee are committed to community engagement by offering short-term programs that graduate capable workers for regional businesses and industries. These programs are developed in consultation with industry partners and advisory boards. The faculty and administration believe that the one place to teach and model work ethics is in the post-secondary technical/occupational training environment.

UAM students also find community in the campus ministries provided by the Baptist Campus Ministry, the Wesleyan Ministry, the Missionary Baptist Student Fellowship, UAM Catholic Student Ministry, and the Church of Christ through its Weevils for Christ program.

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2.C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution in compliance with board policies and to ensure the institution's integrity.

1. The governing board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution's financial and academic policies and practices; the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
3. The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
4. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties.
5. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution's administration and expects the institution's faculty to oversee academic matters.

Argument

2.C.1. The governing board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution's financial and academic policies and practices; the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

UAM operates within the University of Arkansas System. The ten-member U of A System Board of Trustees, representing all areas of the state, is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institutions and to assure its integrity.

The structure, composition, and autonomy of the Board are guaranteed by the Arkansas Constitution. Members are appointed by the governor in staggered ten-year terms. Additionally, the Arkansas Division of Higher Education is itself a bridge and a buffer between the University and the Governor, General Assembly, and public pressure.

A Board of Visitors also serves UAM. It currently has ten members and can have as many as twelve. The Chancellor makes recommendations, and the UA Board of Trustees approves the members, who all reside in counties that are part of UAM's traditional service area. The stated purposes of the Visitors are to serve in a liaison role between UAM and the System President and Trustees, to encourage support for UAM, and to furnish counsel and guidance, by advice and recommendations.

Both boards meet regularly to satisfy their responsibilities to the University of Arkansas System and UAM.

2.C.2. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.

The U of A System Board of Trustees meets at least five times per year, the location of the meetings being rotated through the various campuses of the system. Agendas are set and made publicly available in advance of the meetings, and include items submitted to the System President by the campuses. Agendas and minutes are available on the System website.

2.C.3. The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.

Board meetings are open to the public. UAM administrators, occasionally accompanied by external constituents, attend these meetings. Significant actions in furthering the mission of UAM include the Board approvals in 2003 of the incorporation of the technical institutes at Crossett and McGehee. The Board approved the 2017 renovations to the Library and Horsfall Hall and the construction of the Student Success Center. Other actions have included approval of the new Vision statement, the May 2024 approval of the Strategic Plan, and the regular annual evaluation of tuition and fee schedules. In March 2024, the Board approved the construction of the new Arkansas Forest Health Research Center, and in October 2024, approved a role and scope change for UAM and the proposal for the University's first doctoral program, which is in Forestry.

2.C.4.   The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests, or other external parties.

Board of Trustees policies establish the standards of conduct required of Board members and define actions which would constitute a conflict of interest. Board Policy 335.1 sets out standards of ethical conduct for all University of Arkansas employees and outlines procedures to be followed if these standards are violated. Board Policy 410.1 prohibits nepotism, contains provisions to ensure independence from elected officials, and governs conflicts of interest between employees and contractors.

 2.C.5.   The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

The Board of Trustees delegates management of the operations of the University to the Chancellor, who in turn delegates responsibilities to the Executive Council, comprising the Vice Chancellors for Academic Affairs, Finance and Administration, Student Engagement, Advancement, and the two Colleges of Technology.

Academic matters, in accord with Board of Trustees Policy 100.4.1.1 (4), are overseen by the Assembly, which is responsible for the development and revision of educational policies and programs of UAM. Composition, leadership, and work of the Assembly are described in more detail in 5.A.

Through the leadership of the Chancellor and Vice Chancellors, the UAM administration oversees the day-to-day management of the institution. The UAM Assembly and, in particular, the Curriculum and Standards Committee, the Technical Programs' Curriculum and Standards Committee, and the Graduate Council, manage academic matters for the campuses.

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2.D - Core Component 2.D

The institution is committed to academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

Argument

2.D The institution is committed to academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

The University of Arkansas at Monticello demonstrates in statement and practice its commitment to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

The UAM Constitution begins with the following affirmation: "We, of the University of Arkansas at Monticello, share with all universities the commitment to search for truth and understanding through scholastic endeavor."

Faculty freedom in research, expression, and teaching is codified in the chapter on tenure in the Faculty Handbook. This chapter ensures that faculty have freedom in the design of their courses, provided their policies and actions produce the expected Institutional Learning Outcomes established by the University. The Handbook goes on to say that "the faculty member is entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of results," and "in the policies governing faculty service, the University clearly states that faculty members are protected in their expression of academic freedom." The Handbook also notes responsibilities of the faculty, especially in their dealings outside the University, including the expectation that "faculty should at all times make an effort to be accurate, exercise good judgment and appropriate restraint, show respect for the opinions of others, and indicate that they are not spokesmen for the institution."

UAM is committed to its students having freedom of expression with regard to their academic program. The UAM Student Handbook includes the Policy on Free Speech and Expressive Activities in compliance with Act 614 of 2023 and provides a number of ways for students to have a voice in the activities and even governance of the University, including through student government and student representation on many committees. Students must adhere to ethical standards regarding academic honesty and integrity in order to maintain a UAM community of teachers and learners that reflects honesty, integrity, and fairness, and assures the integrity of the curriculum through high expectations for student learning and performance. The Student Handbook provides clear directions on pursuing grievances for a variety of complaints.

UAM provides a variety of forums in which students can conduct research and enjoy freedom of expression. Two literary journals, *Weevil Pond* (undergraduate) and *Shadowplay* (MFA)*,* feature works of fiction, creative nonfiction, art, and poetry. Research funding is available from sources that include the STEM program funded by UAM and the Student Undergraduate Research Fund (SURF) funded by the Arkansas Division of Higher Education. Guest lectures, notably the Winthrop Rockefeller Lecture Series, and the Library's annual celebration of faculty scholarship help model for students the importance of research.

In addition to holding to the Library Bill of Rights, the Taylor Library vigorously promotes the

American Library Association Code of Ethics, which recognizes that "In a political system grounded in an informed citizenry, we are members of a profession explicitly committed to intellectual freedom and the freedom of access to information. We have a special obligation to ensure the free flow of information and ideas to present and future generations." Banned Book Week makes for lively exhibits and discussions. The Library strives to make all of its resources available to every member of the UAM community. In line with this effort, the library has purchased laptops and hot spots for lending to UAM students so that all students have tools for accessing the information they desire and need.

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2.E - Core Component 2.E

The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, staff and students.

1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.
2. The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.
3. The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.
4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Argument

2.E.1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.

The University of Arkansas at Monticello, through the Office of Academic Affairs and at school and division levels, encourages faculty and staff to continue their professional development through research and other scholarly activities and has policies in place that ensure integrity in the acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge.

In compliance with the UA Systemwide policy 335.1 University Code of Ethical Conduct, UAM fosters ethical behavior among its faculty and staff through several programs. This includes but is not limited to, annual conflict of interest statements, which require all personnel to disclose any potential conflicts that could influence their professional judgment or integrity. By regularly reviewing these disclosures, UAM ensures transparency and accountability, reinforcing a culture of ethical conduct and commitment to the institution's values.

The UAM Testing Center maintains professional ethics by training all staff, including student workers, in administering tests in accordance with strict protocols for confidentiality and security. Testing Center Staff must pass certification exams to be able to administer many of the available tests. Further, tests are typically proctored by one or two proctors, who are physically present, and examinees/candidates must accept and abide by all applicable rules and regulations or forfeit testing center privileges. The Testing Center confidentially and securely maintains all required logs, files, and signed documentation in a locked facility. Personnel are careful not to provide sensitive information over the phone or via computer to unauthorized persons.

2.E.2. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.

Faculty are encouraged to apply for external support for their research programs. The Faculty Research Committee is charged with recommending the distribution of available University research funds and with promoting research across campus.

The Office of Academic Affairs oversees responsible research through the Institutional Review Board

(IRB), the members of which are appointed by the VCAA. The IRB has established policies on the use of human subjects for research or in-class experimentation, and monitors their implementation. All protocols for human experimentation must be approved by the Human Subjects Committee subject to IRB policies. The University through the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee supports the responsible use of animals in research and teaching by complying with all applicable laws and government regulations.

The Fred J. Taylor Library supports students, faculty, and staff in their scholarly endeavors through the variety of services it provides. The Library makes its resources available on campus and online, and the Library website includes guides to research and concerns such as proper citation and avoiding plagiarism. Classroom instruction by librarians includes discussion of the ethical use of information, one of the tenets of Information Literacy.

The Information Technology Department, in addition to providing support for the academic activities of students, faculty, and staff, strives to teach the ethical and responsible use of computers, and has established a Computer Usage Policy applicable to students, faculty, staff, and guests. The policy lays out proper and improper use of computers and the University's network. All faculty, staff, and students who use a University computer network connection are required to sign a form stating that they have read, understand, and agree to abide by this policy.

The UAM Testing Center serves many students, alumni, and others from off campus. Many different tests are administered, from on-campus tests to national certification tests. The Testing Center strives to maintain confidentiality, security and fairness in all its testing services. All examinees must check in with Testing Staff/Proctors and provide valid identification (and sometimes signatures, photos, and voice recognition) Results from exams are never shared with anyone other than authorized personnel or faculty. Many test results are uploaded straight to the sponsoring organization or faculty member and not even seen by staff.

2.E.3 The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.

Students receive guidance in ethical and responsible use of information resources from a variety of sources. In addition to the policies of the Library and the guidance which the library faculty offer, as noted above, the Student Handbook contains information about the University's academic policies including the academic code of conduct. Course syllabi, especially for capstone courses, provide advice on research ethics as well.

2.E.4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

The academic conduct code is spelled out in the Student Handbook along with the procedures for handling violations of the code, as well as in the Catalog. In addition, faculty provide the statement of policy on academic code violations with their syllabi addendum . The Code has regularly been revised, notably in 2022 and 2024, with revisions approved by the Assembly. While currently the only policy on Artificial Intelligence is that faculty should clearly state in their syllabi their individual policies regarding the use of AI, in the Fall of 2024 the VCAA established a work group tasked with considering the topic and recommending policies apropos to UAM.

The Office of Academic Affairs, in conjunction with the faculty, enforces the academic conduct code. In the past four school years through July 2024, there were twenty-two occurrences of academic dishonesty reported to the Office of Academic Affairs. Of these academic code violations, ten were

incidents of cheating, and ten were incidents of plagiarism, of which one was both cheating and plagiarism. Two of the plagiarists were required to retake a test or rewrite the paper with penalty allowing a "C" as highest possible grade. In eight cases, students received no credit for a paper or test. In one instance, it was the student's second violation and another was the third incident. Of the incidents of cheating, six were awarded no credit, four were issued warnings, and two were awarded lower grades for the paper or test.

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2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Summary

The University of Arkansas at Monticello (UAM) operates with integrity, adhering to fair and ethical policies set by the University of Arkansas System, the UAM Board of Visitors, and the Arkansas Division of Higher Education (ADHE). ADHE oversees financial aid, institutional budgets, and academics. UAM maintains standards of conduct for faculty and staff, including annual disclosures of potential conflicts of interest.

In terms of fiscal practices, UAM follows guidelines provided by the University of Arkansas System Administration and undergoes internal audits for compliance. Financial information is transparent and accessible to the public, and the University complies with state procurement policies. Personnel policies ensure compliance with employment laws, and affirmative action plans and grievance procedures are in place. Annual performance reviews hold faculty, staff, and administrators accountable.

UAM ensures clear and comprehensive disclosure of information through its website, which underwent revamping in 2020 for enhanced accessibility. Consumer protection is prioritized with detailed information on tuition, fees, campus security, financial resources, and professional licensure disclosures. Academic requirements and policies, faculty credentials, and accreditation details are easily accessible online.

The University is committed to student success through co-curricular programs, service learning, and NCAA Division-II athletics. Community engagement initiatives, such as the SEARK Concert Association and outreach events, further enrich the educational experience. Campus ministries provide spiritual support and community for students.

The governing board ensures autonomy and integrity in decision-making, meeting legal and fiduciary responsibilities while prioritizing the preservation and enhancement of the institution. UAM upholds academic freedom and freedom of expression for faculty and students, providing various forums for research and expression.

Moreover, UAM emphasizes responsible acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge through professional standards, support services, guidance on research ethics, and enforcement of policies on academic honesty and integrity. Through these measures, UAM fosters a culture of integrity and ethical conduct.

Sources

There are no sources.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support

The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

3.A - Core Component 3.A

The rigor of the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of student performance appropriate to the credential awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate and certificate programs.
3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

Argument

3.A.1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the credential awarded.

Appropriate academic requirements at UAM are predicated upon

- expertise of well-qualified faculty
- regular program review
- annual program assessment
- the oversight of the [Curriculum and Standards](#) Committee and [Graduate Council](#)
- and guidance from the [Arkansas Division of Higher Education](#) (ADHE).

To ensure academic integrity, the maintenance of academic standards, and adherence to best teaching practices, every academic program undergoes a rigorous program review every seven to ten years in either the context of an accrediting agency's re-accreditation requirements or the context of [ADHE's mandated ten-year program review.](#) Both types of program review include a detailed self-study and a site visit. Programs recently having undergone review/reaccreditation include [Music](#) (National Association of Schools of Music), [Forestry](#) (Society of American Foresters), and Nursing (Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing). The [BS in Mathematics](#), the [MFA in Creative Writing](#), [AS and BS in Land Surveying](#), [BA in History](#), and [BA in Political Science](#) all recently underwent ADHE ten-year reviews.

Academic programs seek input from outside the University to ensure that course requirements meet the evolving needs of the workforce. For example, the [School of Nursing](#) and the Colleges of Technology at [Crossett](#) and [McGehee](#) have advisory boards, and some technical programs (for example, [Crossett Early Childhood](#) and [Crossett Health Occupations](#)) have advisory committees composed of local business leaders and professionals who review UAM's curriculum to help keep it current with the needs of the working world.

The Curriculum and Standards (C&S) Committee, the Technical C&S Committee, and the Graduate Council have primary oversight over changes to existing programs and courses, as well as new program and course proposals. These bodies work to assure the maintenance of the educational quality and integrity of every program requesting changes. C&S minutes, such as these from the Spring 2024 semester, demonstrate the committee's efforts to ensure educational quality while being sensitive to the needs of academic units.

Gateway courses--such as English Composition, Quantitative Literacy, American History I, American History II, Art Appreciation, and Public Speaking--assure that freshmen are prepared for college-level work by holding them to appropriately rigorous standards and preparing them for continuous academic growth.

Some units must update courses regularly, such as Federal Tax Accounting and Auditing, because of frequent changes to tax law. And units modify their curricula to reflect the changing needs of students. The School of Nursing, for example, reviews and revises curricula based on consideration of current and emerging medical evidence-based findings, societal needs, health care issues and trends, practice regulation, and feedback from communities of interest.

Capstone courses provide students with the opportunity and obligation to synthesize their major coursework and to demonstrate a program's expected student learning outcomes. Results from the assessment of these courses help ensure continuous improvement of programs. ENGL 47653 Advanced Composition and ART 4693 Senior Thesis are examples.

Graduate classes are offered at the 50000-level and are distinguished by particular rigor. These are available only to individuals admitted for graduate study by the UAM Admissions Office and the individual graduate programs, each of which has distinct admission requirements. Each graduate program also has distinct student learning outcomes and conducts program assessment separate from assessment of undergraduate programs. For example, the Master of Music in Jazz Studies has its own student learning outcomes, and conducts its own program assessment separately from the BA and BME programs in Music.

UAM faculty use a variety of data to gauge the rigor and success of classes. The School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences, for example, uses assessment data reflecting student performance on national examinations such as the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), the Praxis II exam, the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT), the Dental Admissions Test (DAT), the Optometry Admissions Test (OAT), the Pharmacy College Admissions Test (PCAT), and the standardized final exams from the American Chemical Society (ACS).

As another example, the School of Computer Information Systems requires students to complete ISYS 46304 Application Software Development Project, the program's capstone course, in which students integrate various aspects of the curriculum from a variety of courses they've taken. Students are expected to develop an idea for a computer system, move the idea through the Systems Development life cycle, create the code itself, then successfully demonstrate, test, and document their system.

Appropriate academic standards and program updates are demonstrated by the high pass rates UAM students have on licensure exams in Education, Nursing, Forestry, and in technical programs such as Welding Technology (American Welding Certifications and National Center for Construction Education and Research Certifications), Practical Nursing (NCLEX), Early Childhood Education

(Child Development Associate), and EMT and Paramedic National Registry.

3.A.2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.

