



## **University of Arkansas System Milestones**

### *Under the Leadership of Dr. Donald R. Bobbitt*

*Over the last 13 years, the UA System has embraced the concept of functioning collaboratively to solve challenges related to the delivery of high-quality education and being responsible stewards of financial resources. Under President Bobbitt's leadership, the System began leveraging its size and diversity of institutions to better serve the state and its citizens.*

### **Academics/Student Success**

- **Academic Program Review:** Implemented annual 5-year review of academic programs for viability and deletion as necessary, which is presented to the Board each January. Additionally, added student return on investment (ROI) calculation to each program, which is also presented to the Board for approval.
- **Degree Production:** Over the past 5 years (FY18-FY22) systemwide enrollment is down 4.5 percent as we enter the anticipated enrollment cliff period. However, during that same period, degree production across the system is up 9 percent from 17,775 degrees awarded in AY18 to 19,311 in AY22.
- **Common Course Numbering:** In the process of implementing new course numbering system across the UA System which will ease the transfer and completion process for students at system colleges and universities and provide a course number model for all public higher education institutions across Arkansas.
- **New Student Information System:** In the process of implementing Workday Student, which will align all campuses (except UA Grantham) on the same operating system for academic efforts.
- **Arkansas Transfer Achievement Scholarship:** Established to promote and ease the transition and cost burden from students graduating from UA System two-year colleges to complete bachelor's degrees at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, solidifying a contemplated model for other System four-year institutions to follow.
- **UA System eVersity:** Successful creation and launch of the state's first and only 100 percent-online institution in fall 2015, which went on to win consecutive national awards for innovative coursework and provide opportunities to thousands of students who had some college and no degree to continue their education and earn degrees.
- **Acquisition of Grantham University:** In 2021, Grantham was acquired for \$1, creating a path to merge existing eVersity with a larger, established and successful 100 percent-online institution. UA Grantham currently has more than 5,000 students enrolled internationally.
- **UA System Workforce Center of Excellence:** Established through a \$1 million federal grant for campus leadership and business/industry to identify academic programs at UA campuses and

available employment opportunities relying on the expertise of the Arkansas Economic Development Institute located at UA-Little Rock.

## Finance/Efficiency

- Revenue Growth: Despite relatively stagnant state funding and keeping tuition and fees affordable, system revenue has grown by more than \$1 billion since FY2012. This has been accomplished through adding campuses, growing the research portfolio and ensuring the fiscal health of UAMS and UAF, among other efforts.
- Affordability: The average tuition and fee cost across the system has declined during the past seven years when adjusted for inflation. The average system student paid \$9,100 annually in tuition and fees in FY17 compared to an inflation-adjusted \$8,300 annually in FY23.
- State funding: Supported former Gov. Hutchinson's productivity funding formula (implemented in 2018) which rewards campuses for student retention and graduation and worked with UA System campuses to meet statewide goals to increase degree production at all levels.
- Systemwide Contracting: Leveraged system size for contracting in dozens of areas resulting in savings in the millions. This includes the systemwide Blackboard contract that gave campuses access to a variety of new software solutions at less cost to support student outcomes, including allowing for seamless transition to online classes at the outset of the pandemic.
- All Funds Budgeting: Transitioned budget format that represents all funds received by the institutions and is consistent with the annual Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Position (SRECNP). This allows better forecasting of changes in the system's overall net position, which has grown from \$2.1 billion to \$3.1 billion since this change was implemented.
- Internal Audit: Expanded size of department allowing more coverage of potential risks to the system, including individual office expansion on the UAMS campus, and allowing for much-needed IT and cybersecurity focus across the System. Implemented additional audit coverage for ongoing construction projects underway across the system.
- Risk Management/Property Insurance: Successfully moved coverage to the AR Insurance Department to provide long-term stability for more than \$7.5 billion in real property assets during one of the most difficult loss protection environments in recent history.
- UA System Solar Project: Helped secure one of the largest solar power agreements among public higher education institutions nationally, which will result in nearly \$168 million in cost savings for the UA System over the next 25 years, nearly \$20 million more than originally estimated by an outside energy consultant.
- Retirement Plan Overhaul: Instituted contribution minimums to ensure and protect adequate employee retirement savings and modified fund lineup offered to employees to provide investment cost savings and avoid litigation facing other universities across the country.

## Administrative

- Pandemic Management: Successfully petitioned the state for funding to support the statewide higher education response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The system submitted and presented a grant proposal that resulted in funding of \$28.2 million for COVID-19 testing, contact tracing and PPE supplies for all public and private colleges and universities across the state.

