

Presidential Town Hall

Hosted by: The Student Government Association

Table of Contents:

Money & Housing Questions: Pages 1 - 2

Sexual Assault/Safety/Legal Related Questions: Page 3

Academic Affairs Related Questions: Pages 4 - 7

SGA & Miscellaneous Questions: Pages 8 - 10



Money & Housing Questions:

- Why are students who live in campus apartments forced to get a meal plan? Why are students in residence halls not able to get the apartment meal plans?
 - We believe that when the needs for food and shelter are met, students can focus on their studies and on adjusting to college life. The University can be assured students have food options.
 - From a practical standpoint, in order to provide for the quality dining options, meal plans must be required so that revenue can be invested back into the facilities. Our desire is to create settings which foster collaboration and social interaction.

- How is Greek Village Phase II going to affect other projects on campus? Specifically, what are the potential funding sources for Greek Village Phase II?
 - We are comparing the options of financing through the University versus the UCA Foundation to build the facility. The University will be paying the cost of the debt either through a debt service payment for bonds or a lease payment to the Foundation.
 - The Foundation route provides us with more flexibility in borrowing, opportunities to partner with the fraternities in helping underwrite the cost, and the ability to build at a quicker pace.
 - The renovation of Hughes and Conway are currently underway, already funded with University bonds. The plan to upgrade State and Carmichael will be phase two of the hall renovations. As long as enrollment and housing occupancy remain positive, this plan should not be impacted.

- What new things are going to be added under Donaghey Hall? Will these places be compatible with Bear Bucks and dining dollars?
 - A coffee shop will move into the space previously occupied by Blue Sail. A Mexican restaurant will move into the space vacated by Mosaïque. We are very pleased with these options considering the Mexican concept was number one on the student wish list for new food offerings.
 - All food locations, including Marble Slab/American Cookie will be accepting both Bear Bucks and Dining Dollars.
 - The area previously used by Uncle T's will become a Welcome Center for engaging future bears.

- Why are work study jobs at the university extremely hard to obtain, particularly for international students, and what is being done to fix this?
 - a. There are limited funds for federal student work jobs. UCA only receives about \$600,000, which represents less than 400 students for the entire campus, including graduate students.
 - b. International students are not eligible for federal work study and are limited to 20 hours per week on institutionally funded work study positions. This is federally mandated.

- c. Some departments may not realize they can hire international students even with UCA funds.
 - d. The University began limiting workers to 20 hours in hopes of opening up jobs for additional students.
 - e. Improvements are needed on the job posting process. Career Services has the website, it is a matter of getting the campus departments to post their jobs to that site.
- **Why are there no dorms available for married students on campus?**
 - Married student housing was phased out several years ago. Currently, with the demands for single student housing, we do not have the facilities to accommodate married couples or students with families. We believe the available private apartment options adjacent to campus better meet those needs.
 - **Can UCA invest in some Charmin? The current toilet paper is slightly worse than sandpaper.**
 - I wish! Unfortunately, Charmin is not on the state contract from which we are required to purchase. We did, however manage to upgrade last year from 1-ply to 2-ply. We are making progress.

There were other questions/concerns raised at the Town Hall meeting to which I have some follow-up information.

1. **Developing a method of parking lot identification**
 - a. The Parking and Traffic committee will be taking on this topic in their March meeting. That committee has representation from faculty, staff and students.
2. **Concerns regarding asbestos in Meadors Hall**
 - a. Many of our buildings have asbestos. We had a survey done in the mid 90's to locate the asbestos and have placed signs in areas noting this. There is generally no risk when the asbestos containing surfaces are in good condition. Asbestos is typically abated when the materials containing asbestos become disturbed or when the area is renovated. An example of asbestos in Meadors would be the old 9 X 9 floor tiles.
 - b. We are happy to meet with students and review the report.
3. **More "You Are Here" signs on the interior of campus**
 - a. We are mapping the current locations and will check back with you for suggested additions.
4. **24-Hour convenience store**
 - a. We are happy to revisit the option of a grocery kiosk.
 - b. There is currently a shuttle run to Walmart on Sundays.

