

Assurance Argument
University of Arkansas Rich
Mountain

Review date: 6/10/2019

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 broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.
2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission.
(This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)

Argument

The University of Arkansas Rich Mountain understands its mission to provide area residents with appropriate educational services.

1.A.1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.

"University of Arkansas Rich Mountain exists to provide all residents of the Ouachita Mountain Region with exemplary educational and enrichment opportunities to improve the quality of life and standard of living."

The mission of the University of Arkansas at Rich Mountain was established in 1983 and was last reviewed and approved by the Board in 2014. A survey was completed at that time to determine how well employees understood the mission and how it guides operations. Results are listed here:

- 89% are aware of the mission well or extremely well.
- 93% understand and support the mission well or extremely well.
- 81% believe the mission drives Board policies and practices.
- 82% believe the mission drives strategic decisions of the College.
- 79% believe planning and budgeting priorities flow from and support the mission.
- 90% believe the mission documents convey why the College exists.

The next [Strategic Plan](#) and Mission review/update is scheduled for the 2019-2020 academic year. This process involves internal and external constituencies, including faculty, staff, students, alumni, community and business members, and the Board of Visitors.

As mentioned in the introduction, the College aligned with the University of Arkansas System in 2016. The mission, values, scope, and strategic goals were all approved by the [UA System Board of Trustees](#) at the change of control.

Academic programs, student support services, and the [enrollment profile](#) of UA Rich Mountain are consistent with the stated, published mission. Schedule offerings include programming in adult basic education, developmental courses for the under-prepared college student, credit courses in technological fields, transfer courses for baccalaureate degrees, a Kid's/Teen's College, a course series for patrons over age 55, enrichment courses, and targeted on-demand industry training. The mission to improve the quality of life for area residents is reflected in course offerings.

The mission was last revised as part of the review of the [Strategic Plan](#) in 2014 and approved by the local Board of Trustees. Future revisions to the Mission will be recommended by the Board of Visitors to the system Board of Trustees for approval.

1.A.2. UA Rich Mountain's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with the College's stated mission.

The student population is historically under-prepared, low-income, first-generation. Roughly 70.7% of public school students in the College service area were participants in the free and reduced school lunch program in 2014-2015. This number rose slightly to 71.8% in 2015-2016, the most recent data available from the Arkansas Department of Education. Area poverty is documented by the number of College students receiving Federal financial aid.

Table 1.A.2-1					
Percentage UARM Degree-Seeking Students Receiving Federal Financial Aid					
Fall Semesters 2009-2013					
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total Degree-Seeking Population	638	666	674	632	553
Students Receiving Federal Financial Aid (Pell)	404	471	468	390	360
Students Receiving Federal Financial Aid (Pell)	63%	71%	69%	62%	65%
The apparent drop in students receiving federal financial aid is due to changes in federal Pell requirements and changes in enrollment.					

Source: UARM Financial Aid Department

A five-year average puts the number of degree-seeking students at 632. That same five-year average reveals a full two thirds (66.23%) of UARM students received federal financial aid (Pell).

Table 1.A.2-2					
Percentage of Degree-Seeking Students Receiving Federal Financial Aid					
Fall Semesters 2014-2018					
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total Degree-Seeking Population	532	501	468	482	450
Students Receiving Federal Financial Aid (Pell)	348	317	309	346	327
Students Receiving Federal Financial Aid (Pell)	65%	63%	66%	72%	73%
Source: UA Rich Mountain Financial Aid Department					

For 2014-2018, the five-year average number of degree-seeking students is 486. That same five-year average reveals over two thirds (67.8%) of students receive federal financial aid (Pell). This represents a slight increase in the percentage in students receiving federal financial aid since the last assessment report.

Affordability is a concern, and the College demonstrates sensitivity to financial constraints. Tuition increases are limited to 2% or less per year by the System Board.

Educational Attainment

The average educational attainment level of the area population is markedly lower than the national average. The American Community Survey published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics state that 77% of the service area population age 25 or older have a 12th grade education or higher compared to 85% nationally. Only 9.8% of persons age 25 or older have a baccalaureate degree or higher compared to 27.5% nationally.

UARM is a public two-year institution of higher education with an open door admission policy. This policy often results in the admission of first-generation college students who lack initial college readiness skills. Table 1.A.2-3 offers a comparison of UARM’s area population aged 25+ who are first-generation college students to state and nationwide figures. The rate for area first-generation individuals is 9.2% higher than Arkansas average of 81.1% and 17.8% higher than the national average of 72.5%.

Table 1.A.2-3			
First-Generation Individuals UARM Service Area			
County	Population Age 25+	# First-Generation	% First-Generation
Polk	13,856	12,517	90.3%
Scott	7,251	6,593	90.9%

Montgomery	6,421	5,739	89.4%
Total/Average	27,528	24,849	90.3%
Arkansas			81.1%
U.S			72.5%

Source: American Community Survey (2005-2009). No new census data is reported since the last Assurance Review.

The percentage of first-generation students in its degree-seeking population is given in Table 1.A.2-4. and 1.A.2-5

Table 1.A.2-4	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014
First-Generation *	360	378	391
Degree-Seeking	632	553	533
Headcount	1051	957	1005
First-Generation	34%	39%	39%

Source: UARM Office of Institutional Research*A misinterpretation of the definition of “first-generation” resulted in inaccurate first-generation data prior to 2012.

Table 1.A.2-5	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018
First-Generation	355	308	310	296
Degree-Seeking	501	468	482	449
Headcount	929	874	938	815
% First-Generation*	71%	66%	64%	66%

Source: UA Rich Mountain Office of Institutional Research *Calculating first-generation by dividing first-generation by degree seeking population gives a more accurate percentage than in the 2015 self-study in which the first-generation percentage was calculated by dividing first-generation by total headcount.

Campus programming includes adult basic education, certificates of proficiency, technical certificates, and associate degrees. Further, there are enrichment opportunities and workforce training courses for local businesses. These offerings reflect an understanding of area resident needs. All programming is evaluated for appropriateness, efficacy and cost efficiency in meeting these needs.

1.A.3. UA Rich Mountain's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission.

The College aligns priorities with the mission of the institution. This process is described in Criterion Five.

Sources

- Board of Trustees - University of Arkansas System
- Fast Facts 2016-2018
- Strategic Plan 2016-2020

1.B - Core Component 1.B

The mission is articulated publicly.

1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.
2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of 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 document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

Argument

1.B.1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.

The mission of the University of Arkansas Rich Mountain is articulated publicly through various means and the published [Strategic Plan](#). As detailed four years ago, the vision, values, and goals of the institution are revised as needed, most often through the College Effectiveness Committee.

The mission of the college is published through [course syllabi](#), the website, [published documents](#), and posted within the institution. In 2014, 90% of course syllabi included the mission statement. Review of course syllabi in Fall 2018 revealed an increase to 98%.

The College seeks to maintain a leadership role in the community and is a vibrant contributor to the quality of life in the Ouachita Mountain Region. To that end, its faculty and staff strive to create and maintain an exemplary learning environment. Success in this endeavor hinges on turning the following values into action:

Values

- All who choose to use UA Rich Mountain's resources are treated with dignity and are challenged to maximize their potential.
- All students are given the opportunity and are encouraged to accept responsibility for learning and growing as individuals and citizens.
- All College personnel are committed to providing an atmosphere of respect and cooperation where ideas, inquiry, and the continued pursuit for self-development are valued as means towards learning and growth.
- All College employees are dedicated to responsible stewardship and continued sustainability of the human, fiscal, and natural resources with which we have been entrusted.

Philosophy and Scope

UA Rich Mountain recognizes the worth and dignity of the individual, as exemplified by its commitment to serving the multi-dimensional educational needs of its constituency.

1.B.2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of 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.

To that end, The University of Arkansas Rich Mountain endeavors to provide academic, vocational, and personal enrichment opportunities, and dedicates itself to quality programs in each of these areas. Guided by these principles the scope of the college is as follows:

- To offer associate degrees, technical degrees, and certificates of proficiency in occupational education for students who wish to gain competence in specific skill areas or to upgrade their skills.
- To provide the first two years of university parallel course work of high academic quality for students who transfer to senior institutions.
- To provide foundational based educational programs for students who need basic academic skills.
- To provide services for students who desire academic, vocational, financial, and personal guidance.
- To offer the facilities and resources of the College to promote educational, civic, and cultural endeavors within the community.
- To provide programs and services that support and enhance the social, civic, and economic development of the community and state.
- To offer a variety of programs and courses designed to meet academic, vocational, and personal enrichment needs.

1.B.3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

The Strategic Goals of the college are presented here:

Goal 1: Access to Higher Education

The University of Arkansas Rich Mountain continues to provide the Ouachita Mountain Region with accessible, quality, and affordable education. UA Rich Mountain will provide the service area's population with expanded access to educational opportunities for those who seek lifelong learning. In addition to serving traditional and nontraditional students, special programs are available to the disadvantaged, those requiring foundational based studies, or students wanting to enter the workforce. The College will continue to provide best value and seek out every viable opportunity to augment its ability to further serve the community.

Goal 2: Student Success

The University of Arkansas Rich Mountain is committed to student success by providing programs and services that will help students achieve their educational and career goals. UA Rich Mountain promotes student success at every level of the academic process. Foundational education programs are available for students who need to improve math, reading, and writing skills. Qualified, dedicated faculty are committed to student learning. The Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs develops and maintains collaborative activities geared toward student success in and out of the classroom. Federal, state, and student services programs offer additional resources to students.

Goal 3: Quality Learning Environment

The University of Arkansas Rich Mountain creates quality learning environments by promoting excellence in teaching and learning enhanced by state of the art facilities, technology, and delivery methods. The University of Arkansas Rich Mountain provides an effective teaching and learning environment. Quality educational programs and services are accessible and responsive to the needs and interests of the communities it serves. Faculty and staff foster a supportive challenging atmosphere dedicated to serving those who will become tomorrow's leaders and actively engaged members of society.

Goal 4: Educational Partnerships

The University of Arkansas Rich Mountain develops and maintains partnerships with area school districts, colleges, universities, and business and industry to address the educational and workforce development needs of the Ouachita Mountain Region. Working collaboratively with communities and schools, the College seeks to improve academic achievement and expand post-secondary educational opportunities for students. UA Rich Mountain works with teachers, counselors, administrators, and families to foster systemic change and build a college-going culture. Through a comprehensive program of articulation and course transfer agreements, including advanced degree partnerships, with colleges and universities, UA Rich Mountain contributes to economic growth through teaching, outreach, and cultural enhancement.

Goal 5: Development of Resources

The University of Arkansas Rich Mountain strives to develop and improve its programs and services by seeking additional financial, physical, and human resource opportunities. UA Rich Mountain strives to develop additional sources of funding. The College actively pursues public and private sector grants and support to enhance programs and services.

Goal 6: Continuous Planning and Improvement of Outreach Centers

The University of Arkansas Rich Mountain continuously develops all outreach centers to meet the needs of the communities they serve. UA Rich Mountain actively supports and commits significant resources toward continued development of the service area through the operation of outreach centers in Polk, Montgomery, and Scott Counties. Further development of these sites is essential for individuals in these areas to receive superior educational opportunities. The College fosters growth in these areas through continued communication with all interested parties.

The mission documents of the College are current and relevant to the constituencies it serves.

Sources

- 2018-2019 Graduation Programs
- Strategic Plan 2016-2020
- Syllabi Example

1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.
2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Argument

1.C.1 The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.

Evidence that the College understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society is woven throughout its mission documents.

- As mentioned in the Mission, "UA Rich Mountain exists to provide **all residents** with exemplary educational and enrichment opportunities."
- UARM's Vision includes the statement, "The College demonstrates respect for the worth and dignity of each person and recognizes the uniqueness of each individual."
- UARM's Philosophy and Scope states, "UA Rich Mountain recognizes the worth and dignity of the individual, as exemplified by its commitment to serving the multi-dimensional educational needs of its constituency."

UARM adopts a global definition of diversity by recognizing that diversity includes the visible attributes of race, ethnicity, gender, age, and physical abilities as well as the invisible attributes of socio-economic status, religious and political beliefs, cultural background, distinctive life experiences, learning abilities, and physical disabilities. UARM strives to offer relevant learning opportunities and create an environment in which all students are welcomed, valued, respected, and nurtured during their academic and social development. Results from the [2014 Graduation Survey](#) attest to the success of efforts to create this environment:

- 94.6% believe the college is equally supportive of men and women.
- 93.8% agree the college is equally supportive of all racial/ethnic groups .
- 93% are satisfied with the level of respect given to students by faculty.
- 90.8% are satisfied with level of concern shown to them as individuals.
- 86.5% felt a sense of belonging on the campus.
- 90% felt free from harassment on campus.
- 87% of nontraditional students indicated satisfaction with College responses to their needs.
- 79.2% of students with special needs were satisfied with college response to their needs (20% were neutral or indicated the question did not apply).
- 83% felt the campus atmosphere was one of ethnic, political, and religious understanding.
- 79.2% felt their college experience contributed to their social growth and in their understanding of others and their views.

Results from the 2018 Graduate Survey indicate that students are more satisfied than four years ago.

- 97.85% believe the college is equally supportive of men and women.
- 95.04% agree the college is equally supportive of all racial/ethnic groups .
- 96.23% are satisfied with the level of respect given to students by faculty.
- 94.41% are satisfied with level of concern shown to them as individuals.
- 91.3% felt a sense of belonging on the campus.
- 90% felt free from harassment on campus.
- 89% of nontraditional students indicated satisfaction with College responses to their needs.
- 83.9% of students with special needs were satisfied with college response to their needs (16% were neutral or indicated the question did not apply).
- 92% felt the campus atmosphere was one of ethnic, political, and religious understanding.
- 88.2% felt their college experience contributed to their social growth and in their understanding of others and their views.

1.C.2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Since 2015, the College has continued to incorporate diversity on the campus, and the College Values include diversity as a core component, and as part of the Strategic Plan, Goal 3, Strategy 14: Recognize the human and cultural diversity of our world and incorporate this into the classroom and workplace. According to the [2018 Graduation survey](#), the College has improved an average of 4.41% since 2014.

For many students, their first introduction to the diverse ideas and issues found in a multicultural society occurs at UA Rich Mountain. The College works within existing programs to allow students to grow in their awareness of and appreciation for a multicultural society. [Examples](#) of instructional program activities are listed in evidence.

Sources

- Diversity Examples
- Graduation Survey Results 2014
- Graduation Survey Results 2018

1.D - Core Component 1.D

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

1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.
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 identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Argument

College decisions reflect UA Rich Mountain's commitment to the public good. It recognizes its obligation to the communities it serves and its responsibility to respect and protect the public trust and includes this premise in its Value Statements. This dedication is demonstrated in activities and initiatives launched by the College that extend into the communities of its service area.

1.D.1 Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.

A high percentage of area students are low income, first-generation, a population historically at risk for not completing college. Due to the area constituency, the College hosts five federally funded TRIO programs: Educational Talent Search (ETS), Upward Bound Classic (UBCL), Upward Bound Math/Science (UBMS), Educational Opportunity Center (EOC), and Student Support Services (SSS). TRIO programs identify and provide services for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds.

- ETS recruits participants from local area middle and high schools. The program provides tutoring, career exploration, aptitude assessments, counseling, mentoring programs, workshops, and information on postsecondary institutions.
- Through the local area high schools, UBCL serves low-income potential first-generation college students. UARM's UBCL program provides tutoring, counseling, mentoring, cultural enrichment, education, or counseling services designed to improve the financial and economic literacy of students.
- The UBMS goal is to help students recognize and develop their potential to excel in math and science. UARM's UBMS program provides participants summer programs with intensive math and science training, year-round advising, computer training, participation in scientific research, and counseling services to improve the financial and economic literacy of students.

- The EOC program provides information and counseling for GED and college admissions to qualified individuals who desire to enroll or continue in a program of education. Another important object of the program is to provide services to improve the financial and economic literacy of participants.
- The goal of SSS is to assist UARM students in reaching graduation and/or transferring to a four year institution. An SSS participant receives specialized, on-on-one attention with advising, career development, and tutoring, and has access to latest technology in the computer labs.

Strategic Goal 6 commits the College to continuous development of outreach to meet the needs of surrounding communities. UARM actively supports and commits significant resources toward the operation of an off campus site in Scott County and an outreach center in Montgomery County.

The College has a six classroom renovated building in Waldron with a computer lab for student and community use. It also offers classes in Mount Ida in a facility partnership with the UARM Foundation. UARM has dedicated substantial resources in technology enhancements to deliver educational opportunities to these communities. Further fulfilling its mission and its obligation to the public, UARM houses Adult Basic Education (ABE) centers on the main Mena campus as well as these facilities. GED graduates participate in UARM commencement, and the College awards a Tuition and Fees Scholarship to the student with the highest GED exam score.

Commitment to public good is demonstrated through student organization activities. Students participate in public works projects such as community clean-ups. Phi Theta Kappa (PTK), partners with Student Government and sponsors an annual Easter Egg Hunt for Literacy for area preschools. SGA sponsors several blood drives each semester.

UARM regularly offers its facilities to community organizations, many times at reduced or no cost to the organization. The community averages over 350 events per year using the Historic Armory, Lecture Hall, Student Union, Ouachita Center, and classroom space.

1.D.2. UARM'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.

As a public state institution of higher learning, UARM has no investors, parent organization, or external interests outside of the UA System.

The College is responsible to students and public constituencies and to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. UARM supports itself through tuition and fees, legislative appropriations, and millage. UARM received \$376,014 in [county millage revenue](#) in 2013, and \$355,662 in 2018. UARM is able to fulfill its role to with 65% less yearly tax revenue than the nearest community college 45 miles distant.

1.D.3. UARM engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Engaging with its external constituencies and communities of interest is an important part of the scope of UARM. In its Philosophy and Scope statement, UARM is dedicated to “providing programs and services that support and enhance the social, civic, and economic development of our community and state.” Advisory committees work closely with UARM by providing valuable input in the development of classes and programs. A list of these [technical advisory committees](#) is provided in evidence. Further, the workforce development office works closely with the Department of Workforce Services to identify workforce training needs. This office also works with area businesses to provide skill updates for employers.

Demonstrating its support of initiatives directed toward the economic development of the community and state, UARM is an active participant in the following local and state organizations:

- Mena/Polk County Chamber of Commerce
- Mount Ida Chamber of Commerce
- Waldron Chamber of Commerce
- Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce
- Council for Resource Development
- Arkansas Community Colleges
- Arkansas Regional Coalition of the Ouachitas (ARCO)

UARM is fortunate to have six (6) cooperative and supportive public school districts in its service area. The school districts are as follows:

- Mena School District
- Ouachita River School District (Acorn and Oden Campuses)
- Cossatot River School District
- Waldron School District
- Mount Ida School District
- Caddo Hills School District

All school districts offer concurrent and dual credit at varying levels. Mena, Cossatot River, and Ouachita River participate in the Secondary Career Center. Public school administrators are invited to campus at least once per year to discuss needs, concerns or opportunities. Public school counselors are hosted on campus annually and work closely with the admissions office.

UARM offers concurrent credit to high school students on their home campuses, online, and through CIV as needed. UARM served 309 high school students during the 2018-2019 academic year. The College also offers a Secondary Career Center offering technical programs to area high school seniors. This program expands in 2019-2020 to include juniors.

UARM’s service area has a significant number of parents that home school their children. To better meet the needs of these students as they transition to college, UARM has hosted several home-school student/parent meetings to discuss the college admissions process, features of an acceptable home school diploma, financial aid, and curricular offerings.

Sources

- Committee Assignments 2018 - 2019 (1)
- Committee Assignments 2018 - 2019 (1) (page number 10)
- FY18 Millage

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Summary

The University of Arkansas Rich Mountain is guided by the role and scope established by the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Under the leadership and guidance of the University of Arkansas System Board of Trustees, and advice of the Board of Visitors, the Chancellor guides the College to fulfill its stated educational mission. Faculty, staff and administration fully understand the mission of the college and work in a culture committed to the ideals expressed in the mission, vision and values. Faculty, staff, and administration follow guidelines provided by strategic goals to complete UARM's public purpose.

The service area and enrollment profile of the College are marked by a high level of poverty and low level of educational attainment. The College consistently strives to transcend area demographics and bring a high level of service to its students. Technology is current and continually improved. Academic programs are rigorous, yet developmentally appropriate for those overcoming academic deficiencies. Technical programs offer training in high demand occupations.

UARM clearly articulates its mission through several documents via multiple modalities, all of which are easily accessed by the public. The Mission Statement explains why it exists, its Values Statement declares the College's guiding principles, the Vision Statement describes its goals for the people of the region, and, finally, the Philosophy Statement provides the nature and scope of the College. The practice of formally evaluating mission documents as part of the strategic planning process allows for a critical analysis of its statements. This process ensures the documents are current and relevant to its constituency and in alignment with the strategic goals of the College.

A community college is a diverse institution that serves a constituency with variable needs and goals. Diversity is valued and respected, and programming is inclusive. Consequently, all processes and activities of the College, from Affirmative Action and ADA compliance to academics and student activities, are designed to create an atmosphere to promote achievement. UARM strives to instill social competencies required to succeed in a multicultural environment.

UARM provides the area's population with expanded access to educational opportunities for those who seek lifelong learning. Special programs are available for basic education, workforce or skills upgrades, and personal enrichment.

Criterion One Strengths

- Employees understand the College mission and are committed to carrying out the intent of the mission in classrooms and community activities.
- College programming is appropriate for its constituencies.
- College mission documents are current and widely disseminated.
- College decisions are mission driven.
- The College fosters a culture of respect for all students.
- The College provides programs and services to support the social, civic, and economic development of the community and state.
- The College strives to maintain state-of-the-art technology that bridges the educational gap created by a rural location.

Criterion One Challenges

- The College must maintain progress in the midst of continuing budget constraints.
- The College will continue to face challenges related to recruiting minority faculty and staff.
- The College must investigate innovative ways to introduce multicultural elements into a homogeneous population.
- The College must continue to offer relevant, cost-efficient professional development
- The College must identify the reasons for and stem the decline in retention numbers which persist despite use of nationally recognized best practices.

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 operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

Argument

UA Rich Mountain operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions. Its policies and procedures support the integrity of budgeting, hiring practice, affirmative action, grievance filing, anti-discrimination and sexual harassment for employees and students. In 1983, the RMCC Board of Trustees (Board or BOT) adopted a Board of Trustees Policy Manual to establish fair and ethical policies and processes. In 2017, the RMCC Board relinquished local control to the University of Arkansas System, adopting the policies of that entity.

The UA System Board's duties are outlined in the Arkansas Code Annotated (ACA) §6-61-521. The Board is given the charge “to make rules and regulations consistent with the provisions of ACA §6-61-520, and with the rules and regulations of the state board as are necessary for the proper administration and operation of the community college.”

The 2014 accreditation evaluation team had no findings with regard to ethical conduct in policy or procedure. Policy evaluation is an ongoing process but governed by the UA System Board of Trustees. The UA System Board Policy manual is accessible online to faculty, staff, students, and community. The Chancellor’s Office is the repository for college procedures. Employees are given notice of changes, corrections, or additions to policies and procedures via email, employee meetings, or during bi-annual in-service sessions. Legislation requires annual notification of particular policies; the Human Resource office retains the appropriate audit files.

Integrity of Financial Management Functions

UARM uses a balanced budgeting process to manage its financial resources. The Budget Committee spearheads the development of the budget, which incorporates the College’s Mission and the Strategic Plan. The budget is continuously monitored by area supervisors and the business office. More information on the budgeting process is explained in Criterion 5.

