

# NOTES FROM RESEARCH ADMINISTRATORS – POST AWARD MEETING, APRIL 2<sup>ND</sup>, 2014

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## TOPIC

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“The Road to the Top Fifty Research Universities”

Presenters:

- Dr. Jim Rankin, Vice Provost for Research and Economic Development
- Dr. Kathy Van Laningham, Vice Provost for Planning

## PRESENTATION NOTES

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We are not chasing the rankings; instead we want to help the university, students and faculty. We are doing what we should be doing. The rankings talk about the right things to do as a university. If we do our job correctly, we will rise in the rankings. There are two main metrics: “The Top American Research Universities”, as described by the University of Arizona’s center for Measuring University Performance and the U.S. News and World Report ranking systems.

While we may not always agree with the ways USNWR does the rankings, students pay attention and parents pay attention, so we therefore need to pay attention. The university’s reputation is critical to this ranking system. It is important to continue to discuss the good things that happen here – we don’t want to be the “best kept secret in Higher Education”. We don’t want to be a secret!

Enhancing the U of A’s reputation:

- Carnegie Foundation ranked as a Very High Research Activity University
- U.S. News and World Report named U of A one of nine Up-and-coming Public Universities
- U of A is the 13<sup>th</sup> fastest growing institutions in the entire country
- Student Business Plan teams have won twice as many national competitions as the next school
- Fay Jones School of Architecture ranked 19<sup>th</sup> in the nation, 8<sup>th</sup> among public institutions
- 25<sup>th</sup> Best Online Graduate Engineering Programs
- Walton College is the 27<sup>th</sup> Best Public Business School
- School of Law jumped to its highest ranking in history (36<sup>th</sup>, public)

The U.S. News factor percentages (2014):

- Graduation and Retention (22.5%)
  - Six-year Graduation Rate (18%)
  - First-year Retention Rate (4.5%)
- Graduation Rate Performance (7.5%)
- Undergraduate Academic Reputation (22.5%)
  - Peer Assessment (15%)
  - High School Counselors (7.5%)
- Faculty Resources (20%)
  - Class Size <20 (6%)
  - Class Size 50+ (2%)
  - Faculty Salary (7%)
  - Percent of Faculty with Highest Degree (3%)
  - Student to Faculty Ratio (1%)

- Percent of Full-time Faculty (1%)
- Financial Resources (10%)
- Student Selectivity (12.5%)
  - ACT Score (8.125%)
  - Percent Upper Decile (3.125%)
  - Acceptance Rate (1.25%)
- Alumni Giving (5%)

Graduate & Retention and Undergraduate Academic Reputation are half of the ranks. Our six-year graduation rate is currently 60%; our first-year retention rate is 82%. The other fairly significant part of the ranking is how you are doing based on the graduation rate you should have – your expected graduation rate. Our expected graduation rate is 67% and we are at 60%. A lot of what drives that expected graduation rate is ACT score; so based on how students in all of those major universities with those ACT scores, we should be at 67%. Our range of ACT scores is 23 to 28.

We have very little control over our Undergraduate Academic Reputation. Every year the chancellor and the provost answer a survey where they grade a list of institutions. High school counselors receive a similar survey. The U of A has identified those counselors and is planning a communication to better explain the implications of the survey. Our reputation score right now is 2.8. Most of the people in the top 50 have at least a 3.

Smaller class size (under 20 students) is a significant part of the rankings. The English department has had a cap of 23 students for the freshman writing classes; that is not far from 19. By lowering the number of students per class, the teacher has more time to spend with each student, with additional research, and/or additional writing assignments. A similar change is occurring with communications classes. Forty-four percent of our undergraduate classes have less than 20 students per class; two years ago that was 28%.

Eighty-five percent of our faculty have terminal degrees. Full-time faculty is at 86%; student to faculty ration is at 19 to 1.

Although USNWR's financial resources formula is somewhat of a black box, we believe we have been able to recreate it. This is the only place that research dollars matter at all and it comes from our federal reported data.

More and more schools are not ranking their graduates, so looking at the percent in the upper decile is getting harder and harder to quantify. Fayetteville High School does not rank; all schools in South Carolina do rank.

The acceptance rate of students that apply and are accepted: our rate will be 59% this year.

