



Legislative Town Hall Fall 2025

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Agenda

- Purpose of Town Hall
 - Legislation from the 95th General Assembly
- UA System & UAFS Approach to Legislative Affairs in the State of Arkansas
- State of Arkansas Legislative Overview
- Tips on How to Read a Bill
- Review of Legislative Briefing Presentations to Faculty & Staff
- Pre-Submitted Questions
- Audience Questions

UA System & UAFS Approach to Legislative Affairs in the State of Arkansas

- UA System Role
 - Represent Higher Education with the Legislature
 - Interpret New Laws
 - Create New Policies and Procedures
- My Role as Legislative Liaison
 - Communicate
 - Inform
 - Ensure Compliance

State of Arkansas Legislative Overview

- The General Assembly consists of the House of Representatives (100) and the Senate (35)
- Regular Sessions take place in **odd** numbered years
- Fiscal Sessions take place in **even** numbered years
- Special Sessions may be called by the governor to consider only those matters recommended by the governor.
- Appropriations (*permission to spend*):
 - Specifically appropriate money
 - Distinctly state the purposes of the appropriation
 - Express the maximum amount which may be drawn in dollars and cents
 - Limit the appropriations to no more than one (1) year

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law.
Act 340 of the Regular Session

1 State of Arkansas *As Engrossed: S3/6/25 S3/12/25*
2 95th General Assembly **A Bill**
3 Regular Session, 2025 SENATE BILL 246
4
5 By: Senator J. Dismang
6 By: Representatives M. Shepherd, Evans, Beaty Jr., Brooks, Eubanks, Wardlaw, Barker, K. Brown, M.
7 Brown, John Carr, Cavanaugh, Crawford, Gramlich, Hawk, McAlindon, McClure, S. Meeks, Nazarenko,
8 Rose, Torres, Wing, Achor, Beck, Eaves, Unger, Andrews
9

10 **For An Act To Be Entitled**

11 AN ACT TO CREATE THE ARKANSAS ACCESS ACT; TO AMEND
12 VARIOUS PROVISIONS OF THE ARKANSAS CODE AS THEY
13 RELATE TO EDUCATION IN THE STATE OF ARKANSAS; AND FOR
14 OTHER PURPOSES.
15

16 **Subtitle**

17 TO CREATE THE ARKANSAS ACCESS ACT; AND
18 TO AMEND VARIOUS PROVISIONS OF THE
19 ARKANSAS CODE AS THEY RELATE TO
20 EDUCATION IN THE STATE OF ARKANSAS.
21

22
23 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
24

25 SECTION 1. DO NOT CODIFY. Title.

26 This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Arkansas ACCESS Act".
27

28 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 6-1-404(a), concerning the membership of
29 the School Leadership Coordinating Council, is amended to read as follows:

30 (a) The School Leadership Coordinating Council consists of ~~seventeen~~
31 ~~(17)~~ the following members ~~as follows~~:

32 (1) ~~The Chair of the Arkansas Association of Colleges for~~
33 ~~Teacher Education Council of Deans;~~

34 ~~(2)~~ The Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education;

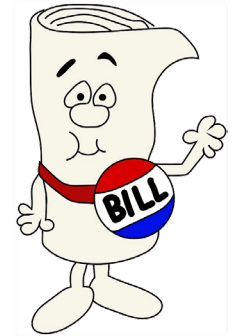
35 ~~(3) The Director of the Arkansas Leadership Academy;~~

36 ~~(4)~~ (2) The Commissioner of the Division of Higher Education;



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Tips on How to Read a Bill



- Subtitle – summary of the bill's subject matter.
- Non-underlined text is existing law
- Underlined text is proposed additions
- Text with a ~~strikethrough~~ is proposed deletions
- [How a Bill Becomes a Law – Arkansas Senate](#)
- [How a Bill Becomes a Law Video – Arkansas House of Representatives](#)

Review of Legislative Briefing Presentations

Presentations were made to Faculty at University Days on August 14th
and Staff at the Fall Staff Meeting on September 19th

- Arkansas ACCESS (Acts [340](#)/[341](#))
 - Acceleration
 - Common Sense
 - Cost
 - Eligibility
 - Scholarships
 - Standardization



Review of Legislative Briefing Presentations (Continued)

Presentations were made to Faculty at University Days on August 14th
and Staff at the Fall Staff Meeting on September 19th