Business office personnel adhere to Government Accounting Standard Board (GASB) financial practices. Arkansas Legislative Joint Auditing Committee audits demonstrate financial standards are maintained. No significant findings were found during the [annual audit](#) in 2017.

The [Business Office Procedures Manual](#) details current financial operations.

Employees monitor detailed departmental budgets through the UARM Intranet. Each department is responsible for maintaining the funds allocated for the year in an ethical manner when choosing to purchase products or spend funds for departmental needs. All expenditures follow a required approval process.

The Board of Trustees oversees the financial responsibilities of the College. The local Board of Visitors reviews monthly and year-end financial statements produced by the Vice Chancellor of Administration and the Director of Budget Analysis and Human Resources.

UARM Foundation, Financial Aid, and Scholarships

The Foundation exists to promote the interests of UA Rich Mountain by aiding and extending the work and activities of the College. Foundation operations are administered under the direct supervision of the Chancellor and the Director of Development. Foundation finances are subject to annual [external audit](#). Foundation operation follow the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) financial guidelines. It is considered a not-for-profit organization with a 501(c) (3) status. Copies of the [Foundation Policy and By-Laws](#) are located in evidence.

The Foundation Board of Directors ensure the proper management of donated funds. The UARM Scholarship Committee is appointed by the Chancellor. The Committee reviews and selects Foundation scholarship recipients based on scholarship eligibility, need, and/or donor-specific criteria. The Scholarship Committee also selects Academic Scholarship recipients by using UARM-defined academic measures and test scores. Information about this procedure is located in the [College catalog](#).

Student aid, other than scholarships, is governed by the U.S. Department of Education. Students follow federal guidelines regarding Pell grants. The Financial Aid Office and the Business Office coordinate the disbursement of grant awards. [External audits](#) provide evidence that student financial aid funds are managed in an ethical manner. The [A-133 state audits](#) and [Veterans Administration Compliance](#) surveys had zero findings in administering state and federal funds. Audits from previous years can be found in the Director of Budget Analysis and Human Resources office or the Financial Aid Office. These offices coordinate monthly to balance accounts and affirm that funds are administered according to state and federal guidelines.

Purchasing Process

The College follows state guidelines for purchasing. Departments submit purchase order requests via the College's Intranet, College-issued procurement cards (P-Cards), or through the procurement clerk. Supervisors approve purchases for their departments, subject to supervisor

approval. The Director of Budget Analysis and Human Resources reviews electronic requests to confirm general ledger account accuracy. The Controller reviews P-Card purchases. All employees with P-Card authority are trained in their proper use. Guidelines are published in the [Procurement Card Program Policies and Procedures Manual](#) updated in 2018.

Bid Process

The College follows the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration procurement threshold provided here:

“Purchase for most commodities and services totaling \$20,000 or less...may be made by Procurement without bid procedures.” Competitive bids are required for materials or projects with a projected cost between \$20,000 and \$75,000. Purchases exceeding \$75,000 for normal commodities and services or “capital improvements” undergo a formal Competitive Sealed Bid procedure.

These limits were revised in 2017. The full process can be found in the [Business Office Procedures Manual](#)

Grant Funded Programs

Grant programs operate by published state and Federal guidelines. These programs include TRIO, Career Pathways, Workforce Development, and Adult Education. The College also receives Perkins funds for technical programming. All grant funded programs submit progress reports in a timely manner and have received no audit findings. [Annual Performance Reports](#) (APR) are available in evidence and detail how grant programs consistently meet or exceed program objectives. The Title III, PACE, and Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant mentioned in 2014 have completed funding.

Academic Functions

The College operates with integrity in academic functions. Expectations of faculty are outlined during faculty meetings and College convocation. Student expectations are provided in course syllabi and the [College Catalog](#).

Instruction

Faculty members consistently review degree and certificate programs for changes, additions, or corrections to meet student needs. Faculty in technical programs stay current within their disciplines to address business and industry changes. Technical program faculty also meet with [advisory committees](#) for curriculum advice. The general education follows the guidelines set by the Arkansas Department of Education (ADHE) for program requirements and transferability. All changes to degrees and certificates are reported to ADHE. ADHE also requires every public institution follow a program review schedule. A compulsory review is due every seven years. The current [program review schedule](#) is provided in evidence. Assessment procedures and results are presented in Criterion Four.

Academic Freedom

Faculty members are guaranteed academic freedom in the classroom, but adhere to guidelines set forth in Board Policy. Research for pecuniary return requires prior approval from the Vice Chancellor and the Chancellor. Faculty are asked to

“refrain from introducing controversial matters bearing no relationship to the subject in the classroom. Faculty members are citizens, members of a learned profession, and members of an educational community. Speaking or writing as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline. However, as individuals of learning and as members of an educational community, instructors should understand that the public may judge the profession and the institution by their utterances, appearance, and actions. It is, therefore, expected that they will at all times be accurate, exercise appropriate restraint, show respect for the opinions of others, and conduct themselves in a professional manner.”

Students

Students are expected to adhere to ethical and fair processes as defined in the [Catalog](#) under Dishonesty. The Prohibited Conduct section defines policies for students in regards to endangerment, harassment, disruption, sexual misconduct, illegal drugs and alcohol, fire and safety, gambling, property violations, computer violations, administrative summons, smoking, and other violations. Students are subject to the published disciplinary procedure.

Computer Use Policy

Faculty, staff, and students adhere to strict guidelines in regard to the use of technology. Employees read and sign an Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy detailing proper use of computers, the Intranet, and technological resources before being given an email address and data access. To access information resources, students are mandated to adhere to the Acceptable Use Policy and accept the policy during their initial Student Portal setup. Students sign an agreement to abide by College policies and procedures as part of the Application for Admission. Community patrons also sign the Acceptable Use Policy prior to accessing technology. The College is subject to FERPA, [HIPPA](#), and an annual internal IT audit required by the UA System. The high risk HIPPA assessments are currently being addressed.

Personnel Functions

Personnel-related and environment-related policies are found throughout Board Policy. The UA System is thorough in detailing hiring, appointments, sanction, dismissal, and grievance. Specific policy questions are directed to the legal department at the system office. Employees adhere to policy 335.1 University Code of Ethical Conduct 1.24.2014 of the System. The code provides uniform conduct standards. A copy of the [Code of Conduct](#) is provided to new employees and available for employee review on the College Intranet.

Policy [4.01.03](#), Transfers and Internal Hiring and [4.01.01](#), Fair Employment practice (Nondiscrimination Policy), were updated in July 2017 to reflect the Chancellor's authority to hire. [Grievance Procedure, 4.03.04](#), changed to reflect any grievance against the chancellor

would go to the system president instead of the local board. The [Dismissal Process, 4.01.07](#), was updated July 2017, September 2017, and July 2018 to reflect changes to System policies.

Auxiliary Functions

The College has several facilities available for rent to the public for community events. An individual or group may make reservations through the Community Outreach Office. The reservation agreement and policies of usage are provided here and detail acceptable use of the facilities. Other auxiliary functions include the Student Union grill and convenience store. The Cosmetology program offers services and products to the public. Activities within these units are governed by business office policy and practice.

Sources

- A-133 Audit 2016-2017
- Arkansas Department of Higher Education Program Review Schedule
- Business Office Procedures Nov 2018
- Committee Assignments 2018 - 2019 (1)
- Compliance FY 18 RICH MOUNTAIN
- ETS P044A160067_2017-18_final
- Foundation Policies and Bylaws
- FY17 Legislative Audit report
- FY2018 Foundation Audit
- Procurement Card Policy Manual 2018
- UARM College Policy July 2018
- UARM College Policy July 2018 (page number 58)
- UARM College Policy July 2018 (page number 61)
- UARM College Policy July 2018 (page number 63)
- UARM College Policy July 2018 (page number 93)
- UofA - Rich Mountain HIPAA Security Report 2019 - Vulnerability Scan

2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

Argument

2.B: The University of Arkansas Rich Mountain presents itself clearly and completely to its students and the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control and accreditation relationships.

UARM's academic program descriptions and requirements are listed on the College website as well as in the Catalog. Tuition and fees are published online and within the Catalog. UARM adheres to federal government regulations for net cost of attendance and other areas of Federal Compliance.

The Personnel Directory in the UARM Catalog lists all full-time faculty and staff credentials. Adjunct faculty credentials can be viewed upon request by contacting the office of Academic Affairs.

Course syllabi adhere to a 13-Point syllabus template. This template requires the ADA Section 504 statement, UARM's tobacco policy, the College's mission statement, a credit hour definition (as defined by the US Department of Education), a credit hour calculator, and the instructor's policy for academic dishonesty, which adheres to the academic dishonesty guidelines located in the Dishonesty portion of the Prohibited Conduct section in the [College Catalog](#). The instructor adds other information relevant to specific coursework.

Programs and Requirements

Information pertaining to academic and/or lifelong learning courses is accessible through the UARM website. It is also published in local media prior to registration. Tuition and associated fees are posted with the course schedule. The College provides information on course offerings and workshop opportunities from elementary age students to those over 60.

Student Programs

Information on student programs and activities is posted on campus as events occur. UARM provides co-curricular enrichment opportunities through student organizations. These organizations include the Student Government Association, Phi Theta Kappa, Baptist Collegiate Ministries, Actors' Guild, and Skills USA among others. The College joined the NJCAA (National Junior College Athletic Associate) in 2017 and welcomed its inaugural class of cross-

country runners to campus in 2018. Information on UA Rich Mountain Buck Athletics is available on the website.

A portion of student fees is set aside each year in a Student Activities budget. These general ledger accounts are overseen by the Director of Admissions and/or the club advisors (faculty/staff). These funds are for the development and logistics of student activities and purchasing needed supplies. Student organizations adhere to policies and procedures set forth within the Student Activities section of the College Catalog.

Admissions

Admissions information is available to the general public from the following:

- UARM website
- College publications/Social Media
- Front desk of the main entrance
- Admissions office
- Waldron and Mount Ida facilities

The Application for Admissions is accessed on the College website. Admissions information and requirements, as well as information about UARM degree plans and programs, are placed in high traffic areas off campus for easy access, i.e. high school counselors' offices, Department of Workforce Services, and local businesses.

The College employs an admissions director and a recruiter. The recruiter is the point-of-contact for inquiry from new and returning students of diverse ages and educational goals. The Recruiter and Director of Admissions coordinate recruitment events and activities for the College at local, state, and regional recruitment programs, fairs, community events, and service area schools. The recruiter is involved with the development, printing, and distribution of information and recruitment materials.

Financial Aid

Financial aid information is available on the website, in the Catalog, and in the Financial Aid Office. Students have access to scholarship material, federal and state scholarships, and requirements for receiving and continuing eligibility.

Staff, Faculty, Administration

Full-time personnel credentials are listed within the Professional and Support Staff section of the Catalog. Staff, faculty, and administrators are available to students via email, telephone, or office visits. Faculty publicly post teaching schedules and office hours. Staff members are accessible during regular business hours and after hours by appointment.

Costs to Students

UARM adheres to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education and the U.S. Education Department regulations for publicly providing the cost of attendance. There is a net price calculator located on the Financial Aid section of the website. Tuition and fees are current and published on the website and in various materials used to promote semester registration. Book rental fees are disclosed to students, as well as the ability to opt-out of book rental.

Accreditation Relationships

The Office of Long Term Care (OLTC), a division of the Arkansas Department of Human Services, is the approving agency for Nursing Assistant Training Programs. The OLTC approves training and competency evaluation programs for individuals who provide nursing or nursing-related services to residents in long term care facilities and who are not licensed health professionals. The nursing assistant program provides courses of instruction and experience that will prepare students to be a qualified member of a health care team. The OLTC requires approval every two years. UARM's most recent [approval](#) was 2018.

UARM's Practical Nurse Program was granted initial approval by the Arkansas State Board of Nursing (ASBN) in 1975. The most recent [approval](#) was 2014. The Registered Nurse Program offered through the Arkansas Rural Nursing Education Consortium (ARNEC) was approved in 2011. ARNEC offers Nursing theory through Blackboard. Clinical experiences are conducted locally. Both programs have maintained full approval by ASBN since initial endorsements.

UARM is accredited by the Veteran's Administration (VA). Students apply for benefits through the Department of Veterans Affairs which determines eligibility for educational benefits. Once approved, the veteran student works closely with the Financial Aid Director, UARM's official VA certifying official. The Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs (AVCSA) is the advisor for VA students to ensure each student is in compliance with regulations. UARM is approved by the Department of Veteran's Affairs State Approving Agency (SAA).

The Cosmetology Program is approved and reviewed through the Arkansas Department of Health Systems Licensing and Regulation – Cosmetology and Massage Therapy. This program was approved in 2013 and remains current in its approval. The Massage Therapy program was approved by the same agency in 2018.

The Welding program was established in 2013. UARM instructors initiated the accreditation application process with the American Welding Society in August 2014 and received acceptance in November. The instructor was recertified in March 2019.

Sources

- Certified Nursing Approval 2019
- UACC-Rich Mountain PPA AR State Board of Nursing Approval 2014-2019

2.C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.
4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

Argument

After the Higher Learning Commission approval of Change of Control, the governing board transitioned from the RMCC Board of Trustees to the UA System Board of Trustees. Oversight and responsibility rest with the System Trustees, appointed by the Governor for ten year terms. The chancellor (previously referred to as the president) along with College administrators are entrusted with day-to-day operations, development of long-range plans, and submission to the System President for Trustee consideration and approval.

UA Rich Mountain policy outlines the general purpose of the former Board of Trustees, now the Board of Visitors, shall be:

"to perform a liaison and advisory function between UA Rich Mountain and residents of its service area, to aid in securing financial support, to advise upon the educational and services needs of the service area, to assist the UA System's endeavors to aid in the orderly transition of UA Rich Mountain as it becomes a University of Arkansas System campus, and to furnish counsel and guidance for the resulting institution."

All communication, including advice and recommendations from the UA Rich Mountain Board of Visitors, will be transmitted through the Chancellor to the President of the UA System, who may then provide that communication to the UA System Board of Trustees. The Chancellor of UA Rich Mountain will be an executive employee of the UA System and will report to the President of the UA System."

Annual elections are held for officers of the system trustees each year. Elections for officers of the Board of Visitors are also held annually "at the first BOV meeting of the calendar year." The

BOV revised local policy to allow officers to hold office for "up to two years with the term length determined during the election of officers," as they meet five times instead of ten per year.

2.C.1 The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance UA Rich Mountain.

The powers and duties of the Board are set by the State in [Arkansas Code § 6-61-521](#). The policies of the Board reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the System and its member institutions. The Board develops, implements, and oversees policies consistent with Arkansas law. Decisions at individual system campuses are delegated to Chancellors and their administrative teams. The influence of local politics and personalities was greatly diminished with the change of control to the system.

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

The Board considers the interests of internal and external constituencies during the decision-making process and the impact of those decisions state-wide. Agendas and minutes of Board of Trustee meetings are available online. Members make reasonable, practical efforts to review action items prior to Board meetings and meet with appropriate interested parties. While the Board considers individual concerns, decisions are made based on the best interests of the institution without undue influence of any one internal or external stakeholder. Board meetings follow a published process for conducting System business. Patrons have the opportunity to address the Board about relevant topics if they follow the process set forth in Board Policy.

In accordance with policy, the System Board establishes the meeting calendar for the upcoming academic year. Advanced notification of Board meetings is given to the media for appropriate announcements to the public. When changes to Board meeting location, date, or time are required, they are announced to the media, public, and employees. The Board of Visitors follow these same guidelines and minutes are kept for public review in the Johnson Learning Commons.

The System President develops appropriate meeting agendas and provides relevant information to the Board. Requests for placing items on the agenda are given to the President in sufficient time to place on the agenda along with supporting documents.

No new business is transacted by the Board unless the item(s) are placed on the agenda and relevant information has been in the hands of the board members for at least 48 hours prior to each meeting. To allow flexibility, new business items may be brought up for Board action without the 48-hour notice if five (of the nine) members vote to allow it. Policies and procedures are set forth for autonomous policy-making and to assure integrity in all aspects of the decision-making process.

2.C.3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests, or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of UA Rich Mountain.

As required by the State of Arkansas, all appointed Board of Trustees, Board of Visitors, and UARM administrators must submit an annual Statement of Financial Interest Form revealing any conflict of interest to the Arkansas Secretary of State. The Trustees acknowledge the high-ranking office to which they have been appointed and act with integrity in all decision making pursuant to [ACA § 6-61-521](#). The UARM Foundation has a separate board to oversee its operations.

2.C.4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

As stated in [ACA § 6-61-521](#), the Board implements policies regarding system entities and makes the final decisions in terms of oversight and governance of the College. The procedures and day-to-day operations of the System are entrusted to the President, administration, and staff. The System President delegates local campus responsibilities to the various Chancellors and Directors. The UA Rich Mountain [organizational chart](#) reflects the flow of authority in which the President is the chief executive officer and is directly responsible for the operation of all aspects of the System. The UARM Chancellor is responsible for providing leadership to Vice Chancellors and Directors on campus, and ensuring the objectives of the College are achieved. The Chancellor implements the broad general policies established by the Board and works with administrative staff to delegate management responsibilities. The Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs is responsible for the overall operation of the academic units. Faculty oversee academic matters pertaining to program design, classroom instruction, program materials, department budget, curriculum, and they chair the Curriculum Committee. Program additions are submitted through the Vice Chancellor to the system Vice President, and to the Board of Trustees Academic Affairs committee for review and approval before being submitted to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education.

Sources

- A.C.A. 6-61-521
- UA Rich Mountain Organizational Chart

2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Argument

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

Freedom of expression is encouraged and protected at UA Rich Mountain through Board policies, employee and student codes of conduct, and faculty procedures. Established Board policies facilitate commitment to academic freedom and the search for truth and free expression. The instructor has the authority to maintain order in the academic environment, “but this authority must not be used to suppress the expression of views related to a subject contrary to his own.” Faculty members are “entitled to the full freedom of research and publication” as well as freedom in the classroom to adequately discuss the discipline. These assurances are upheld and encouraged so students may participate in robust discussions to enhance learning opportunities. Faculty members choose course content in accordance with agreed department outcomes.

Students are encouraged to participate in discussions freely and to express their views openly. Faculty members must maintain an orderly classroom but should in no way suppress or hamper the expression of views related to course content. Course content may be controversial; however, students are provided numerous opportunities for sharing and self-expression.

Students are allowed opportunities for self-expression outside the classroom through a variety of clubs and organizations. More information about the formation of student organizations and student activities as described in the Student Activities section of the [Catalog](#).

Faculty and non-administrative staff are allowed to express themselves freely through participation in the Professional Association, as well as through serving on a variety of committees. These committees shape the governance of the College and allow numerous opportunities for freely sharing ideas. The right to freedom of discussion and expression is strongly encouraged and closely protected.

Sources

There are no sources.

2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.
2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.
3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Argument

2.E.1. UARM provides effective oversight and support to ensure integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.

UARM provides oversight and support to ensure integrity of research and scholarly practice, though research is not a stated part of the College mission. Academic integrity and student conduct are addressed through College [catalog](#). As faculty and students do not typically engage in research involving human or animal subjects, the College does not have an institutional review board.

The College addresses oversight and support of scholarly practice for faculty and staff through its policies. UA Rich Mountain policy 5.01.03 states:

“Public institutions of higher education exist for the common good. The common good is dependent upon a free search for the truth and its free expression. The College is committed to the principle that faculty members must be free to pursue scholarly inquiry without undue restriction and to publish conclusions concerning the significance of evidence that they consider relevant. Faculty members may be assured that their professional careers or resultant material benefits will not be jeopardized because of differences of opinion with anyone inside or outside the College.”

Further, the Sabbatical Policy and the procedures in Governance Through Committees, support faculty endeavors to engage in research and allows for extended leave by modifying employment contracts.

Student research and scholarly practice occurs with the oversight and support of the College. Academic dishonesty is covered in the [College Catalog](#), and course syllabi. Students receive further information about plagiarism and academic honesty in College orientation.

UARM ensures ethical conduct in research and instructional activities. The College is committed to providing an exemplary learning environment to enable students to be successful in a global,

diverse, and technological society. However, the College needs to specifically address research and student work product in a new policy and procedure. While not yet an issue, student work is becoming more advanced in computer programming, entrepreneurship, and other areas. A policy is needed to address student ownership of such work.

2.E.2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.

The Student Code of Conduct defined in the [Catalog](#) applies to all library information users. Copyright notices are displayed in the library copy center. The UARM [Acceptable Use Statement](#) includes a detailed list of guidelines. The librarian and assistants, along with the SSS Computer Lab Coordinator, instruct students regarding the ethical use of information resources. In addition, instructors offer guidance to students in regards to proper use and ethics of information technology. An ethics class is required for the Business and Information Technology degree.

Printed and computer-based resources for students, staff, and faculty are in the Johnson Learning Commons, and they support the educational mission of the college. In addition to the policy, there are established procedures for the appropriate use of resources. It is the individual user's responsibility to follow those policies and procedures and to ensure information resources are used appropriately.

Student identity is verified by the Office of Admissions and Registrar's Office during enrollment and re-verified when student identification is created. Students receive a unique username and password for the duration of their enrollment to access student records, online courses, and e-mail correspondence. Students affirm their understanding of the Acceptable Use Statement in the Catalog by signing admissions application and registration forms.

2.E.3. UA Rich Mountain has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Academic honesty and integrity are expected. Students are informed of the consequences should either be violated. These policies are located in the Prohibited Conduct section of the Catalog, on the Student Portal, within each instructor's syllabi, and as part of student orientation. Instructors inform students about the academic honesty policy while reviewing syllabi at the beginning of class. Students receive a hard copy of syllabi when meeting in a traditional classroom. Online classes offer a link to syllabi.

Any student in violation of the policies or deemed to be dishonest is subject to disciplinary action. Dishonesty is defined as cheating, plagiarism, providing false information, forgery, and other forms of academic dishonesty. Disciplinary sanctions draw upon the experience and professional judgment of faculty, staff, and administrators and on a range of disciplinary techniques. Possible sanctions are failing an assignment or course; withholding grades, official transcripts, or degree; and disciplinary probation, including suspension or expulsion.

Reprimands are initially up to the instructor. If the student disagrees with the decision, the student can file an appeal using the process in the Catalog. Academic dishonesty is considered

both an academic offense and a behavioral violation. The Chancellor appoints a committee of faculty, staff, and a student to hear necessary appeals.

Sources

- Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy 4.04.06
- UA Systemwide Policies

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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

Summary

The University of Arkansas Rich Mountain adheres to all state and federal laws and guidelines and to the policies of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education in a continuing effort to conduct the academic and financial affairs of the College ethically and responsibly. System and local policies and procedures are published and are followed by College stakeholders. These policies are to guide ethical and responsible conduct by all who represent the institution, both internally and externally.

UARM has active and effective planning and program evaluation processes, including procedures for annual program review to confirm the continued improvement of the academic experience for students. It also conducts a comprehensive program review every seven years for each of its academic programs to ensure the integrity and justification for program continuation. Programs that fall below specified graduation rates are reviewed by the academic departments and ADHE for timely program modifications.

A commitment to freedom of expression through academic freedom is evident throughout academic affairs. Administration, staff, faculty, and students function together to achieve the College's Mission.