UAM is transparent in publicizing the student learning outcomes and requirements for all of its programs. This information is readily available in the online Catalog and is detailed in clearly titled sections related to academic regulations, graduation requirements, eight-semester plans, and course descriptions. Readers also find specific information about requirements for majors and other regulations in the sections for individual academic units. The Catalog contains separate sections for the graduate programs and for the technical programs at the colleges of technology. Academic units include their courses of study on their web pages. The University also has templates for syllabi for both face-to-face and online courses. The syllabi articulate the learning outcomes for each course and tie those course outcomes to program outcomes.

Courses are appropriate for the different levels of programs. Some courses are available only for technical credits. There are also 0-level remedial courses, which do not count toward a college-level credential. 10000, 20000, 30000, and 40000-level courses are available to undergraduates, upper-level courses having higher expectations for students than lower-level courses. 50000-level courses are offered at the graduate level.

As noted above, graduate classes are distinguished by particular rigor and are available to individuals admitted for graduate study. In select cases, high-performing undergraduate students are granted permission to enroll in up to six hours of graduate level courses. Each graduate program also has distinct graduation requirements. Whereas the Curriculum and Standards Committee oversees the maintenance of academic rigor at the undergraduate level, the obligation for oversight of graduate courses and programs falls to the Graduate Council. Minutes from this committee show its concern with course rigor and program health.

3.A.3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality.

UAM strives to provide high-quality teaching, consistent course goals, and appropriate evaluation methods for all courses, regardless of their delivery mode or location. The Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) are consistent across the board, and assessment data is collected for all campuses (Monticello, Crossett, McGehee, as well as off-site locations), for all delivery modes (face-to-face, hybrid, hyflex, and online), and for all formats (16-week, 8-week, 6-week, 4-week, and 2-week) to ensure consistent quality in students' academic experiences. The standard syllabus format helps to align learning outcomes across different delivery modes, and the Faculty Distance Learning Handbook and the Student Distance Learning Handbook define online, hybrid, and hyflex classes and underscore that these delivery modes all have the same student learning outcomes and grading standards as do in-person classes. Faculty on all campuses are required to keep the same content and SLOs for online, hybrid, hyflex, and face-to-face courses. All syllabi are approved by deans to ensure content consistency for all delivery modes. The OSCQR rubric and persistent training of faculty in the use of UAM's learning management system, Blackboard, help to assess and ensure the quality of online courses. Compilations of syllabi from face-to-face, online, and hybrid courses demonstrate that in all schools and on all campuses, course content remains the same while the delivery and schedule may vary.

A notable example of UAM's efforts to maintain consistent standards is that all faculty use common exams across all sections of Foundations of College Algebra, Quantitative Literacy with Review and College Algebra with Review. These exams are typically written by a committee of mathematics teachers and distributed to all sections of the course. Each year, mathematics courses are evaluated by mathematics faculty members for quality of content and teaching.

The Assistant Vice Chancellors for the Colleges of Technology oversee the faculty and curriculum on their campuses, as well as at off-site locations such as the Diesel Training Academy (located south of Monticello) and the Warren, Arkansas, campus. The technical campus administrators maintain regular contact with instructors and conduct classroom visits.

Concurrent faculty at high school locations must possess the same academic qualifications as faculty on the Monticello, Crossett, and McGehee campuses and must submit syllabi for approval to the appropriate dean, thereby fulfilling the same requirements as any other faculty member. A concurrent course uses the same textbook as on-campus sections, or an alternate but similar textbook approved by the dean for concurrent use. A student who is enrolled in a concurrent credit course must meet the same requirements and demonstrate the same SLOs as any other student who takes the course.

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3.B - Core Component 3.B

The institution offers programs that engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.
2. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.
4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution's mission.

Argument

3.B.1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.

UAM's General Education Program provides a strong liberal arts foundation for all students with emphasis on critical thinking, communication, an understanding of global issues, and the qualities of productive citizens. Therefore, the efforts of the faculty teaching General Education courses align with the Institutional Learning Outcomes (oral communication, written communication, critical thinking, global learning, and teamwork). The General Education curriculum not only ensures well-rounded individuals but also prepares students for subsequent academic challenges.

The state legislature's Act 98 of 1989 established parameters for the General Education Core to help guarantee transfer credit equivalences.

UAM has a 35-credit-hour General Education core requirement which both meets state requirements and allows students freedom for electives, within the limits of Act 747. This 35-hour core is used by all associate (non-technical) and baccalaureate degree programs. The General Education Requirements appear on the UAM website, in the University Catalog and, advising materials. A standing General Education Committee regularly reviews the program to assure that it meets evolving needs while maintaining its liberal arts rigor. In 2019, at the committee's recommendation, UAM updated the requirements to include four Gen Ed student outcomes (SLOs):

The UAM catalog section about General Education begins with the following philosophy:

It is the mission of General Education to provide a foundation for sustained lifelong learning. The program is designed to help the student develop his/her abilities to reason critically,

analyze objectively, think creatively, perceive assumptions, make judgments on the basis of values, construct arguments, use evidence, and communicate and observe effectively. General Education enhances the specific skills of reading, writing, computation, comprehension, listening, and speaking. The program instills an appreciation and understanding of the creative, intellectual, social, and scientific forces which shape history and guide lives.

When General Education is successfully completed, the student should be prepared to:

- Communicate effectively in social, academic, and professional context using a variety of means, including written, oral, quantitative, and/or visual modes as appropriate to topic, audience, and discipline.
- Demonstrate critical thinking in evaluating all forms of persuasion and/or ideas, in formulating innovative strategies, and in solving problems.
- Demonstrate sensitivity to and understanding of diversity issues pertaining to race, ethnicity, and gender, and will be capable of anticipating how their actions affect campus, local, and global communities.
- Work collaboratively to reach a common goal and will demonstrate the characteristics of productive citizens.

3.B.2. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.

Within the parameters of the state's requirements for General Education, UAM has structured its program to meet the specific learning needs of students and to ensure that they become well-rounded and productive citizens, as well as prepared to take on increasingly challenging academic work. As noted above, the General Education curriculum adheres to the tradition of the historic liberal arts design. Within the framework of the General Education core, students have the opportunity to encounter the primary academic disciplines. Because UAM is an open admission institution, having a core of courses that impart "broad knowledge and intellectual concepts" is especially important. Approximately half of UAM students begin their studies uncertain as to what they wish to major in or what their career goals are. Exposure to a wide range of disciplines and opportunities serves them well.

As stated in 3.B.1., the chief goals of UAM's General Education curriculum are tied to Institutional Learning Outcomes and therefore reflect UAM's values as stated on the UAM website:

The University of Arkansas at Monticello is a society of learners committed to individual achievement by:

- Fostering a quality, comprehensive, and seamless education for diverse student learners to succeed in a global environment;
- Serving the communities of Arkansas and beyond to improve the quality of life as well as generate, enrich, and sustain economic development;
- Promoting innovative leadership, scholarship and research which will provide for entrepreneurial endeavors and service learning opportunities;
- Creating a synergistic culture of safety, collegiality and productivity which engages a diverse community of learners.

3.B.3. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.

Starting with gateway courses and continuing through mid-career and capstone courses, UAM assesses all students in the areas of Global Self-Awareness and Cultural Diversity. Faculty and administrators understand that integrating diversity into courses, programs, and activities enhances the education of all students. Some programs, like Social Work, have courses focused on educating students in the application of appropriate social values, theories, and methods pertaining to the limitless variety of human behaviors and interactions. The Business program incorporates attention to diversity in courses dealing with legal or ethical training. And other programs, such as Forestry, Agriculture, and Natural Resources, include discussions of diversity as it relates to the management of agricultural production or natural resource policy.

Nursing students, as part of their professional training, are required to self-report on their awareness of and preparation for working with people from different cultures. For example, the course description for Social Determinates of Health, states the following: ". . . We will discuss key roles of health professionals in ensuring equitable treatment at multiple levels of influence to enhance population health and reduce health inequities through opportunities to practice skill building using case studies, deliberative dialogues and active listening strategies." Furthermore, the student learning outcomes for the class state that, by the conclusion of the course, students will be able to "describe how various social and behavioral determinants impact population health; . . . analyze the association of race and ethnicity with health and the impact of other social determinants on health; . . . describe the impact of health care access and equality on health status and health disparities; . . . identify and discuss strategies for altering the social determinants of health and reducing health disparities."

By their nature, disciplines such as history, literature, art, and foreign languages (housed in the School of Social and Behavioral Science and the School of Arts and Humanities) promote diversity of thought and the understanding of a wide range of cultures and historical perspectives. Diversity, inclusion, and social justice are the focus of courses such as Women in Literature and Minority Writers. Diversity is particularly promoted by the new multidisciplinary Bachelor of Liberal Arts degree.

Cultural awareness is ingrained by design in technical programs such as Practical Nursing, Early Childhood Education, Health Information Technology, Business Technology, and Hospitality Services. Even in the more industrial programs such as Electromechanical Technology, Welding, Heavy Equipment, and Automotive Services Technology, a growing need exists to equip students with aptitudes necessary for the increasingly global economy. Technical and business communication courses address the need for understanding life and valuing diversity beyond one's own circle.

In the Hospitality Services program, the instructor invites local temporary residents and immigrants from other countries to visit, share information about themselves and about food and its preparation in their countries.

The Office of Student Engagement has sought to increase appreciation for cultural diversity through International Week, which includes a Library display and a week of "international meals."

Foreign language clubs help students learn more about specific cultures. In addition, the Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistants are very active in promoting their cultures as part of their mission as Fulbright scholars.

Fall Semester 2023 UAM hosted a Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence, a playwright and an expert in Systems Thinking who has worked with marginalized populations in a number of countries to help them tell their stories. Themes of her teaching include the role of story in individuals' lives and society, how creativity works, art for social change and the changing role of the artist in a complex world. One of her contributions to UAM was to enable two students to do internships in Iceland.

3.B.4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

Although UAM is primarily a teaching institution, both faculty and students are involved with scholarship and creative works in ways that reflect the UAM Mission and that bring national and in some cases international recognition and honor to the institution beyond what is expected at a teaching institution. Scholarship is a part of the annual evaluation of all full-time faculty, with each school defining and weighting scholarships differently.

Faculty in the School of Forestry, Agriculture, and Natural Resources (SFANR) publish extensively and generate grant funding, $5.5 million in AY 2023 and $6 million in AY 2024. Faculty in the School of Mathematics and Natural Science also publish widely and, like their colleagues in the SFANR, use research assignments in order to mentor undergraduate and graduate students in research projects. Students give presentations and display research posters at a variety of symposia and conferences, such as the Mathematical Association of America, Society of American Foresters Annual Convention, the Wildlife Society Annual Conference, the Southeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, and the North American Duck Symposium. Faculty in these schools also include students in the teams that apply for grants, thereby acquainting them with additional facets of scholarship.

Almost all Science faculty members (other than lab instructors) are involved in undergraduate research. Faculty and students have received research grants from the National Aeronautical and Space Administration (NASA), Arkansas STEM Posters at the Capitol, and Network for Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE) to fund undergraduate research projects in biology, chemistry, and physics. Faculty and students make oral and poster presentations at the Arkansas Academy of Science, INBRE conferences, and the Arkansas Space Grant Consortium (NASA) symposiums.

Faculty and alumni of the School of Arts and Humanities and the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences publish extensively as well, including books, and some have won national awards.

UAM students are widely involved with national honor societies in which faculty serve as sponsors. At the 2024 annual Alpha Chi National Convention, a UAM English student won a national scholarship for her original scholarly paper, and in December 2024, UAM's chapter was named one of fifteen Notable Chapters in the U.S. In the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, students in UAM's chapter of the History honor society (Phi Alpha Theta), which recently received honorable mention in the society's national competition for Best Chapter, and the Psychology honor society (Chi Psi) regularly attend and present papers at state and occasionally national conferences. Political Science students have given papers at international symposia. In the School of Arts and Humanities, Art and Music students attend shows where they display or perform to larger audiences than generally occur in Monticello. Art students attend the Arkansas Art Educators Conference. Over the years, the UAM jazz band has won several awards at the prestigious Elmhurst National Jazz Festival and the International Midwest Clinic in Chicago, including Outstanding Band. In the School of Nursing, students, in addition to regular attendance at state and national conferences, have been recognized statewide and nationally for their skilled outreach to marginalized populations. And the

faculty in most academic units--Forestry and Business take their students to competitions requiring high levels of knowledge and skills. The School of Computer Information Systems recently took students on a tour of Murphy USA and Jefferson Regional Medical Center, providing them with valuable insights into industry practices and career opportunities.

Students from the Colleges of Technology attend state and sometimes national conferences and competitions. Students from the UAM-CTC Welding Technology program compete yearly at the Arkansas SkillsUSA contest in welding sculpture, welding, and pipe welding, winning three bronze medals, five silver, and four gold over the last three years. The first-place (gold) state rankings earned the students eligibility to attend and compete at the Skills USA Nationals.

The Taylor Library has an annual celebration of faculty scholarship and creativity, showcasing books, journal articles, artworks, and other materials.

In several programs at the technical colleges, faculty have developed projects that require applying skills learned in the classroom to the real-world. Some examples include welding technology students regularly crafting projects that are donated to community organizations (including barbecue grills and picnic tables); Hospitality Services offers catering and community service; practical nursing students assist with mass flu clinics; and the heavy equipment training academy prepares community work sites for building projects.

Whether through practical application, exhibitions, recitals, papers, examinations, and/or research projects, all programs engage students in acquiring and demonstrating mastery of knowledge and skills. Information literacy, taught through oral exercises, analytical reading, and expository writing, is part of freshman- and sophomore-level coursework, such as English Composition II and General Education Speech courses. Library faculty work with many instructors in helping students structure effective research on topics, coaching them to identify their question, locate and evaluate information, and use the information in ethical ways. The majority of courses in the Sciences, Forestry, and Agriculture have laboratories with experiments and/or field exercises that require the use of the scientific method, experimental design, and statistical analysis of data. Upper-level courses include seminars that require sophisticated research techniques, and many programs have capstone courses that culminate with independent research and an oral presentation which incorporates previous coursework. Many disciplines also require group projects, which help students prepare for professions that involve teamwork.

The work and achievements of students are acknowledged and celebrated in a variety of ways. Senior Art students have public exhibitions. Music majors are required to give public recitals. Senior English students present their capstone research papers to audiences of students and faculty from across the campus. In 2024, those Capstone English papers were published in Weevil Pond and The Colloquium. The two literary journals, Shadowplay and Weevil Pond and The Colloquium, are both produced by and include creative work by graduate and undergraduate students.

The UAM Investment Club, sponsored by the School of Business faculty and funded with a $40,000 grant from the Walton Foundation, trains club members to develop sustainable financial investment practices.

Faculty in Mathematical and Natural Sciences and Forestry have frequently included their students, both graduate and undergraduate, as their co-authors on papers and presentations. These collaborations even continue, in some cases, beyond graduation. A feature article in the Spring 2025 issue of *National Wildlife Magazine* will cover a UAM Biology professor's discovery of banned

pesticides such as DDT and its metabolites in wildlife samples collected by him and another UAM Biology faculty member, while studying White Nose Syndrome in bats at a historical site owned by the University. The article was authored by a UAM graduate who is now a Research Writer at the University of Arkansas Medical Sciences.

The Social Work program hosts an annual poster session for research projects by students in all majors. The School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences hosts a research symposium to showcase research projects by its students.

Students in several of the Sciences and in Social Work courses are encouraged to work on projects involving the community. For example, the UAM Student Social Work Association hosted a bake sale to benefit the Options Domestic Violence Shelter and The Clothesline Project to raise awareness for victims of crimes. The Political Science students host the Civic Arkansas project, and the Composition II students write notes for the Honor Flight DFW Mail Call.

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- SON National Recognition Stellar School Recipient 2020-2021 Renewal
- Student Social Work Association Bake Sale
- The Clothesline Project - Options
- UAM Alpha Chi Named Notable Chapter
- UAM Forestry Club Competing in Lake Striker Axe Days
- UAM Hosts Arkansas Political Science Conference
- UAM Institutional Learning Outcomes
- UAM International Week
- UAM Investment Club Officers Meet With Investment Team in Washington D.C
- UAM Mission
- UAM Student Receives Statewide Nursing Student Award
- UAM Student Wins Statewide Art Award
- Weevil Pond and The Colloquium
- Welding - Blueprint Reading syllabus Fall 2024

3.C - Core Component 3.C

The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

1. The institution strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.
2. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance, assessment of student learning, and establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff.
3. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortial offerings.
4. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
5. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
6. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
7. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising and cocurricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development.

Argument

3.C - Core Component 3.C

Argument

3.C.1. The institution strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Despite the challenges of being a rural institution with salary constraints, UAM strives to recruit and retain faculty and staff that accurately reflect regional demography.

Each year UAM submits an "Employee Minority Report" to the Arkansas Division of Higher Education. According to the 2024 report, the majority of total employees and the majority of faculty are female, 60% and 63%, respectively. Among students, females are also the majority population.