We have the most loyal alumni; we rate very well with alumni giving.

This system is a mostly undergraduate rating. It does not take into account graduate students and post-docs.

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QUESTION: HOW WILL MOVING THE INTRODUCTION CLASSES ONLINE  
AFFECT OUR RATINGS?

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ANSWER: I DON'T KNOW HOW THAT WILL "COUNT". WE TEND TO COUNT SEATS.

[UPDATE 4/2/14: DR. VAN LANINGHAM SENT THE FOLLOWING RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION ABOUT ONLINE CLASSES AND HOW THEY FACTOR INTO THE CLASS SIZE DATA FOR U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT RANKINGS:

"THE ANSWER IS THAT THEY DON'T.

ONLINE CLASSES, INDIVIDUAL STUDY CLASSES, DISSERTATION HOURS, AND THOSE SORTS OF INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION ARE SPECIFICALLY EXCLUDED BY DEFINITION FROM THE DATA ON CLASS SIZES.

IT WAS A VERY GOOD QUESTION, AND I APPRECIATED THE OPPORTUNITY TO FOLLOW UP."]

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Where is the U of A?

<b>Category</b>	<b>2012 Edition</b>	<b>2013 Edition</b>	<b>2014 Edition</b>
Final Tier:	1	1	1
Final Rank:	132	134	128
Final Public Rank:	65	67	63
Final Overall Score: (Out of 100)	41	40	42
Peer Assessment Rank:	121	134	117
Graduate and Retention Rank:	149	148	149
Student Selectivity:	94	101	103
Faculty Resources Rank:	144	157	131
Alumni Giving Rank:	32	26	21
Graduation Rate Performance Rank: (National Universities and Liberal Arts Colleges)	217	207	211
High School Counselor Rank:	147	145	150

The graduation rate performance rank – this is where the 60% versus 67% difference really hits us. These rankings are both privates and publics together.

<b>SEC Schools</b>	<b>Predicted 6-Year Graduation Rate</b>	<b>Actual 6-Year Graduation Rate (2012)</b>
Alabama	65%	67%
<b>Arkansas</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>60%</b>
Auburn	66%	68%
Florida	82%	85%
Georgia	76%	82%

Kentucky	63%	58%
LSU	67%	67%
Mississippi	56%	58%
Mississippi State	45%	60%
Missouri	67%	71%
South Carolina	67%	72%
Tennessee	72%	66%
Texas A&M	73%	80%
Vanderbilt	92%	92%

This shows the SEC schools and the predicted and actual graduation rates, based on the quality of the incoming students. We are creating an Office of Retention and Graduation in order to institute best practices. Better degree audits, improved attendance, more involvement of undergraduates in research projects, more involvement with the campus, getting connected with a faculty member – seeing there is an end of the tunnel. We need to both connect students with research opportunities and find a way to capture that information.

For some time, there has been an attitude that lower graduation rate means that the education is a better quality and higher standards. That made have made more sense when there was open enrollment, but given the current admission standards, this is not true.

Retention and Graduation Rate study available on the Office of Institutional Research web site at <http://oir.uark.edu/students/retention/retention.pdf>.

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QUESTION: A LOT OF THE MEASUREMENTS SEEM TO CORRELATE NEGATIVELY WITH A QUICKLY GROWING UNIVERSITY. IS THERE ANY LOOKING AT THAT GROWTH RATE OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS?

ANSWER: THAT IS A VERY GOOD QUESTION. AS WITH MANY THINGS, THIS IS BOTH A GOOD NEWS AND A BAD NEWS SITUATION. OUR FINANCIAL RESOURCES ARE NOT KEEPING UP WITH OUR GROWTH, AND THAT IS A BAD THING. IN COMPARISON TO OTHER MAJOR RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES, WE ARE AT THE LOW END OF SIZE. THERE ARE SOME ECONOMIES OF SCALES; WE HAVE TO HAVE THE SAME RESOURCES AS BIGGER UNIVERSITIES. WE HAVE MANAGED TO MAINTAIN SOME SMALL SALARY INCREASES OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS, WHILE OTHER INSTITUTIONS HAVE NOT. THE GROWTH HAS ALLOWED US TO DO THAT. IT IS A CHALLENGE BUT IT IS ALSO A BENEFIT. OUR UNDERGRADUATE GROWTH HAS BEEN SIGNIFICANT; THE GROWTH ON THE GRADUATE STUDENT SIDE NEEDS TO BE EQUALLY ADDRESSED. WE ARE BOTH A RESEARCH AND LIBERAL ARTS INSTITUTION TOGETHER; WE HAVE MISSISSIPPI'S AND MISSISSIPPI STATE'S MISSIONS TOGETHER; WE ARE ALABAMA AND AUBURN TOGETHER. WE DON'T HAVE THE COMPETITION FOR STATE DOLLARS THAT THOSE INSTITUTIONS HAVE. WE NEED TO SERVE THE