Criterion Two Strengths

- The System Board of Trustees Policy manual is current (March 2019) and continuously updated.
- The College legislative audit reports reveal no significant findings
- The College had a successful, smooth transition to the University of Arkansas System.
- The College has grant funded programs, such as Career Pathways and TRIO programs which provide additional services to students.
- Board of Trustees meetings are open to the public and are publicized through state media
- Board of Visitor meetings are open to the public and are publicized through local media
- Agendas and Minutes of the Board of Trustees meetings are accessible online
- Students and faculty are encouraged to freely discuss controversial topics without fear of censorship.
- The mission statement is located throughout the campus, on the website, and on all course syllabi.
- The organizational structure supports the mission of the College.
- The College management reviews policies, procedures, and practices for effectiveness in meeting the mission of the college and makes needed changes.
- Small campus size allows employees to be more engaged with colleagues and address issues or concerns more easily.

Criterion Two Challenges

- Keeping the College's website up to date is necessary to remain transparent and have accurate information; this continues to challenge the college.
- Ongoing training is needed for new employees beyond the new employee orientation with regard to policies and procedures.
- Methods of student authentication for online classes and admissions need to be reviewed to ensure ethical, responsible student use.

Sources

There are no sources.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

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

3.A - Core Component 3.A

The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for 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 degree or certificate awarded.

UA Rich Mountain requires levels of performance appropriate to the degree or certificate being awarded. The College Effectiveness Committee and the Curriculum Committee cooperate with department chairs and instructional faculty to assure quality and relevance of student performance. Each department or program is charged with developing and implementing assessment measures for the respective disciplines. Career and technical education programs use the guidance of advisory committees as well as employer input to maintain the accuracy and relevance of course materials and performance levels. Advisory committees meet at least annually. These committees also provide information for Perkin's grant proposals, funding priorities, and student employment opportunities.

UA Rich Mountain offers 28 degrees and certificates in transfer and technical areas, down from 33 in 2014. The degrees offered include the Associate of Arts (AA), Associate of Applied Science (AAS), and Associate of General Studies (AGS). All Associate degrees require 60 credit hours. UARM also offers certificates of proficiency and technical certificates. These certificates require a minimum of 7-18 credit hours in a specialized area for a proficiency certificate and 19-

30 credit hours for a technical one. Seven certificates of proficiency were deleted and five added due to industry demands since 2014. [ADHE approved program list](#) is in evidence.

Faculty develops, updates, and revises degrees and certificates. Curriculum ideas and changes are vetted through the Curriculum Committee, the College Effectiveness Committee, and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. The approval progress through Chancellor's Cabinet, the system Vice President for Academic Affairs, President, and finally the Board of Trustees.

Upon Board approval, curriculum and program changes are recommended to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) for review and approval following state guidelines and policy. All programs are reviewed at least every seven years on a timetable established by ADHE. The most recent program reviews were in machine tool technology, business and information systems, Associate of Arts/General Studies, and nursing.

Arkansas has a general education course transfer system governed by ADHE. These courses are guaranteed transfer to any public higher education institution in Arkansas. Institutional Chief Academic Officers (CAO) meet quarterly to discuss issues of curriculum, transfer, and articulation. A Transfer Committee within this cohort meets annually to determine courses to be added to the ACTS (Arkansas Course Transfer System). Institutions submit requests to ADHE to initiate this process. These procedures provide structure to ensure that curriculum is reviewed for accuracy, relevance, and appropriateness to higher education in Arkansas. Students who complete an Associate of Arts program are guaranteed transfer of 60 hours. Other UARM courses may transfer through specific Articulation Agreements with universities within Arkansas.

3.A.2. UARM articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate and certificate programs.

Program faculty write and publish student learning goals appropriate to degrees and certificates. These goals are published on the College website and included on program syllabi. Faculty design programs that build skills from introduction to competence and outline these skills in sequential curriculum maps. They are also responsible for advising students of the course sequencing required to meet learning goals.

UARM defines general education as competencies not directly related to technical, vocational, or professional preparation. It is a part of every course of study, regardless of degree or program area. General education is intended to impart common knowledge, intellectual concepts, and critical thinking skills which every educated person should possess. UA Rich Mountain teaches and assesses these four general education outcomes: critical thinking, technology use, research use, and communication skills.

General education learning goals for ACTS courses are the minimum expectation for courses guaranteed to transfer. Teaching faculty are permitted to enhance or expand on this minimum. Programs outside of general education determine their departmental learning outcomes with the assistance of advisory committees and are based on discipline and workplace needs.

3.A.3. UA Rich Mountain'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, and through contractual/consortial arrangements).

Learning goals are established at the faculty and/or department level for general education and encompass all Associate of Arts, Associate of Applied Science, and Associate of General Studies degrees across modes of delivery. Specific technical program goals and related expected outcomes are developed at the department level. Student learning outcomes are based on what students are expected to know and do at the end of the program. Course level goals are developed by faculty and are aligned with ADHE transfer course goals or workforce expectations depending on the course type.

Teaching faculty work together to select common textbooks for courses within respective disciplines to ensure consistency across modes of delivery. There are individual department meetings, department chair meetings, faculty (including concurrent) meetings, and program meetings to discuss trends and improvements. Curriculum is enhanced and modified as necessary to maintain quality instruction.

UARM has procedures in place to assure consistency and quality of curriculum. Program chairs and the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs are responsible for differing aspects of oversight and quality assurance regardless of teaching modality. Site visits, course planning and scheduling, faculty evaluations, and classroom observation occur on all campuses. Online courses are monitored by the VCAA and faculty are evaluated by online students at the end of each course.

The College provides classes on-site, online, and through Zoom and high definition compressed video. Students access courses online through the website using the Moodle course management system platform. The Distance Learning Committee as part of the Curriculum Committee is responsible for evaluating and approving new courses offered in an online format. Additionally, the committee is responsible for reviewing the online course offerings. In 2013, UARM completed the HLC Distance Delivery site visit. The College is approved to offer programming in an online format.

The College has a Secondary Career Center to offer Career and Technical Education to secondary students on the Mena campus. Secondary students are also offered concurrent enrollments on their campuses through on-site faculty, or through compressed video from various college locations. All faculty have the requisite credentials and qualifications. All are expected to attend faculty meetings and participate fully in the review and improvement processes. Common class assessments are used in select courses. UA Rich Mountain makes no distinction between concurrent and on-campus college course work in expectations or outcomes.

To measure educational quality, the College administers the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) to all students. Comparisons are made here with a state peer group of institutions offering similar degrees and all Arkansas community colleges (ACC).

Table 3.A.3-1 CCSSE 2014 and 2018 Survey Results	
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Quality of Education All Campuses						
How much has your experience at this college contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? (Sum of "Quite a bit" and "Very much")	UARM	UARM	Peers	Peers	ACC	ACC
	2014	2018	2018	2018	2014	2018
Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills	63%	67%	62%	54%	61%	55%
Writing clearly and effectively	64	64	70	60	67	62
Speaking clearly and effectively	56	61	65	57	63	60
Thinking critically and analytically	71	75	74	70	74	72
Solving numerical problems	63	62	62	57	63	59
Working effectively with others	68	71	69	61	67	63
Learning effectively on your own	75	80	77	69	75	71

These results show students believe UARM contributes significantly to their growth in education and personal development. Comparison to peer institutions and other colleges within Arkansas reveals broad consistency in reported results. The mean score data from CCSSE demonstrates UARM does not significantly differ from its peers on the variables presented here. Two areas of concern have more than five percentage points in variability. These are in writing clearly and effectively and speaking clearly and effectively.

Sources

- AHECB_APPROVED_DEGREE_PROGRAMS_May_22_2019
- CCSSE 2014
- CCSSE 2018 ACC-Peers Frequency Distributions

3.B - Core Component 3.B

The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.
2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. 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. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.
4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.
5. 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.

Argument

As outlined in Criterion 1, the mission of UA Rich Mountain is to “provide all residents of the Ouachita Mountain Region with exemplary educational and enrichment opportunities to improve the quality of life and standard of living.” As stated previously in this Criterion, general education is comprised of the things all students are expected to know upon completion of a degree program. Not all programs require specific courses in language proficiency or mathematical skill. However, all courses are expected to address skills in critical thinking, technology use, research techniques, and communication.

3.B.1 The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.

The general education offered is appropriate to the mission and degree levels. Each Associate of Applied Science degree requires general education courses in English proficiency (6 hours) and mathematics (3 hours), a minimum of nine (9) credit hours that does not include prerequisite developmental courses. Students must complete a three-hour social science requirement and a course in oral communication. A student completing an Associate of Arts degree is expected to complete the state minimum core of 60 hours of general education courses as this degree is intended for transfer. Indeed, 60 hours are guaranteed transfer to any other public institution of higher education within Arkansas upon completion of the degree. The specific requirements for an AA, AAS, and AGS are listed here.

	AA	AGS	AAS- GT	AAS- BA	AAS-IT	AAS- OT	AAS- RN
English/Communications	9	6	6	9	9	9	6
Arts and Humanities	9	3	0	0	0	0	0
Math	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Sciences	8	7	0	0	0	0	12
Social Sciences	15	6	3	0	0	0	6
Computer Science	0	3	3	6	39	16	3
Business	0	0	0	30	3	18	0
Accounting	0	0	0	6	0	8	0
Economics	0	0	0	6	3	3	0
Health/Physical Education	2	2	0	0	0	3	3
Electives	14	30	45	0	3	0	33
Total Hours Required	60	60	60	60	60	60	66

3.B.2. The College articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in philosophy or framework developed by UARM or an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes the College believes every college-educated person should possess.

UA Rich Mountain articulates the content of its undergraduate general education requirements for each degree in the College Catalog. These requirements are presented to students upon applying for admission or specific programs. The Financial Aid office and faculty advisors counsel students prior to registration regarding specific degree requirements including general education. Degree plans are available on the website. They are also printed and available to students prior to registration. General education requirements are specified in departmental print brochures where applicable.

College-wide General Education Learning Outcomes (GELOs) were formalized by faculty as part of the HLC Assessment Academy. As stated in Criterion 3.B.1, all students are expected to have some proficiency in critical thinking, technology use, research skills, and communication prior to receiving a degree or certificate. Proficiency is expected to be more robust for students receiving Associate degrees than those in shorter certificate programs.

As mentioned in Criterion 3.A, the Learning Assessment Committee tasks instructors to include one or more General Education Learning Outcomes in each credit course. Faculty align course

objectives with GELOs each semester and provide evidence at the end of the semester which documents student learning, outcomes, and planned modifications if any.

3.B.3. Every degree offered engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

UA Rich Mountain is committed to developing the knowledge and skills to prepare students for transfer or employment. Faculty teach in various modalities, and CCSSE results indicate students are engaged in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

The College administers the CCSSE on a biannual basis. The last three surveys are provided in evidence.([2014](#),[2016](#),[2018](#)) The survey results include perceptions of course activities, skill areas, critical thinking, speaking, writing, community engagement, information literacy, and mathematics, as well as how the College contributed to their personal knowledge base. Specific CCSSE results are presented in Table 3.B.3-1.

Item	Response	UARM	UARM	Peers	ACC	ACC
		2014	2018		2014	2018
Made a class presentation	Often	14%	13%	21%	19%	22%
	Very Often	8	10	8	8	10
Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	Often	21	26	31	29	29
	Very Often	19	15	22	22	21
Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources	Often	33	28	37	35	33
	Very Often	25	23	27	24	28
Had serious conversations with students who differ from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values	Often	22	14	23	22	20
	Very Often	12	11	16	18	9

Comparisons to selected cohort groups reveal some concerns. The cohort group for comparisons throughout this Criterion and Criterion 4 is comprised of peer Arkansas community colleges with similar, though inexact demographics. These institutions include Arkansas State University - Newport, Black River Technical College, Cossatot Community College of the University of Arkansas, East Arkansas Community College, and Ozarka College. East Arkansas did not administer the CCSSE in 2014 precluding comparison in Table 3.B.3-2. The ACC cohort

includes all 22 Arkansas community colleges. The CCSSE 2018 Custom Groupings did not include the five peer community colleges.

Table 3.B.3-2						
CCSSE 2014/2018 Survey Results – Using Information						
Item	Response	UARM	UARM	Peers	ACC	ACC
		2014	2018		2014	2018
During the school year, how much has your coursework emphasized making judgments about the value or soundness of information arguments, or methods	Quite a bit	33%	36%	35%	33%	35%
	Very much	19	21	20	20	21
During the school year, how much has your coursework emphasized using computers in academic work	Quite a bit	29		29	30	
	Very much	51		57	55	

With regard to using information, UARM students are comparable with cohort peers. While slightly fewer students report using computers in academic work, not all courses or programs require this particular technology. Information synthesis may be addressed in other formats.

Self-reported CCSSE results indicate UARM is comparable to peer groups regarding some aspects of critical thinking, evidenced above by the judgment question. This is also true regarding integrating ideas from various sources. Results regarding class presentations and written assignments raise concerns as students report less engagement than peer institutions. Results from CCSSE are shared with faculty and staff during an annual “data day” professional development. Faculty, departments, and the College Effectiveness Committee discuss appropriate interventions and ideas for improving engagement and learning.

Table 3.B.3-3				
CCSSE 2014 Survey Results - Written Papers and Reading Engagement				
Item	Response	UARM	Peers	ACC
During the current school year, number of books read on your own (not assigned) for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment	5 to 10	12%	13%	14%
	11 to 20	8%	5%	5%
	More than 20	4%	5%	5%
During the school year, number of written papers or reports of any length	5 to 10	33%	33%	31%
	11 to 20	14%	16%	16%
	More than 20	7%	8%	8%

Table 3.B.3-4

CCSSE 2014/2018 Survey Results – UA Rich Mountain Contribution

Item	Response	UARM	UARM	Peers	ACC	ACC
		2014	2018		2014	2018
How much has UARM contributed to your ‘acquiring a broad education’	Quite a bit	40%		40%	40%	
	Very much	35		37	37	
How much has UARM contributed to your ‘writing clearly and effectively’	Quite a bit	35%	33%	37%	37%	37%
	Very much	29	31	33	30	24
How much has UARM contributed to your ‘speaking clearly and effectively’	Quite a bit	30	26	35	35	35
	Very much	26	35	30%	28	21
How much has UARM contributed to your ‘thinking critically and analytically’	Quite a bit	39	32	39	39	39
	Very much	32	42	35	35	30

A delimiter of these survey responses is they are self-reported. Students may believe that they are thinking, speaking, and writing more clearly and effectively as a result of UARM efforts. An objective test may provide more reliable, valid measures of these skills.

3.B.4. The education offered by UA Rich Mountain recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.

UA Rich Mountain serves approximately 1000 credit seeking students each fall and spring semester. Additional students participate in Lifelong Learning seminars and workshops, Workforce Education training, Kids College, and various other activities which bring the community to campus. Of the credit-seeking student population, approximately 40% are first-generation college students. Approximately 68% of students are women, and the median age is 21 years old. Seventy-six percent (76%) of students receive some financial aid to attend college, and of this number, 62% receive federal Pell grants. Only 10% of the student population is nonwhite in ethnicity, which mirrors the region. While not widely ethnically diverse in its student population, the College makes a concerted effort to bring programs and ideas that reflect human and cultural diversity to campus. Student demographics were presented in the Introduction and Criterion One.

Diversity is apparent on campus in socio-economic status. Arkansas law, until 2016, prohibited community colleges from owning and/or managing residence halls. This limits the amount of time students are on campus. Many students are employed and/or have multiple family obligations. To accommodate some of this diversity, courses are offered at differing times and several modalities, including online, hybrid, and through compressed video and Zoom to limit

the commute time for students at distant locations. Most classes are offered on Monday-Wednesday, Tuesday-Thursday schedules to alleviate time and expense concerns. Classes are offered mornings, afternoon, evenings, and weekends, and several degrees can be attained exclusively online.

College Preparedness

As a traditional, open-access community college, UA Rich Mountain offers a range of preparatory or remedial general education classes in English, reading, and mathematics. Summer bridge courses are available for rising seniors who have not yet received the satisfactory test scores required for concurrent college course work. Students are assisted through the Learning Enrichment and Advising Center (LEAC) and TRIO Student Support Services. The Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs ensures that students with disabilities are accommodated. Buildings and classrooms are Americans with Disabilities Act compliant.

Course Enrichment

Diversity is recognized in a variety of culture-based courses, including but not limited to World Literature, Art Appreciation, Theater Appreciation, sociology, psychology, history, and foreign language. Faculty are encouraged to enhance classroom experiences with appropriate field trips and cultural experiences. The budget adequately accommodates these field trip requests.

Student Life

Student Life offers a wide range of activities, and several organizations assist students in recognizing human and cultural diversity. Programming includes community service projects, community tutoring, theater productions, performing arts, and other academic interests. During 2014, students attended the Arkansas Repertory Theater, Fort Smith Symphony, Crystal Bridges Art Museum, Philbrook Art Museum, Arkansas Arts Center, and the American College Theatre Festival. A study abroad trip to China took place in 2018. This two week experience took students to Beijing, Hong Kong, and various cultural and industrial locations.

Financial Literacy

Many students have issues with financial literacy. The majority of withdrawing students cite financial instability or lack of funding as the cause. The Financial Aid office, local banks, insurance companies, and the Federal Reserve Bank in Saint Louis, Missouri, offer annual campus seminars addressing this concern.

Duke Frederick Lectures

The UARM Foundation is actively involved in fostering cultural experiences and student and community engagement. Each year, the Foundation sponsors the Duke Frederick Lecture in honor of Dr. Duke Frederick to bring speakers to campus to address issues of economic development and community progress.

Veteran Services

Veterans discharged from the armed forces face special challenges as they re-enter civilian life. Combat veterans have these issues in greater numbers as they often suffer from post-traumatic

stress. Service member veterans are assigned to the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs for academic advising and counseling.

3.B.5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the UARM mission.

The mission of UA Rich Mountain does not specifically promote research scholarship or creative works, though these activities are encouraged. As a two-year commuter campus, opportunities are limited for major artistic productions. However, the Actor's Guild presents a play each semester to the campus and local school districts. Faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge through classroom assignments, campus projects, and student activities. Creative work is present in theatre, art, dance, pottery/ceramics, culinary production, and entrepreneurship.

The drama department regularly schedules two or more drama productions per semester. Spring 2014 brought *Winnie the Pooh*, a play performed for the campus, public, and early childhood centers. Fall 2014 was *The Doctor*, a series of vignettes based on the works of Anton Chekov. The Spring 2019 production was *Noodle Doodle Box*.

The Lifelong Learning department sponsored the Operation Jumpstart Entrepreneurship program in Fall 2013 with a grant from the Winrock Foundation. This intense eight-week course, open to community members, allowed participants to develop a business plan with the assistance of experts in accounting, finance, and communication. The program ended with a live presentation competition with local business leaders serving as panelists.

Sources

- CCSSE 2014
- CCSSE 2016 Frequency Distributions by ACC Cohort - Main Survey
- CCSSE 2018 ACC-Peers Frequency Distributions

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 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; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.
2. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.
3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
4. 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.
5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

Argument

Through rigorous hiring practices and commitment to professional development, the College ensures that faculty and staff are appropriately qualified to deliver high quality programs and services. UARM budgets for professional development opportunities to enhance growth, improve post-secondary pedagogy, enhance job skills, and strengthen career development. The College's strategic plan expresses this commitment and dedication to quality programming.

3.C.1. UARM has sufficient number and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.

UARM employs full-time, adjunct, and concurrent credit faculty to fulfill instructional duties. Faculty participate in updating the curriculum, developing shared assessment tools, and assessing student learning. Full-time faculty are hired on annual contracts. Adjunct and concurrent faculty are hired from semester to semester. Concurrent faculty are employees of local school districts and receive no salary from the College for teaching College courses during the school day. There are sufficient number and continuity of faculty members to fulfill all faculty roles. Retirements have reduced the number of faculty.

Table 3.C.1-1	Full-Time	Part-Time	Total

Full Time/Part Time Faculty Ratio						
	2014	2018	2014	2018	2014	2018
Faculty	21	18	45	40	66	58
Number of Courses	143	137	94	77	237	214
Average Number of Students per Instructor	76.9	77.8	22.3	24.5		
Average Class Size	11.3	10.2	10.9	12.7		
Faculty Full-Time Equivalent	20.69	17.95	10.35	10.61	31.04	28.55
Student to Faculty Ratio	15:1	14:1	Source: UA Institutional Research Office			

Full-time faculty carry a 15 credit hour teaching load per semester and maintain a minimum of 15 office hours per week. Faculty are compensated for overload up to six credit hours. Non-teaching overload is compensated for work performed as a department chair or program/project administrator. Adjuncts do not teach more than two courses if employed full-time in another position.

Table 3.C.1-2		
Student Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)		
	Enrollment	FTE
Fall 2010	1116	620.9
Fall 2011	1108	643.0
Fall 2012	1051	604.6
Fall 2013	857	571.0
Fall 2014	1005	558.3
Fall 2015	929	528.5
Fall 2016	874	500.6
Fall 2017	938	526.7
Fall 2018	814	494.7

Student numbers and FTE continue to decline. Fall 2014 saw an increase in the number of students, though a decrease in overall FTE.

The number of faculty was stable at 21 from 2006 to 2014. The number in 2019 is 18. The average years of service in 2014 for full-time faculty was 7.94 years and adjuncts, not including concurrent, the average was 8.14. These numbers were 8.5, and 8.29 respectively in 2019. The length of service for concurrent faculty ranges from one to 16 years. Instructors with the requisite credential are recruited from secondary schools for night or weekend courses.

Full-time faculty are involved in non-classroom activities including advising and committee work. Department chairs guide their respective disciplines in matters of pedagogy, curriculum, textbook adoption, course scheduling, and expectations of student performance.

The Curriculum Committee, as a subset of the Learning Assessment Committee, reviews and recommends changes to curriculum and instructional practices. The charge of the committee is to

- Establish a shared conceptual understanding to define outcomes and assessments across the curriculum, and communicate these to stakeholders.
- Establish a vision for the assessment process by articulating outcomes and determining the means for evaluation of the process.
- Align learning assessment with College strategic goals.
- Ensure that the importance of assessment is communicated to the College Effectiveness Committee and the Chancellor's Cabinet.
- Ensure that assessment is a process established, supported, and evaluated by faculty.
- Establish a process for using data, incorporating quantitative and qualitative methods to make recommendations to faculty and staff to bring about meaningful, substantive change.
- Maintain the process established through the HLC Assessment of Student Learning project into subsequent yearly iterations to consistently improve the assessment plan.

3.C.2. All instructors are appropriately credentialed, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.

Instructional hiring follows College policy for employment. Instructional faculty teaching courses within the Arkansas Course Transfer System (ACTS) have a minimum of a Master's degree, with 18 graduate credit hours in the subject field. The Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs is the hiring authority for faculty and approves the job description prior to announcing a vacancy to the public. Job descriptions contain the essential functions, knowledge, skill/abilities, and educational/experiential requirements for the position. A hiring committee, appointed by the College Chancellor, reviews application materials and credentials. This committee conducts interviews and makes a recommendation to the VCAA and the Chancellor. Upon Chancellor approval, the applicant submits official transcripts. These transcripts are verified and filed in the Human Resource Office upon hire.

Adjunct faculty are hired through collaboration of the respective department chair and the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. There are no public announcements of adjunct vacancies, and positions are filled on an ad hoc basis. Adjunct faculty credential requirements duplicate those of full-time faculty.

Career and technical teaching faculty are credentialed appropriately, either with graduate credit hours in the teaching field, professional licensing, technical training proficiency, or extensive professional experience. Among the faculty, professional licensing is required and maintained in nursing, cosmetology, massage therapy, welding, emergency medical technician, and phlebotomy.

