



# Strategic Plan



UNIVERSITY OF  
ARKANSAS





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# Executive Summary

Following its sesquicentennial, with renewed emphasis on its Land-Grant Mission, the University of Arkansas is leaning into its next century through campuswide strategic planning.

The University of Arkansas' 150 Forward Strategic Plan provides an overview of three overarching pillars, the goals and objectives set to advance the university's land-grant mission, and key metrics to monitor progress.

The strategic plan is not a list of day-to-day operations for the entire institution. The purpose of the 150 Forward Strategic Plan is to initiate some select initiatives while pointing the colleges, schools and units in the same direction, attaining institutional alignment with the stated goals as One University.

The planning process, a campuswide, collaborative effort, mapped out future ambitions and calibrated the entire institution in alignment to three foundational concepts. Simple by design, and intentional in its brevity, the directive from Chancellor Charles F. Robinson to "tease out more and better outcomes in achieving the university's mission," underpinned the process and the plan that follows.

Those three strategic priorities became the pillars that provide the foundation for the campus direction: ***student success, research excellence*** and ***employer of choice***.

The following guiding principles cut across every dimension of planning and are found throughout unit-level plans.

- Commitment to the land-grant mission
- Consistent, clear communication for all audiences
- Creating a culture of engagement
- Data driven decision-making (including data strategy, analytics, and insights)
- Strategic resource management (not just cost containment, but cost reduction)

"Strategic Planning gives us the opportunity to examine what we are doing... and to reimagine what could make us better," Chancellor Robinson said.





# Land-Grant Mission, University Vision and Values

At its core, and since 1871, the land-grant mission of teaching, research and service guides every decision, every action and form the University of Arkansas' purpose.

## Our Mission

The University of Arkansas is determined to build a better world by providing transformational opportunities and skills, promoting an inclusive and diverse culture, nurturing creativity and solving problems through research and discovery, all in service to Arkansas.

Since 1871, our fundamental purpose as a land-grant institution and state flagship remains unchanged — to serve the state of Arkansas as a partner, resource and catalyst by:

- Providing access to a comprehensive and internationally competitive public education, and fostering student success across a wide spectrum of disciplines.
- Utilizing research, discovery and creative activity to improve the quality of life, develop solutions to the challenges we face and drive the state's economy.
- Contributing service and expertise through outreach, engagement and collaboration.



Our mission provides a broad outline of the work required to achieve our vision – that the University of Arkansas represents the best of public higher education, advancing Arkansas while building a better world.

## Our Core Values

We are guided by our mission to advance Arkansas while building a better world. Our core values help frame a desired culture that best supports that mission. We value:

- *Curiosity*
- *Creativity*
- *Character*
- *Our Shared Humanity*



# Strategic Pillars

More and better outcomes will be measured in a high-level way. While many strategies and tactics will be deployed across the institution, the discipline of measurement of student success, research excellence and employer of choice goals by a select and brief set of outcomes ensures campuswide ability to focus and prioritize action. The following (represented in broad categorical terms) will be measured and tracked to show improvements and reported on an online dashboard at <https://chancellor.uark.edu>

A culture of continuous improvement will guide the university's achievement of objectives and as such, targets will be set broadly in those terms.

## Student Success

The University of Arkansas will offer unparalleled access to a holistic education that is designed to help our students grow, contribute and thrive throughout their lives and in their communities from matriculation to graduation. To achieve this, the University will focus on these four goals:

- Academic success & intellectual engagement
- Career readiness
- Affordability
- Wellness & belonging

**Academic Success & Intellectual Engagement:** Ensure students are aware of practices that lead to academic success, understand the opportunity to experience the full array of intellectual engagement afforded through a college education. Students will know where to find resources to help them design a personal plan for success that marries personal, professional and intellectual goals.

**Career Readiness:** Create opportunities for every student to define and attain their individual career or post-graduate pathway.

**Affordability:** Make education more affordable, particularly for Arkansans with financial need, thereby demonstrating that the University adds value to the entire state by offering an accessible education that yields a significant, lifelong and generational return on investment.



**Wellbeing & Belonging:** Ensure students feel a sense of belonging in the campus community and form lasting ties with the University. Ensure students have access to, are aware of and utilize university programs that promote their mental, physical and financial wellness, and civic engagement.

