University Profile

Vision
By 2021, the University of Arkansas will be recognized as one of the nation’s Top 50 public research universities with nationally ranked departments and programs throughout the institution.

Mission
The mission of the University of Arkansas is to (1) provide an internationally competitive education for undergraduate and graduate students in a wide spectrum of disciplines; (2) contribute new knowledge, economic development, basic and applied research and creative activity; and (3) provide service to academic/professional disciplines and society, all aimed at fulfilling its public land-grant mission to serve Arkansas and beyond as a partner, resource, and catalyst.

History
Founded as a land-grant college and state university in 1871, the University of Arkansas opened its doors to students on January 22, 1872. Under the Morrill Land-Grant College Act of 1862, federal land sales provided funds for the new university, which was charged with teaching “agricultural and the mechanic arts,” “scientific and classical studies,” and “military tactics” to Arkansas scholars.

Statewide elections, held to establish bonds to help finance the university, eventually determined the school’s location. Washington County and the city of Fayetteville submitted the highest bid, a total of $130,000, to which was added a $50,000 state appropriation for the benefit of the institution and $135,000 from the sale of federal lands. With $12,000 of this money, the university purchased a 160-acre farm, the homestead of William McIlroy, and established its campus on a hilltop overlooking the Ozark Mountains.

There were few facilities and little money that first academic year, but the eight students and three faculty members who gathered for classes in 1872 showed the same dedication to learning and commitment to excellence that has carried the University of Arkansas into the 21st century. Over the past 140 years, the university has developed into a mature institution with nine schools and colleges, more than 950 faculty members, and 23,000 students. It serves as the major provider of graduate-level instruction in Arkansas. The research and scholarly endeavors of its faculty make it an economic and cultural engine for the state. And its public service activities reach every county in Arkansas, throughout the nation, and around the world.

Today at the University of Arkansas
Students pursue a broad spectrum of academic programs leading to baccalaureate, master’s, doctoral, and professional degrees, not only in traditional disciplines within arts, humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences, but also in the core professional areas of agricultural, food and life sciences; architecture; business; education; engineering; nursing; human environmental sciences; and law.

The University of Arkansas houses more than 210 academic programs and offers bachelor’s degrees in 75 fields of study. Students may also pursue a wide range of graduate degrees, including the Master’s, the Educational Specialist, the Doctor of Education, and the Doctor of Philosophy. Information about graduate programs can be found in the Graduate School Catalog or on the World Wide Web at http://grad.uark.edu/.

The Carnegie Foundation categorizes the University of Arkansas as a research institution with “very high research activity,” placing the university among the top 108 universities nationwide and in a class by itself within the state of Arkansas. In its 2011 edition, U.S. News and World Report ranked the university among the top tier of institutions of higher education. Faculty members perform cutting-edge research for which they annually win prestigious grants and awards, and the university encourages undergraduates to participate in the research process. Such opportunities enhance the learning process by providing hands-on experience in lab and research techniques, by developing students’ abilities to implement, experiment, discover and teach, and by fostering a mentoring relationship early in students’ academic careers.

Research programs involving both faculty and students serve as vital sources of information on the economic and social needs of Arkansas. In many fields, research performed at the University of Arkansas reaches beyond the state to provide insight and guidance on issues of national and international concern. The university provides extensive technical and professional services to varied groups and individuals throughout the state, helping to further Arkansas’ economic growth. The university operates nationally respected self-paced (correspondence) courses; it assists other institutions in developing educational programs; it offers graduate programs, both cooperatively and singly, throughout the state; and it makes specialized campus resources such as computing services and library holdings available to other institutions in the state.

Classes at the university maintain a 17-to-1 average ratio of students to instructor, although individual classes may range from a large general-lecture class of 200 to a focused special-topics class of 4 or 5 students. University of Arkansas students are given the tools and encouragement needed to excel. Over the last 15 years, Arkansas students have become Rhodes, Gates Cambridge, Madison, Marshall, Goldwater, Fulbright, Boren, Gilman and Truman scholars. Forty students have received National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowships.

Location
Fayetteville, a thriving city of 73,000 in the northwest corner of the state, is home to the University of Arkansas. Lying on the hilly western edge of the Ozark Mountains, the city boasts a lively cultural scene and easy access to outdoor recreation. The newly opened Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in nearby Bentonville is the first major American art museum opened in the last 40 years and gives visitors a look at the most influential artists of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries.

Northwest Arkansas remains one of the most economically stable regions in the nation, according to the U.S. Census, and was recently included among the top four “Best Places for Work” by CNN/Money. The region is the base of operations for Walmart Stores Inc., Tyson Foods Inc. and J.B. Hunt Transport Services, industry leaders in their respective fields.

Fayetteville’s temperate climate ensures beautiful seasons year-round. Major cultural amenities include the Walton Arts Center, just two blocks from campus, and the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in nearby Bentonville.

The Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport has direct flights to most major metropolitan areas, including Atlanta, Chicago, Cincinnati, Charlotte, Dallas, Denver, Houston, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, New York and Orlando, and the city is within a day’s drive of several larger
metropolitan areas, including Dallas, Kansas City, Little Rock, Memphis, St. Louis and Tulsa.