STATE. THE PROVOST HAS BEEN PUTTING OUT NEW TENURE/TENURE-TRACK LINES FOR THE PAST FOUR YEARS. IT IS REALLY IMPORTANT THAT WE KEEP THAT TENURE/TENURE-TRACK AT PACE WITH OUR GROWTH. THREE OR FOUR YEARS AGO WE WERE HIRING 55 PEOPLE A YEAR, LAST YEAR IT JUMPED TO 65, THIS YEAR WE ARE LOOKING FOR 75 NEW PEOPLE.

U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT RANKS AMONG PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES BY CATEGORY, 2014 EDITION

<b>US News Ranks Among Public by Category 2014 Edition</b>	<b>Iowa State University</b>	<b>North Carolina State U. Raleigh</b>	<b>University of Kansas</b>	<b>University of Nebraska-Lincoln</b>	<b>University of Oklahoma</b>	<b>University of Tennessee</b>		<b>University of Arkansas</b>
Overall Rank	101	101	101	101	101	101		128
Public Rank	47	47	47	47	47	47		63
Academic Reputation Score Peers	3.2	3	3.3	3.1	3.1	3.1		2.7
Academic Reputation Score Counselors	3.8	3.7	3.9	3.7	3.8	3.7		3.5
Academic Reputation Total ((Peer*2 + Counselors)/3)	36	51	31	42	42	42		71
Academic Reputation (combined rank)	36	51	31	42	42	42		71
Graduation and Retention Rank	38	34	72	64	56	68		75
Faculty Resources Rank	56	83	22	22	64	25		56
Student Selectivity Rank	60	28	60	55	46	23		46
Financial Resources Rank	70	49	38	56	34	19		77
Graduation Rate Actual	71%	71%	64%	65%	66%	66%		60%
Graduation Rate Predicted	66%	71%	67%	65%	68%	72%		67%
Difference of Actual to Predicted	5%	0%	-3%	0%	-2%	-6%		-7%
Graduation Rate Performance Rank	34	78	96	78	90	105		109
Alumni Giving Rank	29	45	22	9	14	66		3

Of course if you want to break into the top 50, you need to look at the bottom of the top 50 because those are the people you want to replace. We are going to need to work on our peer assessment ranking, graduation and retention, performance – it is all the things we’ve talked about. But the thing that has sort of come to me that I am counting on is that we are not that far off on some of those measures as you would think. There are things that we want to do any way that will affect the way the university ranks positively.

QUESTION: HOW DO EXTERNAL FINANCIAL RESOURCES FACTOR INTO THAT?

ANSWER: IT IS MINISCULE IN FINANCIAL RESOURCES. BUT HOW DOES IT FACTOR INTO PEER RANKINGS? HEARING ABOUT THOSE RESOURCES MATTERS WITH REPUTATION.

TOP AMERICAN RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES - 2012

	University of Arkansas	Overall Ranking	Public Ranking
Total Research Expenditures (2010)	\$104.3M	136	97
Federal Research Expenditures (2010)	\$32.7M	176	128
Endowment Assets (2011)	\$777.6M	88	30
Annual Giving (2011)	\$108.84M	55	31
National Academy Members (2011)	3	109	63
Faculty Awards in the Arts, Humanities, Science, Engineering, and Health (2011)	8	78	49
Doctorates Granted (2011)	166	102	72
Postdoctoral appointees (2010)	103	123	83
SAT range (2010)	Not listed	Not listed (191 in 2009)	Not listed (45 in 2009)

If UA had more than \$40M in federal expenditures, we would have tied for #38 public (with Colorado State, Hawaii, Houston, Nebraska, Oregon, South Carolina, and VCU).