Nineteen percent of all UAM employees are African-American. Among faculty, that number is 10%. The African-American population among students has ranged between approximately 26% and 31% since 2019.

Category	Number	Percentage

Total Employees	**693**	**100%**
Female Employees	413	60%
Male Employees	280	40%
Asian Employees	16	2%
African American Employees	132	19%
Caucasian Employees	493	71%
Hispanic Employees	14	2%
American Indian Employees	14	2%
Unreported	24	3%
Category	Number	Percentage
Total Faculty	**206**	**100%**
Female Faculty	129	63%
Male Faculty	77	37%
Asian Faculty	7	3%
African American Faculty	20	10%
Caucasian Faculty	166	81%
Hispanic Faculty	2	1%
American Indian Faculty	1	0%
Unreported	10	5%

3.C.2. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance, assessment of student learning, and establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff.

As the number of faculty has fluctuated over the years, largely because of shifts in enrollment, the UAM administration has consistently and persistently made sure the number has been adequate to provide quality teaching, oversee assessment processes, and to serve on the various and critical workgroups, including hiring committees.

Because the number of faculty is always adequate, class sizes are consistently reasonable. General Education courses might have twenty to forty students, depending on what is feasible given the nature of the discipline. Upper-level courses are often much smaller.

Whenever a faculty member retires or resigns, administrators look at data to determine whether a replacement is needed and, if so, the rank and areas of specialization that would best serve UAM students.

Unlike many schools, UAM keeps faculty (and staff) in full-time status. But where feasible and effective, part-time faculty prove valuable. The most obvious examples are in the Master of Music in Jazz Studies, which employs a number of internationally renowned jazz musicians, like David Kane, and in the Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing, which uses acclaimed writers, such as Steve Heller, with significant publications and national recognition.

UAM strives to embrace part-time faculty as valued and respected members of the University community, and they are included in program meetings and invited to share their perspectives in discussions regarding curriculum, recruitment, retention, assessment, and academic standards.

Teaching Assistants and Graduate Assistants in some areas like English, Foreign Languages, and Speech help assure adequate staffing.

Tenure-track and tenured faculty generally teach twelve credit hours each semester. In addition and in accordance with the Faculty Handbook, they are expected to advise students, engage in appropriate service activities (committee work, usually), and produce scholarly and/or creative work. Non-tenure-track Instructors generally teach fifteen hours a semester, and although expectations for non-teaching activities are lower, most Instructors serve on committees and advise students. Release time is awarded to faculty with administrative duties or who are engaged in significant research projects.

3.C.3. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial offerings.

UAM's policies regarding faculty credentials are set forth in UAM Operating Procedure 415.4.

That document was most recently updated May 4, 2023, and aligns with HLC Assumed Practice B.2., with additional explication:

> If a faculty is not qualified to teach the courses desired based upon their highest degree, the institution may choose to qualify the faculty based upon equivalent experience. In order to do so, the academic unit will need to provide documentation of Tested Experience equivalent to

the degree required. Tested experience criteria may include but are not exclusive to years of teaching experience prior to being hired at UAM, professional experience in which relevant skill sets were developed and demonstrated, certifications, licenses, significant honors, awards, professional society service, and achievements in the area of expertise.

Each discipline will have a rubric of Tested Experience qualifications that has been developed by faculty in the discipline. The Program Coordinator/Chair/Dean will use the rubric to determine whether a faculty applicant meets the standards required to assure the appropriate level and quality of instruction. [Note: these rubrics are included at the end of Procedure 415.4].

The program Coordinator/Chair will sign and forward the rubric, along with the signed Certification of Faculty Equivalent Experience form, to the Dean for approval. If the Dean approves, the documents will be forwarded to the supervising Vice Chancellor for approval. In the case of a graduate faculty member, the Dean should also attach the Graduate Council approval document to the Equivalent Experience form. The Office of Academic Affairs or College of Technology Vice Chancellor will maintain a record of the equivalent experience designation in the faculty member's file.

3.C.4. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.

Both state policy and UAM policy dictate faculty evaluation policy processes, which are detailed in the Faculty Handbook and are rigorous. Deans match faculty self-evaluations against evidence of effective teaching, including peer evaluations, and appropriate service, scholarship, and planning. These evaluations figure in decisions on renewals of contracts, summer teaching, pay increases, promotion, and tenure. There is also a system of post-tenure review with full evaluations every five years. UAM reports these processes annually to ADHE in the Annual Faculty Performance Report.

3.C.5. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.

The annual evaluations of faculty performance help assure that UAM faculty stay professionally active and up-to-date. To support continuous growth among faculty, UAM provides resources and initiatives.

Each school is allotted funds for professional development (for example, attendance at regional and national conferences), and when appropriate, deans can access their Maintenance and Operating funds as well.

Every school year begins with Professional Development Week during which faculty attend a variety of presentations and workshops on topics of special concern, such as Artificial Intelligence, program assessment, new uses for Blackboard, state-mandated performance funding, and high-impact practices for student success. In addition, all faculty can get training in or updates on advising at this time.

UAM annually makes available $14,700 to the Assembly's Faculty Research Committee, which analyzes grant requests and apportions funds as it is able. In 2023-24, the committee funded ten grant proposals.

The University supports and encourages faculty to apply for outside grants. Operating procedures 225.1, 225.2, and 230.1 provide guidance on grants. Faculty must also submit a Grant Proposal Form.

Academic units strive to provide faculty with technology upgrades when appropriate. Academic unit leaders recognize the critical importance of technology in a faculty member's ability to do research and to serve students well.

Finally, UAM follows the UA Systemwide Policy and Procedures for sabbaticals: (Off-campus Duty Assignment 435.4).

3.C.6. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.

The Faculty Handbook states that faculty should try to schedule "a reasonable number of office hours to facilitate counseling and advising. Faculty members must host a minimum of ten hours per week, with at least eight hours of face-to-face time in faculty offices from Monday through Thursday. The remaining hours may be scheduled face-to-face, virtual, via text, or by phone... A schedule of office hours must be posted on the faculty member's door, listed in the course syllabus, and a copy filed in the unit heads office." Faculty syllabi also include e-mail addresses and office telephone numbers.

Online faculty are expected to maintain virtual office hours during which online students may readily contact instructors and receive a timely response. Faculty teaching a mix of face-to-face and online classes must have both in-person and online office hours.

Almost all faculty are assigned students for academic advising. The Office of Academic Advising offers training opportunities to faculty advisors. Faculty advisors also receive a variety of materials such as test score chart, tip sheets, Degree Pathways placement chart, math placement chart, departmental training, and Blackboard organization access to assist with the advising process.

3.C.7. Staff members providing student services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

UAM understands that promoting student success takes teamwork. Campus offices combine staff to provide services where and when they are needed.

The Student Success Center centralizes offices of particular importance to UAM students. Staff in these offices are hired on the basis of appropriate credentials, experience, and demonstrated competence in line with the needs of each office. They obtain additional training as needed and as opportunities arise.

The Office of Academic Advising plays a particularly critical role in helping students succeed. Teaching faculty remain the primary academic advisors and receive training annually -- or more frequently, if sought. The professional academic advisors focus on designated groups, including at-risk students, undecided students, and student veterans, and they largely determine the placement of new students into appropriate programs and classes based on standardized test scores, high school GPA, or in-house tests. Professional academic advisors meet frequently to update each other on challenges and what they have learned. In addition to training for basic advising, professional academic advisors receive training via Blackboard. Trainings include all programs of study, financial aid rules, disability services, military affiliated students, and interpersonal skills in dealing with

diverse populations.

The Financial Aid staff is qualified and trained to help students negotiate the complicated web of seeking financial support. The staff counsels students regarding the variety of available aid, as well as loans. The Office informs students and faculty of important dates and regulations, such as refund deadlines and the sixty-percent class attendance requirement. The staff of the Financial Aid Office attends professional development meetings to stay abreast of federal funding updates.

Community outreach is another way the Office of Financial Aid serves UAM students and prospective students. Financial Aid Nights are offered in area high schools, offering guidance regarding the FAFSA. Financial Aid staff annually provide a counselors training workshop, primarily for high school counselors, but also reaching out to the UAM Colleges of Technology Student Services staff, to share state, federal and institution-level core financial aid program guidance and support. The Financial Aid staff also provide financial literacy training to students enrolled in the University's orientation course and in life-skills/college-skills workshops offered by the Office of Student Engagement.

Tutoring has traditionally been decentralized across campus. Each of the Colleges of Technology has its own tutors. The School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences offers online and face-to-face tutoring. The School of Arts and Humanities offers foreign language tutoring. The Career Services/Testing staff has tutors, whose schedules are published weekly in the Student Engagement newsletter, through social media, and through student emails. Tutoring is also available through Calendly and Blackboard Collaboration as a remote option for all UAM students.

The UAM Center for Writing and Communication (CWC) serves students and faculty from all disciplines seeking help with their writing, research, and critical thinking skills. The CWC student consultants receive regular training in strategies for good writing and pedagogy. The Director of the CWC, a full-time English professor, also provides individual tutoring in addition to training the student tutors.

With the support and guidance of the Director of the Library, a UAM librarian was named to the 2025 class of Emerging Leaders (EL) by the American Library Association (ALA).

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3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and resources for effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its offerings and the needs of its students.
4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites and museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

Argument

3.D.1.The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.

As the state's open enrollment university, UAM serves students from a variety of backgrounds and with a wide range of skills and needs. UAM draws heavily from the surrounding economically challenged Delta region, and most students are Pell Grant eligible. The average ACT Composite Score for an entering UAM freshman in AY 2024 was 18.80. And many UAM students are first-generation students.

The Student Handbook details the variety of support services that UAM offers, including Academic Advising, the Center for Writing and Communication, Intramural and Varsity Athletics, Career Services, Counseling, Testing Services, an Exercise Center and Wellness Center, Financial Aid, Housing, the Taylor Library, and Tutoring. Many of these services are centrally located in the Student Success Center.

Services provided by the Office of Academic Advising are described in more detail in 3.C.7 and below in 3.D.3.

The University's Office of Student Special Services on each campus works to ensure that students with disabilities are provided equal access and reasonable accommodations in compliance with federal statutes. In total, the three offices serve approximately 250 students each year.

The Information Technology Department provides assistance to students with email, wireless access, the student self-service portal, and the Blackboard learning management system. In addition, IT staffs a help desk in the lobby of the Taylor Library.

Nearly all undergraduates and a large majority of graduate students apply for some form of financial aid. The Office of Financial Aid works closely with students to provide access to available funding.

In fall 2023, approximately 96% of UAM full-time, first-time degree-seeking undergraduates received some form of financial assistance. Of those, around 66% received Pell Grants, about 41%

received loans through the Federal Direct Loan Program, and 33% were awarded State grants and scholarships. Federal Loans are the primary source of financial aid for UAM graduate students.

Over 200 UAM students are employed in Work Study Programs, both Federal (74 students in Fall 2024) and Institutional (145). A number also receive scholarships for academics (712), sports (275), and various activities (for example, band, choir, debate). In addition, there are more than 700 UAM Foundation-funded private scholarships.

3.D.2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.

Because of its open admission policy, UAM has always put serious effort and resources into helping academically underprepared students. Until 2019, the University directed students into a number of remedial courses meant to give them the foundation for success in college-level courses. Before attempting English Composition I, the required gateway college-level General Education course, an academically unprepared student had to take one or more of the following courses: Basic English, Critical Reading Skills, and Fundamentals of English. In Math, students took Introduction to Algebra and/or Intermediate Algebra in preparation for Survey of Math (Quantitative Literacy) or College Algebra.

Starting in 2019, UAM began a transition to co-requisite remediation with the encouragement and guidance of the Arkansas Division of Higher Education and the Texas-based DANA Center. Distinct remedial courses have now been entirely eliminated in English. Students take English Composition I their first semester along with a lab or review section if their standardized test scores or high school GPA indicate the need. Very few math students now take a distinct remedial course; rather, most Math students immediately enroll in courses with review sections or labs that enhance their performance in Quantitative Literacy or College Algebra.

The aim of co-requisite remediation is to reduce student costs and time to an earned credential.

In addition to the shift to co-requisite remediation, UAM has adopted a "Multiple Measures" approach to the placement of incoming freshmen. No longer does UAM rely solely on standardized tests (such as the ACT) but now considers a student's high school GPA or performance on an in-house placement exam. The aim is to eliminate unnecessary burdens on students who are capable of the college-level work and to facilitate swift progress toward a credential.

Academic advisors are provided with a Placement Chart to determine the appropriate coursework for new students.

In addition to incoming freshmen, transfer students and returning students who have not completed General Education mathematics and/or English requirements with a grade of "C" will also be appropriately placed to improve their chances for success.

The Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board has mandated that a first-time associate or baccalaureate degree-seeking student with a high school diploma or GED and/or a score of 14 or below on the ACT, 690 or below on the SAT, 62 or below on the COMPASS Reading Skills test, 35 or below on the ASSET Reading Skills test, or 68 or below on the ACCUPLACER Reading exam will be admitted to the institution under Conditional Prep Status.

At UAM, students who are admitted under the Conditional Prep Status must:

1. Select the Associate of Arts degree or a technical certificate program as their primary plan of study;
2. Sign an Enrollment Agreement that outlines the requirements of satisfactory academic progress and continued enrollment. This Enrollment Agreement must also include an individualized degree plan that must be signed by the student and the student's academic advisor;
3. Enroll in a freshman seminar/orientation course. This orientation course must be repeated each semester until it has been successfully completed;
4. Participate in a comprehensive advising/hold on registration process; and
5. Complete any necessary developmental courses during the first thirty semester credit hours.

At the end of each semester, the records of students actively admitted under Conditional Prep Status are reviewed by the Office of Academic Advising or the designated advisor on the appropriate technical campus.

In 2018, UAM broadened the Conditional Prep Status to include students with an ACT Composite score of 15 or lower and also developed the Degree Pathways Program. In 2020, Pathways became UAM's HLC Quality Initiative Project and is described in more detail in 4.C.2.

Learning support is provided for all subjects, but with emphasis on English and math. The Center for Writing and Communication provides tutoring to students from all disciplines regarding writing and oral presentations. This tutoring is available both in-person and remotely. In mathematics, faculty utilize campus tutoring, departmental tutoring, and OpenStax materials to assist students. The materials provide students practice for acquiring the skills that are lacking in order to be successful. Faculty utilize in-house written workbooks with pre-written lecture notes to help students follow class lectures. In addition, faculty perform first-day/first-week assessment in some courses to determine if a student needs to be placed in a lower-level class. Faculty schedule review sessions at varying times and some spend office hours in the tutoring lab. The math workbooks are written by UAM faculty with input from all faculty teaching the courses. The workbooks are sold in the campus bookstore at minimal cost.

Tutoring in a variety of disciplines is also available in the Tutoring Center housed in the Student Success Center. In the evening, tutors make use of space in the Taylor Library.

Both of UAM's Colleges of Technology offer options for students who need special assistance or do not meet the standard admission requirements for entry directly into a college-level or technical program. The Adult Education Program is designed to strengthen an individual's academic skills in reading, writing, math, and other subjects. The program serves non-high school graduates desiring to earn a GED as well as high school graduates who need academic refresher courses to prepare for employment tests, as well as college and military entrance tests. All incoming students are evaluated and placed in classes to eliminate deficiencies through a self-paced, individualized plan. Depending on demand, small-group and individual instruction are available during the day and evening hours at no cost to participants, both on campus and at satellite locations.

The statewide Career Pathways Initiative is another program of assistance offered by both the Crossett and McGehee campuses for parents who want to increase their education and employability. Career Pathways participants have access to:

- Advising for career and educational decisions
- Job placement assistance
- Extra instruction for building successful academic and employment skills
- Tutoring

In addition, Career Pathways program participants may qualify for financial aid to assist with childcare, transportation, tuition, books, and other direct educational expenses.

Since 2004, Crossett practical nursing students have been required to attend a workshop series on study and test-taking skills, learning styles, time management, and stress management.

Both Colleges of Technology provide tutors for all levels of mathematics and English courses and GED 24/7 is provided through distance learning.

In Fall Semester 2022, UAM began requiring that all students take a college-orientation class, either within a student's major or the general orientation course UNIV 11171 Pathway to Success.

3.D.3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its offerings and the needs of its students.

Academic advising plays a crucial role in the success of UAM students. Upon admission, each student is assigned an academic advisor familiar with the student's chosen field of study. Students are required to speak with an academic advisor before enrolling in classes. Until August 2016, the institution primarily used faculty as advisors. In 2016, UAM developed positions for professional academic advisors to strengthen the service. The Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Success ensures that every student is quickly assigned an advisor, advises certain categories of students, provides training for all faculty advisors, and oversees any specialized projects associated with academic advising. The professional advisors work with General Studies students and students being redirected due to Degree Pathways, and student veterans. Advising at the Colleges of Technology is handled by faculty members who participate in annual training sessions led by the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Success.