UARM has two consortium instructors with Master's degrees due to membership in the Arkansas Rural Nursing Education Consortium (ARNEC). Contractual faculty teach non-credit courses through Lifelong Learning and Workforce Training.

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

Faculty are evaluated annually as per Board policy. The College uses a multi-tiered approach to faculty assessment involving students, peers, and a supervisor. Students complete surveys in each course. Results are returned to faculty the following semester. In addition, department chairs, peers, or the Vice Chancellor for Academics completes a classroom observation annually. Observations use a standard classroom visit [report](#). This process is designed to provide meaningful feedback to teaching faculty to improve the quality of instruction and student learning. The Vice-Chancellor conducts full-time faculty performance reviews each spring. Adjunct faculty are evaluated and supervised by department chairs.

Students evaluate instructors using the [Student Instructional Report - SIR II](#) evaluation instrument. This survey asks for student perceptions of teaching effectiveness, including curriculum, content, and delivery. Students are typically surveyed at the end of the semester, when only successful students remain in the course. Recognizing this may skew results, the SIR II instrument was distributed at approximately six weeks into the course in Spring 2014. These data were compared to the Spring 2013 results to see if there were significant differences in student evaluations.

Instructor scores appeared consistent without regard for when the instrument was administered during the semester. SIRS results are greatly affected by the number of respondents completing the survey. UARM class size is typically small, affecting the evaluation scores for most individual faculty. Small class size may affect the satisfaction means of individual faculty; however, scores are consistently above national means. Examples of aggregate reports are supplied in evidence.

3.C.4. The College has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles: it supports their professional development.

UARM recognizes the need for continued employee professional growth and development to provide an effective learning environment. The College provides professional development opportunities for faculty regarding educational trends, recent research, and curriculum. Professional development is also provided for faculty to maintain necessary certifications and improve credentials.

The College provides a minimum of two days for professional development each semester. The Professional Development Committee is a subcommittee of the Professional Association and determines professional development needs. Most of these are institutional in nature, though some are faculty specific. Recent topics of [professional development](#) are listed in evidence.

Each department has an annual budget amount allocated to professional development. This amount depends on the number of faculty within the department, but all faculty are encouraged and expected to participate in discipline-specific staff development. Application for conferences and travel is made through the VCAA. Faculty may attend one national meeting every three years and one state meeting each year. Faculty members document attendance and share information with the respective department. To limit travel expenses, faculty are encouraged to receive professional development through webinars, Skype, or other media if appropriate.

Adjunct faculty professional development is typically addressed by the individual, as the majority of adjuncts are otherwise employed and receive professional development through other means, such as The Arkansas Bar Association or other licensing body, the DeQueen-Mena Educational Cooperative, or respective school districts. Adjunct faculty are compensated for attending UARM faculty and department meetings as part of professional development.

Faculty and staff are encouraged to take courses at UARM if relevant to their discipline. This is especially true for technical courses. No tuition is charged to faculty/staff, but they are required to pay associated fees.

3.C.5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.

Each full-time faculty member is required to schedule 15 office hours per week for student advising and assistance. Faculty schedules with office hours are forwarded to the VCAA each semester. Instructors are required to include office hours in course syllabi. Faculty have autonomy to set this schedule but are expected to maintain it for the duration of the semester.

Faculty schedule appointments during pre-registration for returning students and advise them before the end of the current semester. Full-time faculty are available the week prior to the beginning of the semester for academic advising without appointment. Typically, adjunct instructors do not advise students.

Adjunct faculty are expected to be accessible to students outside of class but do not have required office hours. The times of availability are on course [syllabi](#), and a means to contact the instructor is printed as well. Due to FERPA laws, adjunct faculty are required to correspond with students using UARM email. Online and hybrid course instructors have times listed for when students can reasonably expect to contact them. Student surveys confirm satisfactory accessibility for instructors. SIRS II results in 2014 show Faculty/Student Interaction as 4.62 on a five-point scale. Five represents “very effective.” The average score for two-year institutions is 4.40. This score in 2017 was 4.68.

Graduation survey results show overall satisfaction with faculty availability at 93% for 2014 and 89% for 2013. Table 3.C.5-1 lists other survey results related to faculty/student interaction. Dissatisfaction is consistently less than one percent.

Item	Response 2014		Response 2018	
	Faculty respect for students	Satisfied	29%	Satisfied
Very Satisfied		64%	Very Satisfied	69%
Quality of Instruction	Satisfied	32%	Satisfied	24%
	Very Satisfied	61%	Very Satisfied	67%
Availability of faculty for office appointments	Satisfied	31%	Satisfied	33%
	Very Satisfied	61%	Very Satisfied	62%
Concern for me as an individual	Satisfied	33%	Satisfied	25%
	Very Satisfied	58%	Very Satisfied	69%
Informal contact with faculty in non-academic settings	Satisfied	31%	Satisfied	30%
	Very Satisfied	55%	Very Satisfied	61%

[CCSSE](#) results also indicate overall satisfaction with faculty accessibility. The only area below the comparative mean in this category in 2014 was “Contacting faculty via e-mail.” This may be attributed to faculty allowing students to contact them via text or private cell phone, perhaps not an option at a larger institution.

3.C.6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

The State of Arkansas’ Department of Finance and Administration determines employee qualifications for classified staff in support positions. At hire, each staff is assigned as Classified or Non-Classified. All classified personnel are hired according to required core competencies; otherwise, job qualifications are the responsibility of the Chancellor. Department supervisors review established job descriptions for required qualifications. Qualifications may include professional competencies and/or minimum educational degrees. As covered in Criterion 2, UARM follows state guidelines and laws as well as Human Resource Department procedures when evaluating candidates. The hiring process for staff follows the processes as mentioned in Criterion 3.C.2.

Staff providing student support services are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development. Tutoring is provided through federally funded Student Support Services (SSS) and the institutional Learning Enrichment and Advising Center (LEAC). Persons providing tutoring in SSS are hired by the Director of Student Support Services. There is a professional full-time tutor, qualified through standard hiring practices. Peer student tutors are hired as needed and are qualified through instructor recommendation or a minimum grade of “B” in course for which they provide tutoring. SSS tutors undergo formal training prior to working with students.

LEAC peer tutors are hired by the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs upon expressed student and/or faculty need. Students must have a 3.0 minimum cumulative grade point average and a minimum grade of “B” in the course they tutor. Tutors participate in a formal training outlining expectations and student learning styles. Tutoring is provided on an appointment schedule though walk-in sessions may be available. Detailed records of tutoring sessions are relayed to instructors at two-week intervals.

The Financial Aid Director and two staff members are duly qualified to provide student support services in financial aid counseling. Professional development is provided through state and national training, conferences, and financial aid directors’ meetings. All staff members attend the Arkansas Association of Financial Aid Administrators fall and spring conferences for state and national updates. Staff members also attend the Western Association of Veterans Education Specialists conference, and the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators meeting every other year. Staff members take advantage of webinars offered by NASFAA on federal updates and changes when available. Evidence of quality in financial aid administration is documented in audits finding no audit points.

The Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) is a support program for students eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The CPI director and professional staff hold Bachelor’s degrees as required by the grant. They also attend state and regional conferences to keep apprised of program changes.

Campus Federal grant programs follow strict guidelines to ensure personnel are qualified as dictated by each grant. Staff members attend position-specific professional development each year also dictated by the terms of the grant.

Sources

- 2017-2018 SIR Institutional Report.pdf
- CCSSE 2014
- CCSSE 2018 ACC-Peers Frequency Distributions
- Classroom Observation Form
- Professional Development List
- Syllabi Example

3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and 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 programs 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, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).
5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

Argument

UA Rich Mountain provides multiple support resources to enhance the learning experience and success of all students. Recognizing diverse student needs, UARM strives to assure all students have the opportunity to improve their standard of living through education.

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

Faculty, staff, and administration are aware of the level of preparedness, demographics, and special needs of the varied student population. Due to diverse needs, programs and processes are in place to address issues, implement changes, and assess the quality and effectiveness of these changes. The Student Success Committee is charged with developing strategies to help students remain in college and achieve their educational goals. Listed below are 2014 and 2018 CCSSE results for various aspects of student support. UARM is comparable to its cohort peers and Arkansas Community Colleges in the categories shown in Table 3.D.1-1.

Table 3.D.1-1

2014 and 2018 CCSSE Institutional Report

Support for Learners						
How much does this college emphasize each of the following? (Sum of "Quite a bit" and "Very much")	UARM 2014	UARM 2018	Peers 2014	Peers 2018	ACC 2016	ACC 2018
Encouraging you to spend significant amounts of time studying	85%	90%	78%	77%	80%	78%
Providing the support you need to help you succeed at this college	82	90	81	77	80	79
Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds	52	91	53	51	55	56
Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	40	49	38	33	37	36
Providing the support you need to thrive socially	42	57	46	38	44	43
Providing the financial support you need to afford your education	62	81	66	64	64	64

Tutoring is an essential part of student services. Tutoring centers are open each day of the class week, and students are encouraged to make appointments with SSS or LEAC coordinators. SSS tutoring serves approximately 512 students per semester with average tutoring hours of 256 hours per week. Faculty receive tutoring reports twice monthly regarding students receiving tutoring.

The 2014 Graduation Survey revealed the following student satisfaction rates (very satisfied and satisfied) with student services:

- 88.5% were satisfied with library/learning resources center services
- 86.2% were satisfied with developmental, remedial, and tutorial services, including writing labs and math labs
- 90% were satisfied with student access to computer facilities and services
- 91.5% were satisfied with Business Office services
- 89.2% were satisfied with Bookstore services
- 90.8% were satisfied with Financial Aid services
- 83.8% were satisfied with New Student Orientation

2018 revealed higher results, with approximately 70% of students responding they were very satisfied in all categories.

- 93.2.% were satisfied with library/learning resources center services

- 87% were satisfied with developmental, remedial, and tutorial services, including writing labs and math labs
- 95% were satisfied with student access to computer facilities and services
- 92.5% were satisfied with Business Office services
- 92.5% were satisfied with Bookstore services
- 95.7% were satisfied with Financial Aid services
- 89.4% were satisfied with New Student Orientation

Several support programs are in place to address the needs of particular student groups. A concerted effort is made to ensure students benefit to the greatest extent possible. Specific programs are outlined here.

Career Pathways: The Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) is a comprehensive grant project implemented in Arkansas in 2005 and brought to the campus in 2007. The program is designed to improve the post-secondary education, and ultimate earning potential, of low-income TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) -eligible adults with children under age 21. The initiative emphasizes program components such as job readiness skills, basic academic skill preparation and/or remediation, and post-secondary credentials tied to high wage, high demand occupations. CPI staff provide career counseling, assessment testing, academic advising, workshops, employability guidance, and job placement services. Financial assistance is provided through payments for tuition and fees, childcare assistance, and transportation vouchers. The program also loans books, calculators, supplies, and laptop computers. Lastly, the program pays for necessary testing and licensing fees. Funding for the program is filtered through ADHE and awarded through the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services Federal TANF funds. The grant award is based on performance measures provided by ADHE and DWS. Assessment information regarding this program is presented in Criterion 4.

CCAMPIS: Child Care Access Means Parents in School is a federal grant program that supports participation of low-income parents in post-secondary education by providing campus-based child care services. UARM does not have a child-care facility on campus but contracts with area facilities to provide childcare and preschool services for children of parents receiving Pell grants. This program serves a minimum of 10 students annually. Funding is awarded at one percent (1%) of the federal Pell grant amount awarded at UARM in the year prior to submitting the grant proposal.

Carl D. Perkins: Perkins grant money provides enrollment and employment placement assistance for career and technical education students. UARM is in a consortium with Southern Arkansas University and University of Arkansas at Little Rock to promote career awareness, preparedness, technical programs, purchase equipment, and placement of students.

Johnson Learning Commons: Recognizing the way students acquire information has changed, the library underwent extensive renovation in 2012-2013. This facility contains the library, the Learning Enrichment and Advising Center (LEAC), and Student Support Services (SSS). Research databases and study materials are available as well as the Saint John book collection, plus computer lab and technology-enhanced group study rooms. SSS provides another computer

lab with an on-site tutor, a transfer counselor to assist with academic transfer issues, and subject matter tutors.

TRIO Programs: Federal TRIO programs provide various support services suited to the area population. Student Support Services (SSS) assists first-generation college students who meet income qualifications or students with disabilities to complete a degree or transfer to a four-year institution. The Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) provides assistance to financially limited, first-generation college students over the age of 19 with applying for financial aid and completing admission applications. In addition, EOC also provides assistance with career planning, placement testing, and agency referrals. Upward Bound (UB) and Educational Talent Search (ETS) are also on campus. ETS provides academic guidance, career planning, financial aid counseling, and personal assessments. Upward Bound provides academic instruction, tutoring, financial literacy instruction, cultural enrichment, and college admission assistance. Finally, the UB program provides financial aid counseling, college entrance exam preparation, and a six-week college summer program.

Financial Aid: UARM recognizes financial stability is an integral part of the formula for college success. The financial aid office assists students by providing information regarding available resources, qualifications, and filing procedures. More than 70 percent of degree-seeking students receive financial assistance. The College provides financial information on the website, at regional workshops, at College Orientation, and during personal counseling sessions. Financial literacy is addressed in College Orientation and in class regarding required attendance for receiving aid.

Table 3.D.1-2	
Students Receiving Financial Aid	Percentage
Fall 2018	90%
Fall 2017	86%
Fall 2016	83%
Fall 2015	79%
Fall 2014	79%
Fall 2013	76%
Fall 2012	77%
Fall 2011	79%

Transfer Counseling: The College has a designated transfer counselor to assure continuity and expertise. The counselor works closely with four-year institutions to provide up-to-date, accurate information to students regarding transfer requirements. Student Support Services (SSS) also provides transfer visits for students considering a particular college or university.

Lifelong Learning/Workforce Training: The Office of Lifelong Learning (LLL) is charged with providing enrichment courses for the College. Courses vary from those provided for high school

students preparing for the ACT to resources for healthy aging. Enrichment programming is an integral part of the College mission, and LLL continually changes to address community needs.

Veterans are a special population, as are students with disabilities. The Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs is the advisor for these two student populations, providing admissions, academic advising, and counseling as appropriate. UARM is ADA compliant and makes accommodations for students identifying as needing such services.

3.D.2. UARM 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 students are adequately prepared.

The College recognizes the need to assist students at their level of preparedness. Adult Basic Education (ABE) is housed on campus. In addition, there are ABE locations in Waldron, Mount Ida, at the Department of Community Corrections in Mena, Wickes, Delight, and Glenwood. There are two full-time non-classified professional staff and one full-time classified administrative assistant on the Mena campus. Off-campus instructional needs are covered by qualified adjunct faculty.

As per Arkansas law, referenced in Criterion Four, all students are required to take placement tests upon entering a program of higher education in Arkansas. Students are placed in remedial courses in English, which includes Reading, and mathematics if required. These tests are the Accuplacer Next Generation, ACT, or SAT. An ACT score of 19 or higher in reading and English excludes a student from taking developmental courses. For math, the student must achieve a score of 22 or higher to avoid developmental courses. As of Fall 2018, the college uses scores in the Accuplacer for placement, removing the COMPASS and ASSET placement tests. The outline of [placement scores](#) is provided in evidence.

In 2014, students not taking the ACT exam prior to registration, took the ACT COMPASS placement test. This test has been phased out by ACT in favor of the Accuplacer Next Generation. Advisors receive scores to aid students with the advising and registration process. Students needing remediation are encouraged to take those courses immediately.

In 2011, the faculty merged developmental reading and English classes into one College Literacy course. Instructors use a blended model of instruction and computer technology that allows students to advance more quickly. The Accelerated Learning Path (ALP) was developed through a grant and allows students who test within two points of college-level English to enroll in English Composition I and a companion Supplemental English Instruction class (ARW), saving a semester in developmental College Literacy.

Students may advance through remedial course work in mathematics at an accelerated pace completing as many as three developmental courses in a semester. Remedial math is based on computer-aided instruction with a math lab tutor/instructor. Students access the online, self-paced mastery learning math program from any location as well as the Math Lab. Students may attend any math lab class Monday through Thursday.

3.D.3. UARM provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.

Full-time faculty advisors, TRIO program advisors, and the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs conduct academic advising appropriate to programs and student needs. Career Pathways staff and others assist when appropriate. Advisors assist students with defining career goals, selecting a course of study, mapping the course sequence, and registering for class. New students are assigned an advisor based on information provided to the Admissions Office. All full-time faculty are assigned advisees based on the student’s program interest. Students changing programs are reassigned an appropriate adviser. Faculty advisors specifically address the following:

- Career planning and course of study options
- Placement test scores and implications
- Course prerequisites
- Course counseling, course times, and other time commitments
- Registration – initial and drop/add
- Program progress

Students indicate overall satisfaction with advising. Academic advising has a favorable response of 95.0% in the [2018 graduation survey](#), up from 88% in 2014.

Item	Response 2014		Response 2018	
	<i>Graduation Survey</i> : Quality of academic advising	Very Satisfied	61%	Very Satisfied
	Satisfied	28%	Satisfied	22%
<i>CCSSE Survey</i> : How satisfied are you with academic advising/planning at this college?	Very	41%	Very	61%
	Somewhat	35%	Somewhat	27%
<i>CCSSE Survey</i> : How important is academic advising/planning to you at this college?	Very	60%	Very	75%
	Somewhat	27%	Somewhat	18%

3.D.4. UARM provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning, as appropriate to the College’s offerings.

The College provides resources to support and enhance teaching and learning. UA Rich Mountain employs four (three in 2014) full-time technical staff for computing and audio-visual needs. Technical support for teaching is achieved through the following equipment and services:

- Server and network administration
- Printers, desktop computers, ceiling projectors, laptops and iPads

- Audio-Visual equipment including high definition compressed video at multiple locations
- Campus-wide wireless access
- Television and radio capability
- Software systems and administration
- Website maintenance
- Institutional research and reporting
- Selection and purchase responsibility for IT equipment
- Maintenance of the online course management system
- Computer labs in Waldron and Mount Ida
- Multiple labs and classrooms in Mena
- Computers on Wheels, mobile computer technology using wireless technology, providing 18 laptop computers to any classroom. There are two units available in Mena, one in Waldron, one in Mount Ida
- Stationary classroom teaching stations with desktop computers, document cameras, projectors, DVD/VCR players, and sound
- Mobile teaching stations with a computer, projector, DVD/VCR, and amplified speaker

A list of further [instructional resources](#) for specific programs is available in evidence.

3.D.5. UARM provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

UARM library staff provide access and instruction to students seeking information. The librarian conducts classroom tutorial sessions to help students understand the depth of resources available and how to use them effectively. In cooperation with faculty, the library is open extended hours for special projects. Students expressed satisfaction with library services the last two years.

Table 3.D.5-1		
Graduation Survey		
Satisfaction with Library/Learning Resources		
Level of Satisfaction	2014	2018
Very Satisfied	58.5%	73.91%
Satisfied	30.0%	19.25%
Total Satisfied	88.5%	93.16%

Classroom instructors encourage the use of internet resources, database technologies, and reference material to produce quality student projects. Courses expressly requiring library services include those in English, History, Business Administration, and the Humanities.

Sources

- 2019 Accuplacer Next Gen. Classic SAT Compass ACT Course Placement.pdf
- CCSSE 2018 ACC-Peers Frequency Distributions
- Graduation Survey Results 2014
- Graduation Survey Results 2018
- Specific Learning Resources

3.E - Core Component 3.E

The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.
2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

Argument

3.E.1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experiences of its students.

Prior to the last accreditation visit, the College did not have stated objectives for its co-curricular programming. The office of student affairs has since developed the following to guide its programming:

Leadership

- Empower and inspire others
- Navigate and affect change
- Recognize strengths
- Work toward a shared vision

Inclusiveness

- Promote cultural awareness and diversity within the College and community

Social Responsibility

- Behave with honesty for positive social change

Mindfulness

- Recognize effective strategies to foster healthy, mind, body, and spirit
- Engage in activities to enhance healthy living

Lifelong and Global Learning

- Demonstrate and apply interdisciplinary connections

- Cultivate spirit of creative thought and curiosity to achieve goals

The College recognizes the impact co-curricular programming has on student retention and persistence, and evaluates its activities and their effectiveness. Co-curricular programs are designed to contribute to diverse student needs. Moving knowledge and intellectual inquiry beyond the classroom and curriculum is an important part of College Strategic Goals.

Student Campus Center (Union): The campus Student Union allows students, faculty, and staff a location to relax and build community. As a commuter campus, this facility is a gathering place that includes television, lounge areas, the Mountain Range Grill, and convenience store, as well as the bookstore. Students regularly congregate in this space. It is also home to the quarterly Variety Show.

Phi Theta Kappa: The Beta Eta Upsilon chapter of Phi Theta Kappa was founded in 1998. The organization promotes individual growth through programs that provide leadership training, scholarship, fellowship, and service to the community. PTK members organize a spring Egg Hunt for Literacy on the lawn of the campus, providing prizes and books for pre-school children. They are also involved in an annual Constitution Day scavenger hunt, serve as tour ambassadors during College Orientation, and read with elementary age children at local schools and the Polk County Library.

Student Government: The Student Government Association provides a means for student leadership and input into the College, as well as cultivates a sense of community responsibility. The SGA Constitution states its purpose, "to represent, lead, and unify the student body, to decide and recommend for students upon any matter involving student interests, and to promote common understanding among students, faculty, and administration." This organization is very active in promoting college activities. Examples of [activities](#) are presented in evidence.

Actors Guild: The Actors Guild produces plays on campus and actively participates in theater-related off-campus events. It provides an artistic outlet for students on the campus and for community members interested in theater. The Guild presents a Variety Show each quarter featuring live performances. Proceeds from the Variety Show support the Foundation Theatre Arts Scholarship. The College provides funding for theater students to travel to productions at the Arkansas Repertory Theater among others.

Science Club: The Science Club was formed to provide an opportunity for science students to engage in public service and awareness of science-related topics.

Voices of the Ouachitas: Founded in 2014, the chorale group, Voices of the Ouachitas, is for students interested in voice performance. Originally part of the Variety Show, this group performs at appropriate College functions.

Baptist Campus Ministry: The Baptist Campus Ministry is the sole organization on campus devoted to a spiritual purpose. It provides students with opportunities for Bible study, Christian fellowship, and leadership skill development. The BCM has an annual mission trip where

students travel to less fortunate U.S. neighborhoods and assist with programs, churches, and families. BCM sponsors weekly lunches off campus.

3.E.2 UARM demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its student's educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

The College's mission is to provide all residents of the Ouachita Mountain Region with exemplary educational and enrichment opportunities to improve quality of life and standard of living. UARM provides students with educational and enriching opportunities through both credit and noncredit offerings, from seminars to courses that span a semester. Community members are actively involved as advisory board members and on the Board of Visitors. Course offerings are in high schools, and elementary children are brought to campus for children's theater and Kid's College. The 55+ program engages those making life transitions, enriching their lives with cultural events and new skill sets.

The office of Lifelong Learning/Workforce Training offers programming specific to enrichment opportunities. This office offers community education, customized training, and workforce development training for local employers.

The College engages the community through course offerings and programming. Cosmetology and nursing offer unique lab opportunities for students to use class skills in a lab setting. Students interact with patients and clients first as observers and then practitioners to learn what is needed for licensure. It also allows them to engage the public, and the community at large as they train for employment. The cosmetology program serves between 25 and 40 clients per day.

