

**School of Education
University of Arkansas – Fort Smith
Strategic Plan
2016-2018**

The School of Education (SOE) Strategic Plan is based on the University of Arkansas – Fort Smith (UAFS) Academic Affairs Goals with the exception of Goal 7.

The UAFS Academic Affairs Goals are:

1. Attract and retain a diverse faculty.
2. Attract and retain a diverse staff.
3. Create and enhance educational offerings that are responsive to the region.
4. Provide a learning environment that attracts and retains diverse students and prepares them for success after graduation.
5. Foster effective communication among stakeholders.
6. Strategically identify, secure, and steward resources to support academic goals.

The School of Education additional goal is:

Goal #7: Ensure excellence in all academic programs.

The School of Education faculty and the Teacher Education Council (TEC) will review the strategic plan annually, monitor its progress in meeting the performance metrics, disaggregate and analyze relevant data, and adjust goals to improve.

Goal #1: Attract and retain a diverse faculty.

Performance Metrics

- 1.1 Increase the number of diverse faculty.
 - a. The SOE will conduct national searches to attract, interview, and hire diverse and outstanding faculty.
 - b. The SOE will recruit and mentor diverse faculty members, using a “grow your own” model.
- 1.2 Retain diverse faculty by promoting the teacher-scholar model that values and rewards excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service.
 - a. The SOE will ensure that faculty are supported financially for presentations made at state, regional, national, and international conferences.
 - b. The SOE will encourage and support faculty who work with students on major research projects.

Goal #2: Attract and retain a diverse staff.

Performance Metric

- 2.1 Recruit and mentor diverse potential staff members and provide support for them as they acclimate to the UAFS campus community and the SOE.
 - a. The SOE will create an environment that values and supports collegiality and collaboration among staff members.
 - b. Each new faculty member will be appointed a mentor to assist him or her through the first year.

Goal #3: Create and enhance educational offerings that are responsive to the region.

Performance Metrics

- 3.1 Create and improve programs that supply graduates for high-demand teaching fields.
 - a. The SOE will be cognizant of the high need areas in education and will be responsive to those needs. The SOE has representatives who serve on the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) committees to identify shortage areas in the education profession. The SOE is quick to add programs that are in demand. For example, the SOE created a Special Education Resource Room endorsement (effective fall 2016) to meet the need for special educators, one identified shortage area. The Pre-Kindergarten program created an endorsement to add ages 3-4 to the new K-6 program of study (effective fall 2016).
 - b. The SOE will continue to monitor and adjust its programs of study to meet new state, federal, and specialized professional association (SPA) requirements. It revised its Pre-Kindergarten – Grade 4 and Middle Level Education (MLED) Grades 4-8 programs of study to meet new ADE competencies in spring 2015. The SOE faculty collaborated with secondary education faculty who work with teacher licensure in other colleges to revise their programs of study to meet new ADE competencies.
 - c. The SOE will continue to seek feedback from stakeholders for program improvement and make revisions as needed. In summer 2015 public school stakeholders expressed the need to revise the SOE lesson plan format to more closely align with those found in nearby schools. The Coordinator of Field Experiences met with the stakeholders, and they collaboratively created a new lesson plan for the SOE candidates.
- 3.2 Explore the feasibility of applied graduate programs to be offered based on the region's economic demands.
 - a. The SOE is aware of the data that suggest area schools and individuals who possess content area degrees are extremely interested in graduate degrees and programs.
 - b. The SOE is poised to meet the need for graduate programs.
- 3.3 Systematically monitor and revise academic programs to ensure current effectiveness given community, regional, and/or national trends and document graduates progress through self-evaluations and employer surveys.
 - a. The SOE administers employer satisfaction surveys and graduate surveys every year. Subsequently, data-driven program improvements are made.
 - b. The SOE has implemented a 3-year pilot case study research project to track its graduates through their first three years of teaching. The SOE will provide mentoring to those graduates who join the project. In return, the graduates will provide data reflecting their impact on student learning and teaching effectiveness. The data will provide important information for program improvement.
 - c. The SOE will revise academic programs as needed. It has created and/or revised multiple programs over the past two years to meet ADE licensure areas requirements, SPA standards, Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE), ADE Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) requirements, and national standards.
- 3.4 Create an effective and useful assessment system that is transparent to stakeholders and holds the SOE accountable for the revision, development, and improvement of teacher candidates' learning.
 - a. The SOE will continue monitoring its assessment system. In fall 2014, the SOE hired an outside consultant to evaluate its assessment system. Based on the recommendations of the consultant, the faculty revised its assessment system in summer 2015 for implementation in fall 2015. Several key assessments and assessment rubrics were added while some were deleted and/or modified in an effort to implement a more efficient and effective system to better prepare teacher candidates. Curriculum is monitored and modified regularly based on data generated

through the assessment system.