Sexual Assault/Safety/Legal Related Questions:

- **Do you have anything in progress to help victims of Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence aside from the counseling center?**
 - The Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Committee (with members representing faculty, staff, and students) is developing recommendations on the design and implementation of a victim advocate program. The committee is currently reviewing victim advocate programs at other universities.
- **Should an assault be reported and the person goes to the hospital, do you have an advocate that is there for the survivor? (Someone completely third party whose only concern is the survivor).**
 - Two organizations that currently serve as resources are the UCA Counseling Center and the Sexual Assault Crisis Response of Central Arkansas. The Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Committee is developing recommendations on the design and implementation of a victim advocate program.
- **Should someone report an assault, is there a process in place should the assailant be in the victims class? Is there anything in place should a victim miss class due to an assault?**
 - In the event of sexual assault or domestic violence, a report should be filed with the Title IX coordinator. Protective measures authorized by Board Policy 511 include issuing “no contact” orders and placing the assailant on administrative leave. The Title IX coordinator and/or the victim can contact the professor to discuss accommodations.
 - If the assault does not involve sexual misconduct, the assailant could still be subject to discipline as outlined in the Student Handbook. The matter should be reported to the Dean of Students. Removal from an academic class is a disciplinary action that may be imposed.
- **How are you making sure UCA is a safe campus?**
 - The University of Central Arkansas is committed to providing a safe environment for students, faculty, staff, and visitors. The university offers numerous education programs and safety services to promote safety on campus. Specifically, the university provides ongoing sexual misconduct prevention, awareness, and risk reduction programs and training for the entire UCA community. The UCA police department provides 24-hour service, and UCA police officers are professionally trained and certified by the State of Arkansas.

Academic Affairs Related Questions:

- What steps are currently being taken to address deficiencies in academic advising? What changes in academic advising will be seen in the upcoming year?

The first two bullets have been combined and the answers to both are as follows.

The Academic Advising Center (AAC) is piloting a program called "Progress Toward Degree," which is a "check in" with one of the AAC advisors (who are different than faculty advisors in the departments) at, or near, the 30 hour and 60 hour completion mark. AAC advisors will review the different components of a degree students will need to graduate, confirm the students' progress towards completion of that degree, and identify courses they will need to complete over the next year to stay on track. The "Progress Towards Degree" reports can then be shared with faculty advisors in the departments to facilitate further conversations about major and minor requirements. The goal is to give students the knowledge and tools to help them manage their academic career – and to ensure consistent communication between students, the AAC, and Department/Faculty advisors. Feedback so far this semester has been very positive.

Additionally, the AAC has an advisor on duty every day to answer questions for any student who visits the AAC. Sometimes students are stressed simply because they do not know where to get help or get questions answered. The entire AAC staff rotates for half a day every two weeks to be available to help these students on a walk-in basis. This has been a very successful and well received program, and has helped students who need some assurances and assistance in real time get general questions answered. For specific questions related to a student's major, advanced registration, and Progress Towards Degree planning, students must still make an appointment to see their assigned advisor.

Each advisor in the AAC is assigned to a specific college, and they have been reaching out to the colleges and department to improve the transition students experience from the AAC advisor to the faculty advisor. The AAC works closely with department chairs to make sure students begin meeting with a faculty advisor at the right time in their progress towards degree. Every department and major is different. The goal is to work together to help bridge the gap and make sure students are well prepared for that transition.

AAC advisors engage in both local and national professional development opportunities to ensure they are knowledgeable about best practices in higher education advising. The AAC also offers academic advising training for faculty advisors. One opportunity the AAC offers to faculty is the chance to shadow AAC advisors during the summer. The faculty who have shadowed in the past said it was very helpful and an eye opening experience for them. This training helps the faculty advisors understand the questions,

struggles, and stress that a student may have when attending college for the first time, and they also get a good holistic view of the advising process.

- What steps can you take to make sure that each department offers at least one of each of the upper division core classes? For example, the Political Science Department does not offer any diversity course.

Although all students are required to complete their Upper Division Core requirements as they progress to degree not all programs offer a full complement of UD Core courses as part of their programming. In addition, some programs that do may not require those UD Core courses as part of their programmatic requirements. Therefore, it is possible for students to complete all programmatic degree requirements and not complete their UD Core requirements.

Ideally, programmatic requirements and UD Core requirements would be aligned as much as possible so that were it possible, and consistent with programmatic standards, a student would complete their UD Core requirements as they complete their program requirements. We are working diligently to align the UD Core with programs in this way. This spring I, the director of the UCA Core, distributed a questionnaire to all department heads to be completed by May 30th. The questionnaire asks for details related to UD Core course offerings in programs. The purpose of the audit is to ensure that the UCA Core is placed intentionally in departmental curriculum to both offer the student the best possible educational experience possible while also ensuring that students are able to matriculate efficiently.

The questionnaire will be used to audit each program on campus.