Sources

- SGA Events

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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

Summary

UA Rich Mountain is committed to quality teaching and learning. It provides instruction, support services, and appropriate resources to accomplish its mission. Courses and programs are appropriate to higher education and require levels of performance appropriate to the degrees and certificates awarded. Due diligence is performed to keep programs relevant for transfer or employment. General education is provided across the curriculum to help students to think critically, communicate effectively, research thoroughly, and use technology. Expected learning outcomes are presented to students in a clear manner, and faculty expectations remain constant across teaching modalities. Cultural diversity is a continuing challenge as the College's isolated location makes this difficult. Faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and discovery of knowledge.

After reviewing the practices of faculty, effort of students, and support staff services, the College recognizes the following strengths and areas for improvement.

Criterion Three Strengths

The CCSSE report, and recent graduation survey results, reveal the following strengths:

- Active Collaborative Learning is evident through peer tutoring
- Student-Faculty Interaction occurs when instructors work on activities other than coursework
- Support for Learners helps to cope with nonacademic responsibilities
- Student Effort is evident through preparation for class and frequency of tutoring
- Faculty and support staff are properly credentialed and receive ongoing professional development.
- Appropriate faculty and staff development is budgeted and expected.
- Technology is current and appropriate to the mission of educating students consistently across all modalities.
- Evaluation of faculty is consistent regardless of teaching modality
- Results of faculty assessment is used appropriately.
- Quality tutoring services are readily available to students.
- Students have access to faculty for advising and assignment questions

Criterion Three Challenges

The CCSSE reports and the graduation survey results, highlight these areas needing improvement:

- Active/Collaborative Learning - Make a class presentation
- Student Effort - Prepare two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in
- Student Effort - Work on a paper or project that requires integrating ideas or information from various sources
- Student-Faculty Interaction - Used email to communicate with the instructor
- Academic Challenge - Number of written papers of any length
- UARM is isolated but is challenged to do as much as possible to educate students on cultural diversity.
- Due to its small size, faculty and staff have more committee assignments than preferred
- A need exists to pre-/post-test students on critical thinking and writing to better evaluate possible gains
- The college has a need for better assessment of co-curricular activities

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 demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
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 assure 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 assures 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 assures that the degree or certificate programs 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, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

Argument

4.A.1. UA Rich Mountain maintains a practice of regular program reviews.

All College units undergo program review. The College Effectiveness Committee oversees the evaluation timeline. Programs follow the guidelines set forth in the [Program Review Handbook](#) published through the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. In academic departments, the program review is an intense evaluation of curriculum offerings, standards, and outcomes. Components within each academic self-study include, but are not limited to, program need/demand, curriculum, faculty, resources, course delivery methods, evaluation, student outcomes, and recent/planned program improvements. Each evaluation is completed by faculty teaching within the program with oversight from the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.

After completing the internal program review, academic program documents are sent for external review as per Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) guidelines. Results are typically received within six weeks. Programs outside the academic departments follow program review standards set by the College or appropriate state or federal governing body. This currently includes several grants.

Arkansas Code §6-61-214 requires the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) to establish [standards for the academic programs](#) offered by Arkansas colleges and universities. It also requires a 7-10 year review cycle for all existing academic programs. The purpose is to “ensure quality academic programs that support Arkansas’ economic development goals; to identify and remove nonviable programs from the AHECB approved program inventory; and to reduce barriers to graduation.” UA Rich Mountain is a full participant in the program review process. The [seven-year program review](#) timeline is presented in evidence.

Welding, Emergency Medical Technician, Certified Nursing Assistant, Nursing, and Machine Tool Technology completed program reviews for ADHE during 2018-2019. Since the last accreditation visit, program review has been expanded and has an annual evaluation component. This is explained more fully in Criterion Four, Part B.

TRIO programs (Educational Opportunity Center, Student Support Services, Talent Search, Upward Bound-Classic, and Upward Bound-Math/Science) are required to file an [Annual Performance Report](#) (APR) to receive continued federal funding. These evaluations assess areas of impact on student learning and achievement. In addition, a review of each TRIO program is conducted by an independent consultant every other year. Lastly, a self-study review is conducted every other grant cycle (10 years) using the Council for Advancement of Standards (CAS) guidelines. The last review was completed in 2015.

Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative

The Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative provides a comprehensive set of academic and support services designed to foster low-income, low-skill individuals into high-demand high-wage industry jobs. It is funded with federal TANF dollars. Students are eligible if they are 1) adult caretakers of children less than 21 years of age, and 2) have incomes below 250% of the federal poverty line.

Arkansas Adult Basic Education

Adult Basic Education is part of Arkansas Career and Technical Education (ACTE). It provides adult basic education for students to complete the General Education Development (GED) test. This program is evaluated by the ACTE office. The curriculum is established at the state level. There are annual reports and [evaluations](#) for improvement.

ARNEC

The Arkansas Rural Nursing Education Consortium (ARNEC) is a 12-month program combining interactive video instruction and clinical experiences for nurses to transition from licensed practical nurse to registered nurse. This program is designed to meet the needs of working nurses and is evaluated by the Arkansas State Board of Nursing.

Career Center

The Secondary Career Center is offered in cooperation with the Arkansas Department of Career Education, the DeQueen-Mena Educational Cooperative, and area high schools for concurrent education in the fields of medical profession education, machine tool technology, and welding. This program is reviewed through the Career and Technical Education office on a five-year cycle. The next review is scheduled for June 2019.

4.A.2 UA Rich Mountain evaluates all the credit it transcripts including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning.

UARM has a clear procedure for evaluating credit it transcripts. Experiential learning is granted to veterans and military personnel at the discretion of the Registrar or Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. Students with military experience may be granted credit based upon the evaluation of an ACE (Sailor-Marine American Council on Education Registry) transcript issued by the appropriate branch of service.

Students may receive college credit by taking qualifying exams. The Advance Placement Exam criteria is in the Catalog. This exam allows students to receive advance placement and/or credit upon entering the College. These exams are offered annually by area high schools. UARM authorizes credit and/or placement for students who present qualifying scores in the following courses. Credit is awarded after a student completes a minimum of 12 credit hours with a 2.00 GPA or better at UA Rich Mountain.

Advanced Placement Course	Score	UARM Course
American National Government	3	PSI103
Biology	3	BIO104
Calculus AB	3	MTH245
Calculus BC	4	MTH245 and MTH255
Chemistry	3	CHM114
Chemistry	4	CHM114 and CHM124
Computer Science A	3	CST113
Computer Science AB	3	CST113 and CST elective
English Composition	3	ENG113
English Literature/Composition	3	ENG123
U.S. History	3	HIS213
Macroeconomics	3	ECN213
Microeconomics	3	ECN203
Physics B	3	PHS214

Physics C	3	PHS224
Psychology	3	PSY20
Spanish	3	SPN103
Spanish	4	SPN103 and SPN113

The College also recognizes the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) of the College Board as a method of establishing credit by examination. A student may earn up to 30 semester credit hours of college credit through CLEP. To receive credit, a student must complete an additional 12 semester credit hours of course work at UARM. The examination list, scores, equivalent courses, and credit are available in the Catalog and listed here.

Examination List	Score	Credit Hours	RMCC Course
Composition with essay	50	6	ENG113, ENG123
Freshman Humanities	50	6	Humanities Elective
College Algebra	50	3	MTH203
Biology	50	6	BIO104
Chemistry	50	6	CHM114, CHM124
Trigonometry	50	3	MTH213
Spanish	50	6	SPN103, SPN113
American Government	50	3	PSI103
Intro to History of the US			
Colonization to 1877	50	3	HIS213
1865 to Present	50	3	HIS223
Human Growth/Development	50	3	PSY213
Microeconomic Principles	50	3	ECN203
Macroeconomic Principles	50	3	ECN213
Psychology, Introduction	50	3	PSY203
Social Science and History	50	3	Social Science Elective
Sociology, Introduction	50	3	SOC103
Western Civilization			
Ancient Near East to 1648	50	3	HIS113
1648 to Present	50	3	HIS123
Introduction to Business Law	50	3	BUS223

Financial Accounting	50	3	ACC203
Information Systems/Computers	50	3	CST113
Marketing Principles	50	3	BUS253

4.A.3. UARM has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.

UARM has stringent guidelines to assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer. These procedures are explained in the Transfer Student Admission section of the Catalog.

Requirements and conditions for transferring credit from other regionally accredited colleges or universities are as follows:

- UARM will only accept transfer of college-level credits earned at a regionally accredited college or university. These courses will only be accepted with a grade of C (2.0 on a 4.0 scale) or higher. Students may be required to supply college catalogs with descriptions of courses being transferred from out-of-state institutions. If questions remain, the student may be asked to provide a syllabus to determine eligibility for transfer.
- Transfer credit will be accepted only for college level courses for which UARM offers equivalent courses. Transfer courses for which there is no equivalent courses will be evaluated by the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs to determine if courses may be used for general elective credit. Credits earned at other institutions will not be calculated in the grade point average used for graduation from UARM.

Transfer credit for remedial courses are used for placement but do not count toward completing degree requirements. Students wishing to appeal acceptance of a transfer course may complete the appropriate paperwork and submit it to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs who has the final right of review.

Act 672 of 2005 directed the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board to implement a transfer curriculum for all public colleges and universities, effective December 1, 2006. The goals were to

1. identify and reduce barriers to student achievement,
2. comply with statutes to provide seamless transfer,
3. reduce the number of individual articulation agreements required at each institution
4. establish a permanent ongoing process for course transferability, and
5. address course transfer issues identified by the Governor, legislators, institutions, and students. The Arkansas Course Transfer System (ACTS) is a result of this legislation.

The Act specifies that the criteria and content for course transferability be determined by faculty transfer teams according to the discipline. Twenty-two (22) faculty teams composed of two-year college and four-year university faculty met to determine transferable course criteria and minimum course outcomes. These faculty transfer teams established the course descriptions and common learning outcomes for each course.

The College is a full participant in the Arkansas Course Transfer System (ACTS). The system provides comparable course information for transfer among Arkansas public colleges and universities. Students are guaranteed transfer of applicable credits and equitable treatment in the application of credits for admissions and degree requirements for courses listed within this system. UARM currently has approximately 50 courses that may be transferred to/from other Arkansas public institutions. The system is accessed through the ADHE website.

4.A.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 assures 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.

Strict attention is paid to prerequisites for all college work, not only to ensure continuity of learning outcomes, but to increase the likelihood of student success. As per Arkansas Act 1052 of 1987, students cannot enter courses without [acceptable test scores](#) that indicate prerequisite knowledge. UARM does not waive prerequisites as a general practice except in cases where students test at a sufficient level of proficiency to render such prerequisite redundant to the learning process. Students are not granted credit for these prerequisites, nor are degree requirements shortened. Students must take additional course work to complete degree requirements.

To maintain the integrity of course prerequisites, the registration system is programmed to notify the adviser should a student attempt to register for a course without the prerequisite. Approval from the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs is necessary for an override should a student test proficient enough to warrant one.

Rigor of courses is assured in various ways within the academic system. All courses are taught by qualified faculty, using textbooks, materials, teaching methods, and procedures appropriate to the discipline. Every instructor, regardless of discipline, location, or method of course delivery, outlines each course with a detailed syllabus. These [syllabi](#) include specific course objectives and learning outcomes. In addition, each instructor meets regularly with department chairs and peers to discuss and assess changing student learning needs, appropriate outcomes, and methodologies to achieve student learning. Students are expected to adhere to stated course requirements to receive credit.

The introduction of new courses follows the procedure outlined by the Curriculum Committee. This committee is responsible for developing and maintaining curricular offerings in keeping with the philosophy, mission, and objectives of the College. The Curriculum Committee reviews proposals from faculty members pertaining to [curriculum changes](#), additions, or deletions. Recommendations are forwarded to the Learning Assessment Committee, the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, and the College Chancellor. Once approved, they are forwarded to the System Vice President, President, and the Board of Trustees. Lastly they are submitted to ADHE.

UARM does not differentiate its curriculum for dual credit or concurrent enrollments. Concurrent faculty participate in faculty and department meetings. The College fosters collegiality through planned meetings to set common learning outcomes, discuss effective teaching strategies, and evaluate and revise courses as needed. Minimum expectations for all faculty include

- Meeting as part of the discipline every semester one or more times with the department
- Using current teaching materials, published within the last three years
- Adhering to the common learning outcomes for transferable courses established by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education.
- Participating in developing, revising, and teaching the common departmental objectives and outcomes
- Using agreed upon common evaluation methods for some aspects of the campus General Educational Learning Outcomes
- Using common assessment techniques and measuring devices such as rubrics, scales, checklists, completed work projects, or tasks as selected by departments
- Implementing agreed upon changes warranted from assessment data
- Participating in the annual course and program review for each degree/discipline

Faculty are not expected to use the same teaching methods. Innovation in delivery and class assignments is encouraged.

Students receive instruction from faculty who are highly qualified and credentialed for the courses they teach. Faculty credentials are on file in the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs office. Technical program instructors are required to attain the minimum of an Associate's degree or be otherwise highly qualified through extensive documented and relevant work experience. Faculty teaching courses for transfer must have the minimum credential of a Master's degree and 18 hours of graduate credit within the discipline.

Students have access to multiple learning resources including the Learning Enrichment Advising Center (LEAC) and Student Support Services (SSS). Tutoring is provided through both resources. SSS students have financial qualifications or other criteria to receive tutoring services. LEAC is open to all students. SSS has four and a half full-time employees to assist students, two of which are the Computer Lab Coordinator and the Adviser/Professional Tutor. The program also hires peer tutors. LEAC is primarily staffed by student tutors hired through the office of the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. These services are available in all locations.

Students have access to the Johnson Learning Commons as a resource to support learning. Individual rooms are available for group study or private research. There are 10 computers available in the SSS lab, and 20 computers are available in the open library for student or community use. The entire campus has Wi-Fi available for student research purposes. Students in Waldron and Mount Ida have access to labs with 18 stations each and Wi-Fi access.

4.A.5. UARM maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.

The registered nursing program and the licensed practical nursing program are approved by the Arkansas State Board of Nursing. The most recent review cycle took place in June 2014, and the [program was re-approved](#). There were no changes suggested relating to instruction, content, facilities or faculty. The nursing program is next scheduled for evaluation in June 2019.

The certified nursing assistant (CNA) program is monitored and reviewed through the Arkansas Department of Human Services Division of Medical Services, Office of Long Term Care. The program was last reviewed and [approved](#) December 2018.

The Arkansas Department of Health - Emergency Medical Services is the inspecting/review agency for the emergency medical technician (EMT) program. The program began in 2007, and the most recent training center site visit was June 2018. EMT students test through the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians for certification.

The Cosmetology and Massage Therapy programs are approved through the Arkansas Department of Health Systems Licensing and Regulation. The Cosmetology program received approval and admitted students in 2013. Massage therapy was approved in 2018, and students began January 2019. Both programs are subject to surprise inspections by the Arkansas Department of Health. The College has never been cited for health violations or concerns.

The Welding program was established in 2013. Welding instructors initiated the accreditation application process with the American Welding Society in August 2014 and received acceptance in November 2014. The most recent re-approval was submitted in spring 2019.

4.A.6. UARM evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the College looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission.

UA Rich Mountain is committed to graduate success. It assures that degree and certificate programs are current for transfer or employment. All technical programs offered are advised by committees comprised of persons working in the requisite field. This ensures course content is relevant, current, and flexible to changing employer needs. [Advisory board minutes](#) are available in evidence. Programs requiring licensing follow established state and national guidelines for curriculum and testing. Those programs not requiring a summative licensing examination use best practices in the respective field. [Licensing information](#) is provided here in evidence.

Employment

Unlike other states, Arkansas does not maintain an employment database for its graduates. Employment information is gathered through employers, advisory committee members, faculty/staff contact with employed graduates, and community contacts. While not comprehensive, there is evidence that graduates are gaining employment within their respective fields.

One hundred percent of 2014 cosmetology students were employed in the profession. The average employment rate for cosmetology students is 93% through 2018. Anecdotal employment

data is available for students completing business, computer information systems, machine tool, nursing, EMT, and welding programs. Students in the Machine Tool program are stopping out indefinitely without completing degrees as they are employed full-time prior to graduation. While not considered a success in terms of IPEDs data, students consider the goal complete.

Graduates are transferring to other institutions. The following information is from ADHE for the period FY2008-2013 and compares the College to a cohort of Arkansas community colleges with similar enrollments and financial resources. No college in Arkansas is truly representative for comparison. The five college comparison cohort is Arkansas State University-Newport, Black River Technical College, Cossatot Community College of the University of Arkansas, East Arkansas Community College, and Ozarka College.

Table 4.A.6-1

Transfer Students with 12 or More Earned Credit Hours

Transfer undergraduates and undergraduate (UGT) credit hours only

1. Inst.	2009			2010			2011			2012			2013	
	UGT	No. >= 12 CrHrs	%	UGT	No. >= 12 CrHrs	%	UGT	No. >= 12 CrHrs	%	UGT	No. >= 12 CrHrs	%	UGT	%
ASUN	120	88	73.3%	136	92	67.6%	138	91	65.9%	167	117	70.1%	173	1
BRTC	283	222	78.4%	276	212	76.8%	257	220	85.6%	295	250	84.7%	261	2
CCCUA	132	110	83.3%	122	98	80.3%	105	81	77.1%	131	108	82.4%	135	1
EACC	235	177	75.3%	208	146	70.2%	213	156	73.2%	209	140	67.0%	191	1
OZC	169	129	76.3%	195	144	73.8%	172	126	73.3%	168	135	80.4%	173	1
RMCC	116	82	70.7%	137	104	75.9%	89	68	76.4%	101	85	84.2%	105	9
Cohort Average			77.3%			73.7%			75.0%			76.9%		
AR Comm College Average			78.2%			76.5%			77.1%			79.5%		

Students are also transferring prior to completing their degrees. As evidenced by the transfer data in Table 4.A.6-2, UARM has a higher percentage of transferring students compared to the cohort group, especially when expressed as a percentage change comparison in the three-year versus five-year average.

Sources

- 2018-19 Adult Education Site Visit Rich Mountain
- 2019 Accuplacer Next Gen. Classic SAT Compass ACT Course Placement.pdf
- ADHE Program Review Guidelines
- Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

- Arkansas Department of Higher Education Program Review Schedule
- Certified Nursing Approval 2019
- Curriculum committee minutes
- ETS P044A160067_2017-18_final
- Licensure Pass Rates 2019
- Syllabi Example
- UACC-Rich Mountain PPA AR State Board of Nursing Approval 2014-2019

4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

Argument

All programs within the College are designed, implemented, assessed, and evaluated with the purpose of student achievement. Teaching, learning, assessment, and evaluation are a continuous four-step cycle that establishes learning goals, provides learning opportunities, assesses the level of student learning, and uses that information to change and improve the process.

4.B.1. UARM has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.

Outcome goals are an integral part of the planning process for course work, programs, and systems within the College. Goals are based on student needs and program requirements to move students toward mastery learning of specific skill sets within courses, programs, and institutional degrees.

The College developed general education goals within the HLC Assessment Academy framework in 2011-2014. The following areas were selected for teaching and assessing student learning across the curriculum:

- Thinking critically
- Communicating effectively
- Using technology
- Conducting relevant research

Originally, the faculty developed, discussed, and adopted these general education learning outcomes (GELO) as part of the Academy, then integrated them into classroom activities. However, coordinated assessment was still an administrative function not fully embraced by

faculty. While the College was compliant, the last accrediting team had Criterion 4B met with concerns. The faculty has since re-evaluated the process.

Faculty participated in a full-day professional development session in 2015 to gain expertise in writing clear, concise learning outcomes for each certificate and degree in the College. Further, each department spent a few weeks determining where each program outcome was introduced, practiced, and mastered. Each of these outcomes was placed on a curriculum map. These maps also included the original general education learning outcomes for learning across the curriculum. Outcomes are reviewed each academic year in the process outlined under the next section.

4.B.2. UARM assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.

Assessment at the College has changed dramatically since 2015, the last accreditation visit. Each certificate and degree is now part of a program evaluation notebook. These notebooks are located in the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs office and contain the following information:

- Certificate/Degree Plans
- Course List/Syllabi
- Course Objectives
- Program Objectives/Outcomes
- General Education Learning Outcomes
- Curriculum Map
- Course Assessments
- Student Course Evaluations
- Program Assessments/Licensing Data
- Advisory Board Minutes
- Faculty Professional Development
- Annual Program Review and Recommendations

These program notebooks were instrumental in taking assessment from the abstract process to a concrete project. Each semester, faculty evaluate needed changes in curriculum, course assessments, and overall objectives of programming. Notebooks are updated with documents demonstrating these changes, with the newest changes in the front of each section. These notebooks and inherent assessments keep everyone on track for updating and improving performance. There are two required documents each year: the annual program review and general learning outcomes reports. The [nursing notebook](#) is provided in evidence for review, as well as a copy of the [annual program review](#) document, and a [general education learning outcome](#) form. General education program certificates and degrees are evaluated using the same process, though there are more faculty involved in assessing outcomes and future direction. An example from the [Associate of Arts degree](#) is provided here.

For simplicity, the four general learning outcomes are rotated so faculty are focused on assessing only one general learning outcome per year though all are incorporated in course work. Each

faculty member evaluates an aspect of their coursework and provides an assessment document for the program notebook. Evidence is continually submitted by faculty that demonstrates success and failure.

Since the last review, the College has identified the following as desirable co-curricular outcomes for its programming:

Leadership

- Empower and inspire others
- Navigate and affect change
- Recognize strengths
- Work toward a shared vision

Inclusiveness

- Promote cultural awareness and diversity within the College and community

Social Responsibility

- Behave with honesty for positive social change

Mindfulness

- Recognize effective strategies to foster healthy, mind, body, and spirit
- Engage in activities to enhance healthy living

Lifelong and Global Learning

- Demonstrate and apply interdisciplinary connections
- Cultivate spirit of creative thought and curiosity to achieve goals

Co-curricular services are continually assessed to evaluate their impact on the learning process. Student services, from federal programs such as TRIO to the admissions office and financial aid, strive not only to comply with required guidelines and federal standards, but also to improve processes that foster student engagement and course/program completion. [Government audits](#), as well as self-studies of these services, reveal compliance and concerted effort toward improvement. Details regarding these [audits](#) are located in Criteria Two and Five.

Assessments of [co-curricular programming activities](#) are presented in evidence. This aspect of student life is not yet systematically assessed and evaluated. However, student participation and satisfaction with campus co-curricular activities is higher than the national average.

Providing support to thrive socially		UARM	ACC	CCSSE
	Very Much	26%	14.0%	13.1%

	Quite a bit	31.2	26.7	25.3
Student Organization Satisfaction	Very	24.6	14.1	11.7
	Somewhat	14.1	16.2	14.6
	Non-participant	57.7	64.6	68.0
Student Organization Importance	Very	33.4	30.4	27.2
	Somewhat	23.8	30.3	33.7
Level of Satisfaction with Campus Activities*	Very	63.98	* 2018 Graduation Survey	
	Satisfaction	25.47		

Further evidence of achievement of learning outcomes is in the form of transfer rates, graduation rates, skill proficiency, licensing, and various completed classroom and program assessments. Reporting on graduation rates and further transfer data is presented in this criterion under section 4.C.2.

Specific program assessment scores and [completion data](#) are in evidence for nursing, emergency medical technician, and cosmetology. The Registered Nursing program is through the Arkansas Rural Nursing Education Consortium (ARNEC). Due to licensing requirements, nursing students face a stringent attendance policy. Program completion rates reflect these policies. Prior to taking the NCLEX, students take a test to determine readiness for the licensing exam. The test provides a remediation component that identifies weak skills and offers computerized instruction for improvement if needed.

