

FULBRIGHT COLLEGE AS A PUBLIC GOOD

Our Strategic Vision for 2036



This plan works
because of you.



Dear colleagues,

Fulbright College is the heart and soul of the University of Arkansas. We are the largest and most academically diverse college on campus. Our research and creative expression span the fine and performing arts, the natural and physical sciences, the humanities, and the social sciences. We teach every undergraduate at the U of A, and our impact on the state and the region is enormous.

Even though we come from different academic disciplines, we are unified by our mission. This shared mission fundamentally organizes our work around contributing to the good of society, the good of our students, our state, and our world. Each of us, in our myriad roles, contributes mightily to that mission. And it is in the framework of that mission that we offer this plan.

Over the past two years, many faculty, staff, students, and alumni came together. We listened, debated, challenged assumptions, and refined ideas. We created this strategic plan together. We framed it around the belief that Fulbright College is a vital public good for the state and the world.

Our shared goal is bold and ambitious. We seek to become one of the nation's leading public, flagship, land-grant colleges of arts and sciences, recognized for advancing the public good in Arkansas and the world.

Every member of the college advances this aspiration in different ways. Some of us teach. Some discover. Some create. Some make the college's daily work possible. Together, our efforts have an impact far greater than their sum.

A strategic plan is only meaningful if it guides the choices that we make together. This plan is not about a handful of initiatives or a few areas of expertise. It is about a bold aspiration and a shared vision. Together, we have an opportunity to demonstrate what a public land-grant college of arts and sciences can be at its very best.

Thank you for everything you do. Together, let's embrace this vision and move the college forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Brian Raines". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brian" and last name "Raines" clearly legible.

Brian E. Raines
Professor of Mathematics
Dean, Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences
University of Arkansas

Our Aspiration

By 2036, Fulbright College will be one of the nation's leading public, flagship, land-grant colleges of arts and sciences, recognized for advancing the public good in Arkansas and the world.

We will achieve that distinction not simply through rankings or reputation, but through the impact of our work: research that expands knowledge and improves lives, creative activity that enriches culture and strengthens communities, teaching and mentorship that prepare students for meaningful lives and careers, and a shared commitment to serving Arkansas and the world.

This aspiration belongs to all of us.

Whether you teach, research, create, advise students, manage programs, support operations, or engage communities, your work contributes to our mission.

Fulbright College Mission Statement

The Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences is a vital public good.

We provide a transformational education that prepares all students to lead and thrive in a complex world. Our research, scholarship, and creative expression address society's great challenges and push the boundaries of human understanding.

Fulbright College brings the world to Arkansas and Arkansas to the world.

HOW WE WILL MEASURE PROGRESS

Our aspiration is ambitious, and measuring our progress matters. Each year, Fulbright College will publish a report on our progress toward the goals of this plan. These annual reports will focus on key indicators across our four strategic outcomes and help guide future decisions.

IMPACT ON THE STATE AND THE WORLD

How is Fulbright improving lives beyond the university?

Measures include community partnerships, public engagement, cultural participation, policy impact, outreach activities, health initiatives, and stories that demonstrate meaningful public impact.

RESEARCH AND CREATIVE EXCELLENCE

How are we advancing discovery and creative expression?

Measures include external funding, scholarly publications, books, creative works, exhibitions, performances, citations, awards, patents, undergraduate research, and national recognition.

STUDENT SUCCESS

How are students thriving during and after their time at Fulbright?

Measures include recruitment, retention, graduation, advising effectiveness, participation in high-impact practices, career outcomes, and post-graduation success.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH

How are we creating the conditions for faculty, staff, and students to do their best work?

Measures include faculty and staff recruitment and retention, compensation, professional development, mentoring, recognition, leadership development, and satisfaction with institutional support.

Foundational Initiatives

This plan invests in our people and supports their success.

The Fulbright College strategic plan is a commitment to creating conditions that help every member of our community excel in research, teaching, creative work, and service to Arkansas and the world. From expanded grant support and faculty recognition to student success initiatives and competitive compensation, the plan invests in the people and conditions that make our aspirations possible.

These commitments are the foundation of our strategic plan. The initiatives listed in each area are not comprehensive; they are representative of the kinds of investments we will pursue across each area.

RESEARCH SUPPORT

We will invest in the infrastructure that helps faculty pursue ambitious scholarly and creative work.

- Expanded pre-award grant support
- Improved post-award grant support
- Writing circles and manuscript development groups
- Internally funded postdoctoral research and visiting assistant professor opportunities

RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

We will work to make Fulbright a place where faculty and staff build a career and do their best work.

- Improve faculty and staff compensation
- Improve faculty starting salaries and start-up packages
- Enhance graduate stipends
- Support faculty pursuing competitive external fellowships
- Interdisciplinary program support

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT AND RECOGNITION

We will work to ensure that Fulbright faculty receive the internal and external recognition their work deserves.

- Expanded nominations for national awards and scholarly societies
- Teaching and mentoring recognition programs
- Lifetime Outstanding Teacher and Outstanding Researcher designation

STUDENT SUCCESS

We will invest in the people, ideas, and experiences that help every Fulbright student thrive from enrollment through graduation and beyond.

- Career readiness
- AI fluency for all students
- Strengthened advising and student support
- Student recruitment
- Expanded hands-on, first-year, experiential and global learning opportunities
- Student Success Innovation Fund

Our disciplines may differ, but our purpose is shared: creating knowledge, fostering creativity, and preparing students to contribute to the world and lead meaningful lives.



