

## **Introduction to Reports Submitted to the UA Board of Trustees**

**University of Arkansas at Little Rock  
Christina S. Drale, Chancellor**

**May 4, 2020**

When I was appointed as Chancellor in September 2019, I understood that my primary task was to address the budget problems at UA Little Rock by any means available. In previous years, the institution had used the method of across-the-board cuts, which was efficient, but indiscriminate and had the effect of weakening all units. The campus community in general and our Institutional Effectiveness Committee, in particular, felt strongly that we should take a more strategic approach to budget planning enabling us to invest in our institutional priorities. I agreed. This is also an expectation of our institutional accreditors, the Higher Learning Commission and is the primary focus of their fifth criterion.

In November, I identified four strategies that we would use to address both immediate and long-term solutions: 1) Make three rounds of cuts to the fiscal year 2020 budget between December and March to ensure that our expenditures would not exceed our revenue. These cuts would be identified by division heads and would result from efficiency measures and internal reorganization; 2) Reduce our physical plant usage by consolidating our footprint, 3) Reduce our administrative overhead through academic college restructuring, and 4) Right-size our academic departments to reflect the decline in student enrollment levels by conducting a careful review of our academic portfolio. In January 2020 I notified the Board of Trustees of my intent to submit an academic planning retrenchment proposal for implementation in fiscal year 2021.

Regarding the first strategy, we have carried this out and were on course to balance our operating budget prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, we incurred an additional \$4 million in lost revenue in the form of reduced appropriations (\$2.5 million) and room and board losses (\$1.5 million). Nevertheless, by implementing a spending reduction plan and a continued hiring freeze, we believe we will still end the year breaking even in our E&G operating budget, and will be down about \$1 million in housing.

We have taken steps towards the second strategy, primarily through the closure of the Benton campus. We are in the process of closing two main campus buildings, a medium-sized classroom building and a small office building. We will continue to work on plans for consolidation in this area.

Following this introduction are two reports that represent the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> strategies. The first is a report on our plans for academic college restructuring. We are reorganizing our current five academic colleges into three new colleges. The Law School and the Graduate School will remain as is. The new colleges will be in place starting July 1, 2020. We will continue to look at

potential consolidations of departmental and other units throughout the next fiscal year for additional savings. The second report is my proposal for academic planning retrenchment in accordance with policy 405.5. This report reviews all academic areas and recommends a status of maintain, reduce, eliminate, or suspend for each academic program.