Certified Nursing Assistant – Students take the CNA exam at the completion of the eight-week course of study. Exams take place on campus using the Prometric computer software system, a subsidiary of the Educational Testing Service.

Cosmetology – The cosmetology program was approved in spring of 2013, and the inaugural class of students began in Fall 2013. This class completed the required course work and practical hours in the summer of 2014. Twenty-four (24) students were in the licensed cosmetology operator course, and one (1) was in the instructor course. Twenty one of 25 students completed the program for an 84% pass rate. All cosmetology students who completed the program passed the state licensing exams. The average national pass rate for the theory portion is 76.4%. The average national pass rate for the practical portion is 93.3%. Comparative state rates from the Department of Health are not available.

Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) – Pass rate percentages for EMT are heavily impacted by the low number of students taking the examination. Students consistently take this course for work with rural fire department and emergency needs. These students do not typically take the national exam.

Students scored slightly above the national average in writing, math, and reading. Scores are not statistically significantly different than the national mean in any tested category. Students may have scored slightly lower in science as not all degree programs require a science course to

complete the degree, though previous years' test scores do not indicate this. The CAAP exam was discontinued from the publisher after 2014.

2014 CAAP Test Results					
Content Area	Writing Skills	Mathematics	Reading	Critical Thinking	Science
UARM Average	62.1	56.9	64.4	61.0	58.5
National Average	61.5	56.0	60.2	60.8	59.2

4.B.3. UA Rich Mountain uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

Course methodologies and assessment techniques are constantly changing to meet student needs. Students are evaluated on all levels of the cognitive skills learning taxonomy. They are asked to identify, evaluate, synthesize, reason, and produce. As students are completing assignments, tasks, processes, and programs, their work is systematically assessed. The purpose of that assessment is to gather information and use it to improve student learning.

Faculty members are responsible for taking assessment information and improving the learning process. As assessment documents attest, not all ideas or assessments yield great results and modifications to the process are required. Faculty analyze outcomes to make changes to methodologies, activities, assessments, courses and programs. These changes range from the fairly simple “reteach and retest” in an individual class to changing and coordinating a developmental math software program at three locations.

Academic departments are actively coordinating changes based upon assessment results and are continuously developing strategies to improve student learning. Common assessment tools are sometimes a part of these strategies. As a challenge to any assessment device, caution is needed to ensure the tools used reflect the constructs meant to be tested.

As mentioned in Criterion 4.A.1., several programs have undergone review in the last three years. Program-specific results and reviewer suggestions and comments are provided here:

Machine Tool Technology

There were no discrepancies noted in the evaluation report and a two-part suggestion. This was to investigate the KeyTrain career readiness curriculum and the Work Keys Career Readiness Certificate as a curricular addition. The reviewer stated, “Every graduate that I spoke with indicated that the training and education they had received were excellent, and they had very little stress upon entering the workforce.” The next Machine Tool Technology program is 2019.

Nursing

The Arkansas State Board of Nursing completed its program review in June 2014. The program passed all requirements with only one recommendation. The recommendation was that clinical

site agreements develop a signature page to be sent out annually affirming participation by the sites. This suggestion was implemented in Fall 2015. The Practical Nursing Program was granted full approval until 2019, the time of its next review.

Computer Systems Technology

At the conclusion of the Computer Systems program review, the external reviewer provided the following commendation.

“Several CST alumni were interviewed over the quality and relevance of the program courses and overall effectiveness of preparing students for the technological work environment. The students accredited their educational pursuits at UARM with supplying the knowledge, skills training through hands on labs, and instructor involvement and expertise with their successful internships and following employment opportunities.”

Among other comments, a specific positive mention was made regarding an online course evaluation rubric. Recommendations were suggested regarding online identity verification and a caution not to teach computer technologies that are ahead of the local employer’s hardware/software status.

Associate of Arts/Associate of General Studies

The external evaluator for the Associate of Arts and Associate of General Studies (AA/AGS) program review in the summer of 2014 provided the following findings and recommendations:

1. I commend the faculty and administration for their dedication to the specific educational goals, objectives, curriculum, and activities of the AA/AGS programs and overall General Education program. I find that the objectives of the two general education degrees – the establishment of a minimum core of general education courses required for baccalaureate degrees in Arkansas and greater flexibility in course selection for certificate programs and associate degrees – have been successfully met and continue to flourish.
2. The college has successfully developed and implemented a general education curriculum which provides the means for students to achieve the outcomes of communication, mathematical reasoning, scientific methodology, basic technological skills, and appreciation of the arts, humanities, and culture, methods of rational and empirical inquiry, and personal health and wellness.
3. The institution has a solid process for the introduction of new courses and internal curriculum review.
4. The faculty teaching in these two general education programs have sufficient academic preparation and experience to achieve the goals and objectives of the programs.
5. The institution provides sufficient support for faculty development in teaching, research, and service.
6. The college sufficiently provides available, adequate, and accessible campus resources for its student population. The college is especially adept at providing personalized treatment for its students due to its small size.

7. UA Rich Mountain successfully implements policies regarding the establishment, organization, funding, and management of distance education and the infrastructure necessary to keep technology current.
8. I especially applaud the institution for its development of retention and graduation strategies included in its student success plan; particularly, its innovative approach to developmental education, its efforts to revamp mandatory orientation, its evaluation and assessment of student learning.

Finally, two recommendations were made regarding processes:

1. The process for Faculty evaluation/observation should be reviewed for effectiveness and bench marking with similar processes at other comparable institutions.
2. Efforts should be made to ensure that a system is established for checking student qualifications for the next level of instruction where prerequisites are involved.

Recommendation two has already been addressed by the English faculty with the development of a common exit examination.

Lifelong Learning/Workforce

This program often serves as a proving ground for community interests, ranging from one-night seminars to courses running for several months. Often courses begin as ideas in LLL and become credit offerings. Courses/Classes in the LLL department are evaluated by students at the end of the course. The Phlebotomy course is now a credit offering for Fall 2019 and began a year ago as a workforce demand class.

Student Support Services

Assessment information for Student Support Services (SSS) for 2012-2013 is presented below. The program is funded to provide services to 220 qualified students. In order to receive full funding points, the program must meet its percent approved goals. Students who receive SSS assistance have a grade point average of 2.88, as compared to 2.67 of the overall student population. Updated information from the last [evaluation](#) (APR) is presented in evidence.

Category	Percent Approved (Standard)	Percent Attained	Points Available /Attained
Number Funded=220	100.00%	101.36%	3/3
Good Academic Standing	80.00	98.65	4/4
Persistence	60.00	84.75	4/4
Graduation	30.00	59.65	4/4
Transfer	20.00	21.05	4/4

Student Success Plan

The Student Success Plan was developed for the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) to address statewide issues in developmental education (ADHE policy 5.08.1). Elements include initial enrollment diagnostic testing, intrusive academic advising and counseling, mandatory orientation, and academic support. The plan also included varying the approach to “borderline” testing students, allowing them to enroll in a credit English course, if they also took a supplemental (ALP) instruction course. Developmental standards were put in place requiring students to score at 70% proficiency to progress to the next level of course work. The developmental English and mathematics faculty have made modifications to the plan since its inception. The software in math was changed to a more user friendly program. The English department moved to a hybrid method of online instruction and individual assignments for developmental English.

In 2011, the College merged the developmental reading and English classes into one College Literacy class to provide personalized remediation. The increased use of technology in College Literacy enables instructors to use a blended model of instruction, thereby reducing classroom seat time. The developmental redesign not only helps students move more quickly through their developmental studies, it also helps them balance the demands of family, work, and college by spending less time in class.

The College also implemented the Accelerated Learning Path (ALP) initiative. ALP allows students who test within two points of college-level English to enroll in English Composition I and a companion Supplemental Instruction class allowing students to save a full semester of developmental English. During the Fall 2012 semester, 81.8% of the students enrolled in ALP successfully completed English Composition I, and 77.8% of the students enrolled in ALP during the Fall 2013 semester successfully completed English Composition I. These numbers were 81.4% for Fall 2018.

UARM offers three levels of developmental math: Basic Math, Beginning Algebra, and Intermediate Algebra. The math department uses the Hawkes Learning System, an online, self-paced, mastery-based math program. Because of open access and flexible lab hours, students are able to complete up to three developmental courses in one semester at no additional cost. Any student who wishes may attend any or all scheduled Hawkes math lab classes Monday through Thursday.

Admissions Testing Diagnostics

Students are evaluated to determine requisite skills before assigning them to classes. These assessments help with advising and focus on placing students in courses that allow them to succeed. Students cannot take college-level courses without a qualifying English, Math, or Reading score. No exceptions are made for students seeking concurrent enrollment. Because of this, summer bridging courses were developed and offered for high school rising seniors wishing to test into fall concurrent courses. These courses were put into place after evaluating current practice.

CCSSE

The [Community College Survey of Student Engagement](#) is administered on a bi-annual basis. The results of these findings are carefully reviewed by the Institutional Research office and the College Effectiveness Committee. It is also shared with faculty and staff at fall convocation. While this information is self-reported and cannot be used as a criterion reference, it is useful in providing qualitative data regarding student experiences. After reviewing the guidelines set forth by the Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCCSE) report, *A Matter of Degree: Practices to Pathways (2014)*, it was noted that the College already follows 11 of the 13 high impact practices recognized in the study as influencing student success. During the last CCSSE iteration, faculty also completed the Faculty Assessment of Student Engagement. Comparison of these results and findings were reported to the College Effectiveness Committee for review and suggestions.

4.B.4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

The processes and methodologies to assess student learning are generated and implemented by faculty and instructional staff. While other employees have a vested interest in the success of students, College programs, goals, processes, and methodologies for assessment are grounded at the faculty level.

With regard to good practice, every effort is made to make student assessment continuous, practical, and meaningful. Faculty are responsible for assessment within their individual courses and conveying expected outcomes to students in a clear, understandable manner. Students are explicitly informed of what they are to learn, how to participate in that learning, and how learning will be assessed. Methodologies and processes used vary with the curriculum or student support service. Departments and programs are responsible for bench marking standards and assessing student attainment of those standards. As previously described and documented in this criterion, assessment is valued as it provides feedback for change and improvement.

Sources

- 2017-2018 SSS APR
- Activity Assessment Examples
- Associate of Arts Degree Plan
- CCSSE 2018 ACC-Peers Frequency Distributions
- Course Outcomes Template
- FY15 Leg Audit Report
- FY17 Legislative Audit report
- Licensure Pass Rates 2019
- Nursing Program Review
- Program Outcomes Template

4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to 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.
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

As an institution of higher education committed to scientific inquiry, a working knowledge of statistical methods, data collection, and interpretation of grouped data is essential. Concerted effort is made to statistically evaluate and interpret how program and curricular changes impact student learning, retention, persistence and completion.

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

As stated earlier, a majority of the student population is challenged by financial insecurity, lack of preparedness, and lack of previous academic success. This presents the faculty and staff with challenges related to poverty and the historically underprivileged. UARM students also face the challenge of unreliable transportation in a rural location. Until 2016, Arkansas law prohibited community colleges from operating residence facilities.

After careful review and evaluation of statistical data, the Chancellor's Cabinet, in conjunction with the [College Effectiveness](#) committee, set student retention and persistence goals

“to consistently meet the Arkansas average for two-year schools with similar student populations and financial resources.”

The schools selected within the comparison cohort are Arkansas State University - Newport (ASUN), Black River Technical College (BRTC), Cossatot Community College of the University of Arkansas (CCCUA), East Arkansas Community College (EACC), and Ozarka College (OZC). UARM recognizes the student populations and financial resources of these schools do not comprehensively align with the service area, but these are the institutions most likely to face of the same challenges.

The U. S. Department of Education calculates 18% of students successfully complete their two-year degree within three years. UARM information on retention, persistence, and graduation are presented in the following tables. Additionally, the five school cohort average is also displayed along with the Arkansas two-year college average for comparison. The graduation rate average for 2010-2015 was 16.36%. The UARM average success rate, as defined as persistence plus graduation, for 2010-2015 was 31.76% of the degree-seeking cohorts, while the five Arkansas community college cohort was 41.53%. Specific data from 2010-2016 is supplied in evidence. Comparisons for 2015-2018 are detailed here.

Table 4.C.1-1			
Five-Year Averages of First-Time Full-Time Degree-Seeking Cohort (Fall 2013 Cohort) After Three Years			
	Graduation	Transfer	Retention Fall 2015 Cohort
UARM	28%	6	57%
AR College Cohort	34	18	58
AR 2-YR Colleges	28	15	55

Based on information from IPEDs there is a significant difference in the number of students transferring out. As graduation rates are consistent with other institutions in Arkansas, it may be that students are graduating versus transfer. This is an area for further investigation.

Table 4.C.1-2 includes graduation rates for 2013. The five-year average for UARM is 17.4%.

Table 4.C.1-2				
Arkansas Department of Higher Education/IPEDS Graduation Rates for UARM				
2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
19%	16%	15%	15%	22%

According to the National Student Clearinghouse, nearly a third of all students transfer at least once in five years and 17% at least twice. Seventy-two percent (72%) of community college graduates who transfer get a baccalaureate degree. Fifty-eight percent (76 students) of the Spring 2014 UARM graduating class planned to transfer and continue their education. Fifty-six percent (56%) of students who transfer without first receiving their associate degree get a Bachelor's degree. Recognizing that transfer impacts a large number of students, multiple analytics are

continuously performed to determine where and when students transfer from and the cause of such transfer if possible.

Tables 4.C.1-3 through 4.C.1-9 on the following pages detail specific IPEDs data on retention and persistence at UARM, the five Arkansas college cohort group, and Arkansas two-year colleges.

Table 4.C.1-3					
Retention: One-Year Rates: First-Time, Full-Time					
Source: IPEDS Feedback Reports, *ADHE Comprehensive Reports					
		Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015
ASUMH		56	62	53	62
CotO		49	55	58	55
NAC		51	50	56	61
OZC		54	46	43	57
UACCRM		60	44	55	57
Four (4) College Cohort		53	53	53	59
AR 2-YR Colleges*		49	50	51	53

Table 4.C.1-4					
Retention: One-Year Rates: First-Time, Part-Time					
Source:IPEDS Feedback Reports					
		Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015
ASUMH		34	56	55	45
CotO		32	48	38	26

NAC		37	38	37	51
OZC		28	21	39	35
UACCRM		27	40	48	58
Four (4) College Cohort		33	41	42	39

Table 4.C.1-5

Retention: One-Year Rates: Freshman Cohort Students

College	AY2008-09	AY2009-10	AY2010-11	AY2011-12	AY2012-13
	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
ASUN	41.3	43.7	44.0	31.5	38.0
BRTC	51.7	53.9	56.7	50.8	46.6
CCCUA	50.4	53.7	42.0	44.0	51.2
EACC	53.8	50.2	43.3	44.4	51.3
OZC	51.4	50.6	51.4	51.9	49.0
UARM	43.1	43.0	41.1	48.6	41.0
Five (5) College Cohort	49.7	50.4	47.48	44.52	47.22

Retention: One-Year Rates: Remediated Students

College	AY2008-09	AY2009-10	AY2010-11	AY2011-12	AY2012-13
	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
ASUN	35.2	38.5	33.9	31.6	38.1
BRTC	54.1	51.8	54.6	49.8	46.2
CCCUA	48.8	57.4	40.2	47.1	47.1

EACC	50.0	51.1	42.5	40.5	48.3
OZC	46.2	45.2	48.9	49.2	43.5
UARM	38.8	41.9	39.1	36.8	30.9
Five (5) College Cohort	46.9	48.8	44.0	43.6	44.6

Table 4.C.1-4				
Retention: Two-Year Rates: Freshman Cohort Students				
College	AY2008- AY2010 2007-2009	AY2009- AY2011 2008-2010	AY2010- AY2012 2009-2011	AY2011- AY2013 2010-2013
ASUN	21.5	20.1	15.2	13.3
BRTC	27.6	32.2	30.2	30.6
CCCUA	29.3	34.3	24.7	21.1
EACC	27.9	32.0	23.5	20.5
OZC	28.5	30.8	29.7	26.3
UARM	20.9	22.3	23.4	19.4
Five (5) College Cohort	26.96	27.88	24.66	22.36

Five (5) College Cohort	26.32	32.66	24.52	22.52
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Source: Arkansas Department of Higher Education. Comprehensive Annual Report (2013). This table could not be updated from 2014 using ADHE data.

4.C.2. UA Rich Mountain collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.

The College has experience in data collection, review, and analysis, especially data related to student achievement, retention, and persistence. While imperative to the mission of the College, persistence, retention, and graduation rates are also reviewed in the political arena of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, the State legislature, and local stakeholders with a view toward accountability and performance funding.

Over the last twelve years, UARM has used data gathered on these metrics to effect changes in curriculum, department procedures, job duties, committee structure, and measures of effectiveness. Retention, persistence, and program completion concerns are pervasive in discussions. At least once each year, faculty and staff participate in professional development specifically related to trends and internal analysis of gathered data on recruiting, enrollment management, survey results, and program efficacy. This staff development takes approximately three hours and revolves around reviewing and discussing various aspects of reports and studies. These reports and associated data sets come from the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, the Community College Student Engagement instrument, the Graduate Survey, academic program reviews, and support program evaluations. Working groups are formed in these sessions for issue discussion. Notes and recommendations are submitted to the College Effectiveness Committee. Often these discussions yield the need for further statistical comparisons or research questions. The College Effectiveness Committee is responsible for assigning tasks and issues arising from these data meetings. The next data review is scheduled for Fall 2019.

The College makes a consistent and coordinated effort to gather, analyze, and report pertinent data to its constituencies. Processes included in the analysis are both qualitative and quantitative, with an emphasis toward quantitative methods. Anecdotal evidence is also gathered and considered, though conscious effort is made not to base decisions for change on such data. The following is a list of analyses performed since 2012 related to retention, persistence, and completion. Results of these inquiries are shared with appropriate stakeholders. Information and statistical analysis specifics are available in the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Office.

- Analysis of student demographics and preparedness for college.
- Review of exit survey data for withdrawing students.
- Analysis of results of graduate survey.
- Correlation study between the number of required developmental courses and program completion.
- Analysis and usefulness of CAAP results.
- Analysis of online student retention.
- Analysis in differences in student reported faculty efficacy when faculty evaluated mid-semester versus end of semester.
- Review and analysis of 2014, 2016, and 2018 CCSSE results and a comparison between said results and the Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement during the same time frame.
- Analysis and comparison of transfer, retention, persistence, and completion data with five Arkansas two-year college cohort group.
- Analysis of CCSSE data comparison to four two-year college cohort group. (One college in cohort group did not participate in the CCSSE survey for comparison Spring 2014.)
- Correlation analysis of number of hours spent in tutoring and course completion.
- Analysis of transfer data to determine possible reason for transfer.
- Correlation analysis between time since last educational experience and success.
- Efficacy of changes to required orientation on student course completion.
- Analysis of non-returning students: Financial aid exclusion versus financial aid expulsion.
- Analysis of local high school enrollment numbers and subsequent College matriculation.

- Analysis of the number of high school students taking concurrent classes: online and on-campus
- Analysis of faculty load summaries
- Comparison of online course versus onsite course completion
- Analysis of metrics related to the 2017 funding formula including gateway course success
- Impact of late registration on course completion
- Assessment of the College Orientation course related to service learning.

The following are institutional research questions or studies scheduled for review through December 2019:

- Is Arkansas Career Pathways effective due to cohort scheduling or monetary incentives?
- Multivariate study with factor analysis to determine high impact variables on student success.
- How many students who register late persist in class attendance after the first four weeks of class? Compare and evaluate the results of the graduate survey self-perception of critical thinking skills versus the CAAP critical thinking component. Use the results to inform the evaluation of this general education learning outcome.
- Pilot test cohort scheduling in two courses in general education for retention purposes.
- Pilot test cohort scheduling in a minimum of two courses in business administration for retention purposes.
- Analysis of completion rates for online courses. (This is a continuing analysis.)
- Assess the efficacy of the Learning Enrichment and Advising Center on student retention and completion.
- Complete construct validity and reliability assessments on prior learning instruments in Medical Billing and Coding program.

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

Much of the information on retention, persistence, and completion inform the decision making in committees, meetings, and overall institutional effectiveness. Some specific program changes follow:

Demographics

The demographics of the student population reflect the three-county service area in terms of income, education, and financial stability. Students are predominately financially insecure women, though this student demographic is shifting slightly in 2018. Many are head of household with multiple dependents. The majority of students also lack the requisite background education needed to be immediately successful. In 2012, roughly 68% of students required developmental course remediation. In 2018, that number was 55%. After an analysis of poverty data, the College committed to educating faculty and staff on the culture of poverty. Staff development in recent years has included a three-hour poverty simulation, a seminar on Ruby Payne's *Framework for Understanding Poverty*, and in Fall 2014, the documentary, *Paycheck to Paycheck*. Full-time faculty and staff participated in these activities. Faculty have also received staff development on teaching strategies for unprepared students.

Graduate Survey

Intense effort is made to ensure graduates complete the online graduate survey. (Students receive graduation regalia at its completion). In addition to important demographic information, the survey also gathers information specific to the General Education Learning Outcomes discussed earlier in this criterion. Students are asked the importance of these outcomes and their perception of how well those outcomes were achieved. This survey provides valuable information with regard to characteristics of successful graduates.

Late Registration

Analysis of late registration data revealed that the students who register within two weeks of the beginning of the semester do not persist. In the last analysis, only 23% of students who registered just prior to the start of class persisted. Results of this analysis were forwarded to College Effectiveness in Fall 2014 and late registration was eliminated. The Arkansas funding formula is no longer based upon headcount and FTE enrollments but has shifted to retention and graduation rates, a good reason not to encourage late registrants as they do not persist.

Online Student Retention

Online courses are challenging for students prepared for college level work. Analysis of this data showed that students who are low in reading and English scores complete online courses at rates lower than the prepared population. While it is documented that students needing developmental courses complete at lower rates than prepared students for all courses, this effect was higher for online offerings. Analysis was forwarded to College Effectiveness to consider guidelines for policy changes. At this time, students who test into remedial courses are strongly discouraged from taking online courses. Update: Students who test at remedial level are not enrolled in online courses.

4.C.4 Rich Mountain processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice.

Every effort is made to ensure that the data collected, analyzed, and reported is accurate. Reports generated by UARM are delivered according to the highest level of ethical standards. All data submitted reflect adherence to reporting standards and guidelines. Reporting for financial aid, ADHE, and IPEDS is completed through the office of Institutional Research. Reports submitted to required agencies are complete and on time. Institutional research staff attends professional development to remain current on best practices and reporting changes.

Departments and programs may request data for use in evaluation at any time as the process is often an email or phone request. Institutional Research also coordinates with the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, Office of Planning and Accountability for specific data requests. These requests are usually fulfilled within a 48- hour period.

Sources

- College Effectiveness Meeting Minutes 2016-2018

- Criterion 4 C Tables 5-9

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 Strengths

- Programs have clear objectives and processes to ensure assessment and evaluation. Reviews of all recent programs found no substantive issues needing attention, and credit transfer policies are well established and consistent. Faculty and staff are following best practices set forth in their respective departments.
- Students in programs with licensing requirements are successful in completing their programs, testing proficient for licensing, and acquiring employment. Student support programs have documented evidence of success in retention and completion of their participating students. Students graduating and transferring to other institutions are successful.
- UARM has a systemic, manageable method to assess and improve student learning and program outcomes.
- UARM recognizes the value of accurate data and embraces decisions informed by such data. While few education decisions are based solely on numbers, UARM recognizes the value of this pragmatic approach.
- Effort is made to report accurate data to government agencies regarding enrollment, retention, and persistence. Further, Institutional Research and the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs work closely to gather, analyze, and evaluate the data that is generated through various reports into information used by the institution. This information is a driver of college effectiveness and decision making within the College.