- 1) Where a program is noted to offer a full complement of UD Core courses embedded in programmatic requirements we will verify that these courses offer educational experiences consistent with UD Core standards.
- 2) Where a program offers a full complement of UD Core courses but they are not fully embedded in program requirements we will work with departments to align them so that students, if possible, can complete their UD Core requirements while meeting degree requirements.
- 3) Where a program does not offer a full complement of UD Core courses we will inquire as to why they do not, if it is possible to do so while remaining true to UCA Core standards, and if it is not what courses outside of that program would serve those program's students' interests best.
- 4) Regardless, we will ask that programs be able to articulate a coherent path through the UD Core within their curriculum for students as they progress to degree.

Ultimately, the answer to this problem is twofold: 1) Better alignment between programs and the UCA Core, and 2) Better programmatic advising so students are directed to courses both within and outside of their programs that meet the UD Core.

With regards to political science, it is cases like these that motivated the above procedure. I am well aware of this specific instance and have already worked to resolve it. When I, as director, noticed a trend of students, in this case political science students, lacking a specific UD Core course, in this case diversity, I raised the issue with political science. The department was responsive and worked diligently to resolve the matter. This semester the department of political science proposed to add two upper division courses to the UD Core within diversity. These courses are currently moving through the curriculum process. This solution is the ideal case. A gap was noticed; there was no UD Core diversity course embedded in the political science major. The department was able to offer courses in the major that were consistent with UD Core standards, and so proposed they be added to their curriculum. In the future, students in that program will meet UD Core requirements while matriculating through their major taking a course that both meets programmatic needs and exemplifies the best the UD Core has to offer in regards to diversity. Other programs have made similar adjustments as gaps were noticed.

As we continue to revise the UCA Core we will strive to better align major curricula to the Core curriculum to facilitate student progress to degree while maintaining the highest of standards in both departmental and Core curriculum.

In the short term, when issues do arise wherein a student has completed all degree requirements save their UD Core requirements, and these have been missed due to poor advising, legitimate confusion, or lack of accessible UD Core courses I am able to resolve the issue through exemptions or substitutions. I handle these instances on a case by case basis operating under the principle that given current limitations the UD Core ought not to place an undue burden on students as they matriculate to degree.

- **Why can some professors have office hours posted, but are never available for them, and is there any way to hold them accountable for this?**

Per page 49 of the Faculty Handbook, all faculty are expected to have set office hours.

If a faculty member has posted office hours but is not available during those hours, the best thing to do is to contact the Chair of the department with this information. The Department Chair will ensure that this does not continue and that you can meet with the faculty member. If the Department Chair is not able to reach an appropriate resolution, then students should contact the College Dean.

- Are there resources in place for individuals doing research abroad to offset the cost of travel who have already used student research grants for equipment costs?

Not at this time; however, please know that we are consistently working to identify ways to support student research and study abroad.

- There are many faculty with specialty courses that students would like to take, but the offering (or even making) of the courses is hindered by lack of other faculty to cover required courses. What measures can the university take to increase the availability of these special topics?

While overall enrollment at the University has remained stable over the last several years, some departments and colleges have experienced growth while others have experienced decreased enrollment. Some of the departments and programs that have seen growth in majors have also experienced growth in the demand for their courses included in the UCA CORE. These departments often offered multiple electives in the past, particularly in spring semesters. The growth experienced by these programs has translated into the need to offer many required courses every semester thus reducing the range of electives that can be offered. Some of the growth in these departments has initially been supported by adding part-time faculty. As demand continues in these programs permanent faculty are being added, and over time this will result in a greater diversity of elective courses. If a student has interest in seeing a particular elective offered, they could poll their fellow students within the major to determine the level of need and interest in the elective, and can then share that information with the department chair.

- For professors who are currently lecturer-track but begin researching and would like to transfer into tenure-track positions, what options are available?

All UCA faculty are expected to teach classes; provide service to their departments, the university, and/or their academic disciplines; and to actively engage in research or creative work. Faculty who are currently employed as a Lecturer would need to have the appropriate qualifications as specified in the Faculty Handbook, apply for an open tenure-track position, and be selected by the appropriate review bodies and administrators.

SGA Related Questions:

- What should students do that want to get involved in student government?

I would suggest following SGA on all social media accounts to stay up to date about all things SGA! We always post when applications open, close, and other important information about elections and appointments.