### Student success objectives:

- Retention and graduation rates across demographics including narrowing of gaps between populations
- Increased number of graduate students
- Increased financial support for all students and particularly in meeting cost of attendance for students in need
- Improved time-to-completion rates for doctoral students
- Increased success rates for historically dropped, withdrawn and failed courses
- Growing percentage of students served by career coaching, student involvement and participation in high-impact practices
- Continuous reporting of post-graduate plans and outcomes by majority of student body





## Research Excellence

A comprehensive research university with significant emerging strength in applied research, the University of Arkansas relentlessly pursues its land grant mission by promoting knowledge creation, scientific inquiry and creative works. We seek to:

- Attain a lasting reputation for deep faculty expertise, high quality education and research outputs.
- Align the research enterprise with society's needs, and the economy across the region, state, nation and world – including research commercialization, workforce training, and other economic and cultural development that advances all Arkansans.
- Achieve a sustainable, shared research enterprise that adopts and develops best practices in: research administration; growing research facility size and support; faculty recruitment, retention, and success; graduate education; and undergraduate participation in the research enterprise.

### Research Excellence Objectives:

- Increase research expenditures, particularly in signature and federal priority areas
- Increase scholarly productivity percentile, an algorithm that combines citations, books, chapters, patents, and trials among other measures relative to the size of the faculty
- Regularly attain highly prestigious faculty awards
- Increase patent production-to-expenditure ratio and technology transfer
- Improve retention of faculty
- Increase the number of graduate and doctoral students

We are among the top research universities in the nation with \$184 million in research expenditures. Our research success is supported by our unprecedented investments in our research enterprise, with three leading-edge applied research facilities opening in the next 12-18 months – the Institute for Integrative and Innovative Research (I<sup>3</sup>R), the Multi-User Silicon Carbide Research and Fabrication Facility (MUSiC), and the Anthony Timberlands Center for Design and Materials Innovation.

## Enhancing the University's Status as an Employer of Choice

The University of Arkansas is committed to fostering a work environment where everyone feels a sense of belonging, works toward a meaningful purpose, and has the data, resources, connections and foundation of support to be most effective, grow and advance their careers, and thrive in their personal and professional lives. This will be accomplished when we:

- Attract and match the best talent to the right roles at the right time, through proactive outreach and offering candidates a top-notch hiring experience to meet the evolving needs of candidates, employees, the university and its units.
- Engage and retain faculty and staff by helping them fulfill their career aspirations and caring for their well-being
- Strengthen university's land-grant mission through a high-performance culture that drives results and continuous improvement

### Employer of choice objectives:

- Completion and adoption of employee value proposition
- Continual high employee engagement / satisfaction
- Reduction in annual turnover rate
- Depth, quality and diversity of applicant pools.







# Actions and Projects for Implementation

Strategic imperatives will permeate the University of Arkansas as realized by the colleges, schools and units in support of advancing objectives. These plans may be found on the college and school websites.

Baseline and annual data will be housed at the following link:

<https://chancellor.uark.edu>

## Participants and Process

The 150 Forward Strategic Planning process began even before Dr. Charles Robinson was selected as the university's seventh chancellor on Nov. 16, 2022, when he began rallying the campus around three strategic priority areas – or pillars: student success, research excellence and employer of choice initiatives.

A planning group began designing a series of events to bring the entire campus community into the planning process, and partnered with EAB, a higher education research firm, to provide best practices, tools and support to campus units.

The events — including town hall discussions, unit and organization level listening sessions and discussions, workshops and goal-setting sessions — kicked off in February 2023 and continued throughout the year, supporting the planning process from the initial stages of identifying goals and objectives to working with representatives across campus to develop strategies and tactics for achieving them.

Members of the campus were invited to participate in one of three Pillar Working Groups. These groups met over the summer and fall of 2023 to define KPIs (also called objectives) and form a discussion around whether these are the right things to be measuring. Strategies that emerged were collected for consideration in achieving goals.

The final plan and key metrics were announced in December 2023.



# One University

The concept of One University emerged as a rallying call from Chancellor Robinson to reinforce that the University of Arkansas is a singular entity, comprising many parts, but always with a shared sense of purpose and priority.

“While considering our university’s future, I often come back to one of our country’s traditional mottos: *e pluribus unum* - Out of many, one. There are great things ahead for this university, but the future is even brighter if we adopt the mindset that we are one University of Arkansas,” Robinson said.

One University is a paradigm to guide the institution’s next 150 years, reminding the campus that we are one institution and should make decisions, policies, programs and priorities that keep top of mind the good of the whole.

“On such a large campus, it is natural to get siloed into our respective areas. However, we can realize so much more of our potential by collaborating with people and units across campus,” Robinson said. “It is important for us to remember that while the U of A consists of many colleges, schools, departments and units, we are One University with a shared land-grant mission.”

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– Charles F. Robinson, Chancellor







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