Criterion Four Challenges

There are several challenges facing UARM with regard to evaluation and improvement of student learning.

- Employment Data - No consistent mechanism is currently in place to provide substantial information about students after graduation, other than transfer data to other Arkansas public institutions. Knowing if students are working and, perhaps more importantly, if they are working in the field in which they received a degree or certificate, would

validate program teaching and student learning goals. Working with advisory committees and the Arkansas Department of Higher Education and following program guidelines are extremely helpful but do not provide complete answers to questions of applicability and relevance in employment.

- Development of valid and reliable departmental assessments. While not granting credit based solely on tests, it is imperative faculty award credit based on instruments with the correct constructs.
- Programming Challenges - Enrollment numbers, persistence, and retention are at the forefront of an institution of UARM's size and location. While other colleges may have an abundant pool of potential students, UARM is bound by its rural location and regional population size. It is essential that programming meets employer needs and student interests to keep UARM a viable entity.
- Continuous Analysis/Valid Assessments - Close evaluation and analysis of student trends and reasons for non-persistence are required. Faculty and staff are continuously involved in this evaluation process with the goal of raising student engagement, participation in programming, and completion or graduation rates.
- Assessment Coordinator - While IR analyzes data on a consistent basis, it would benefit the organization to employ a full-time assessment coordinator. This coordinator, working closely with IR, could more quickly analyze and provide statistical information to various departments and committees. In keeping with institutional size considerations, budget constraints do not make this an option at this time.

Sources

There are no sources.

5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

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

5.A - Core Component 5.A

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

1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.
3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.
4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.
5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

Argument

The University of Arkansas Rich Mountain has resources sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The College fully prioritizes and allocates resources to promulgate the Strategic Goals outlined in Criterion One. Financial audits, college and program reviews, as well as low faculty-to-student ratios all demonstrate this capability. UA Rich Mountain's legislative audits and financial statements reflect a solid financial position. The College's audited financial statements are now consolidated with the UA System, though UA Rich Mountain still operates as its own entity.

5.A.1. The College has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.

Fiscal Resources

UA Rich Mountain is currently able to meet its financial obligations and future projections and address long-term financial sustainability. Legislative Audits and financial statements are evidence that the College has a strong, sound financial position. UARM has been extremely proactive in the development of multiple funding streams rather than relying on unpredictable sources, such as state appropriations. Total funding for the College is now derived from a

number of pools: state appropriations, partnerships, revolving funds, federal grants, state grants, local grants, auxiliary operations, and capital funds. Since 2017, the College's audited financial statements are now consolidated with the UA System. However, UA Rich Mountain still operates as its own entity and maintains a strong reserve balance.

State Appropriations

As part of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE), UARM is provided state-appropriated funding through the Arkansas General Assembly. In the last ten years state investment in higher education has steadily declined. The College received approximately 57% of its unrestricted budget needs through allocations from the state in FY2014, compared to the 70% received in FY2009, as evidenced by Table 5.A.1-1.

	Total Unrestricted Budget	Total General Revenues*	Percentage of Budget covered by State Funding
FY2009	\$4,749,076	\$3,379,458	71.16%
FY2010	\$5,056,430	\$3,314,431	65.55%
FY2011	\$5,099,819	\$3,384,422	66.36%
FY2012	\$5,262,232	\$3,419,757	64.99%
FY2013	\$5,345,011	\$3,397,250	63.56%
FY2014	\$5,903,975	\$3,404,968	57.67%
FY2015	\$5,824,721	\$3,409,713	58.54%
FY2018	\$5,839,784	\$3,425,317	58.65%

State Appropriation funding has undergone significant change since the 2015 accreditation visit. Act 148 of 2017 repealed the needs-based and outcome-centered funding formulas as prescribed in Arkansas Code § 6-61-210, Arkansas Code § 6-61-224, Arkansas Code § 6-61-228, Arkansas Code § 6-61-229, Arkansas Code § 6-61-230, and Arkansas Code § 6-61-233, and amended Arkansas Code § 6-61-234. The Act directs the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) to adopt policies developed by the Department of Higher Education (ADHE) to implement a productivity-based funding model for state-supported institutions of higher education. The new funding model is aligned with goals and objectives for post-secondary attainment in the state.

The AHECB uses the [productivity-based funding model](#) as the mechanism for recommending funding for applicable state-supported institutions of higher education. The AHECB makes separate recommendations for the two-year institutions and four-year institutions. The framework for those recommendations is described in the Productivity Funding Distribution Policy. The new funding model was implemented in 2016.

Faced with constricting budgets, UARM responds to these decreases with careful planning and a renewed focus on alternative revenue streams. Strategies include partnerships, revolving funds, federal grants, state grants, auxiliary operations, and capital funds.

Partnerships

One of UARM’s first responses to seeking out additional funding sources was to enhance community partnerships. One example of this effort is evidenced by the growth of the UA Rich Mountain Foundation. The Foundation provides funding to the College through scholarships, supporting operations, and raising funds for infrastructure.

The total assets of the foundation have more than doubled since 2005, and as of June 2013, have a carrying value of over three million dollars. Other fiscal support from the foundation includes a fund carrying over half of a million dollars designated by the College for buildings and structure maintenance. As of April 2019, the Foundation has a value of just over \$3.7 million.

Revolving Funds

Tuition, fees, and charges for various services make up the bulk of revolving fund income. Unexpended balances are carried forward as reserve funds and may be added to the budget as needed in subsequent years. The College strives to balance tuition rates with student financial aid resources. The tuition rate for UA Rich Mountain ranks as the sixth most expensive of the 22 Arkansas community colleges in 2018.

Increases in tuition and fees cannot completely compensate for revenue declines. To this end, the College works closely with business and industry to offer classes for local training needs. Most recently courses in phlebotomy and plant management were developed and offered specifically to meet these requested needs.

Federal Grants

Federal grants make up a large portion of UA Rich Mountain's financial resources. Based on the FY2013 Financial Audit, UARM received over \$3.9 million in federal grant revenues. This is an increase of 25% compared to the FY2007 audit. Table 5.A.1-2 contains the names of recent federal grants, years in which the grants are active, and the monetary amount received from the grant. These resources provide the academic, career, financial, and admissions advising services to all communities within the service area.

Table 5.A.1-2		
Name of Federal Grant	Award Years	Grant Amount
Adult Basic Education**	2013-2014	\$42,928
Aerospace Community Based Job Training Grant (Aviation)*	2009-2013	\$277,800
Arkansas Energy Sector Partnership (AESP)*	2011-2013	\$100,000

Arkansas Partnership for Nursing’s Future (APNF)*	2013-2014	\$57,726
Career Pathways*	2013-2014	\$192,790
Carl D. Perkins*	2013-2014	\$25,806
Child Care Access Means Parents In School (CCAMPIS)	2013-2017	\$100,320
Education Opportunities Center	2011-2016	\$1,935,940
Educational Talent Search	2011-2016	\$1,533,650
Path to Accelerated Completion and Employment (PACE)	2011-2014	\$516,407
Student Support Services	2010-2015	\$1,594,778
Title III	2005-2009	\$1,827,252
Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College & Career Training	2013-2017	\$300,000
Upward Bound Classic	2012-2017	\$1,696,905
Upward Bound Math and Science	2012-2017	\$1,250,000
*Federal grants are passed through the State, and thus awarded based on the State’s provisions.		
**The Adult Basic Education Grant is partially funded via a federal grant, but the majority of funds are provided by the State (see Table 5.4).		

As of June 30, 2018, the College received just under \$3.9 million in federal grant revenues, which is the same amount received in the Fiscal Year Ending (FYE) 2013. State and local grant revenue for FYE 2018 totaled \$705,000, which is an increase of 18% compared to FYE 2013.

Other federal grants include those awarded directly to students in the form of student financial aid. Due to the poverty of the College’s tri-county area, these grants are paramount to student recruitment and success. UARM recognizes how important financial aid opportunities are to the student population. Table 5.A.1-3 outlines the federal financial aid scholarships awarded to students in FY2014.

Name of Federal Financial Aid Grant	FY2014 Total Amount Awarded
Federal Pell Grants	\$1,729,148
Federal SEOG Grants	\$19,486
Workforce Improvement Grants	\$26,307
Veteran’s Affairs Tuition Assistance Grants	\$20,279
North American Free Trade Agreement Educational Grants (NAFTA)	\$23,529

Title V funding has changed since the last 2015 writing. Beginning summer 2018, Pell Grant eligible students were able to receive up to 150% of their scheduled Pell award each year. This

allowed many students to continue taking classes during the summer that otherwise would not have been able to afford it. The College offered a larger variety of courses since demand was higher. As a result, the College received \$1.8 million in Pell funds for FYE 2018, which was a 17.5% increase compared to the previous fiscal year.

State Grants

Based on the FY2013 Financial Audit, UARM received approximately \$598,000 in state grant revenue, an increase of 41% compared to the FY2007 audit. State grant opportunities have enabled the College to offer services in adult education as well as in the secondary Career Center. The institution works closely with service area public schools to enable students to take advantage of these programs for academic dual-credit. The various state grants also provide direct student financial aid in the form of scholarships. Table 5.A.1-4 contains the names and amounts of state grants awarded in FY2014.

Name of State Grant	FY2014 Total Amount Awarded
Adult Basic Education*	\$236,406
Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarships	\$179,125
Workforce Improvement Grants	\$26,307
Veteran’s Affairs Tuition Assistance Grants	\$20,279
North American Free Trade Agreement Educational Grants (NAFTA)	\$23,529
*The Adult Basic Education Grant is partially funded via a federal grant, but the majority of funds are provided by the state (see Table 5.2).	

As evidenced in Table 5.A.1-2, it is important to note that some of the federal grant funds received by UARM are actually passed through Arkansas agencies. In this case, the award amount allocated to UARM is based on state regulations and performance factors. The College commonly refers to these grants throughout this document as being “state grants.”

One federal pass-through grant is the Career Pathway’s Initiative (CPI) program. The program covers the tuition and textbook costs of career training and college classes and helps qualified students overcome other barriers such as childcare and transportation expenses. Unfortunately in FY2014, despite the program’s documented success rate, it received drastic cutbacks due to the Federal sequester. UARM’s funding was cut by 37%, a reduction of \$114,500. While the state did not receive additional federal funding in FY2015, UARM did receive an increase due to the successful achievement of FY2014 goals. Since 2018 funding has stayed flat.

Auxiliary Operations

UA Rich Mountain operates a campus store for books and classroom supplies. In 2013 the Bookstore expanded to form the Student Union. The Student Union now also includes a convenience store and the Mountain Range Grill. An extensive remodel is planned for the

campus beginning in Spring of 2020 that will relocate the bookstore and expand the grill to a full-service dining facility for residential students. More information on this expansion was provided in Criterion One. The bookstore began a textbook rental program in 2016 to lower the cost of books to students. A student taking 30 hours receives a cost savings of approximately \$775.

The Mountain Range, open until 2 p.m. daily, provides a new form of revenue stream for the College. In prior years, food service was managed by a third-party provider. The College also built a convenience store within the Student Union Center that provides additional revenue.

UARM opened the School of Cosmetology in Fall 2013. The program requires students to receive and document “on the floor” salon simulations so cosmetology services are offered to the general public. Revenues for these services has increased with the growth of this program. Massage therapy will begin offering client services in Fall 2019.

Capital Funds

Past capital funding was received from several sources, including the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). One ARRA grant provided UARM with \$645,000 in capital funding to update items in the Business Continuity Plan. This included purchasing a new 100kw backup generator for the main campus as well as updating the fire alarm system. The College also upgraded Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems to efficiency units. UARM received a second ARRA grant for \$105,968 for faculty and student computers and office machine updates

In June 2013, UARM received \$4,830,000 from general obligation bonds and additional funds from revenue bonds of \$1,850,000 for various construction projects. These projects included renovating the existing library to create the Johnson Learning Commons, updating the Bookstore and Student Center, and constructing the Ouachita Center, a community and campus meeting space.

In 2017, the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services (DWS) partnered with UA Rich Mountain, Rich Mountain Adult Education, Arkansas Rehab, and Western Arkansas Employment Development Agency to more effectively deliver public services. To align this partnership, the UA Rich Mountain Abernathy Building underwent an extensive renovation totaling \$440,000 to house all partners on campus. This partnership aids in recruiting new students who have been misplaced in the workforce and assists DWS clients who need retraining or want to obtain a GED. It also assists Career Pathway participants looking for employment.

The College secured financing for the Abernathy Building renovation with a local bank at a net interest cost of 1.0% for the life of the funding. The DWS rent revenue also covered the funds needed to modernize campus science laboratories. These were entirely renovated in 2018 for approximately \$600,000. These science labs are a crucial recruitment factor for students in STEM.

Human Resources

The financial and physical resources at UARM support the daily functions of faculty, administrators, and professional and classified staff. Although small when compared to sister institutions in the state, UARM employees are a resourceful workforce. They conduct daily institutional operations, impart academic excellence, participate in shared governance, and provide outreach and ancillary services to area counties.

In 2013, UARM employed 164 persons on a full-time or part-time basis as faculty, professional, or classified employees. This includes 21 full-time instructors, 48 part-time instructors, 3 administrators, 30 professional support staff, 20 classified support staff, and 42 part-time support staff. In 2018, that number dropped to 147. All positions are appropriated from the state. All full-time employees of the College work under an annual contract. Adjunct faculty are employed for each course and are compensated on a combination of credit-hour, student head-count basis. The faculty to student ratio has decreased from the 2013 ratio of 14:1 to 13:1 in 2018.

The primary responsibility of faculty is classroom instruction. Other duties include student advising and committee service. Full-time instructors teach 15-16 credit hours per semester. Faculty teaching fewer than 15 hours per semester are assigned other administrative responsibilities. Teaching loads vary with each semester's enrollment, but patterns indicate that more than half of full-time faculty teach overload classes in addition to serving on a minimum of two institutional [committees](#). Similar workloads exist for other staff. All full-time instructors maintain 15 office hours per week during fall and spring semesters. Full-time instructors may choose summer appointments for additional compensation.

Professional staff serve as department heads, directors of programs or auxiliary operations, and/or technical or program support personnel. The primary duties of this group involve tasks that play an integral part in the day-to-day operations of the College. Classified staff serve as administrative assistants, support specialists, technicians, clerks, or maintenance workers. Classified staff provide vital services to help meet student needs and support faculty and administrative staff.

In Spring 2014, of the 73 full-time employees, 49 were employed with state-appropriated funds as compared to 25 with grant-based funds. Both institutionally funded and grant-funded staff work contracted hours and complete committee work. All faculty and staff are expected to contribute time and skills to committees, ensuring shared governance. The institution operates with an adequate number of state-appropriated positions.

Physical Infrastructure

UARM's Strategic and [Campus Master Plan 2018](#) provide evidence that the physical infrastructure is sufficient to support its current operations. These plans consider future needs and anticipate growth prospects.

In 2008, a Master Plan was completed that identified future buildings sites, buildings, slope/drainage areas, utility connection readiness, and pedestrian and vehicular traffic flow. A community center was part of that Master Plan. Due to a 2009 tornado, ARRA funding, and construction obstructions, there were several deviations from that Master Plan. The latest

iteration of the Master Plan was completed in 2018 and includes student housing, modest athletic facilities, and space for additional technical programs.

The Maintenance and Operations (M&O) Department is responsible for maintaining a campus environment that supports UARM's Strategic Plan. In 2014, the Director of the Physical Plant reported directly to the President. The Director's supervisor was changed in 2017 to the Vice Chancellor of Administration. The department consists of five full-time employees, three regular part-time employees, and seasonal part-time help as needed. The director is responsible for overseeing the day to day operations relating to maintenance and housekeeping. The maintenance division oversees the operations of the grounds, facilities, and the auto fleet. The housekeeping division provides cleaning and sanitation services for all facilities. Because the M&O Department is limited in man-power, the College uses outside contractors in areas where projects are beyond the scope of the UARM staff, or where special construction skills are required. Outside architectural firms design major construction and renovation projects.

In 2013, the St. John Library was reconstructed as part of the new Johnson Learning Commons. The Learning Commons provides 7,700 square feet of attractive and technologically advanced educational space. It features meeting rooms for students for group projects or collaborations. It also houses TRIO, SSS staff offices, and tutoring space.

The Student Union center completed in 2013 provides 4,700 square feet of modern recreational and organizational space. In August 2014, the College completed construction on the Ouachita Center, a convention center contains various meeting/exhibit arrangements and audio/visual equipment. This 13,300 square foot center can be divided into smaller meeting areas with retractable wall partitions. It contains a catering kitchen to accommodate groups with special events. This facility was an asset in the College's vision for economic development tied back to Goal 4 in the 2014 Strategic Plan.

In 2014, the College had 48 total classrooms. This included three classrooms in the Historic Armory building, eight classrooms at the Waldron off-campus site, and six classrooms at the Mount Ida outreach center. Due to the demand for distance learning capabilities, UARM also has four distance learning classrooms. Two of these rooms are on the Mena campus, and one each at Waldron and Mount Ida. UARM added a distance learning classroom to the Cossatot River High School and Waldron High School campuses to strengthen concurrent course offerings. Classroom availability in 2018 is 46, with the expansion of the science laboratories, and the DWS space removing two teaching spaces. Another space was renovated in the Cosmetology building for Massage Therapy.

Technological Infrastructure

UARM is committed to providing the highest quality affordable technology-based services and systems, to support student learning and community service. The Information Technology Department (IT) provides technical support to all areas of campus and locations. The IT Department has four employees.

As seen in Table 5.A.1-5, UARM's FY2014 financial investment in the IT Department amounts to over 7.6% of the College's unrestricted budget. IT was spared the budget reductions seen

elsewhere in the institution as technological infrastructure is critical to advance academic programs and operations.

Fiscal Year (FY)	Total Unrestricted Budget	Total IT Budget	IT Equipment Budget	IT ratio to overall Budget
FY2009	\$4,749,076	\$284,394	\$5,300	5.99%
FY2010	\$5,056,430	\$373,114	\$76,186	7.38%
FY2011	\$5,099,819	\$408,923	\$30,000	8.02%
FY2012	\$5,262,232	\$449,214	\$70,000	8.54%
FY2013*	\$5,345,011	\$470,263	\$295,423	8.80%
FY2014*	\$5,903,975	\$449,214	\$240,417	7.61%
FY2018	\$5,837,533	\$511,056	\$8,600	8.75%

*The Institutional Research (IR) department was separated from the IT department in FY13. This table includes both departments in order to provide an accurate comparison.

The UARM Strategic Plan targets the importance of technology in Goal 3: Quality Learning Environments. The College offers a large variety of online classes to students including high school students seeking to obtain dual credit. In 2013, UARM invested heavily in high-definition Compressed Interactive Video (CIV) equipment to broadcast a class lecture live to other students in off-site locations. This method is cost effective as only one instructor is needed for multiple locations. It also provides additional options for students who reside in outlying regions. In Fall 2013, UARM offered 27 online courses, 14 CIV courses, and five hybrid courses. This is an increase of 22 online courses since 2005. In Fall 2019, there are 27 online classes being offered, 16 CIV courses, 5 hybrids, and three using Zoom interface technologies. Student surveys reveal no significant difference in satisfaction between courses with an on-site instructor.

Another strategy is to “maintain current instructional technology and consider adopting new emerging instructional technologies.” The demand for technology services, network connectivity, operating systems, and hardware is constant and ever changing. A [list of technology capabilities](#) in 2014 is listed in evidence, as well as the specific updates and changes that have occurred since that time.

5.A.2. UARM’s resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.

UARM has no superordinate entities that influence resource allocations. As a public institution, there are no stockholders or monies distributed through profit-sharing. Resource allocation is guided by the duly appointed Board of Visitors and Board of Trustees.

5.A.3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of UARM’s organization, resources, and opportunities.

The mission statement and the goals are reviewed and modified as part of the College's strategic planning processes. Resource allocation plans encompass short- and long-range objectives. All departments and academic divisions participate in long-range planning through development of the institution's five-year strategic plan. During the review of these Strategic Goals, the College considers the organization, the resources available, and growth opportunities. The organization of the College was presented earlier within this Criterion and is evidenced in publications and annual [accomplishments](#) reports.

Fiscal Operating Budgets confirm that resources are conservatively assigned to line items within departments for efficacy. Additionally, the Budget Committee aligns resource allocations to departmental goals and institutional values. The budget contains a contingency line item for unforeseen events, revenue shortfalls, and opportunities. Changes to budgets are done through a Budget Transfer Request for approval by the area Vice Chancellor and Chancellor.

Opportunities for growth are limited as economic and geographic obstacles are a persistent challenge. New programs and improved learning environments are continuously researched. Outside revenue sources are pursued. Meetings and partnerships with local employers help to spur the creation and growth of Industrial Technology programs, such as Machine Tool Technology and Welding. Massage Therapy was added Spring 2019.

The College recognizes the challenges of living in a rural, high -poverty area. Faculty and staff continuously seek opportunities that align with the Mission and the Strategic Goals. Integrating goals with human, physical, technological, and monetary resources indicates that the current Strategic Plan, although visionary, is realistic and reasonable in scope.

5.A.4. UARM's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.

Hiring and new employee practices, as discussed in Criterion 2 and Criterion 3, ensure that staff members are appropriately qualified for their respective positions. During the hiring process, essential job qualifications are identified. Only applicants meeting those qualifications are considered. After hire, UARM requires faculty and staff members to maintain the qualifications and upgrade skills necessary to continue employment. [Annual performance reviews](#) assure that employees remain current with needed skills and provide avenues for improvement.

The College's dedication to highly qualified personnel is apparent in its commitment to furthering employee skills through continuing education. Professional development hours are earned in a variety of ways, including attendance at on-campus workshops, professional association conferences, teleconferences, webinars, and other approved methods. Faculty and staff are encouraged to join professional organizations in their respective disciplines. Departmental annual budgets include funds for travel and professional development. The Vice Chancellors have additional professional development funds in the budget that may be requested training opportunities arise. Professional Leave requests are submitted for approval to allow the College to track professional development activity and certify the required training hours.

5.A.5. UARM has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

UARM uses a well-defined, continuously-updated budget development and monitoring process. The overall institutional budget is aligned with the College's [Legislative Biennium Plan](#) and [Strategic Plan](#). Resource allocation is an institution-wide initiative. It begins in the budget process and is regularly reviewed. All areas of the College are responsible for monitoring their respective budgets. Budget requests are required to have support tied directly back to the Strategic Plan at the time of the request. The Budget Committee sets priorities, recommends changes to tuition and fees, estimates enrollments, and establishes budget parameters. Decisions are based on the Mission, Strategic Plan, student needs, economic conditions, and anticipated state funding. The committee includes the Chancellor, the Vice Chancellors for Administration, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and the Director of Budget Analysis and Human Resources. Once the budget is completed, it is submitted to the system office for Board of Trustee approval.

This structure ensures that budget planning is done by those most knowledgeable regarding academic unit requirements, administrative support functions, and longer-term planning issues.

The resource allocation process begins in January of each academic year. Faculty and staff working directly with students are best able to identify budget needs to improve educational experiences. Recommendations and requests must include strategy numbers from the Strategic Goals and are due in mid-February to the Budget Committee. Justification is required for additional budget funding. After compiling all requests, the committee meets in late-February to discuss each department's needs and determine funding priorities. A contingency plan is developed and budgeted each year.