- System Expansion: Oversaw the successful addition of UA Rich Mountain and UA – Pulaski Technical College to the UA System in 2017 and UA - East Arkansas Community College in 2024.
- Project One: Oversaw procurement and implementation of Workday under Project One as the unifying software solution to streamline all human resources, finance, academic and data throughout the campuses, divisions and units of the UA System. Highlights include:
  - Migrated entire UA System from 15 disparate Finance, HR, and Student IT solutions to one modern cloud-based solution
  - Aligned payroll schedule dates
  - Streamlined hiring processes, including consolidation of multiple background-checking service contracts to one system-wide agreement
  - Created a UA System-wide secure intranet site for employees to stay informed of technology initiatives and implementations, including project details, training materials, and support contacts
- Compliance: Executed systemwide contract for mandatory student and employee training modules in areas such as Title IX, child maltreatment, Title VII, FERPA and other areas of compliance required by state and federal law. Training modules launch in Fall 2023.
- Campus Leadership: Led searches for leaders of nearly every campus, division and unit. Has developed the most diverse leadership team ever across the UA System, including more women and minorities into Chancellor/Director positions than at any time in UA System history.

## Legal

- Policy Overhaul: Oversaw the comprehensive review and updating of Board and System policies through the Office of General Counsel in tandem with feedback from employees, staff and the public for Board approval over the last decade.
- Sovereign Immunity Case: Supported the General Counsel in its defense of a case for UACCRM that has had a profound impact on the consideration of sovereign immunity among state agencies, policymakers, the private sector and other interested parties.
- General Counsel's Office Expansion: Supported GC Office growth to ensure the office has the personnel necessary to assist the campuses, divisions and units with ongoing compliance, litigation and other daily legal matters.
- Website Accessibility: Created process for campuses, divisions and units to monitor website accessibility to ensure compliance with ADA standards and show effort to comply with national accessibility standards.
- FOIA: Oversaw the successful response to hundreds of open records requests annually under the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act and has fostered and promoted a positive reputation of cooperation and transparency.

## Campus/Division/Units Major Successes

- UAF Growth and Development: Supported campus efforts to increase enrollment of both in-state and out-of-state students and raise the national profile of the institution through record philanthropic support and expansion of the research enterprise. Successfully engaged the flagship campus to collaborate in systemwide projects including contracting, ERP, energy savings and transfer agreements, among others.

- UAMS Efficiency and Expansion: Supported UAMS efforts to seek National Cancer Institute (NCI) designation; establishment of the first Proton Therapy Center; establishment of new, state-of-the-art orthopaedic surgery facility; addition of a \$150 million UAMS energy project that is producing cost savings and garnering national praise.
- Division of Agriculture/UAF Relationship: Improved relations between the Division and the UAF campus, which was solidified through the signing of an MOU creating an outline for a more productive working relationship between the two entities.
- UA Little Rock Boost: Supported UA Little Rock through a retrenchment process to bring the institution more in line for financial efficiency, recovery and future success; Assisted UA-PTC with a similar process of downsizing administrative expenses to lead the institution to fiscal health during a period of enrollment decline.
- UA Rich Mountain Stabilization: Successfully worked with and supported leadership at UA-Rich Mountain to add athletics programs and housing to stabilize and grow the smallest 2-year college in the state.
- School Safety: Supported Gov. Hutchinson's school safety efforts through leadership of the Criminal Justice Institute to lead, coordinate and share its expertise with K-12 leadership across the state.
- Statewide Degree Partnerships: Collaborated on and implemented a fully integrated campus-within-a-campus model between UAM and National Park College offering NPC students the opportunity to obtain degrees in business and teacher education, and beyond.
- Winthrop Rockefeller Institute: Led effort resulting in UA System securing a \$125 million gift endowment to support WRI activities in perpetuity.
- Prep Pipeline: ASMSA, with its 260 dynamic students living and learning at one of the nation's Top 25 high schools, has been supported to grow its physical footprint with more than \$15 million in capital projects, and partnerships and programs with UA System institutions solidify campuses as destinations of choice for these exceptional students.

## Honors/Recognitions

- Scharlau Chair in Presidential Leadership: Inaugural holder of the endowed chair in presidential leadership at the UA System, established in 2015 by Charles E. Scharlau, former chairman and CEO of Southwestern Energy Company and past chairman of the Board of Trustees of the University of Arkansas. Secured a \$5 million gift from Mr. Scharlau to establish the chair.
- Innovating Arkansas: Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson named Bobbitt among a group of key leaders from Arkansas businesses, research universities, philanthropic organizations and state agencies to form the inaugural Arkansas Innovation Council in 2019.
- Achievement in Invention: President Bobbitt was named to a prestigious body of fellows of the National Academy of Inventors in 2015.
- International Ag: Selected by Gov. Hutchinson as a member of state leaders who traveled to Cuba on a trip to showcase Arkansas agriculture and economic development.