Twitter - @UCA_SGA

Instagram - uca_sga

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/UCA-SGA-446912445490572/>

Miscellaneous Questions:

- Why did Reynolds stop selling tickets at the Concierge desk? It is extremely inconvenient for students, faculty, and staff. If they are no longer selling them in the student center, why have they failed to communicate so properly.
 - The director of Reynolds, Amanda Horton, told us that it was a financial decision. The number of tickets they sold at the SC location, were not enough to cover the expense of paying a student worker to staff the operation. It just wasn't economically viable. She said if there are additional questions to please feel free to contact her at 450-3682.
- Does the Echo have an editor or advisor to proofread what they write? I've noticed a lot of typos and errors every time I read it. What can be done to make sure our campus newspaper is reporting quality, correct information? *Response from Echo Editor*
 - First thing of the week is our paper meeting on Monday. In this meeting, volunteers, paid staff members and students in the Print Media Applications class pitch stories and ideas for the paper, and people take or are assigned these stories. Most stories are then due either Wednesday or Thursday depending on the story. On Wednesday, we meet again to discuss story progress and take care of any other necessary business. Some stories, especially sports stories, may be due as late as the weekend, because of the nature of the stories. The section editors (News Editor, Opinion Editor, etc.) then edit the stories and look for inaccuracies and any possible plagiarism. The editors (Editor and Associate Editor) also do preliminary editing and fact checking at this time. The section editors also design the pages of the paper at this time. On Monday, the paper has it's production night. The editors edit the pages for design, spelling, grammar and style. The section editors then, with the help of their assistants, apply those edits. Paid staff members often spend most of the night working on the paper, and sometimes

some staff are editing until well into Tuesday morning. The PDFs of the pages are sent to The Log Cabin Democrat and then The Jacksonville Patriot for printing. The papers are delivered around campus Tuesday night. Although all staff members, paid and unpaid alike, try to avoid errors and typos, sometimes they still slip through. It is important to remember that the paper is produced by students. The best thing readers can do to assist with the factuality and polish of the paper is by letting us know when there has been a mistake so we can, if needed, run corrections in the following issue.

- **What do you both personally think needs to be improved upon on campus and what are you hoping to do to improve upon this?**
 - **President Davis:** I would like to see our IT services be improved and expanded upon to the point of ensuring that core services are delivered flawlessly and that we approach the cutting-edge of next generation services. Our IT reorganization and action plan is working toward those goals which will result in noticeable improvements for students, faculty and staff.
 - **Hershila:** I think communication to students definitely needs to be improved. There are so many wonderful things happening on campus, and majority of the times most of us do not know about them happening. The Presidential Town Hall is the perfect example. The goal of the town hall was to help bridge the gap between our executive staff members and students, and provide students with the opportunity to be able to ask any questions they may have or even tell us about their ideas. I hope that in years to come, SGA Presidents will keep the town hall event and that it continues to grow and be successful.
- **What does the phrase "Go Here. Go Anywhere." mean to you?**
 - **President Davis:** This is our confident statement that UCA students find a comprehensive array of academic programs and excellent opportunities outside of the classroom to ensure that they are ready for any career path and/or graduate education. UCA alumni can be found all over the globe and in all occupational sectors. We know that if a student chooses to make UCA their home for their education, the world is available to them.
 - **Hershila:** UCA has provided me with opportunities I didn't even know were possible. Through my experiences at UCA, there have been doors that have opened up for me that have led to amazing things and I had I not been at UCA, I

do not think it would have been possible. From inside of the classroom to getting involved in extracurriculars to studying abroad, UCA has a wide array of things for ANY student to get involved in.

- **What is your favorite place to be on campus and why?**
 - President Davis: The student amphitheater area by the Student Center. It sort of serves as the crossroads of our campus. As students criss-cross from classes and go in and out of the Student Center throughout the day, you can always catch folks and say hello. When I get tired of meetings and other administrative duties, I know that I can wander down toward that area and soak up some energy from our students going about their day.
 - Hershila: I would have to agree with President Davis and say the student center amphitheater is my favorite place on campus. Many don't know this, but the amp was funded by SGA several years ago. Being at the amp reminds me of my SGA journey and all of the opportunities and friendships I have gained throughout my collegiate career. When school is getting stressful and I feel overwhelmed, I love being able to go sit out in the amp and just be by myself for a few minutes. My favorite part would have to be the wide array of events that are held in the amp throughout the semester. From PRISM hosting a drag show, the Latino Student Association hosting a mariachi band, Student Activities Board hosting several singers and bands, to the NPHC organizations doing Music on the Yard, the amp is definitely the place to be (especially when the weather is beautiful).