- [Act 116](#) – Prohibit Discrimination or Preferential Treatment
- [Act 677](#) – Religious Nondiscrimination
- [Act 721](#) – Prohibit Antisemitism
- [Act 797](#) – Prohibit Using the Term “West Bank” in Government Materials
- [Act 573](#) – Display of the National Motto & the Ten Commandments
- [Act 848](#) – Require Public Entities to Create a Policy Concerning the Authorized Use of Artificial Intelligence
- [Act 943](#) – Promotional Items from China
- [Act 955](#) – Multi-Occupancy Spaces
- [Act 122](#) – The Bell to Bell, No Cell Act
- [Act 566](#) – Strengthening Arkansas Education Act (Core Curriculum)

Pre-Submitted Question #1

This is a question regarding the laws against the use of certain words/phrases by State of AR employees -- a) Can you please explain the step-by-step actions that would be taken against a faculty who is recorded by a student accidentally using one of the banned words/phrases in class? b) Can you please explain the step-by-step actions that would be taken against a faculty who is caught by a student, a supervisor, or a faculty peer-reviewer accidentally using one of the banned words/phrases in video or written materials created by the faculty for students in an in-person or on-line class? c) Can you please explain the step-by-step actions that would be taken against a faculty who is caught by a student, a supervisor, or a faculty peer-reviewer unintentionally using one of the banned words/phrases in video or written materials created by someone other than the faculty member (such as a textbook, video, or other materials) for students in an in-person or on-line class?

Act 797 – Prohibit Using the Term “West Bank” in Government Materials

Prohibits institutions from using the term “West Bank” to refer to Judea and Samaria in any official government material including a guidance, rule, material, briefing, press release, or communication prepared by the institution.

- Does include Syllabi according to the UA System General Counsel
- See **UA System General Counsel Memo from 6/18/25** for more information

Pre-Submitted Question #2

This is a question regarding the restructuring of the General Education and the DEI-related courses -- a) Will this restructuring, in addition to the move away from DEI and the budgetary issues lead to discontinuation of minors, such as the Diversity Studies Minor and/or classes, such as the race, gender, or inequality classes in the Sociology Minor? b) If the answer to Qa is yes, will this lead to faculty layoffs? c) If the answer to Qb is yes, will UAFS honor the 2-year or 3-year contracts, or will faculty be laid-off immediately or at the end of the school-year of the lay-off decision?

- **Limitations on Unjust Practices Related to DEI**
- *Section [48](#)*
- **Policies Regarding Protests and Riots**
- *Sections [23](#) & [47](#)*
- **Absences for Certain Purposes Unexcused (*Dec. 31, 2025*)**
- *Section [23](#)*
- **Arkansas Purple Star Campuses (*Dec. 31, 2025*)**
- *Sections [34](#) & [49](#)*
- **Tenure Review (*July 2025*)**
- *Section [60](#)*
- **Removal of Professional Organizations from Arkansas Code**
- *Sections [2](#), [3](#), [6](#), [13](#), [14](#), [22](#), [24](#), [27](#), [28](#), [29](#), [30](#), [31](#), [32](#), [35](#), & [92](#)*



Common Sense

Create free, unbiased higher education learning settings.

- » Stop using DEI as a metric in accreditation standards.
- » Prohibit professors from indoctrinating students with forced statements in support of DEI.
- » Prevent institutions from granting excused absences for protests and other disruptive behavior.
- » Require students who vandalize school property to pay damages before they earn their degree.
- » Allow institutions of higher education that support service members and military families to earn "Purple Star Campus" designations.
- » Consider professors' work evaluations in tenure review to ensure they are educating students.

Act 566 – Strengthening Arkansas Education Act (Core Curriculum)

Requires state-supported institutions of higher education to implement a 15-semester credit-hour general education requisite core curriculum for all undergraduate students.

- Effective August 5, 2025, but **applies to the entering class of fall 2027 and beyond**
- American Government & American History are **required** for every student.
- Update General Education Core Requirements
- Increase Demand for Specifically Qualified Professors
- Budget Impact
- Potential Space & Staffing Impacts

Audience Questions



Thank You

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Additional Links

- [ACCESS](#)
- [Home Page - Arkansas State Legislature](#)
- [UA Board of Trustees & UA System Policies](#)
- [UA System Office of the General Counsel](#)
- [UAFS Faculty and Staff Handbook](#)
- [UAFS Student Handbook & Code of Conduct](#)