

# HANDOUT 1



UNIVERSITY *of* ARKANSAS  
FORT SMITH®

Commitment to Workforce and Economic Development

Dr. Terisa Riley, Chancellor  
Ms. Jennifer Belt, Chief of Staff

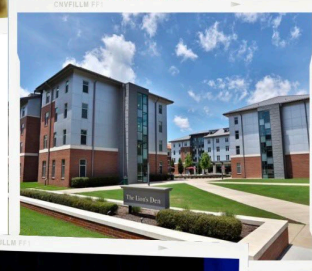
# Outline for Today

- Introduction to the University of Arkansas-Fort Smith  
History, Situational Analysis, State of the University
- Define pillars of a strong community and explain the role of the University of Arkansas – Fort Smith
- Review UAFS workforce development strategies
- Review of UAFS economic development

# History

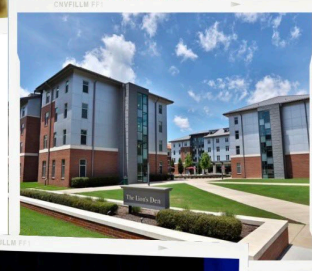
## History:

- Founded in 1928 as Fort Smith Junior College
- Became Westark Junior College in 1964
- 1972, renamed Westark Community College
- 1998, named Westark College
- Joined University of Arkansas System, became the University of Arkansas-Fort Smith and changed its role and scope to offer 4-year degrees in 2002
- First master's degree approved in health care administration



# Situational Analysis

- Enrollment: Approximately 5,700 students across all programs.
- More than 50% of students are First Generation students
- More than 50% are Pell Grant eligible
- Pipeline of Education—certificates, technical certificates, associate's degrees, bachelor's degrees, and 2 master's degrees
- Loss of \$6.2 million annually when sales tax sunset in 2021



# State of the University

Mission: UAFS prepares students to succeed in an ever-changing global world while advancing economic development and quality of place.

- Admissions: First Time Entering students up 2.8%  
Overall Enrollment Increase of approximately 4%
- Housing: Matching the national market with 25% increase.
- FY22 Foundation Aid awarded: \$2.2 M to 1,432 students
- FY22 Completion: 1,205 graduates and 1,409 credentials



# Pillars of a strong community

- Businesses/Jobs: Ways to earn income
- Education: Early Childhood to Professional Programs
- Homes: Affordable and Available
- Health Care: Complement of general care, specialties, and trauma/emergency care
- Quality of Life: Arts and entertainment, safety, social organizations, ability to purchase goods and services, ways to stay active outdoors

# Quality Education

- 777 Public, 4-year degree granting universities in the US\*  
19,495 incorporated cities, towns, and villages\*\*
- UA-Fort Smith has accreditation by Higher Learning Commission, AACSB accreditation for College of Business & Industry, program accreditation for education, health sciences, music, art, and technical programs

# University of Arkansas Fort Smith Recognition

- 2022-23 Colleges of Distinction: Best Colleges
  - ▶ Best Colleges: Public, Arkansas
  - ▶ College of Business
  - ▶ School of Education
  - ▶ School of Nursing
  - ▶ Babb Center for Career Services





# University of Arkansas Fort Smith Recognition

## U.S. News and World Report

Top Regional Colleges in the South

#5 in Social Mobility

#12 Top Public Colleges

## Military Friendly Distinction

2022-23 Military Friendly University: Silver

2022-23 Military Spouse Friendly University

# Workforce Development

Workforce development encompasses a relatively wide range of activities, policies and programs employed by geographies to create, sustain and retain a viable workforce that can support current and future business and industry.\*

[\\*What is Workforce Development? | St. Louis Fed \(stlouisfed.org\)](#)

# Early Childhood Education

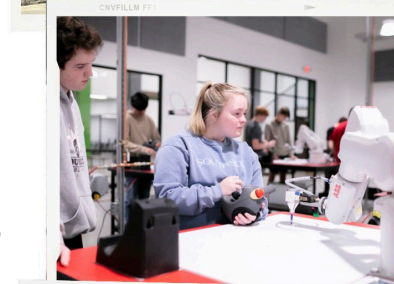
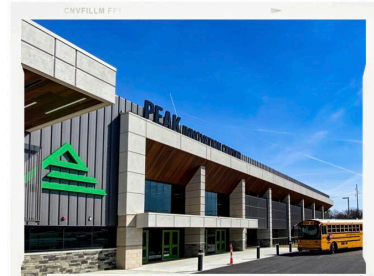
- UAFS received grant for more than \$1 million to create the Little Lion Childhood Development Center: A learning laboratory for students in A.S. and B.S. in Early Childhood Education and a safe, convenient childcare center for the children of students and employees.
- Early Childhood Education is one of the fastest growing majors at UAFS.





# Early College

- Western Arkansas Technical Center and the Peak Innovation Center
  - ▶ 436 Students – 5,232 Credits – 168 Industry Certifications
- Smart Start
  - ▶ 500 Students – 3,561 Credits – 35% matriculated to UAFS
- High School Associate Degree Initiative
  - ▶ Discussions underway for additional degree pathways





# Educational Partners

- Business & Industry Experience Partnerships
  - ▶ Internships, Apprenticeships and Clinicals
- Regional Community Colleges
  - ▶ 63 current 2+2 MOU's with 27 partners
- Arkansas Colleges of Health Education





# Educating Adults

Future Fit: Short courses to prepare adults for careers in advanced manufacturing and industrial technology

Adult Degree Completion Program: Allows adults with some college credits to return to college to earn bachelor's degrees. Students in the program learn to document their leadership experiences for college credit.



# Health Care

Current:

Allied Health: EMT,  
CNA

Nursing: LPN, BSN

Dental Hygiene

Radiography

Sonography

Surgical Tech

- Announced gift of \$10 million over four years to provide competitive salaries to nursing educators: Plan to double the number of nurses we educate over 4-years.
- Plan to reintroduce associate's degree in nursing, create LPN to RN

# Economic Development

In general, **economic development** is usually the focus of federal, state, and local governments to improve our standard of living through the creation of jobs, the support of innovation and new ideas, the creation of higher wealth, and the creation of an overall better quality of life.\*

\*Study.com





# Economic Development

## UAFS Center for Economic Development

Governor Hutchinson said, “And it really goes to the heart of what’s happening here in the River Valley. This center is the first of its kind in Arkansas, and I’m extraordinarily proud that this innovation is here in this community.”





# Economic Development

UAFS Arkansas Small Business & Technology Development Center served 97 Clients with Economic Impact of \$6.35M in FY22

UAFS Family Enterprise Center: 44 families and 11 affiliate members

UAFS Center for Business and Professional Development hosted 67 training events for 587 students, 46 companies & agencies



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