Arizona State looks at nine different metrics. These rankings look at the top 25, then at the next 25. You have to have at least \$40 million in federal expenditures to be ranked. Federal dollars have gotten tougher to obtain in the last four years. We tend to focus on competitive funding like the NSF; we need to go after agencies with discretionary funds. We had eight major national award winners (there are 23 nationally competitive awards in the rankings). We have three national academy members. North Carolina and Georgia have an office of post-doctoral relations; it is hard to track our post-docs as we don't have enough post-doc titles through HR.

RED Strategic Planning: Empowering the university community to excel at competitive research and promote economic growth.

- Faculty engagement
- Research clusters
- Research infrastructure
- Student empowerment
- An economic engine
- Communication and branding

How do we increase faculty engagement? How can we continue to maintain and improve our core facilities? If we are going to do research, how can we turn that into financial opportunities and jobs in the state of Arkansas?

You can't be great in everything, so what do you want to look at? These are the six research strengths that have been identified multiple colleges and schools:

- Health
- Nanotechnology
- Energy and the environment
- American art, architecture and humanities

- Food safety
  - Supply chain, retail, and transportation
- Cross-cutting activities:
- High performance computing
  - Entrepreneurship
  - International relations/global outreach
  - Sustainability

STRATEGIC PLANNING ACTIONS (A PARTIAL LIST):

New faculty lines based on research needs	Federal Agency focus	New Investigator training	More Graduate students	Media training for faculty	Seed funds
Cluster Hires	Core Facilities	Scientific and Administrative Support	Undergrad research (The 3.0 student)	Get the Word Out! (PR)	Transformational Research Ideas
Senior Hires	Inter-disciplinary Research & Hires	Grant Program Management (+Financial)	Research Space	Encourage Faculty Awards	Competitive start-up funding (w/ROI)
Retain Faculty	Classified Research	Research Development	Research Library (ARL)	Recognize IP generation	Collaboration with UAMS
Research Faculty/ Post-docs	Research Foundation	Grant writing	Research Computing	Entrepreneurship (start-ups)	Industry Research

It takes a while to build new space, so we need to look now at how much research space we need with our growth.

The University of Arkansas has state its intention to become a Top 50 public research university by 2021. The Providing Transparency and Accountability to the People of Arkansas (TAP) document identifies 15 goals to enhance the university in reputation, quality of life, aesthetics and services.

The 5 goals identified here are drawn from the TAP document and provide the initial steps needed to begin the ascent to a Top 50 institution:

- Increase undergraduate graduation rates and retention (TAP goal 5);
  - Improve graduation rates to 66% in 2015 and 70% in 2021
  - Enhance academic advising
  - Initiate a required freshman class on “Destination Graduation”
- Increase research funding and scholarship (TAP goal 7);
  - Increase federal and extramural research expenditures
  - Increase journal and scholarly publications
  - Increase PhD and terminal degree production
  - Enhance library holdings

- Increase top ranked graduate programs (TAP goals 1 and 12);
  - Increase number of graduate programs in the top 20 nationally
  - Increase PhD and terminal degree production
  - Enhance library holdings
- Increase reputation (TAP 1 and 12);
  - Continue to inform opinion leaders about positive actions at the University of Arkansas
  - Increase PhD and terminal degree production
- Increase the number of classes under 20 students (TAP goal 1 and 3).
  - Look to increase the number of classes with less than 20 students by adding additional sections.

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FROM DR. VAN LANGINGHAM: DO YOU FEEL CONNECTED TO THIS PROCESS? DO YOU FEEL PLACES YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE?

ANSWER: WELL, WE HAVE NO INPUT INTO MOST OF THIS; WE ARE THE BOTTOM OF THE FOOD CHAIN WHEN IT COMES TO THIS. BUT WE CAN SEE THE DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN WHAT WE ARE DOING AND WHAT WE NEED TO DO. HUGE CLASSES OF 400 STUDENTS HURTS THE ATTENDANCE; ONLINE CLASSES OF 500. THE PUSH FOR NEW FACULTY TO FIND NEW RESEARCH DOLLARS HAS RESULTED IN A DISCONNECT BETWEEN THE YOUNG FACULTY AND THE STUDENTS, WHICH THEN HURTS OUR GRADUATION AND RETENTION RATES.