Over the past decade, the Academic Advising Office has launched two new programs:

- The Academic Alert System was introduced Spring 2014 to identify students under-performing in their classes and put those students in contact with appropriate campus resources as quickly as possible. When students are failing tests and/or papers, are chronically absent from class, or are having difficulty adjusting to campus life, faculty submit concerns directly in the Academic Alert System. Faculty and staff members may also issue alerts on students who are having personal or financial issues that are making it difficult for them to be successful.
- The Academic Recovery Program was introduced in Spring 2017 to assist students who have experienced academic difficulty. Any student placed on academic suspension, academic probation, residential denial, or financial aid denial is encouraged to work one-on-one with a professional advisor to develop an Academic Recovery Plan in an effort to return to good academic standing and/or meet UAM's Satisfactory Academic Progress policy. This plan may or may not include mandated tutoring.

3.D.4 The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as

appropriate to the institution's offerings.)

The Student Success Center (SSC) evinces UAM's dedication to providing the resources necessary for student success. The SSC brings under one roof many critical services: Academic Advising, Admissions, Testing, Career Services, Tutoring, Student Special Services, as well as Student Engagement and the Dean of Students. During registration events representatives of Financial Aid, Residence Life, and the Registrar come to the SSC to streamline the registration process. Offices for the Chancellor, the University bookstore, meeting rooms, classrooms, and a Chick-fil-A complete the list of resources found in the SSC.

Renovated in 2017, the Taylor Library houses a Learning Commons, an extensive collection of books and journals, and a help desk for the Office of Information Technology.

- The Learning Commons includes a variety of study environments, including individual study rooms and rooms equipped with large monitors that are suitable for group projects (or gaming).
- A print collection of over 300,000 items includes books, bound periodicals, microforms, government documents, and archival materials.
- Many full-text journals are available thanks to the library's participation in the UA System's contractual arrangements with publishers.
- The library provides access to electronic research subject databases, most of which are full-text, and many of which are purchased with a consortium of other Arkansas academic libraries.
- Twenty-five PCs are available to the public and are in steady use each day.
- Taylor Library also has laptop computers and hotspots for lending to students.
- Available to the public are a scanner, a color printer, and a photocopier.

The [Randy S. Risher Wellness Center](#) offers students and staff access to fitness equipment and is staffed by a nurse who coordinates healthcare on campus.

As mentioned in 3.C, the Center for Writing and Communication is a free service to UAM students. The center provides trained consultants (UAM students) who assist writers at all stages of the writing process: brainstorming, pre-writing, drafting, and revising. Appointments are typically done as walk-ins, though students may schedule a time if they desire. A typical session with a consultant lasts thirty minutes to an hour. By way of campus outreach, tutors give tours of the CWC space to classes, visit classes to give presentations, and consult with instructors to gain enhanced understanding of course assignments, student learning outcomes, and grading standards.

Most classrooms across campus have Smart Room technology.

Specialized laboratories around campus include the following:

- The School of Nursing has a state-of-the-art simulation laboratory, which has ten beds (including two radiant warmers, a bassinet, and an incubator), two hospital rooms, a pediatric/neonatal area, and a medical-surgical ward with appropriate equipment for each area. Clinical sites for the School of Nursing include eight hospitals, two dialysis units, Kids First (which treats infants and children under five years old who have developmental delays), two out-patient women's health clinics, and several community sites.
- The [Turner Neal Museum of Natural History](#) houses a planetarium and specimen collections. Excellent museum collections and models are available for teaching zoology, anatomy, ichthyology, herpetology, and ornithology. The collection of freshwater and marine invertebrates is one of the best in the region for teaching zoology and marine biology-related

courses. Recent acquisitions of equipment and technology for teaching cell biology, genetics, and DNA technology have greatly improved instruction in these areas.

- An Herbarium and Plant Research Center was opened in 2017 and houses herbarium collections, a plant research laboratory, a conference room, and a library, as well as a faculty office. A 2023 gift of [the library of a world-famous botanist](#) has provided superb print resources for researchers.
- The School of Education maintains up-to-date technology in classrooms, a computer lab, a STEM Center with specialized pedagogical technology which annually hosts a STEM Leadership for Girls Conference, and recently added a state-of-the-art exercise science lab.
- Memorial Classroom Building (MCB) houses the Windgate Graphic Design Lab, the [Center for Writing and Communication](#), and neuroimaging equipment for Psychology faculty and undergraduates to collaborate in research.
- Wells Hall provides dedicated space to the Forensics Team for practices and meetings.
- The Forestry building of the College of Forestry, Agriculture, and Natural Resources (CFANR) has approximately 45,000 square feet of new and renovated teaching and laboratory facilities. This includes two computer laboratories as well as twelve computers for graduate student use. The building also has a quantitative laboratory that is central to the unit's research in the areas of [Geographic Information Systems (GIS)](#), Global Positioning Systems (GPS), Remote Sensing, and Expert Systems. Numerous high-quality output devices (color laser printers, 48-inch and 42-inch Inkjet plotters, etc. that permit the visualization of spatial and tabular information are also used in the laboratory. The CFANR also houses other technologies, such field GPS units, dual frequency surveying grade GPS systems, Topcon total stations, digital levels, two GPS Base Stations (Mapping and CORS), GER 1500 and GER 2600 Spectroradiometers, and two thermal Imaging systems.
- The CFANR has modern wet-dry laboratories that are used for both teaching and research. A soil laboratory is used mainly for teaching the undergraduate soils course, but it is also used for initial processing and determination of soil physical characteristics. The Water Lab is used for most analytical services. A Wildlife lab is used mainly for teaching and has a large number of preserved specimens and also functions as the location for specimen preparation and investigation. The Forest Health Lab has a large collection of forest pests that are used for instruction.
- In addition to classroom and laboratory space, the Agriculture program has greenhouse space, pastures, horticulture field plots, sheep, and beef cattle on the campus. The college's partnership with the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture provides additional faculty and resources for teaching and learning. The cattle, sheep, and farm equipment owned and maintained by UAM and are used for teaching purposes. The Agriculture Building includes computer equipment for faculty and students as well as laboratory equipment and supplies. Two of the three classrooms are equipped with 70-inch and 65-inch televisions and with laptop computers. The third classroom is an auditorium and is equipped with a ceiling-mounted projector and classroom computer.
- Several technical certificate programs of study require clinical, internship, or practicum placement. Instructors partner with businesses and agencies to provide effective and appropriate sites for students to practice their skills. Instructors perform on-site visits and receive evaluations on students' performances from supervising professionals. The Diesel Technology program, based at a site a few miles south of the Monticello campus, provides specialized spaces and heavy machinery.
- The Division of Music uses a number of venues around campus: the Performing and Visual Arts Center has large ensemble rehearsal areas and practice rooms. Additionally, the Music Building houses classrooms with Smart Room technology, several practice rooms, a piano lab,

a listening lab, a computer lab, a Zoom lab. Harris Recital Hall within the Music Building is a venue for recitals, presentations, and readings. The Fine Arts Center hosts events ranging from solo musical performances to large-scale musicals and is a major resource for area music. Band and Choir students have their own residence hall, which includes practice rooms and a music library.

- UAM hosts one of the UA system archeological stations, and the archeologist, along with History faculty, has coordinated work in restoring a nineteenth-century plantation house, while the History faculty have helped in the restoration of the Pindall Law Office in Arkansas City.

In 2024, the Windgate Foundation recently awarded $750,000 to UAM for the renovation of The Red Barn building on the Monticello campus to transform that space into a new facility for the Art program. This site will house art classrooms, painting rooms, galley space, faculty offices, kilns, and storage.

UAM has also recently received a $16.8 million appropriation from the Arkansas legislature for the construction of the Arkansas Forest Health Research Center. The State Attorney General's office is providing an additional $1 million to purchase furniture and equipment for the facility. The funding for this Center stipulates completion of construction by December 31, 2026. The governor was present for groundbreaking in October of 2024, and excavation has begun. The Arkansas Forest Health Research Center will have three laboratories and two sample processing rooms equipped for research on the following:

- Pathology
- Entomology
- Genetics
- Soil and plant elemental analyses
- Geospatial analyses

In addition, the Center will house six offices for graduate students and technicians and four teaching laboratories for biology and chemistry classes and a conference center.

Finally, in December of 2024, the Chancellor awarded a $10,000 Innovation Grant, which will be used to gather and make available resources and tools for UAM faculty seeking to update and hone their pedagogical skills.

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3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Summary

The University of Arkansas at Monticello ensures that its educational offerings possess content, learning outcomes, and rigor appropriate to higher education. The standards set by accrediting agencies and the Arkansas Division of Higher Education provide UAM with guidance and opportunities for reflection on and analysis of its academic programs on a regular basis via annual reports and 7-year to 10-year self-studies for every program.

UAM transparently communicates the requirements and expected student learning outcomes at all levels of instruction, from technical certificates to graduate-level studies.

The institution is also deliberate in ensuring that content, student learning outcomes, and quality of instruction are consistent regardless of location, format, and delivery mode.

All of UAM's academic programs build upon a solid General Education foundation that embraces and acknowledges the value of a traditional liberal arts education--a curriculum that emphasizes the develop of communication and critical-thinking skills and that fosters global awareness and sensitivity to social-justice issues and the qualities of strong team members and citizens.

UAM believes that scholarship and creative endeavors make faculty strong teachers and contribute in profound ways to the intellectual and emotional maturity of students.

The University of Arkansas at Monticello acknowledges the importance of diversity among its faculty and actively pursues measures to enhance it. Recognizing the challenges of recruiting faculty to a rural university with salary constraints, UAM's administration is committed to improving compensation structures to boost morale and productivity.

The University ensures that it has adequate faculty numbers and verifies that each faculty member possesses the necessary qualifications for his/her respective roles.

The quality of instruction is maintained, in part, through an annual faculty evaluation process.

Professional development is a cornerstone of UAM's commitment to faculty excellence, with numerous opportunities available throughout the year, starting with Professional Development Week every August.

UAM guarantees student access to faculty through established policies, which mandate specific office hours and communication protocols. This accessibility is crucial for fostering an environment conducive to learning and mentorship.

In addition to the faculty, the staff members who support various student services are also well-qualified and receive ongoing training, along with professional development opportunities.

The University's efforts reflect an understanding of the integral role that a diverse and well-supported

faculty and staff play in the success of its students and the institution as a whole.

UAM provides a variety of appropriate tutorial, advising, and counseling services to its students.

To further enhance student success, retention, and on-time completion, the University carefully places first-year and transfer students into appropriate English and math classes, using multiple measures and employs co-requisite remediation.

A well-trained and dedicated advising staff, along with trained faculty advisors, assures appropriate academic planning.

UAM strategizes to fulfill the need for up-to-date technology and to maintain essential spaces such as libraries, laboratories, performance venues, and museums.

Sources

There are no sources.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It ensures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution ensures that the credentials it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission.

Argument

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

Core Component 4.A: The Institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

1. **The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon its findings.**

The University of Arkansas at Monticello evaluates the quality of its academic programs and cocurricular activities in all scheduling formats and delivery modes through annual program assessment in which faculty, staff, students, and administrators participate in a deliberate process of gathering data to determine strengths, weaknesses, and the need for change. Course and program assessments are documented in each academic unit's Annual Report, which is critiqued by the

University Assessment Committee (UAC). A recent example is the 2023-24 Annual Report for the School of Nursing. The UAC makes recommendations to the units each year on how the collection and use of assessment data might be improved. UAM's assessment culture is predicated on the desire to continuously improve the delivery, pedagogy, and content of its educational programs, as well as its support services.

In addition to annual program review, many academic programs do a state-mandated ten-year review that includes in-depth reflection upon accumulated data following the guidelines of the Arkansas Division of Higher Education (ADHE) and evaluation from external reviewers. Examples include these 2023-24 program reviews for UAM's History and Land Surveying programs. The 10-Year Program Review timetable is set by ADHE.

The remaining programs maintain external accreditation through periodic self-studies evaluated by visiting teams from their discipline-specific accrediting agencies such as the National Association of Schools of Music, the Council on Social Work Education, The Society of American Foresters, and the National League for Nursing, Commission on Nursing Education and Accreditation.

The review process for academic programs at the University of Arkansas at Monticello adheres to the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) Existing Program Review Policy. This policy requires the review of all academic programs every seven to ten years. The review timetable for UAM programs is shared with Academic Council at least twice a year.

The self-study uses extensive data and other information to support and illustrate a program's viability, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The institutional self-study describes and assesses the following: 1) Goals, Objectives, and Activities; 2) Curriculum; 3) Program Faculty; 4) Program Resources; 5) Instruction via Distance Technology; 6) Number of Major/Declared Students; 7) Program Assessment; and 8) Program Effectiveness.

The self-study is evaluated by the UAM Program Review Committee, the membership of which consists of faculty from a range of disciplines. This committee submits a summation and recommendations to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.

The self-study document is also reviewed by two external consultants (out-of-state for baccalaureate and master's programs), one of whom makes a site visit.

The external consultants' written evaluation and the University's response to the consultants' findings are submitted to the ADHE, following the guidelines pertaining to the evaluation from external reviewers. Linked here are the response documents for the 2023-24 reviews of History, Political Science, and Land Surveying.

In addition to comprehensive ADHE or external agency reviews every seven to ten years, the University of Arkansas System Board of Trustees requires abbreviated program reviews five years after the creation of a new program or the significant modification of an existing program. UAM's five-year program reviews the UAM System President in January 2024 are linked here: 5-year reviews. Such reviews focus on revenue, enrollment, and graduation numbers.

2. **The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.**

To ensure reasonable accommodations of transfer students, advanced incoming freshmen, and nontraditional and returning students, UAM officials consider transfer hours from other institutions, the quality and value of life experience for experiential credit, as well credit via CLEP, AP, and International Baccalaureate scores. Arkansas Course Transfer System (ACTS) course equivalency numbers are stated on all printed and electronic materials and sites pertaining to course offerings. Policies and procedures are in place to maintain adherence to University content and standards in Concurrent Credit classes offered through several high schools.

In accordance with UAM's transfer policies, as stated in the UAM Catalog, transfer students are required to submit for review all official transcripts from all former institutions. The Office of the Registrar is responsible for review of each transcript, including determining which credits will transfer as well as how credits will apply toward the University's General Education requirements. Application of courses toward a major program is determined by the pertinent academic unit.

The policy mandates that applicants must meet the minimum academic standing requirements outlined in the University Catalog. The Arkansas Course Transfer System (ACTS) provides information about the transferability of courses within Arkansas public colleges and universities. Students transferring from other Arkansas public institutions are guaranteed the transfer of applicable credits and equitable treatment in the application of credits for admissions and degree requirements.

Generally, technical courses are not transferable as credit toward baccalaureate degrees. However, an exception for credit may be made for no more than twelve hours of technical course credit from an accredited technical school or college, with the approval of the advisor, academic dean, the Office of Academic Affairs, and the Registrar through the completion of Recommendation for Course Equivalencies, Waivers or Substitution form.

The transfer evaluation process is organized by the Registrar's Office. High school students taking college-level courses submit transcripts from their high school, as well as from any colleges or universities from which they have taken college-level courses, as part of their admissions packet, and their college credits are evaluated and entered into their student file.

Policies for transcripting and awarding credit obtained through all forms of evaluation can be found in the UAM Catalog under Academic Regulations. Recognizing that individuals are often able to learn concepts, skills, and information essentially equivalent to college-level learning yet acquired outside the traditional college classroom setting, the University offers students the opportunity to earn college credit through special examination, evaluation, and other procedures. A maximum of thirty college credit hours may be awarded for non-classroom credit: *Academic credit by testing or experiential learning*.

3. The institution has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.

UAM's transfer policy requires that transfer applicants must meet the minimum academic-standing requirements and be eligible for admission to the institution from which they are transferring. To simplify transfers, the University has formed articulation agreements with several Arkansas institutions. Transfer students must submit an ACT, Accuplacer, or SAT score when they have not completed a transferable course in mathematics that will satisfy the general education mathematics requirement or when they have not completed one semester of a transferable course in English composition so that they can be appropriately placed in math and/or English courses. Course credit for acceptable work is transferred. Grades from other institutions appear on the transcript but do not

affect the student's UAM grade point average. Students on suspension from UAM may not transfer hours taken at any other institution during the suspension period. Other regulations affecting transfer credit are found in the UAM Catalog.

4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It ensures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.