Goal #4: Provide a learning environment that attracts and retains diverse students and prepares them for success after graduation.

Performance Metrics

- 4.1 Improve efforts to recruit diverse candidates into the teaching profession.
 - a. The SOE will implement the recruitment plan it created (spring 2016) in an effort to attract diverse candidates into the teaching profession.
 - b. The SOE will utilize current senior candidate pools as recruitment focus groups to develop fresh ideas for recruitment/retention.
 - c. The SOE will welcome high school students from nearby schools with diverse populations to visit classes and participate in activities sponsored by the student organizations within the SOE. The student organizations provide literacy outreach programs for English Language Learners and contribute food and educational materials to schools in need in the region.
 - d. Students representing diverse populations assist in Preview Days on Saturdays to assist with translating for non-English speakers.
 - e. The SOE will continue its relationship with the Western Arkansas Technical Center (WATC), providing early childhood education courses leading to the Associate of Applied Science Degree. After four semesters of attendance, the participants from the region's high schools will have earned 32 credits, ten of which will apply towards the Pre-K Level, Ages 3-4 Endorsement program of study.

- 4.2 Develop additional collaborative relationships with high schools, community colleges, and industries to promote student success.
 - a. The SOE has hosted numerous collaborative workshops, meetings, initiatives, and grants with public school partners and will continue these efforts.
 - b. The SOE will collaborate with the Babb Center for Student Professional Development to offer opportunities for teacher candidates to engage in extended learning opportunities with public school partners.
 - c. The SOE has increased its Professional Development Schools' (PDS) partnerships and will continue to cultivate other school partnerships.
 - d. The Education Renewal Zone (ERZ) and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education Center will increase collaborative efforts with public school partners.
 - e. The SOE will collaborate with high schools and state community colleges in developing articulation agreements and seminars to facilitate transfer students with a seamless transition into the teacher preparation programs.
 - f. The SOE Early Childhood Program will continue to provide professional development opportunities to early childhood educators in the seven-county region.

- 4.3 Create opportunities and support for undergraduate research.
 - a. The SOE will increase the number of teacher candidates participating in research projects. Due to the number of teacher candidates participating in research projects, the SOE created a course (beginning fall 2016) that will enable students to enroll in educational research projects.
 - b. The SOE will increase the number of faculty working with students on research projects. Faculty have worked with students on major research projects. Several teacher candidates have been recognized by the university for exemplary examples of research and have earned first place recognitions in the UAFS Undergraduate Research Symposium.
 - c. The SOE faculty will collaborate with undergraduate teacher candidates to publish in educational journals in content areas appropriate with degree programs offered.
 - d. Teacher candidates will be encouraged to present at local, regional, state, and national conferences in which faculty members participate and present.

- 4.4 Develop and implement engaging and innovative learning opportunities that address the formal and informal needs of the non-traditional, degree-seeking student population.
 - a. The SOE will create more on-line courses to provide working adults with flexible learning opportunities.
 - b. The SOE will develop partnerships with area high schools to recruit future teachers by collaborating on an articulation agreement for a concurrent Introduction to Education course and/or alternative process to allow partial credit for the course taken at the high school.
 - c. The SOE will continue to provide internships and practica in diverse settings.
- 4.5 Implement strategies to facilitate the success of non-traditional students.
 - a. The SOE will offer study sessions in Praxis Core, Praxis Content Area Assessments, and Praxis Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT) assessments.
 - b. Faculty members will communicate frequently with librarians on campus to secure the most up to date review material and to make print and online Praxis Examination study guides continually accessible.
- 4.6 Implement strategies to ensure the success of graduates in the teaching profession.
 - a. The IRB has approved the 3-year pilot case study research project. The study will begin in the fall 2016 semester and will track its graduates through their first three years of teaching.
 - b. The SOE will provide mentoring to those graduates who join the project.
 - c. The SOE will collaborate with the Guy Fenter Education Cooperative specialists to co-prepare teacher candidates and to co-mentor them during their first year of teaching.

Goal #5: Foster effective communication among stakeholders.