DR. VAN LANINGHAM: I WOULD RATHER HAVE 400 STUDENTS WITH A CRACKER-JACK BIOLOGY TEACHER THAN 40 WITH A MEDIOCRE TEACHER. IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE THE CONNECTION AND THE EXPERIENCE. WE ARE TRYING TO GIVE OPPORTUNITIES WITH THE ONLINE CLASSES AND THE INTERSESSION CLASSES – IF THE STUDENTS DROP A BALL OR HAVE A BALL DROPPED ON THEM, THIS GIVES THEM AN ABILITY TO CATCH UP.

DR. RANKIN: WITH REGARDS TO THE WORKLOAD WITH THE FACULTY, IT IS A PROBLEM THAT WE ARE TRYING TO CATCH UP. WE CAN'T JUST HAVE NEW FACULTY WHO ARE 100% TEACHING OR 100% RESEARCH; WE NEED TO ATTACK AT BROAD FRONT.

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QUESTION: WHAT IS THE PERCENTAGE OF FACULTY MEMBERS 5-7 YEARS TO RETIREMENT?

ANSWER: DEFINE RETIREMENT FOR A FACULTY MEMBER! IT IS HARD TO DETERMINE. AS THERE IS NO LONGER A MANDATORY



RETIREMENT AGE, IT IS HARD TO PLAN FOR HIRING AND FOR REJUVENATION.

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QUESTION: IS THERE A PLAN FOR RETENTION FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS FROM SECTIONS OF THE STATE OTHER THAN NORTHWEST ARKANSAS?

ANSWER: I HEAR YOU – WE ARE FARTHER AWAY FROM EL DORADO THAN WE ARE FROM DALLAS OR FROM OUR OUT-OF-STATE STUDENTS. I HATED THAT THE SIZE OF LOTTERY SCHOLARSHIP WENT DOWN BECAUSE IT REALLY HELPED THOSE FARTHER AWAY STUDENTS. AS FAR AS THE TRANSITION ACADEMICALLY FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE, WE HAVE A COURSE, UNIVERSITY PERSPECTIVES, DESIGNED TO HELP THOSE STUDENTS MAKE THE TRANSITION. BETWEEN THAT COURSE AND THE OFFICE OF RETENTION AND GRADUATION, WE ARE ACKNOWLEDGING THAT THIS ISN'T A SINK-OR-SWIM SITUATION.

COMMENT: AN UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT WHO WORKS ON CAMPUS, ESPECIALLY IN A RESEARCH SITUATION, ARE MORE LIKELY TO GO TO GRADUATE SCHOOL VERSUS WORKING OFF CAMPUS, WORKING AT WALMART OR FLIPPING BURGERS. ATTENDANCE IS PARAMOUNT.

RESPONSE: IT SEEMS SO SELF-EVIDENT; BUT THE NEW FOUND FREEDOM OF BEING ON CAMPUS CAN ALSO BITE YOU IN THE BUTT.

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One last comment: A lot of what we do is based on metrics. We can't report federally if we don't have the right data going into the systems – dates, amounts, etc.

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SUGGESTION: IT WOULD BE A GREAT MEETING TO HAVE "HOW TO FILL OUT THE PAPERWORK". WE CAN'T GET THE GRANTS, BUT WE FILL OUT THE FORMS.

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QUESTION: HOW CAN WE AS ADMINISTRATORS HELP THE FACULTY MEMBERS GET MORE RESEARCH DOLLARS? HOW CAN WE IN OUR LOWLY LITTLE POSITIONS HELP THEM?

ANSWER: PIVOT. DON'T BE DISCOURAGED WITH A REJECTION – 90-95% ARE REJECTED RIGHT NOW ON SOME SOLICITATIONS.

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ANSWER: ENCOURAGE THEM TO APPLY! BE A CHEERLEADER! GIVE THEM A CUPCAKE EVERY TIME THEY APPLY!

ANSWER: HAVING RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE PROGRAM OFFICERS. BUILD RELATIONSHIPS AT THE STATE LEVEL, EXPLAIN WHAT WE DO AND HOW IT HELPS THEM. AND BE NICE TO YOUR UNDERGRADUATES!

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Our next meeting is May 7<sup>th</sup>!