When faculty discern from their analysis of program assessment data that curriculum changes to an undergraduate program are called for, they work with colleagues, program directors, assistant deans, chairs, and deans to complete a Curriculum Change Approval Form for submission to the UAM Curriculum and Standards Committee, which comprises representatives from each academic unit and Academic Council. The UAM Curriculum and Standards (C&S) Committee is charged with maintaining and ensuring academic rigor justifying the awarding of credit hours, as recent minutes show. Proposals for change can include the creation of new courses, course modifications, course deletions, restructuring of program curriculum, the addition of new concentration areas within an existing program, and the creation of new programs leading to a credential. Every C&S proposal is an effort to improve the educational experiences of UAM students.

The unit head submits proposals to Academic Council for evaluation. If a proposal is approved by Academic Council, it is forwarded to the C&S Committee or the Technical Programs' Curriculum and Standards Committee, where consistency with University policies, procedures, and academic standards is determined. From there, it is brought before the Assembly for review and a vote, and then sent for approval to the Chancellor.

A similar process is in place for graduate courses and programs. Proposals are submitted to Graduate Council on the Graduate Course and Curriculum Proposal Form. Following Graduate Council approval, proposals must be approved by the Chancellor.

Following campus approval, proposals for new and significantly modified programs are submitted to the Board of Trustees and the Coordinating Board. Some submissions (usually modifications) to these entities are notifications; others (like new programs) are requests for approval. Proposing a new program begins with a Letter of Intent Form followed by a New Program Proposal Form, which may require attachments such as a plan of study, descriptions for new courses, student return-on-investment, workforce need for the program, student demand data, program student learning outcomes, and projected enrollments for a three-to-five-year period.

A syllabus is required for every course and includes information required by Academic Affairs. Syllabi are uploaded into Blackboard course shells. There is a Face-to-Face Course Syllabus Template and a separate Online or Hybrid Course Syllabus Template. In addition, there is a standard Syllabus Addendum that accompanies each syllabus.

All syllabi are approved each semester by the unit head no later than the first day of class, and copies are retained by the unit, as well as forwarded to Academic Affairs. In addition to containing University deadlines and policies and instructor contact information, a syllabus and addendum provide details about class assignments, requirements, grading procedures and standards, class deadlines, procedural expectations, technological requirements, and student learning outcomes. Information regarding student support services and tutoring is provided as well.

No student may enroll in a course until successfully completing all prerequisites or concurrently enrolling in the co-requisite. The Office of Academic Advising may withdraw any student who does not comply with this regulation. The head of an academic unit may approve exceptions to this policy when there is a strong justification for doing so.

All students have access to a number of learning resources noted in 3.D.1, including the Center for Writing and Communication (CWC),the University Tutoring Center, and the Fred J. Taylor Library and Technology Center.

All students have a UAM email account and access to the learning platform Blackboard, which is used to some extent in face-to-face classes and extensively in hybrid and online classes.

UAM strives to provide access to all services to remote students— admission applications, financial aid assistance, registration, academic advising, tutoring, use of library resources, and academic appeals.

Mental-health counseling is provided through Telehealth. The University's partnership with Mainline Health Services also makes DOXY (a web-based telemedicine platform that allows healthcare providers to consult with patients virtually) available for mental-health counseling services. Student Health Services offers virtual health screenings and provides assistance with proper use of the health care system through appropriate referrals. Blackboard provides health education pieces such as Narcan Training and sexual assault education.

The Office of Student Engagement records its student workshops on a variety of topics (for example, preparing for exams, time management, communicating with professors and advisors) and makes them available on the UAM website for students who cannot attend the workshops in person.

Student Engagement's tutoring services are available online.

In addition, through Student Engagement, all students have access to the Handshake and Focus 2 Career platforms as part of Student Engagement's Career Services.

Program directors, chairs, assistant deans, and deans, as well as faculty, all play a role in the recruiting, supervising, and mentoring of faculty.

It is usually the dean's (Vice Chancellor or Assistant Vice Chancellor on technical campuses) responsibility to write a job description for open faculty positions that includes the required faculty qualifications and the responsibilities related to the position. The request to fill a position is submitted through Workday for approvals by Human Resources, the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, and the Chancellor before a position can be advertised.

UAM confirms the credentials of its faculty through official transcripts, letters of recommendation, emails and/or phone calls to references and former supervisors, interviews, documentation of scholarly and creative achievement, and teaching demonstrations. All faculty hold degrees appropriate for the program of study in which they are teaching (often terminal degrees: Ph.D., Ed.D., or MFA, for example) and/or possess demonstrable exceptional achievements and experience in their areas of expertise in accordance with HLC guidelines and UAM Operating Procedure 415.4. A number of UAM faculty have national or international reputations based on their publications, research, awards, and performances. Tenure-track faculty generally are expected to have terminal

degrees. Graduate faculty have credentials suitable for instruction at the graduate level and are approved by Graduate Council.

Concurrent (formerly known as Early College High School) faculty teaching general education courses must, at a minimum, hold a master's degree with eighteen hours of graduate course work in the discipline in which they are teaching according to the ADHE Concurrent Credit Policy.

The same is true of UAM adjunct faculty, though exceptions are made for individuals with demonstrable exceptional professional experience and achievement in accordance with UAM Operating Procedure 415.4.

To ensure faculty qualifications, the Arkansas Division of Higher Education also conducts a Faculty Credentials Audit as well as a Concurrent Faculty Verification report.

Concurrent credit courses must follow ADHE Concurrent Credit Policy. The dean of the academic unit under which a concurrent course falls must approve the concurrent faculty, the textbook, and the syllabus to ensure conformity to UAM requirements and standards. If the concurrent course is a technical course, the Vice Chancellor and Assistant Vice Chancellor on the technical campus provides the same oversight. Concurrent enrollment faculty are evaluated using the same standards as faculty on-campus. In fall 2022, UAM modified the procedures to ensure consistency in the process. The process includes self-evaluations, supervisory evaluations, student evaluations, and site visit evaluations.

5. **The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.**

As stated earlier, all of UAM's programs undergo regular review via the state Ten-Year Program Review process or via a process dictated by a specialized accrediting agency, all of which require an assessment every seven to ten years. These include:

College of Forestry, Agriculture, and Natural Resources

- The Forestry curriculum is accredited by The Society of American Foresters (SAF). The SAF Committee on Accreditation's letter of November 11, 2022, has granted accreditation through 2032 for the Forestry Option within the Forest Resources curriculum leading to the Bachelor of Science as administered by the College.

School of Arts and Humanities and Division of Music

- The National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) accredits the undergraduate and graduate Music programs. In 2024, the Division of Music received re-accreditation for a ten-year period.

School of Education

- Since 2022, the School of Education has undergone review by the Arkansas Department of Education. Formerly, the School of Education was accredited by CAEP. The SOE has eight programs that will undergo ADHE program review in 2025-26

School of Nursing

- The [Associate of Science in Nursing](#) and [Bachelor of Science in Nursing](#) hold continuing accreditation status from the National League for Nursing Commission for Nursing Education Accreditation (NLN CNEA).

  The [Master of Science in Nursing](#) (delivered via distance education) holds initial accreditation status from the NLN CNEA.

School of Social and Behavioral Sciences

- The [Social Work Program](#) is approved by the [Council on Social Work Education](#). It was reaccredited in 2022 and will be up again in 2029.

UAM College of Technology-Crossett

Several of UAM-CTC programs are approved by their representative agencies:

- The Electrical Apprenticeship program—[The Bureau of Apprenticeship Training](#)
- The Practical Nursing program—[Arkansas State Board of Nursing](#)
- The Nursing Assistant course—[Department of Human Services/Office of Long Term Care, Division of Provider Services & Quality Assurance](#).
- The UAM College of Technology—Crossett is recognized as an [Eligible Training Provider](#) by the Arkansas Workforce Development Board.

UAM College of Technology-McGehee

Several of UAM-CTM programs are approved by their respective approving agencies:

- The Practical Nursing Program - [Arkansas State Board of Nursing](#)
- The Nursing Assistant Course - [Department of Human Services/Office of Long Term Care, Division of Provider Services & Quality Assurance](#)
- The Emergency Medical Technology Program is accredited by the [Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP)](#).
- The [Community Training Center](#) is certified through the American Heart Association.
- The UAM College of Technology—McGehee is recognized as an [Eligible Training Provider](#) by the Arkansas Workforce Development Board.

6. **The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution ensures that the credentials it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission.**

UAM understands and acknowledges that the success of an academic institution is strongly tied to the preparedness and success of its graduates in their post-college lives. The post-graduation success of students is inherent to the [UAM mission statement](#) and its [Strategic Plan](#).

Ensuring students' post-graduation success is also inherent in the University's [Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs).](#)

As noted in more detail in 4.B, individual units assess the ILOs, as well as distinct program student

learning outcomes by a variety of measures: pre-tests and post-tests, portfolio evaluations, standardized examinations, pass rates for professional certification, admission to graduate and professional programs, and success in obtaining and retaining employment. Of widespread campus use for both program and institutional assessment since 2021 are the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU) rubrics for written communication, oral communication, critical thinking, global learning, and teamwork.

Following are examples of academic units' tools for ensuring the success of their graduates and evidence of graduates' success.

College of Forestry, Agriculture, and Natural Resources

Since 2021, based on graduation surveys conducted by Academic Affairs and CFANR, an average of 78% of CFANR graduates have found employment by the time of graduation.

School of Education

The School of Education works with the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to track all graduates in licensure programs. Graduates must complete a survey through the Arkansas Educator Licensure System before the state will issue their standard teaching license. DESE also surveys principals to determine employer satisfaction with teachers. Through the assistance of the state, the UAM School of Education has a 100% return rate on graduate surveys and a 60% return rate on employer surveys.

School of Nursing

To prepare undergraduate Nursing students for success, the School of Nursing focuses on the NCLEX-RN examination. Nursing faculty prepare students with hands-on clinical and practicum experience, mock NCLEX exams, and the requirement that seniors participate in a live three-day NCLEX review course taught by a nurse educator (not from UAM). For the graduate program, faculty prepare students for success through practicum experiences (MSN students are already licensed nurses).

The pass rate on the NCLEX-RN exam is used to measure the success of the Nursing program and its graduates. Graduates must have that license to be employed as an RN.

As further evidence of graduates succeeding, the School of Nursing deploys an employer survey six months after graduation and alumni surveys twelve months after graduation, both of which measure the performance of graduates against several CNEA accreditation standards.

School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences

In the School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences, learning outcomes and students' preparation for careers and/or further studies are measured through student performance on exams, quizzes, laboratory exercises, field course journals, homework assignments, research projects, reports, and presentations. Further assessment is done using performance on nationally normed examinations such as the American Chemical Society (ACS) standardized final examinations and pre-professional placement exams such as the GRE, PCAT, MCAT, OAT, and DAT, and post graduate placement into graduate programs, professional programs, and employment. In 2023-24, for example, the School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences tracked three students accepted into medical school, one student accepted into pharmacy school, two students accepted into physician assistant school,

three students accepted into graduate (master's or doctorate) programs, and many others accepted into various Allied Health programs such as occupational therapy, dental hygiene, and imaging.

Crossett and McGehee Technical Campuses

The technical campuses prepare students for success by offering programs that lead to well-paying employment; keeping labs updated with the latest equipment; offering an employability/ethics class to prepare students for resume writing, interview skills, and professionalism at the job site; offering students the opportunity to earn an NCRC (National Career Readiness Certificate), which is an employment requirement for many employers state-and-nationwide; and working closely with business and industry to ensure the campus is providing graduates with the knowledge and skills employers require.

Faculty and staff measure the success of graduates by looking at the number of credentials earned per student, job placement of graduates via six-month follow-up surveys, positive feedback from employers, placement in state and national competitions, the number of occupational certifications (AWS, NCCER, NCRC, CDA), and licensure pass rates (for example, Nursing Assistant and Practical Nursing). This information is documented in the annual reports of the Crossett and McGehee technical campuses.

All units are asked to document in their annual reports the employment of graduates -- whether graduates are employed in fields related to their major and what their salary ranges are. Of course, such tracking is easier in some areas (like Nursing, Education, and the technical programs) than in others (arts and humanities disciplines like English and History). This information is displayed on each program's website.

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4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

1. The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.
2. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
3. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty, instructional and other relevant staff members.

Argument

Core Component 4.B: The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

1. **The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.**

As the result of a 1993-94 self-study, the position of Coordinator of Student Assessment was created to facilitate the development and implementation of a campus-wide assessment program. The Coordinator formed the Council on Assessment of Student Academic Achievement (CASAA), the members of which were faculty members from all academic units. CASAA's chief purpose was to review units' annual assessment reports and to provide recommendations for making the collection and analysis of assessment data valuable.

Each year, UAM saw improvements in program assessment as academic units made progress in clearly stating student learning outcomes (SLOs) and taking action in response to assessment data.

In the summer of 2017, the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (together with a task force of Deans, faculty, Vice Chancellors, and Program Directors) re-evaluated and then streamlined the annual reporting process of academic units. Until this time, deans annually completed multiple reports covering annual assessment, viability, retention, faculty development funds, outside employment, and strategic planning. Since the 2017-18 academic year, academic units have submitted a single annual report that includes all of these components with associated data. Academic Affairs continues to refine the structure of the Annual Report to compile and analyze data that will lead to positive change.

In fall 2018, the CASAA Committee was reconfigured into the University Assessment Committee (UAC), which provides leadership and assistance in overseeing program and University-wide assessment. The members of the UAC are appointed by the Chancellor at the beginning of each academic year. As part of its mission, the UAC created a University Assessment Plan in 2019. That plan was most recently updated and revised as the University Assessment Plan 2024.

Recent significant assessment initiatives include using Blackboard as an assessment management tool and the adoption of the Online SUNY Course Quality Review rubric (OSCQR) for assessment of the quality of online courses.

Assessment occurs at all levels of the University:

Cocurricular assessment includes activities such as band, debate, advising, career services, and tutoring--in other words, those activities outside a traditional classroom setting (face-to-face or virtual) that, nonetheless, enhance students' abilities to demonstrate program and institutional learning outcomes.

Curricular assessment includes academic programs leading to credentials at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Analyses of these assessments provide data critical to measuring progress toward meeting Institutional Learning Outcomes and fulfillment of the University's Vision, Mission, and Strategic Plan.

Students can expect assessments from their first semester through their last. In each course, the instructor is responsible for evaluating student learning and uses one or more of the following for doing so: examinations, rubrics, surveys, pre-tests, post-tests, standardized tests, writing assignments, and portfolios. As for program assessment, the methods vary from discipline to discipline with faculty determining what tools are logical, efficient, and consistent with program values and goals. In addition to whatever other assessment tools a unit might employ, all units, including General Education, use the UAM-modified AACU rubrics for written communication, oral communication, critical thinking, global learning, and teamwork.

Academic and administrative units develop assessment plans linked to the University mission, vision, and strategic plan. Assessment is a transparent and faculty-driven process with guidance and assistance from unit heads and the UAC. Annual Reports are due August 1st to Academic Affairs. The reports, in turn, are due to the UAC by October 1st each academic year.

The University Assessment Committee reviews each assessment plan. The UAC provides feedback to the units in critiques of annual reports and in meetings with each unit head, and submits a final report to the Chancellor each academic year in the form of the Annual University Assessment Report. The minutes of all UAC meetings are located in Blackboard, as well as the individual committee members' critiques of the annual reports.

The assessment and review processes continuously evolve to strengthen effectiveness and better ensure validity and reliability.

As mentioned above, the University Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) are Communication (oral and written), Critical Thinking, Teamwork, and Global Learning. In addition to assessing the General Education curriculum, every academic unit measures the University ILOs using the UAM modified AACU Value Rubrics.

Most units collect data for Global Learning and Teamwork one year and then for Communication and Critical Thinking the next. Some units, however, like the School of Nursing are gathering data for all the Institutional Learning Outcomes each year.

Cocurricular areas are also assessed annually for progress toward meeting the University-wide ILOs. UAM's Cocurricular learning activities reinforce the university's mission and values while complementing the formal curriculum. Several cocurricular activities are assessed using the AACU rubrics.

Offered here as examples of cocurricular assessment are the annual reports from Academic Advising and the Office of Testing, Career Services, and Tutoring.

UAM continues its work to refine the institutional assessment processes. For example, because the template for an academic unit's annual report did not serve the Taylor Library and Academic Advising well, those two units worked with Academic Affairs to design distinct templates for their annual reports, as did the Colleges of Technology.

2. **The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.**

As a University-wide example of using assessment to improve student learning, UAM's Degree Pathways Program (Pathways) was developed in 2018 based upon analysis of retention and graduation data with significant input from all three campuses and University stakeholders. The goal of the program was to place all first-time freshmen on an appropriate pathway in accordance with standardized test scores. At-risk students would be a particular focus of attention and placed into coursework or plans of study aimed at enhancing their chances of success. Thus, students with an ACT Composite of 15 or below would be placed into a technical program with significant hands-on learning. The hope was that after succeeding in a few courses or completing a certificate of proficiency, students would move into more academically challenging coursework with an enhanced chance of success in a program aligned with their interests and career ambitions. To recognize student grit as a placement measure, an appeal process now known as Reconsideration was included in the program design. UAM also offered opportunities for students to retest through the UAM Testing Center at no cost to them.