Performance Metrics

- 5.1 The SOE will provide opportunities for interaction among former and current teacher candidates to establish clear communications and collaborations among students and alumni.
 - a. The SOE works closely with UAFS Alumni Association to maintain relationships with alumni.
 - b. School of Education faculty members meet with alumni in a variety of locations when attending or participating in professional development conferences at the state, regional, and national levels.
 - c. The SOE makes program improvements based on the data gathered and analyzed from surveys of former students.
 - d. The SOE will continue to work with the Advancement Council to promote interest in alumni contributing to the success of the teacher education programs.
- 5.2 The SOE will continue to hold a faculty retreat each summer. All stakeholders will be invited to attend the retreat, particularly the alumni.
- 5.3 The SOE plans to add more public school members to its Teacher Education Council (TEC) in an effort to increase participation and collaboration with area stakeholders.

Goal #6: Foster effective communication among stakeholders.

Performance Metrics

- 6.1 The SOE plans to seek opportunities to engage in meaningful conversations with stakeholders.
 - a. The SOE will continue to expand its PDS partnerships with public schools.
 - b. The SOE will continue to seek grant opportunity partnerships with stakeholders. Currently over \$300,000.00 in grants have enabled the SOE to expand its partnerships and work with school partners in order to increase the number of graduates in high demand areas.

- c. The SOE will continue to have conversations with stakeholders in an effort to identify collaborative partnerships. During 2016 the SOE established multiple partnerships with stakeholders by facilitating meaningful professional conversations in panel discussions and focus groups.
- d. The SOE faculty will be active participants with public school partners, ADE, Arkansas Council of Education Deans, and other stakeholder groups by serving on joint committees and collaborating with them in the shared decision-making process.
- e. The SOE Executive Director will continue to attend the superintendents' monthly meetings at the Guy Fenter Educational Service Cooperative.

Goal #7: Ensure excellence in all academic programs.

Performance Metrics

- 7.1 Create and improve programs that supply graduates for high-demand professions. The SOE will:
 - a. Ensure all licensure programs are nationally recognized by the respective specialized professional associations.
 - b. Meet Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) accreditation requirements. The School of Education (SOE) was first accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) in spring 2005 and reaccredited in spring 2010. Currently the SOE is preparing for reaccreditation through CAEP, the accrediting organization that has replaced NCATE, during the spring 2017 semester.
 - c. Increase the number of students admitted into the SOE. The School of Education has created a recruitment plan to actively recruit, retain, graduate, and support the preparation of teacher educators for high-demand teaching areas. The recruitment plan implements specific strategies to attract candidates into shortage areas in science, mathematics, and special education. The School of Education created the Special Education Resource Room endorsement, which has been approved by ADE and is ready to be implemented in fall 2016 to meet the need for special educators, one identified shortage area. The recruitment plan also outlines strategies to recruit, retain, and support teacher candidates and to support our alumni who are currently teaching in area classrooms.

- 7.2 Systematically monitor and revise academic programs to ensure their effectiveness given community, regional, and/or national trends and track graduate and employer surveys. The SOE will:
 - a. Continue to collect data. The SOE administers employer satisfaction surveys and graduate surveys every year. Data are used to make improvements in programs.
 - b. Provide support to its graduates and collect data on their effectiveness. The SOE has implemented a 3-year pilot case study research project to track its graduates through their first three years of teaching. The SOE will provide mentoring for those graduates who join the project. In return, the graduates will provide K-12 student impact data and teacher effectiveness data. The data will provide important information for program improvement.
 - c. Continue to monitor and make changes suggested by stakeholders. Programs of study have been created and/or revised to meet ADE licensure areas requirements, specialized professional association standards, ADHE and ADE Educator Preparation Provider requirements, and national standards.

- 7.3 Implement an effective and useful assessment system which holds SOE administration and faculty accountable and guides curriculum revision, development, and improvement in student learning. The SOE will:
 - a. Review the assessment system annually and make changes as needed. In fall 2014, the SOE

hired an outside consultant to evaluate its assessment system. Based on the recommendations of the consultant, the faculty revised its assessment system in summer 2015 for implementation in fall 2015. Several key assessments and assessment rubrics were added, deleted, and/or modified in an effort to develop a more efficient and effective system to better prepare its teacher candidates pre-service teachers.

- b. Faculty members and administrators disaggregate and analyze data and use a shared decision-making process to plan and implement improvements.