Once all requests have been reviewed and approved, the Budget Committee develops a formal budget book. This Proposed Revenue and Expenditures Budget Book is presented to the Board of Trustee's Finance Committee between April and May for review, approval, and recommendation to the full Board. Upon recommendation, the Board approves the final budget between May and June, depending on how soon the State General Revenue forecast is released.

Expenses are monitored monthly by area supervisors. Expense versus Budget data are available for supervisors to review on the Intranet via the General Ledger Inquiry. In addition, the Chancellor, Vice President of Administration, and the Director of Budget Analysis and Human Resources review monthly financial reports to monitor expenses.

An electronic requisition approval process is in place for expenses. From the originator, an expense request is sent to the area supervisor and then to the area Vice Chancellor. The Chancellor must also approve the e-req if the amount exceeds a preset monetary threshold. Lastly, the Director of Budget Analysis and Human Resources reviews the e-req to confirm the correct general ledger coding.

Sources

- Accomplishments 2016 - 2018
- Campus Master Plan 2018
- Committee Assignments 2018 - 2019 (1)
- Legislative Biennium Plan A_BOOK_VOL_2_v2
- Legislative Biennium Plan A_BOOK_VOL_2_v2 (page number 251)
- Performance Review Form
- Productivity_Funding_Policy - Two-Year Colleges
- Strategic Plan 2016-2020
- Technology List
- UA Rich Mountain Organizational Chart

5.B - Core Component 5.B

The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight of the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.
3. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

Argument

Due to the Change of Control to the University of Arkansas System, this criterion has been rewritten since the 2015 accreditation visit.

5.B.1: The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; provides oversight of financial and academic policies and practices. It meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

Upon unanimous vote of the Rich Mountain Community College Board of Trustees, and the University of Arkansas System Board of Trustees, RMCC became the University of Arkansas Rich Mountain on February 1, 2017, through an Agreement of Merger and Plan of Transition. Through this agreement the duties of the previous Board of Trustees were transferred to the University of Arkansas System Board of Trustees. The previous Board became the Board of Visitors. The new [organizational chart](#) is provided in evidence. The authority of the UA System Board is Arkansas Code Annotated section 6-64-201 et al. as amended.

All items related to buildings/grounds, academic programming, financial audit and oversight, and athletics pass through committees on the Board. The Board meets six times each year at various System campuses throughout the state. Specific powers of the Board and its responsibilities are detailed in previously cited Arkansas Law.

The University of Arkansas System has five universities, a medical school, The Arkansas Archaeological Survey, Division of Agriculture, including the Cooperative Extension Service, the Winthrop Rockefeller Institute, the Clinton School for Public Service, a criminal justice institute, a high school for math and science, and seven community colleges. Trustees are appointed by the Governor and serve 10 year terms.

Per Arkansas Code § 6-61-202, in order to promote a coordinated system of higher education in Arkansas, each System Board member receives a minimum of eight hours of instruction and training each year on higher education issues, policies, laws, and the duties and responsibilities associated with the position of board member. System Board meetings are open to the public and usually attended by the media. The agenda is published online for the week prior to the Board meeting and contains relevant committee information and items requiring Board approval.

As a campus within the UA System, UA Rich Mountain follows applicable policies and resolutions of the System and the System's policies and procedures, as they are promulgated, amended, or repealed. UA Rich Mountain's operating procedures, internal governance, and established traditions are acceptable, so long as they are consistent with policies and resolutions, the System's policies and procedures, and the merger agreement. Policies that were in conflict or redundant with System policy were revised or deleted to bring local policy into compliance. In situations for which the College has no policy for administrative action, the Chancellor has the power to act, but his/her decisions are subject to the review of the UA System President. It is the duty of the Chancellor to inform the President promptly of all actions that should be covered by policy and recommend a written policy, if one is required.

The UA System Board and President delegate to the Chancellor its authority for administering the laws and policies governing the College. The line of communication between the Board and the staff is through the office of the President and Chancellor with the understanding that the following types of decisions will be referred to the Board of Trustees:

- Appointment of the Chancellor or his/her successor,
- Budgets and financial reports,
- Academic related items such as new programs, degrees, and technical and proficiency certificates

The Chancellor is responsible for developing and operating biennial budgets. The Chancellor reviews the College's proposed annual operating budget recommendations that include tuition and fees with the Board of Visitors. The Chancellor then provides the proposed budget to the UA System President, who is responsible for making recommendations for tuition and fees for all campuses of the System.

Board of Visitors: The [Agreement of Merger and Plan of Transition](#) between the University of Arkansas System Board of Trustees and the Rich Mountain Community College Board of Trustees outlines the general purpose of the Board of Visitors which is to perform liaison and advisory functions between UA Rich Mountain and area residents to:

- aid in securing financial support;
- advise regarding the educational and service needs of the area;
- assist the UA System's endeavors to aid in the orderly transition of UA Rich Mountain as it becomes a University of Arkansas System campus;
- furnish counsel and guidance for UA Rich Mountain

The Board of Visitors encourages the input of faculty, students, administrators, and the public. At the regular Board of Visitor's meetings, the Board receives direct information from the Chancellor concerning academic programs, fiscal accountability, and construction priorities. Business is conducted in public sessions with opportunities for public comment.

5.B.2. UA Rich Mountain has policies and procedures to engage all internal constituencies in governance, including the Board, administration, Professional Association, and Student Government Association. The UA System Board approval is required for various functions of the College including but not limited to personnel, academic programming, fiscal responsibility, and various other College functions.

Administration: While maintaining general overview and control, the Board entrusts administration of the institution to the President and various Vice Presidents of the System. Local Chancellors and Vice Chancellors provide leadership of the respective campuses as per Board Policy. On the campus level, internal constituents have input opportunities through various meetings, committees, and College functions.

The Chancellor's Cabinet meets directly with faculty, staff, and students using a variety of venues—including one-on-one meetings, informal "Lunch and Learns" and informal "Campus Update" potlucks. The Cabinet employs an open-door policy for employees and students.

The Chancellor's Cabinet consists of the Chancellor, Vice Chancellors for Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Administration, along with the director of Information Technology, and the Director of Marketing. The Cabinet meets on a bi-weekly basis to coordinate the various functions of the College and provide cohesive direction including:

- Promote coordination and communication across campus.
- Develop programs and services that are fully coordinated among college units and are supportive of excellence in fulfillment of the mission, vision, values, role and scope.
- Review administrative procedures and practices for effectiveness in meeting the mission of the College and to make changes as needed.
- Recommend college processes and be integral to planning and effectiveness review.
- Review recommendations submitted to the Board of Trustees.
- Provide leadership which unites all areas of the College.
- Provide assistance to one another for the attainment of the College mission and values.
- Outline, discuss, and resolve issues that impede the College in fulfilling its mission.

During the last accreditation review the College also had a President's Council. This Council was more expansive and included several other department representatives. This organizational structure proved ineffective and was revised into the College Effectiveness Committee. This committee meets as a group to share information and provide input and feedback on the various activities of the College. This Committee structure is provided here for reference and meets bi-monthly. [Effectiveness minutes](#) are published on the intranet.

Faculty, Staff, and Governance

UA Rich Mountain involves College personnel in the governance of the institution through organizational channels, committees, and the Professional Association. Committees are organized and appointed in late spring or summer of each academic year and published in an annual [Governance Through Committees document](#). Standing committees have defined ongoing responsibilities. Task force groups and ad hoc committees are charged with specific duties as needed such as sabbatical review, policy review, and employee hiring.

Professional Association: The main body for shared governance among the faculty and staff is the Professional Association. The Professional Association (PA) was formed in 1998. The purpose of it is to assist in planning, implementing, and evaluating all aspects of the institution. The PA is also charged with overseeing and protecting the welfare of its membership by participating in policy development. The specific functions of the organization are outlined in the [PA Constitution](#).

The Professional Association is composed of three chambers.

Faculty Chamber	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full-time instructional faculty members• Two adjunct faculty members (associate members appointed by Faculty Chamber President annually)
Professional Staff Chamber	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full-time employees who fill non-classified positions at the institution.
Classified Staff Chamber	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full-time employees who fill classified positions at the institution.

The PA Executive Committee takes recommendations to the Chancellor's Cabinet for consideration. A follow-up response, and any actions taken, are communicated back to the PA. The PA also conducts annual administrative reviews to improve administrative operations and provide feedback on leadership. The PA also recommends professional development opportunities to the Effectiveness Committee. Due to the size of the College structure, many issues or concerns are addressed in an informal manner.

Student Government Association

The SGA acts on behalf of the entire student body from all college locations and centers. The purpose of this organization, as stated in the [SGA Constitution](#) is to:

- Serve as a student governance vehicle
- Represent, lead, and unify the student body
- Aid the college in its large purpose of education
- Make recommendations regarding student issues to the UA Rich Mountain administration
- Act as a means of maintaining the well being of the college community
- Encourage enthusiastic school support

SGA is led by a group of elected executive officers including a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. Matters of student concern are brought before this group. Other groups are encouraged on campus and are guided by the AVCSA. Each student group requires a faculty or staff sponsor. Examples of student clubs and organizations are detailed within Criterion Three. Engagement and enthusiasm among the student body is best evidenced through [planned activities](#) evaluated in co-curricular outcomes.

5.B.3. UA Rich Mountain enables the involvement of its administration, faculty, staff, and students in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

Evidence of the involvement of UA Rich Mountain's internal constituents in setting policy and procedures has been described in detail in previous criteria and sections. Additional shared governance forums help further support the collaborative process at UA Rich Mountain. In addition to those already described, several shared governance forums exist. These include beginning [semester convocations](#), [faculty meetings](#), and [committee meetings](#). Agendas and minutes examples are provided in evidence.

- The UARM Chancellor conducts Convocation at the beginning of the Fall and Spring semesters to report on campus-wide issues and concerns, progress and improvements in service areas, and general updates and reminders of the Mission, goals, and purpose. Convocation also provides an opportunity for senior administration to respond to questions or concerns among the faculty and staff. All full-time employees are required to attend convocation each semester in efforts to reinforce engagement and shared governance.
- Faculty meetings with all faculty including adjunct and concurrent adjunct allow for expression of concerns or to provide suggestions. Faculty also break into academic departments to discuss concerns and improvements.
- The College Effectiveness Committee meets bi-monthly to coordinate, assess, and recommend improvements to the processes used for college development, responsiveness, and compliance with its mission. This committee has representatives from all areas of the College, including the chairs of each standing committee, Program Directors, the Recruiter, the Institutional Research Coordinator, and each of the Professional Association (PA) chamber presidents.

Sources

- 20160217_board_packet
- Activity Assessment Examples
- College Effectiveness Meeting Minutes 2016-2018
- Committee Assignments 2018 - 2019 (1)
- Faculty Meeting Agenda
- Professional Association Constitution Amended 10-12-18
- RMCC Merger Agreement and Plan of Transition
- SGA_Constitution

- Spring Convocation Agenda
- UA Rich Mountain Organizational Chart

5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.
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. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.
5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

Argument

5.C.1. UA Rich Mountain allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.

UA Rich Mountain's ability to effectively carry out its mission to provide "exemplary educational and enrichment opportunities to improve the quality of life and standard of living" is dependent on strategic planning and managing resources. The resource allocation process involves all constituencies to address the various aspects of the College mission. As discussed in Core Component 5.A., the allocation of resources is part of the budgeting process.

The Strategic Plan, along with the related Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals, dictates actions concerning all parts of institutional work. Programming development, hiring, and fiscal planning coordinate with the vision and mission of the institution. [Accomplishments](#) are provided in evidence that are specific to each of the strategic goals.

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

Student learning is the purpose of the College. Evidence provided in Criterion Four outline the procedures for assessment and evaluation of that learning. All functions of the College relate back to how well students are taught, evaluated, advised, and mentored. Activities are evaluated on their contributions to student learning, and budgets are adjusted accordingly. The budgeting process is outlined in a previous part of this criterion. Consistency in budgeting/expenditures is detailed in [audit](#) reports.

Changes to offerings and curriculum, workforce training, Lifelong Learning courses, Kid's and Teen College, and the 55+ program are all subject to continuous evaluation and revision. Further, all student services, including admissions, student life, advising, and other co-curricular activities are also evaluated for ways to improve. Integral to this is good stewardship of limited monies. This requires consistent monitoring and adjustments. Evidence of this adjustment process is in budget documents and meeting minutes.

Students complete a survey upon applying to graduate. Like the CCSSE described in Criterion Four, it provides data on student engagement and satisfaction. UARM also uses the SIRII as the instrument of student evaluation of courses. Survey results are used in committee and Cabinet meetings to provide direction for the institution. Budgeting follows these priorities.

For the 2014-2015 fiscal year, academic salaries and instructional support comprised 42% of the total budget. In 2018-2019 this amount was 37%. This does not include the salary or operating budget of the chief academic officer. Student learning is the ultimate goal in college processes. Money is budgeted to provide quality education.

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

UA Rich Mountain places great emphasis on involving all administrators, faculty, and staff in planning and evaluative processes. Various committee meetings allow for thoughtful, frank discussion of issues related to priorities, direction, and budget allocations. Suggestions from committees are incorporated into strategic planning when appropriate. Committees are charged with specific tasks each academic year related to the strategic plan.

UA Rich Mountain continues to involve all constituent groups in the planning process. The most significant example of this is the College's decision to merge with the University of Arkansas System (UAS). Beginning in February 2016, the RMCC Board of Trustees (BOT) began considering a merger into the UA System. Over the next few months, the BOT and the RMCC president and administrators talked to faculty, staff, students, and the community about the possibilities and discussed reasons for and against the merger. At the April 27, 2016, BOT meeting, the Board voted to merge with the System effective July 1, 2016, or as soon as possible after that date.

External group engagement in the planning process involves input from the Foundation, ARCO, Mena Chamber of Commerce, various local government, law enforcement, and state agencies. For example, law enforcement input was a major influence in providing the new 2019 criminal justice certificate of proficiency and technical certificate. Local constituents and businesses consistently provide input for both credit and non-credit course offerings and academic programs. As an example, the faculty met with representatives from the community in each of their respective fields to discuss the current needs of the workforce. As a result, the Health Information Management program was revised to include both an Associate of Applied Science and a Technical Certificate in Health Information Management to meet the demands of students and the current healthcare market. Further, external constituents participate in the planning process as [Advisory Committees](#). Representatives from local business and industry, educational

facilities, and local and state government agencies provide input. This input is used to reform and update the Strategic Plan, strengthen departmental services, and research new opportunities for the College.

5.C.4. UA Rich Mountain plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. UARM plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.

UA Rich Mountain's planning documents reflect an understanding of its current physical, financial, and human resources. Due to its small size and limited resources, the College must plan accordingly and realistically in alignment with its mission and goals. Plans are based on student needs and resource availability. Needs are prioritized and resources allocated accordingly though some items may be flagged for immediate attention.

The annual budgeting process described in Subcomponent 5.A.5 is well-developed and allows the institution to manage revenue fluctuations. Tuition revenues for each academic year are built upon conservative enrollment projections. Projections are informed by area demographics, high school graduation rates, and enrollment. Unfortunately, UARM has seen enrollment declines over the last five years based on these area demographics.

The budgeting process incorporates several contingent scenarios that incorporate state funding changes, enrollment changes, and tuition limitations. These measures allow the institution to make plans and adjust quickly if unexpected events occur. The institution budgets very conservatively and typically sets aside a 1% to 3% operating contingency fund for emergencies and unbudgeted initiatives. Allocations of contingency funds during the year are recommended by Vice Chancellors and reviewed by the Chancellor. UARM makes appropriate resource allocation adjustments for favorable variances in revenue or expenditure streams through contingency fund pre-planning. Further, current plans include expanding programming options and student housing.

5.C.5. UA Rich Mountain's planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

UARM recognizes and understands the larger environment in which it operates. Leadership is aware of demographic and technological trends affecting the College and its role and function in the community.

The College seeks opportunities to offer optimal technology to students. As discussed in subcomponent 5.A.1., resources for technology are a significant portion of the operating budget. The Information Technology department works closely with faculty and student support to acquire cost-effective equipment to improve the learning environment. Rapid changes in technology and the complexity of its interaction with other planning factors make forecasting and planning difficult. The College therefore plans with flexibility, responsiveness, and adaptability.

The College monitors and plans for demographic shifts but operates in an insulated rural environment. Without significant business investment, the College does not anticipate large area population shifts. Other demographic information is gathered for planning as needed.

While isolated from many global impacts, area manufacturing employment is influenced by globalization. Large plant manufacturing continues to downsize creating unemployment. Many former employees qualify for federal benefits under TAA (due to NAFTA) and become students. The College anticipates plant closures and retraining needs and plans appropriately.

Sources

- Accomplishments 2016 - 2018
- Advisory Council Meeting Minutes
- FY17 Legislative Audit report

5.D - Core Component 5.D

The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.
2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

Argument

5.D.1. UA Rich Mountain develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.

Student success, community needs, economic development trends, and financial forecasts are all valuable data. As seen more specifically in this section, UARM consistently addresses how to best gather, manage, and report the enormous amount of data available for improving operations.

The [SIR II Course](#) and Instruction evaluations along with [Graduate Surveys](#), ([Results 2018](#)) provide important feedback from students regarding educational experiences. This feedback allows adjustments to be made to improve educational performance. A copy of the SIR II results are returned to each faculty member to identify areas for improvement. Deficiencies are discussed with the faculty member.

Ongoing program assessment is detailed in Criterion Four and provides feedback to improve learning environments across academic departments. Assessment tools include course outcome analysis, informal and formal student satisfaction reports, and employee evaluations among other measures. Faculty members are evaluated with three different methods: [Employee-Performance reviews](#), classroom evaluations, and student evaluations. Classroom evaluations are conducted at least annually by the Vice Chancellor, a department chair, or a peer to evaluate instructor performance and classroom engagement. The SIR II survey is administered to students for each course. This survey evaluates both the instructor and the course content. All full-time staff also participate in annual performance reviews as per UA Board Policy.

Student services conduct assessments and surveys throughout the year to solicit input on campus life. Examples of other informal student satisfaction assessments include the Student Union Survey, academic and non-academic Graduation Surveys, Post-event [Evaluation Surveys](#) for events such as Educational Talent Search activities, and Student Support Services surveys.

The College Effectiveness Committee is dedicated to defining, developing, and implementing systematic processes that yield institutional effectiveness consistent with college measures, state

policies and laws, and accreditation requirements. The committee is also tasked with coordinating, assessing, and recommending improvements to the effectiveness process.

UARM uses a wide variety of assessments, surveys, and evaluations, both formal and informal. This data helps to determine how current curricula, programs, and personnel are meeting the needs of students and the residents of the Ouachita Mountains. This evidence of performance is addressed in detail in Criterion 4.

Formal Assessments/Evaluations/Surveys:

- **ACT Accuplacer:** This college placement test evaluates incoming students' skill levels in Reading, Writing, Math, and English as a Second Language and also helps to place students in appropriate courses.
- **Administrative Reviews:** This survey is conducted by the Professional Association and allows members to review each administrator to improve administrative operations.
- **Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (CCFSSE):** The CCFSSE elicits information from faculty about perceptions regarding students' educational experiences, their teaching practices, and the ways they spend professional time—both in and out of the classroom. This survey is conducted every two years.
- **Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE):** This survey assesses institutional practices and student behaviors correlated with student learning and student retention. The survey is administered every two years.
- **Employee Performance Reviews:** Each full-time employee is annually reviewed by the respective area supervisor. It is used to evaluate overall employee job performance, recognize personal growth and achievement, and identify areas for improvement.
- **Faculty Classroom Evaluations:** Faculty classroom evaluations are conducted by the Vice Chancellor or a department chair to evaluate instructor performance and engagement in the classroom at least annually.
- **Graduation Surveys:** Each graduating student completes the survey. It is used to identify how well UARM meets expectations and fosters student success.
- **Student Instructional Report II (SIR II):** As previously mentioned, the Sir II is administered to students for each course. It is used to evaluate teaching effectiveness and learning quality.
- **Withdrawing Student Survey:** Students received this survey prior to withdrawal. The intent is to gather data regarding reasons for such action.

Other Assessments/Evaluations/Surveys/Information:

- High School Superintendent and Principal Luncheon: This annual gathering between public school administrators and UARM intended to garner information focused on improving and/or expanding services to area schools.
- Faculty Meetings: These meetings among the Vice Chancellor, division chairs, and faculty are to discuss academic-related issues for improving academic operations.
- Post-event Evaluation Surveys: These informal evaluations review the outcomes, both positive and negative, of events or activities
- Strategic Planning Retreat: The purpose of this meeting for Chancellor's Cabinet, College Effectiveness Committee, Program Directors, and Professional Association Presidents is to identify and discuss challenges, planned and implemented prior to the academic year, and the status of ongoing projects.
- Student Satisfaction Survey: These informal surveys are conducted as needed to gauge student approval and to identify ways to increase student success, retention, and program awareness.

Other Tools for gathering data on performance of students/faculty/staff/college:

- Admissions data
- Annual State Legislative Audit reports
- Arkansas Department of Higher Education data and reports
- Arkansas Research Center
- CAMS software
- Census Data
- Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data and reports
- Microsoft Great Plains/FRx software
- Monthly budget-to-actual expense reports
- National Student Clearinghouse Student Tracker

The Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs meets regularly with division chairs and faculty members to review assessments, evaluations, and surveys in order to determine which methods are working, programs deficiencies, and possible improvements. Results are referred to the Cabinet.

Additionally, the College publishes an [accomplishments](#) report listing the achievements of each department for the fiscal year. Each accomplishment is tied back to the Strategic Plan. Annual accomplishments are published and available to internal and external constituents.

5.D.2. UA Rich Mountain learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

UARM responds to issues through innovating to improve its effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability. Based on information from various student surveys and other metrics, the College responds by modifying operations, programming, priorities, and personnel.

Faculty, staff, and administrators continually address concerns from students, the Board, and other parties. Efforts are transparent and focused on improvement. Not all projects are successful, and employees make decisions on how to improve or abandon a poor practice. The College is flexible and innovative to accomplish goals set forth in various mission documents. Data are being used to better inform the decision making process.

There is a proliferation of data. The College has only recently begun to address how to gather, manage, and report data available for improving operations using a restructured committee system. Reports are made to the [Effectiveness Committee](#) for concerns and recommendations.

Sources

- 2016-2017 SIR Institutional Report
- 2017-2018 SIR Institutional Report.pdf
- Accomplishments 2016 - 2018
- Activity Assessment Examples
- CCSSE 2016 Frequency Distributions by ACC Cohort - Main Survey
- College Effectiveness Committee minutes 03-03-2017
- Graduation Survey Results 2016
- Graduation Survey Results 2018
- Performance Review Form

5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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

Summary

The University of Arkansas at Rich Mountain has a consistent pattern of assessment and evaluation that drives the learning curriculum and the accompanying budget. Sufficient processes are in place to ensure monetary expenditures are documented and evaluated for accuracy. Further, the College assures proper stewardship of funds by budgeting according to its mission and strategic goals.

Planning is evidenced in the evolving Strategic Plan, Master Plan, and administrative priorities. Resources are in place to fulfill the mission with contingency planning for both unforeseen difficulties and opportunities.

There are no immediate issues with financing, facilities, planning, or accomplishment of stated institutional goals. The institution assesses its processes for improvement through appropriated administrative and committee structures. Issues are resolved quickly and effectively moving the institution forward.

Sources

There are no sources.