The Pathways program launched in Spring 2019 on a trial basis involving a small number of students with full implementation targeted for Fall 2019. The Fall 2019 cohort did well with increased fall-to-fall retention rates across all ACT groupings. Future cohorts have seen success but not to the same extent as the Fall 2019 cohort. One theory is that the Covid-19 pandemic diminished the effectiveness of institutional efforts during the Spring 2020 semester and AY21. Since 2021, some recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic has occurred.

Following the Covid-19 pandemic, institutional data and staff observations revealed what Jonathan Haidt explores in his book *The Anxious Generation* regarding young adults raised since the early 2010s. This generation of young people has demonstrated a dramatic rise in mental-health issues including diminished motivation and real-world coping skills, characteristics which were exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, the institution launched a pilot program in Fall 2022 to allow students with ACT scores 13-15 to enter associate-degree programs without filing for Reconsideration. Ultimately, the pilot showed that 13-to-15 ACT students who were admitted to associate degree programs aligned with their interests and goals had higher success rates than students re-directed into technical programs. As a consequence, a Curriculum and Standards proposal is under consideration that will allow 13-to-15 ACT students to be admitted into the Associate of Arts program, housed in the Division of General Studies, without having to apply for Reconsideration. Deans who oversee other associate degree programs have been invited to consider allowing students in the 13-to-15 range admission to their programs as well.

Other data-informed efforts have been made to improve the Pathways program. Some academic programs have changed the placement scores required for initial entry, and the institution is working to align Pathways with other campus initiatives. UAM, having closely monitored all facets of this program, has made Pathways an integral part of its regular academic system and plans to continue refining the program with the vision of "empowering students to realize and develop their potential."

UAM faculty are aware that the mere collection of data is not the purpose of assessment. Everyone understands that assessment must lead to the enhancement of student learning and University services. All units continue to refine their efforts in improving the evaluation of student learning.

Below are recent examples of the ways in which units and departments have used the analysis of assessment data to make changes leading to improved student learning and University services.

The heading (unit name) of each segment below is a link to that unit's most recent Annual Report.

College of Forestry, Agriculture, and Natural Resources (CFANR)

Assessment data from 2022-23 related to the institutional learning outcome of critical thinking showed students to be weakest in integrating sources of information, interpreting it, making their own interpretations of the information, and communicating their inferences and recommendations. In response, the CFANR incorporated throughout its curricula a greater number of assignments and tests that require students to take in diverse sources of information, to make inferences about meaning, and to apply their analyses to learning objectives. Faculty and the administration will be looking closely at data gathered during AY2024-25 to determine the success of these changes.

School of Arts and Humanities and Division of Music

Implemented Spring Semester 2024, the Bachelor of Liberal Arts with a concentration and a four-credit capstone course allows the School of Arts and Humanities to sustain the disciplines of English, Communication, Art, and Foreign Languages. While assessment data showed that all of these programs have been successful in imparting their Student Learning Outcomes to their majors, enrollment and graduation data did not support the maintenance of the distinct major programs. SAH faculty and the dean also cited evidence that multidisciplinary studies have high value in justifying the change.

School of Business

In an analysis of the written communication rubric in the Business Communications course, the instructor noted "a lack of knowledge of what is appropriate wording and etiquette in a business setting." The addition of the course Business Professionalism enhances students' "soft skills" such as presentation skills, interviewing, and professional etiquette.

Assessment has also led instructors to increase the use of Excel in quantitative courses and to develop a series of assignments and exercises to improve student skills in spreadsheet use and formula entry. In Accounting courses, particularly at the upper level, students are required to submit a number of assignments in Excel files as this will be expected in the workplace. Faculty have encouraged students to take Advanced Microcomputer Applications as an elective to further develop their computer skills.

Assessment data for communication and critical thinking in economics, accounting, finance, and marketing classes indicated the need for action to improve student performance. Below are two

examples of changes made to improve student learning.

- Oral presentations: students are now provided tip sheets (maintain eye contact, practice transitions, memorize key phrases, do not read from screen) and having each member of the group do part of the presentation.
- Written communication: students now complete projects in sections each week in order to get immediate feedback for revisions.

School of Computer Information Systems (CIS)

In 2018, assessment data analysis found that several strong students transferred after completing their sophomore year. Reasons for students transferring included family illness, athletics playing time, relationship issues, and financial difficulties. These individuals did not receive a credential from UAM. In response, CIS faculty decided to create an Associate of Science in CIS. This degree gives students who are not able to complete their bachelor's degree a chance to earn a credential. The AS also helps the School of CIS to recruit who were not interested in pursuing the 120-hour Bachelor of Science in CIS.

Similarly, feedback from high school students reflected their strong desire to enter the workforce sooner than pursuit of a college degree would normally allow. Therefore, in 2022, the CIS faculty created a Technical Certificate in CIS and a Certificate of Proficiency in CIS.

School of Education (SOE)

Prior to 2019, the pass rate on the Foundations of Reading examination among education candidates was below the state average. The SOE determined that it was necessary to add an additional literacy/reading course to the licensure programs. The class Advanced Literacy was added to the program of study, and overall scores have increased to a pass rate in the high 90th percentile.

Assessment data collected from the clinical internship classroom observation rubric indicated that interns were low in assessment literacy. In response, the SOE added an Advanced Assessment course during the clinical internship.

School of Nursing

Assessment feedback from clinical sites suggested that UAM Nursing students were not as prepared as they needed to be to care for multiple patients. Therefore, the School of Nursing made changes in its patient assignment load and now requires seniors to take care of two hospital patients during clinical rotations.

School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences

Data from 2021-22 showed that while graduates generally performed well on standardized tests, they were relatively weak in critical thinking; therefore, faculty modified Bio Stats to focus on this area and thereby help students on the critical-thinking portions of the MCAT, GRE, DAT, or PCAT. In AY2024-25, faculty will be revisiting the performance of graduates on these exams to determine whether further curriculum modifications are needed.

In all laboratory courses, because of marginal student performance, faculty introduced greater variety into the types of lab experiments performed and, in the upper-level laboratory courses, more examples and practice to enhance students' ability to record lab books and write scientific articles.

As a result of upper-level math-course assessment, faculty determined that students needed more time for problem solving during class so that the students could become more familiar with the content. Analysis of assessment data is ongoing to determine the need for further modifications.

From 2018-2020, assessment data from the ACS Organic Chemistry finals showed that students' scores in spectroscopy were sliding, so more time is now devoted to mass spectroscopy, NMR spectroscopy, and IR spectroscopy. Also, the topic is now introduced in Organic Chemistry I instead of waiting until Organic Chemistry II.

In General Chemistry, more nuclear chemistry is now covered because the ACS General Chemistry final assessment data showed that students were not performing well on that topic.

In math, one major change that came from assessment was the perceived need for and the resulting creation of College Algebra with Review. The success rate (grades of A, B, or C) was 82% over the period of 2021-2023--far higher than previous success rates in College Algebra.

At the request of the School of Nursing, the ACT composite scores vs pass rates in Anatomy and Physiology (A&P) I were evaluated to determine the validity of the corequisite ACT score. Institutional Research gathered data from the past ten years, and the percentage of Nursing students passing with an A, B, or C were calculated for ACT scores 11-33. This showed that the percentage of Nursing students who scored a composite of 21 on the ACT and passed was 48.03% while the percentage of Nursing students who scored 22 and passed was 49.55%. As this difference is insignificant, the Math and Science faculty decided to lower the entrance score to allow more students to go directly to A&P I without first having to take Introductory Biology. The number of Nursing students taking A&P in the summer was also reviewed to see how many of those students were taking it in the summer because they failed it in the Fall. Of the Nursing students who needed the Introductory Biology prerequisite, 32 out of 54 students who were taking A&P I for the first time during the summer passed the course with an A, B, or C. Therefore, the Introductory Biology requirement for those making less than the ACT composite score of 21 remained in place.

School of Social and Behavioral Sciences and Department of Social Work

SSBS used assessment data related to the Institutional Learning Outcomes to shape the curriculum of the new Social Science Research Methods course developed in 2023-24. Data in the Critical Thinking category indicated that students struggled in determining significance and thinking about probability of outcomes (as opposed to interpreting statistics with a binary approach). The new course curriculum places greater emphasis on statistical interpretation.

Prior to 2016, assessment data from Psychology indicated that students were having trouble with advanced research concepts in upper-division courses. The program determined the best way to address this issue was to develop a second Research Methods course (PSYC 30183); a two-course sequence would allow students to have a background in both experimental research and interpreting research papers and issues. This change has played a role in retaining students in the Psychology major.

A review of assessment data in 2016 revealed that students concurrently enrolled in remedial English and certain SSBS gateway courses (American History and Introduction to Psychology in particular) had a startling 2% passing rate. A co-requisite of ENGL 1013 was placed on those courses to ensure that students had adequate reading and writing skills. Pass rates rose immediately upon implementation of the co-requisite. The implementation of co-requisite remediation at the urging of

the Arkansas Division of Higher Education undermined this new policy, so advisors had to then adjust their recommendations to incoming freshmen.

A review of assessment data in 2019 revealed that Criminal Justice and Social Work majors who failed to pass Introduction to Psychology had a 5% graduation rate. As a result, Introduction to Psychology was made a general education requirement for both majors to ensure that students had the foundational knowledge to succeed in their chosen major. Both majors have seen increased retention rates as a result.

In assessing students' written communication between 2021 and 2023, the faculty of the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences determined that courses with more diverse writing assignments might be a better yardstick to measure the AACU rubric dimension of "Control of Syntax and Mechanics."

The Department of Social Work has, in evaluating assessment data over the past several years, revised not only individual courses and the Social Work curriculum, but has also revised assessment measures to further refine measuring success.

College of Technology at Crossett

In the 2022-23 academic year, while analyzing the data for the ILO related to Oral Communication, the Crossett faculty discerned a need for more instruction and activities related to organizing a topic and identifying pertinent information. They therefore made curriculum adjustments to the Tech Communication course. In 2024-25, they will be measuring the success of these changes.

After assessing Critical Thinking in the Business Math course, Crossett faculty found that students needed additional practice in and discussion of concepts and applications. The course curriculum was adjusted, and the faculty hope to see improvement in student performance in the 2024-25 assessment cycle.

3. **The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty, instructional and other relevant staff members.**

UAM's processes and methodologies to assess student learning do, indeed, reflect good practice. The University has a centralized monitoring system for program assessment in place through the University Assessment Committee (UAC), yet the assessment process is flexible enough to allow individual academic units to employ methods and tools best suited to their disciplines: pre- and post-tests, portfolio reviews, performances, standardized testing, surveys, and syllabi review in addition to the use of UAM modified AACU rubrics.

Academic units summarize and analyze their assessment data each year in their Annual Report, which is reviewed by the UAC. The UAC provides feedback and makes recommendations to strengthen each unit's assessment processes.

The faculty are the drivers of assessment. At the academic unit level, assessment data is collected and analyzed primarily by members of the faculty, with participation from the dean. Based on their analyses, units discuss making changes in their academic programs. These discussions and subsequent decisions typically happen in unit-level faculty meetings. During Professional Development Week 2024, nearly fifty faculty attended a session on program assessment.

Students participate in the assessment process, for example, by filling out evaluation rubrics of peers in the context of student presentations and performances in English, Communication, and Music. Students, of course, are invited in every class to complete an end-of-course survey in which they evaluate their learning experiences. Students who are soon to graduate complete the Graduate Survey, in which they have the opportunity to evaluate instruction and other services provided by UAM. Students are also frequently invited to evaluate cocurricular events (workshops and guest presentations, for example).

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4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve retention, persistence and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence and completion that are ambitious, attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

Argument

Core Component 4.C: The institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve retention, persistence and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. **The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.**

Efforts at retention, persistence, and completion are reflected in the design of the University's Mission, Vision, Strategic Plan, the Implementation Framework, and in unit annual reports.

Examples of goals and strategies include the following from the University's Strategic Plan:

- Enhance academic advising, tutoring services, and career counseling for all students, especially by establishing a Center for Teaching and Learning.
- Further promote the academic success of student-athletes, band, choir, residential, international, non-traditional, military veterans and first-generation students.
- Establish new high-impact student experiences, such as internships, field experiences, job shadowing opportunities, and study abroad.
- Develop a system of connecting students to service-learning opportunities specific to their interests.
- Implement innovative instructional models, such as hyflex, in more academic programs.

To enhance retention efforts, the Office of Academic Affairs has created an academic communication calendar for retention and enrollment that prompts administrators, faculty, and staff to contact students about enrollment dates and advisement opportunities.

In the summer of 2024, the UAM administration set new and ambitious retention goals of 90% fall-to-spring retention for first-time freshmen and 80-to-90% fall-to-fall retention. Specifically, the aim is to retain freshmen with composite ACT scores of 21 or lower at 80%, freshmen with ACTs in the range of 22 to 28 at 85% and those with ACTs of 29 and higher at 95%.

In Fall 2024, the Chancellor created the UAM Innovation Grants to provide incentives for UAM faculty and staff to launch new and innovative efforts that will specifically impact and improve student retention and completion.

Each academic unit documents and analyzes enrollment, retention, and graduation data in its annual report. Each unit's Strategic Plan, which is part of the annual report, documents strategies, goals, and key performance indicators (KPIs) related to retention, persistence, and completion.

2. **The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.**

As students enroll at the University, they are tracked within the WeevilNet system (PeopleSoft), where they are designated as first-year or transfer, and as either full-time or part-time. With this tracking mechanism in place, PeopleSoft and/or Workday reports can be generated and produced for IPEDS reporting, UAM reporting, and Arkansas Division of Higher Education reporting.

The Annual University Assessment Report contains several tables summarizing retention, persistence, and completion data, as well as narratives analyzing the data.

Data is compiled and information is retained about these entering students in cohort groups in order to be able to produce institutional-specific breakdowns, such as retention rates, persistence and completion of programs.

For example, the institution tracks and analyzes fall-to-fall retention rates for first-time entering, full-time, and bachelor-seeking students. The most recent data shows retention to be at historically high levels. Fall-to-fall retention has improved by roughly 16 to 24 percentage points since 2015.

UAM's fall-to-fall retention rate for *all* first-time freshmen dropped from 61.8% for the Fall 2021 cohort to 58.5% for the Fall 2022 cohort. The retention is still significantly higher than it was for the Fall 2017 cohort (50.9%). This data does not consider whether a student completed a credential--for example, a CP or TC.

There was a significant jump in the student-athlete fall-to-fall retention rate. There was also improvement in the student-athlete graduation rates.

UAM also collects data regarding its Quality Initiative project, Pathways. Prior to the implementation of the Pathways program in 2019, the fall-to-fall retention of students with ACT scores below 16 averaged around 37%. Pathways was created to enhance under-prepared students' chances of earning a credential or multiple credentials starting with the Certificate of Proficiency and then possibly moving on to a Technical Certificate and, from there, possibly an associate degree and even a bachelor's.

The retention rates of redirected Pathways cohorts are somewhat deceptive because these students are often quick to earn a credential like a CP or TC and then leave UAM to begin working.

To evaluate the success of Pathways, UAM staff have looked at data from prior to the Pandemic because more recent data appears to continue to reflect the negative impact of Covid.

The retention data for the Fall 2019 cohort of 78 redirected Pathways students suggests a rather successful program, especially when considering that by Spring 2023, 55 credentials had been earned:

Entering in the midst of the pandemic, the Fall 2020 cohort of 88 redirected students, however, performed less well as reflected in the cohort's retention percentages: Fall 2021, 40.9%; Fall 2022, 13.6%; Fall 2023, 6.8% with only 44 credentials having been conferred.

The Fall 2021 cohort of 68 redirected students performed slightly better than the 2020 cohort. Fall 2022 retention was 44.1% and Fall 2023 retention was 14.7% with 45 credentials having been conferred.

Intimately related to Pathways is first-time freshmen placement in remediation for Math and English. The effectiveness of co-requisite remediation and the use of Multiple Measures for placement is difficult to judge as of yet because of the impact of the pandemic. Success rates, for instance, in freshman English courses are still not back to where they were prior to the pandemic.

Through analysis of standardized test scores, high school GPAs, and success rates (grades of A, B, C) in English and Math gateway courses for freshmen, it was determined that students should be placed on the basis of standardized test scores *or* high school GPA *or* an in-house placement test.

Gateway Course success rates in English are on an upward trajectory as they continue to recover from their severe drop during the pandemic. In Math, results are mixed since the implementation of the co-requisite model of remediation. While success rates in College Algebra with Review have risen to 90%, success rates have been declining in Quantitative Literacy with Review. Math faculty are investigating the contrast.

3. **The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.**

As noted above, data regarding student retention, persistence, and completion are part of UAM's Annual University Assessment Report.

The following are just a few examples of how UAM has used data regarding student retention, persistence, and completion to improve University, unit, and program policies and procedures:

For appropriately placing incoming freshmen into gateway courses with or without remediation--and thereby retaining them and helping them swiftly progress toward a credential--UAM has developed "Multiple Measures" for making each individual student determination. In other words, students are placed by standardized test scores (ACT, SAT, or Accuplacer) or by high school GPA or by an in-house placement test. Cut scores for placement were all determined by analysis of five years of data. Staff analyzed success rates for UAM freshmen with all standardized test scores and with all high school grade point averages in gateway Math and English courses. It was determined, for example, that a high school GPA of 3.5 or an ACT of 22 was needed for admission to College Algebra without remediation. Success rates dropped off significantly at lower GPAs and ACT scores. As another example, staff determined that students, regardless of ACT score, had a good chance of success in

English Composition I if they had a high school GPA of at least 3.1. Here is the UAM Placement Chart.

The creation of UAM's Pathways for placing new students into appropriate academic, technical, or adult-education programs was predicated on very low success and retention rates among students under-prepared for university studies as reflected by their standardized test scores. For example, students whose composite ACT score fell below 12 had a single-digit retention rate. A student's readiness for university studies is now determined by "Multiple Measures" (standardized tests, in-house tests, high school GPA) to determine the starting point for the student that is most likely to lead to success. Prior to the implementation of the Pathways program, retention of students with ACT scores below 16 was almost nonexistent. UAM is now seeing retention of a good portion of students with ACT scores ranging from 9 to 15 as they earn Certificates of Proficiency, Technical Certificates, and in some cases, higher credentials.

Below is a list of initiatives from the Office of Admissions regarding efforts at improving retention, persistence, and completion.

- Based on data showing poor success rates in baccalaureate programs for students with low standardized test scores and low high school grade point averages, at-risk students are now guided within the context of a range of educational options, including Adult Education, a certificate of proficiency, a technical certificate, and an associate degree.
- Data shows that first-time, full-time freshmen residing on campus tend to have higher graduation rate; therefore, to enhance Pathways students' chances of success, they have the opportunity to live on the main campus even if attending a program housed on a technical campus.
- Because data shows high school GPA to be a good predictor of academic success, recent changes in scholarship eligibility have been made to the benefit of students with low ACT scores but strong high school GPAs.

The UAM Office of Testing, Career Services, and Tutoring uses data collected from surveys of students, area employers, and faculty to improve the designs and offerings of student-life and career workshops including time management, study skills, resume writing, job searching, and interview skills. Students expressed a desire to more quickly receive feedback from exams administered by the Office. In response, the Office now uses QR code check-ins which allow the Testing Center to schedule and administer exams more efficiently and return feedback from the exams in a timelier fashion, which in turn promotes quicker learning.

The Master of Science in Nursing Graduate Program Review Committee (GPRC) meets twice per semester to review the program of study for the RN-to-MSN and BSN-to-MSN tracks, with particular attention to prerequisite courses, sequencing for progression, and sequence supports for the acquisition of competencies. To facilitate retention and progression, two undergraduate courses (Pathophysiology for Nursing and Health Assessment) are now waived for RN-to-MSN students due to holding an RN license. (The MSN degree has a graduate-level Advanced Pathophysiology and Advanced Health Assessment course.)

The All Campaigns Summary Document provides details about retention efforts.

In the past three years, the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences has begun regularly offering online sections of American History I, American National Government, and General Geography I as eight-week classes. This is owing to student demand for online coursework and to allow students to

re-take core courses they did not do well in for the first eight weeks.

As a method of retaining students, both the Criminal Justice and Political Science programs have experimented with hyflex delivery and other models that allow students to attend in-person classes remotely, either for individual class sessions or on a long-term basis. Social Work pursued a similar experiment Spring Semester 2024.

In 2017, the Criminal Justice program instituted an Associate of Science degree that is stackable into the BS degree. This promotes student completion of the bachelor's degree by outlining a clear course sequence from the AS to the BS degree. In addition, since many Criminal Justice students were dropping out of school after their sophomore year to pursue work with law enforcement agencies, this allows students to complete a credential before leaving and may encourage some students to come back and complete the bachelor's degree.

Data (success rates and DFW rates) indicated a need for a concurrent remedial model for STEM majors who scored out of Introductory and Intermediate Algebra classes but struggled in College Algebra. Therefore, College Algebra with Review was created to bolster retention.

4. **The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)**

UAM uses IPEDS definitions. For student retention, a fall-term cohort of first-time, degree-seeking students is compared to the subsequent year's fall enrollment. The first-time, degree-seeking cohort is also tracked to determine if students complete their degrees within the allotted time frame: for example, 150% of the length of the degree – six years for a bachelor's degree, three years for an associate degree.

To ensure adherence to good practice, UAM uses Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) rubrics for assessment of the quality of programs. UAM also uses SUNY's Online Course Quality Review Rubric (OSCQR) in developing and assessing online classes.

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4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

Summary

Criterion Four Summary

The University of Arkansas at Monticello is persistent in its efforts to improve the quality of its student services and academic programs with the aid of data.

An annual report is required of all academic units, as are periodic comprehensive reviews requiring not only internal reflection and examination but also the benefit of external consultants.

Several UAM programs maintain accreditation with appropriate discipline-specific organizations.

The deans and faculty work in concert with the Registrar's office and Academic Affairs to ensure fairness and logic in evaluating transfer credits, credit for life/work experience, credit via departmental examination, and credit through CLEP, AP, and the International Baccalaureate program.

Regarding academic modification proposals, a system for maintaining the academic integrity of the institution involves a process requiring multiple approvals by individuals and committees including departmental committees, deans, the VCAA, Academic Council, the University's General Education Committee, the University's Curriculum and Standards Committee, the Technical Programs' Curriculum and Standards Committee, the Assembly, Graduate Council, and the Chancellor.

UAM persists at evaluating the success of UAM graduates. Tracking professional licensure exams and subsequent employment is relatively easy in units such as Education, Nursing, and Social Work. Tracking the success of graduates is more challenging in disciplines not requiring licensure exams and from which graduates enter a range of careers and often must seek employment outside of southeast Arkansas. In recent years, UAM has striven to improve tracking of graduates' success through the Graduate Survey and by reaching out to alumni through social media such as Facebook, X (Twitter), and Linked-In. In the individual unit annual reports, unit heads summarize and analyze data related to tracking graduates.

UAM has made significant progress in program and institutional assessment over the past decade. Substantial assessment data are reported and analyzed in every unit's annual report. Program Student Learning Outcomes and Institutional Learning Outcomes have long been established and are widely disseminated to all stakeholders.

More than ever, faculty recognize the necessity of assessment and are the drivers of collecting and analyzing data, and they act in response to the data to enhance student learning. Assessment has also expanded into co-curricular areas such as Academic Advisement, band, choir, debate, and Student Engagement programs and activities.

Over the past decade, UAM has improved its tracking of data related to retention, persistence, and completion, as well as employment and career progress of its graduates.

Moreover, many of the actions based on the analysis of institutional data have been program, departmental, and/or intuitional watershed events—such as the creation of Pathways; the modifications of academic programs and academic support services; and the creation of new academic programs.

Sources

There are no sources.

5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

The institution's resources, structures, processes and planning are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

5.A - Core Component 5.A

Through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the institution's leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.
2. The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.
3. The institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

Argument

5.A.1 Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.

As detailed in Core Component 2.A, UAM is a member of the University of Arkansas (UA) System, whose principal campuses, divisions, and administrative units are governed by the UA Board of Trustees, which approves major system and institutional policies. For example, at its May 2024 meeting, the Trustees approved UAM's new strategic plan and changes to the Assembly's Constitution and Bylaws. The ten Trustees are appointed by the Governor and represent each of the state's four congressional districts.

The Trustees meet five or six times per year to consider action proposed by each campus, and to ensure compliance with existing policies and procedures. The Trustees also develop policies and procedures in keeping with changing regulatory action and laws and general governance. The public agendas and minutes of board proceedings are evidence of the oversight provided for UAM's financial and academic policies and its other responsibilities.

The System President is the chief executive officer and reports directly to the Board of Trustees. Each institution's Chancellor reports directly to the System President.

The Boards of Visitors of the UA System, while advisory in nature, are a means of individualizing the system-wide administration for the campuses that compose the system. The ten members of UAM's Board of Visitors, all UAM alumni, are nominated by the Chancellor and appointed by the System President and represent the counties of southeastern Arkansas. Minutes from the past year

illustrate the work of this body.

Upon the recommendation of the System President, the Board of Trustees appoints the Chancellor, who serves as the official spokesperson, promotes the ideals of academic achievement, and ensures the development and welfare of UAM. The Chancellor also acts as the official medium of communication between the System President and all of UAM's administrators, faculty, staff, and students. The UAM organizational chart demonstrates the nature of these relationships.

The Executive Council (EC), comprising the Chancellor and Vice Chancellors, conducts the administrative affairs of the University of Arkansas at Monticello. The EC is the only campus council authorized to commit the institution to any administrative act or action. The EC's minutes are linked on the UAM website, and those from 2024 illustrate the nature of the Council's discussions.

As mandated by the System Trustees, the University Assembly acts as UAM's legally constituted governance organization. It operates under its own constitution and bylaws and carries out its work through a series of active committees. The Assembly has legislative powers over educational policies including admission requirements, curriculum and courses, degrees and requirements for degrees, calendar and schedule, academic honors, student academic affairs, and interpretation of its own legislation. The Assembly has at least two regular meetings each semester. Assembly membership consists of faculty on appointments of half-time or more at the rank of Instructor or above; administration including President, Chancellor, Vice Chancellors, and unit heads; staff membership including Registrar, Dean of Students, and directors; Student Government Association President and additional designated students. Minutes are posted in UAM's Blackboard.

The work of the UAM Assembly is carried out in large part by the action of standing or ad hoc committees. The Bylaws of the Assembly state that "committees of the Assembly are constituted to provide a forum in which a greater detail of attention can be given to tasks and matters before the Assembly. As such, all Assembly committees shall be empowered to conduct investigations, make recommendations, and formulate legislation on matters under their consideration." Standing committees include Academic Appeals, Athletic, Curriculum and Standards, Faculty Equity and Grievance, Faculty Research, Library, Student Engagement/Student Services, Teacher Education, and Constitution and Bylaws. Procedure calls for resolutions to pass from these committees to a vote by the full Assembly and thence to the Chancellor for approval. Two committees that are very active throughout the year are Curriculum and Standards, which oversees the development of undergraduate academic programs and thus assurance of academic quality, and Academic Appeals, which ensures the maintenance of UAM's scholastic integrity and due process responding to students' academic concerns. Recent minutes demonstrate the work of these committees.

Assembly meetings also provide an opportunity for exchange of general information and for moderated debate. Within this forum, the faculty, administration, staff, and student body can discuss issues related to campus policy, attend to campus concerns, and promote awareness of campus activities and programs. Minutes from October, 2024, demonstrate the breadth of the agendas and activities.

Peer elections determine the officers of the Assembly. The University Assembly Chair, along with the Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Parliamentarian work together as the Assembly Leadership to ensure that the UAM community knows of pending policy changes. These campus leaders meet by arrangement with the Chancellor and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (VCAA) to discuss faculty, staff, student, and administrative issues.

The Faculty Council meets on an ad hoc basis for matters pertaining specifically to the faculty, such as to make specific recommendations to the Trustees or to the University administration. In the Spring of 2024, for example, the Faculty Council worked with the Chancellor and the VCAA to modify the policy on faculty office hours, to better serve students.

The Student Government Association (SGA) serves as the official conduit for conveying the concerns and opinions of students to the University hierarchy. Students from each academic unit are elected by their peers to serve in the SGA Senate with additional elected at-large members. The Association appoints student representatives from its membership and the student body at large to serve in the University Assembly and, where possible, also appoints students to serve on specific Assembly and Administrative Committees.

5.A.2 The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.

Data from the Recruiting Office, enrollment statistics from the Registrar, and financial data from the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration are regularly on the agenda for Executive Council meetings. All plans and decisions reflect real numbers. Financial data is updated almost daily through the early weeks of each semester as enrollment data becomes clear. Ongoing projects are modified as budgetary constraints demand or surpluses permit. And enrollment data is distributed by Vice Chancellors through their divisions.

The Office of Institutional Research responds to requests related to institutional data. Regional demographic numbers also help drive consideration of programs, whether adding or deleting, such as the MS in Nursing for Public Health, approved in 2022, designed to meet a growing challenge for southeast Arkansas.

An example of how data informs UAM operations is the Quality Initiative, the initial and ongoing development of the Degree Pathways Program, described more fully in 4.B.2. Academic Affairs collaborated with Institutional Research to regularly generate data related to enrollment (including demographic information), grades, and retention, and adjusted the program accordingly. The data continues to be tracked every semester with changes proposed based upon analysis of the data.

5.A.3 The institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

UAM is committed to the exercise of best practices and shared governance. While Executive Council, Assembly, Graduate Council, Faculty Council, and SGA work independently of each other, they also collaborate in order to ensure that the policies and procedures are kept current and function as intended. The Chancellor regularly consults with the officers of the Assembly. Through his staff, the Vice Chancellor for Student Engagement keeps the SGA and other student organizations apprised of and involved in deliberations. Finally, the existing standing committee structure provides widespread participation and input from faculty, staff, and students in the academic and structural operation of the University.

Sources

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- Assembly Committees Members 2024-25.pdf
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- Board of Trustees Meetings - University of Arkansas System.pdf
- Board of Trustees - University of Arkansas System.pdf
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- BOT Academic Consent Items March 2024
- BOV-Minutes-2023-1
- CS Minutes Spring 2024
- Cumulated 2022 SWOT
- CURRICULUM AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE
- EC-Minutes-2024.pdf
- Executive Council.pdf
- Faculty Council
- Faculty Office Hours Policy - Faculty Handbook 2024.pdf
- Faculty Office Hours Response Doss
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- UAMOrgChart2024
- University of Arkansas System.pdf

5.B - Core Component 5.B

The institution's resource base supports its educational offerings and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

1. The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.
3. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.
4. The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

Argument

Resource Base: State Funding

UAM has two main funding sources: state appropriations and tuition revenue. As with all publicly funded educational institutions, UAM must deal with the challenge of state support. In FY2023, state appropriations accounted for $18,252,937 and 52% of overall E&G revenue. For FY2025, state appropriations are accounting for $20,115,329, or just 49% of overall E&G revenue.

Up until 2017, state appropriations to higher education were based primarily on student headcount. In 2017, the General Assembly approved a funding model with a significant percentage of appropriations based on performance and student success, defined by meeting credit hour, certificate, and degree targets. Given UAM's designation as open admissions and its high number of students requiring remedial classes, this new funding model makes predicting state funding difficult from year to year.

Enrollment/Tuition Revenue

Public school enrollment in southeast Arkansas has dropped by more than 14% over the past decade, and UAM has struggled to maintain enrollment levels. UAM's Fall 2014 FTE was 2,860. The FTE of Fall 2024 was 2,130. In recognition of the financial value of having students in seats, UAM has worked hard on retention with some modest successes. Two factors make high retention rates challenging. UAM's open admissions policy comes with the risk that some students will enroll as freshmen with little ability to pass college courses. Retaining these students is, of course, difficult. UAM's Degree Pathways, its Quality Initiative, is documented in 4.B.2. as a primary strategy for helping under-prepared students for college-level study.

Furthermore, because the University operates within the economic realities of southeast Arkansas, low tuition is important in order to make a college education accessible to UAM's region. However, because of flat state revenues, tuition increases are becoming increasingly necessary. UAM's Advancement Office has intensified its work on obtaining funds for student scholarships, with significant results, and is developing plans for more endowments.

The budgets for the past two years, as well as audits (discussed below in 5.B.3), are evidence of careful stewardship of hard-won fiscal resources.

The inexorable rise in costs has led to another, albeit indirect, threat to tuition and fee revenues: student default rates. Over 90% of UAM's students receive Title IV funding in the form of Pell grants, student loans, federal work study, and other grant funding. The Arkansas Student Loan Authority (ASLA) assists the University by maintaining frequent contact with previous and current UAM student borrowers to inform and facilitate repayment, deferment, and forbearance of federal student loans. Prior to the national student loan payment pause, the most recent official Cohort Default Rate at UAM was 4.4%. This rate was calculated based on 954 borrowers in repayment with 42 defaulted loans during the 2019 fiscal year.

5.B.1 The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.

Whenever a staff position becomes vacant, the supervisor completes a Request to Initiate a Hire, which helps assure that all Human Relations procedures will be followed to fill the position. Applicants for all positions fill out an Application for Employment form so that supervisors can see training and qualifications, and contact references. In filling faculty positions, search committees are given firm guidelines noting Equal Opportunity rules and other pertinent regulations. Finally, upon a position being filled, paperwork documenting the procedure is gathered.

The University follows AHECB Policy #5.11.15 and HLC Assumed Practices regarding faculty credentials for instruction. Professional development is handled by offices, departments, and units, generally from funds allocated for that purpose.

Summary of Faculty Credentials

Rank	Total	Terminal Degree
Main Campus		
Professor	22	21
Associate Professor	35	29
Assistant Professor	30	26
Instructor	32	0
Adjunct	53	15
Total Faculty excl. Adjuncts	119	76
Crossett Campus		
Full-Time Faculty	13	0

Part-Time Faculty (Adjuncts)	8	0
McGehee Campus		
Full-Time Faculty	13	1
Part-Time Faculty	5	0

The UAM Office of Student Engagement has, in common with many schools over the recent past, experienced significant change in staff. The current Vice Chancellor for Student Engagement, in office since October of 2022, has brought more stability to all areas of his division, and instituted a program of cross-training so that employee absences and vacancies do not result in a lack of services.

UAM is a land-rich institution. The Monticello campus, in particular, has approximately 272 acres of maintained land. The nearly eighty buildings on campus range from some of the school's original buildings, now over a century old, to two buildings dedicated in 2018. In the 2010s, tight budgets led to decisions to defer maintenance, and resulting problems with leaking roofs and treatment for mold have made clear the need to make up for lost time. To that end, the current administration has carried out a planned program of replacing roofs, sealing crawlspaces, and working with the state's highway department to repair road surfaces. The most severe problems have been addressed through a portion of a bond issue that dedicated $2 million for deferred maintenance projects, and others are in line for attention as funds are available.

During the past three years, UAM has received grant funding totaling $2,194,334 from the Arkansas Natural and Cultural Resources Council to address deferred-maintenance issues for three buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places. UAM continues to work with Arkansas Historic Preservation to identify potential additional facilities for listing on the National Register. These funds are welcome and essential for maintaining older facilities with historic significance.

For other buildings, UAM continues to address maintenance needs. Since 2021, the institution has replaced several roofs and HVAC systems. Over the past two years, UAM has received $2.1 million to upgrade indoor athletic facilities. In the fall of 2024, UAM hired an additional maintenance employee dedicated to HVAC repair and replacement. The institution is doing its best to bring such services in-house to save money, as well as proactively addressing the aging infrastructure. Strategic sourcing of inventory, despite initial costs, has already resulted in savings in the maintenance of the HVAC system.

The Information Technology office at UAM strives to obtain and maintain technology that is sufficient for the evolving needs of faculty and students. In response to the 2014 HLC Team identifying I.T. as being thinly staffed, the office added personnel and farmed some operations -- such as the Library's management system -- away from internal servers to external suppliers. This has increased system reliability and freed up staff to pursue other tasks, such as boosting Wi-Fi access so that students and staff have strong and consistent connectivity across campus.

UAM began using Blackboard as its Learning Management System in 2010, and the school was a prime beneficiary when in 2016 the UA System decided to make a more robust version of Blackboard available system wide.

In 2018, the UA System purchased and began installing the ERP system Workday. Since 2021, UAM's H.R. and Finance areas have been using Workday exclusively, and the entire system should

be fully implemented by the Fall of 2025.

UAM's website, similarly, is hosted by a vendor but managed in house. The University has invested in a new texting platform which allows for instantaneous connectivity with the campus community for emergencies and is utilized by the Admissions Office to streamline its recruiting processes.

Finally, the I.T. staff have been vigilant in implementing new standards for securing data and user accounts, following the most current NIST standards. All UAM staff participate annually in data security and privacy training.

As a member the University of Arkansas System, UAM makes regular financial reports to--and provides proportional payments for a number of services from--the System. In return, UAM benefits in many ways from the System's collective resources.

The purchasing and negotiating power of the System makes available many resources to UAM which would be cost prohibitive otherwise, including:

- Internal Audit: System auditors can respond quickly to investigate very specific requests or concerns as they arise.
- Legal Counsel: UAM provides a monthly stipend, pro-rated according to enrollment, for access to the System's legal office.
- The purchase and installation of digital resources such as Workday and the enhanced Blackboard package have been mentioned above. The fiscal and staff resources required for installation and maintenance of these programs are only available through the combined resources of the System.
- Employees are able to obtain much lower rates on Health and Dental Insurance and can take advantage of reduced administrative costs for retirement plans such as TIAA and Fidelity. Other group purchases make available products like automobile insurance and long-term disability insurance.
- While the Arkansas state government has purchasing contracts, often the UA System contracts are better, and more specific to educational needs. For example, System libraries negotiate consortial prices on databases and journal subscriptions, such as the recently concluded $1.98 million annual package with Elsevier that provides UAM with access to hundreds of scientific journals for $15,395 or 0.8% of the total cost.
- The System provides guidance and final approval for bond issuances, real estate sales and purchases, and construction contracts.
- The system manages government relations and keeps campuses informed of changes to laws or regulations.
- UAM has access to expert advice and updates, such as the System financial staff alerting campuses to Governmental Accounting Standards Board rule changes.

5.B.2 The goals incorporated into mission statements and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.

UAM's Mission Statement is based on the Role and Scope statement mandated by the state legislature and ADHE. The Mission Statement and its goals are pursued with a blend of imagination, ambition, common sense, and data analysis. The Mission is infused throughout institutional policies and procedures. The 2021-22 project to recast the Vision Statement, described in 5.C, provided many

opportunities for all component parts of the UAM community to consider and discuss UAM's essence and the University's critical role in southeast Arkansas. The 2024 Strategic Plan ensures a renewed understanding of the university's mission, obligations, and focus as UAM continues to serve southeast Arkansas and beyond.

5.B.3 The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.

Each year, prior to submitting its budget to the UA Board of Trustees for approval, UAM engages in a budget process that involves wide participation and careful monitoring of expenditures.

In late February, the Director or Dean of each unit makes a budget presentation to the Executive Council, which includes the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration and the Chancellor. Amendments from the previous year's budget must be justified by reference to the unit strategic plan, as well as with data pertaining to operations, enrollment, retention, and graduation rates. The Executive Council evaluates the presentations and, in alignment with institutional plans and income forecasts, adopts a budget which it recommends to the System Board of Trustees.

UAM has traditionally been very conservative in estimating enrollment and has budgeted with an eye toward sustainability over the foreseeable future. Even when funds have been tight, mid-year budget cuts have been rare.

UAM's fiscal policy requires that funds be available before approval can be granted for any expenditure. The approved budget is established by July 1, and funding for each unit is broken down by unique account numbers for each functional category. Salaries and benefits are paid over the pre-determined number of pay periods and limited to the funds designated. Supplies and expenses, sometimes referred to as maintenance and operations expenses or M&O, also have effective controls down to the account level. Once an account's budget has been expended, requisitions cannot be approved until an adjustment is made. Overrides are permitted but must receive additional supervisory approval.

In addition to the controls in place at the micro level, the University generates a quarterly financial report that is submitted to the Board of Trustees. This report monitors overall revenues, with a focus on cash flow and maintenance of cash reserves, measured against projections. UAM undergoes annual independent audits conducted by the Legislative Audit and the University of Arkansas System. The Legislative Audit makes a public report of its findings to the UA System Board of Directors and the report is maintained on its website.

It is notable that UAM has, over the past decade, had exactly one audit finding, which was in 2019 resulting from a phishing event that snared several other institutions and was quickly addressed. Audits, such as these for fiscal years 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024 include UAM as part of the System-wide audit, and comments specific to UAM can be located throughout the document.

Several years ago, UAM engaged the help of Arkansas Student Loan Authority's (ASLA) default management services to aggressively work to reduce its Cohort Default Rate, as discussed under 5.A.1.

UAM had a Perkins Loan portfolio and successfully completed the liquidation process in June 2024. Perkins Loans were reassigned to the U.S. Department of Education during the liquidation process, with help from the University Accounting Service, UAM's longtime Perkins Loan servicing

company. Any outstanding loans that could not be reassigned to the Department of Education were re-purchased by UAM in the final phase of the liquidation process.

5.B.4 The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

The University's resource allocation process is governed by the Executive Council, which represents each aspect of the institution. This process centers on the primary mission of the institution, which is academic in nature and more specifically emphasizes teaching. The 2024-25 budget allocated 57% to instruction, confirming that teaching remains UAM's priority.

The University, after drafting a budget that it believes will achieve its goals for a given fiscal year, recommends this plan to the Board of Trustees for its consideration and approval.

The Arkansas Division of Higher Education publishes comparative data on all public universities for study by the institutions and by members of the Higher Education Coordinating Board. The State, through this board, has set limits on athletic, academic, and performance scholarship expenditures. The Coordinating Board also sets a maximum amount of funding that may be transferred from educational and general operations to cover athletic expenses in excess of the revenues generated by all sports and other supporting fees. Further, the Board requires annual reporting on the sources of revenues for athletics as well as the allocation of all expenditures.

Sources

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- UAM web vision.pdf
- University of Arkansas System.pdf

5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.
5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.
6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

Argument

5.C.1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.

UAM allocates resources consistent with advancing its mission. The annual budget, as described in 5.B.3, is established through departmental presentations to Executive Council. The Chancellor, in consultation with the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, makes the final recommendations to the Board of Trustees. This process helps ensure that funding advances the mission at all levels, including the mission of the UA System**.**

An example of a mission-aligned research enterprise is the upcoming construction of the federally-funded Arkansas Forest Health Research Center, which will reinforce and enhance UAM's role as the state's only institution with a Forestry program. Similarly, the recent establishment of the Five Oaks Ag Research and Education Center is a resource for wetlands research, Delta farmers, and forest managers.

5.C.2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.

Assessment, planning, and budgeting connect at several points in University operations. Each unit is responsible for its own strategic plan, which aligns with the UAM Strategic Plan. Each academic and co-curricular unit, as described in 4.A, must submit an annual report that assesses its performance, including student learning over the past year, and, in reference to the strategic plan, the annual report lists goals for the coming year, such as these reports from the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences and the School of Nursing. The annual report, along with Program Review documents (if any) are the basis for formulating unit budget requests to the Executive Council, as described in 5.B. Non-academic department heads submit their budgets to their Vice Chancellor.

Each year, unit strategic plans may be revised; programs may be modified, and budgets--including annual budget requests--may be adjusted.

5.C.3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.

In 2017, UAM approved a Strategic Plan designed to be effective through 2021. In 2020, the Chancellor felt that, while the plan was still functioning, UAM needed to begin formulating a new plan. In late 2020, the Chancellor appointed a Strategic Planning Coordinator, who formed a Strategic Planning Task Force, which included a number of faculty, the Vice Chancellor for Advancement, and the Director of the Arkansas Small Business and Technology Center. The Chancellor charged the group with establishing a process for developing a new plan. The group met weekly and conducted an environmental scan, a SWOT analysis (with input from the Executive Council), and determined four primary areas for focus in a new strategic plan: Students, Personnel, Partnerships, and Resources.

In 2021, the Task Force coordinated a series of workshops designed to examine and revise, as necessary, the University's Vision Statement. Across all three campuses and including academic departments, administrative units, students, and the Board of Visitors, as well as regional political, business, and cultural leaders, these groups participated in brainstorming responses to three questions:
1.   What makes UAM unique?
2.   What does UAM do very well?
3.   How would you complete: UAM is successful when?

The groups identified unique and important qualities in defining UAM as an institution with distinct obligations, strengths, and challenges. A task force analyzed the results of all of these sessions and was able to list elements that essentially condensed or combined the comments of all the groups into a shorter list. UAM's Director of Marketing and Public Relations, herself a published poet, then drafted a new Vision Statement, which was reviewed and very slightly amended by the Executive Council and the Board of Visitors, and now is recognized as a cornerstone for strategic planning at all levels and in all departments:

> The University of Arkansas at Monticello will be recognized as a model open access regional institution dedicated to empowering students to realize and develop their potential. UAM is committed to advancing three vibrant, diverse campuses that serve their communities and foster key partnerships that contribute to the economy and quality of life in the region, state, and beyond.

In 2023, while the Vision Statement was being finalized, an online survey of all employees and students on all three campuses was conducted. The survey elicited over one hundred responses and became a significant part of the planning process.

In the Fall of 2023, all academic and administrative units were given the new Vision Statement, the word clouds of the Vision workshops, and the survey results, and asked to contribute measurable goals for their specific units and suggested goals for the University as a whole.

With this data, Strategic Planning Task Force studied the suggestions and drafted a proposed plan, which was submitted to the Executive Council for revision and disposition. The Executive Council finalized a strategic plan in March 2024, which was approved by the UA System Trustees in May

2024.

This plan is now the foundation for planning at all levels and informs budgeting and requests. In 2025 and annually thereafter, the Strategic Planning Coordinator will work with campus leaders in analyzing progress on the plan. Using additional input, such as environmental scans, SWOT analyses, and surveys, the plan will be revised to reflect accomplishments, ongoing efforts, and new challenges until such time as an entirely new plan becomes necessary.

5.C.4 The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.

Capacity

UAM seeks to provide an environment conducive to learning for all students. Although a formal study has not taken place, the institution's leadership believes that UAM's existing facilities, with renovations and new buildings envisioned in the Campus Master Plan, will adequately serve its academic and administrative needs for the foreseeable future.

As noted in more detail in 1.C, southeast Arkansas has seen its population and student enrollment in feeder high schools decline steadily for several decades. Given this reality and the projected national enrollment cliff, the University's concerns have not been related to exceeding capacity, but rather to identifying strategies to maintain and, ideally, increase student enrollment.

Retention has been a significant focus of the University since 2015. The 2017 changes to the state's formula for funding have added incentive to bolster retention. Also, given regional demographics, UAM is seeking opportunities to make itself more attractive to students from a wider area. The 2017-18 branding study identified several strategies for wider publicity.

Potential Fluctuations in Revenue Sources

Like other public institutions of higher education, UAM's primary sources of revenue are student tuition and fees and state appropriations. When considering its proposed budget each year, UAM makes allowance for the possibility that one or both of these sources may not meet projections. Accordingly, and following recent practice, the FY2025 Contingency Fund has been set at $1,119,366, or about 5.7% of projected state appropriations.

A 2018 gift to UAM of property worth around $6 million has been slowly liquidated with the generated funds used to cushion financial fluctuations and, especially, to help fund many of the infrastructure repairs noted in section 5.B.

5.C.5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.

The development of the most recent Strategic Plan involved analyses of external opportunities and threats as part of SWOT exercises carried out by both the Executive Council and the Planning Task Force. Demographic and economic changes in southeast Arkansas are of great significance and drive actions such as the 2022 development of the MS in Nursing for Public Health.

Lumber and agriculture remain two of the region's largest industries, so, unsurprisingly, support for the UAM Agriculture program remains robust, as evinced by 2024 updates to some of the Ag buildings. The 2023 establishment of the Arkansas Center for Forest Business and the 2024

groundbreaking for the Arkansas Forest Health Research Center, both bolstered by support from the state legislature, position UAM to be not only a regional but a national leader in the industry and thereby a significant contributor to the economy of the entire region.

Higher education support from the state remains a concern, and all planning is conducted with an eye on the political currents in Little Rock. UAM is fortunate to be part of a strong university system and to have solid local political support.

Student demographics and ever evolving workforce needs play significant roles in UAM planning. The Degree Pathways project, for example, was designed and has been modified to help meet the challenge of at-risk students who seek to better themselves. Efforts at retention, carefully analyzed, similarly seek to keep challenged students on track for success. And additions to internship programs, along with ongoing conversations with local businesses, help UAM provide coursework that meets changing workforce needs.

5.C.6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

At the core of UAM's vision is its service to southeast Arkansas and its students. Plans for buildings and programs, all facets of budgeting, policies and procedures, grow from the Mission and are measured finally against the success of students and the health of the region.

UAM carefully monitors not just expenditures, but outcomes. With challenging demographics and state support, all planning and budgeting must lead to improvement. Academic and co-curricular programs all take action based on the success of students and how UAM supports local communities.

Student Success can be measured in many ways. Certainly, the state's budgeting process defines it with specific metrics. Although not as quantifiable but quite dramatic, the number of graduates at commencement who self-identify as first in their families to graduate, the cheers of family members who have never seen a college commencement ceremony, the many graduates taking photographs with beloved faculty--all of these qualitative measures suggest that UAM's plans and operations are succeeding in changing lives.

Sources

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5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

The institution's resources, structures, processes and planning are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Summary

The University of Arkansas at Monticello, firmly focused on its Mission and Vision, operates efficiently. UAM's planning, assessment, and budgeting are all linked, and operations, directed through collaborative governance, are supported by resources that are sufficient and used carefully to serve Southeast Arkansas.

Sources

There are no sources.