Focused Initiatives

This plan builds on our strengths and sets us apart.

These initiatives focus on several of our distinctive strengths, areas that distinguish us from our peers. They create opportunities for concentrated, highly visible impact.

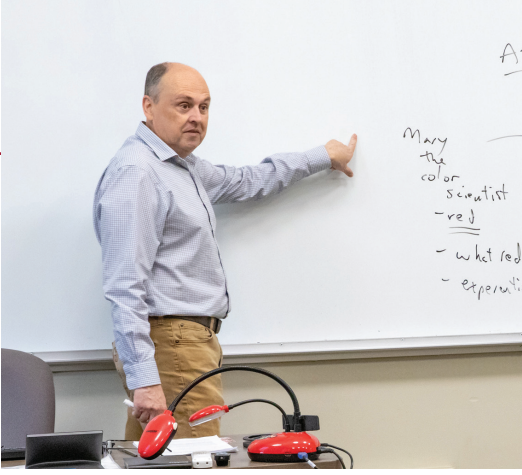
CAREER READINESS AND COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION

Fulbright graduates leave with the durable skills, applied experiences, career readiness, and civic understanding needed to contribute to Arkansas, the nation, and the world. The plan expands internships and applied learning, strengthens Career Connections, develops AI and digital literacy offerings, and builds alumni mentoring and employer engagement pathways.

CULTURAL HEART OF CAMPUS AND THE REGION

Fulbright will strengthen its role as the cultural hub of the University of Arkansas and Northwest Arkansas by connecting arts, humanities, museum collections, public programming, and community partnerships. The plan proposes an Arkansas Arts and Humanities Center, expands public-facing programming, and creates clearer pathways for students and faculty to engage in community-based creative work.





HEALTH AND WELLNESS OF ARKANSANS

Fulbright will lead statewide and regional initiatives to improve health knowledge, expand access to mental and behavioral health support, and advance research in the metabolic and social sciences. Building on the Arkansas Health Survey, the Bridge Consortium, and the Arkansas Integrative Metabolic Research Center, the college will address Arkansas's most pressing health challenges.

NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE SYSTEMS AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES

No college is better positioned to address artificial intelligence than one that brings together the physical and natural sciences, the humanities, the social sciences, and the creative arts. Fulbright will establish a collegewide AI task force, support faculty research across neuroscience, machine learning, digital humanities, and develop a student AI competency framework pairing technical fluency with ethical reasoning.



STUDENT OUTCOMES

Building on our foundational investments, Fulbright will further strengthen an educational experience that prepares graduates not only for successful careers, but for lives of curiosity, leadership, and service. The college will expand opportunities for students to engage in research, creative work, interdisciplinary collaboration, civic engagement, and global learning, ensuring every graduate leaves with the knowledge, experiences, and durable skills to contribute to Arkansas and the world.

TEACHING EXCELLENCE

Teaching is one of the most direct ways Fulbright fulfills its public-good mission. The college will invest in professional development, instructional innovation, mentorship, and graduate instructor preparation while recognizing and rewarding outstanding teaching — strengthening student success and reinforcing a culture that values teaching as a core expression of the college's mission.

BIODIVERSITY AND HUMAN ORIGINS RESEARCH

Questions about where we come from and how life has developed are among the most profound in any field — and Fulbright already has the faculty, collections, and fieldwork capacity to lead in answering them. The plan proposes a Center for Biodiversity and Human Origins, and dissertation grants and seed funding in this distinctive area of strength.

REGIONAL AND GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

Aligned with the Fulbright program legacy of building a better world through education and service, Fulbright research and scholarship positively impact Arkansas and the world. Through interdisciplinary scholarship, public humanities, regional and global studies, and community-engaged research, the college will generate knowledge that informs public understanding, contributes to policy and practice, and connects Arkansas to national and international conversations.

CRITICAL MINERALS, MATERIALS RESEARCH, AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Fulbright has distinctive strength in materials science research and training. Moreover, our proximity to the Smackover lithium brine deposit — combined with faculty depth in chemistry, geosciences, policy, and community development — positions the college to contribute to both the science of critical minerals and the long-term human and civic dimensions of growth and development. The plan proposes focusing efforts on the new Arkansas Materials Institute while supporting efforts on campus to build a group of researchers working on critical minerals.

Aligned with the University's Priorities

While this plan is specific to Fulbright College, it is designed to advance broader institutional goals. We are the heart and soul of the University of Arkansas, and so our success is critical to the success of our campus plan, 150 Forward, and the University of Arkansas System's strategic pillars of access, student success, innovation, stewardship, responsiveness, and collaboration.

The public-good theme runs through all of it, measured through evidence: graduation and retention outcomes, research and creative expression, community partnerships, student experiences, cultural engagement, and statewide responsiveness.

FOCUS AREA

Careers and Community Contribution

Health and Wellness of Arkansans

Cultural Heart of Campus and Region

Natural and Artificial Intelligence Systems
and New Technologies

Student Outcomes

Critical Minerals, Materials Research,
and the Built Environment

Teaching Excellence

Regional and Global Engagement

Biodiversity and Human Origins



150 FORWARD

Student success

Research excellence; student success

Research excellence; student success;
employer of choice

Research excellence; student success

Student success

Research excellence; student success

Student success; employer of choice

Research excellence; student success;
employer of choice

Research excellence; student success

UA SYSTEM

Access; student success;
responsiveness; collaboration

Responsiveness; student success;
innovation

Access; responsiveness;
collaboration; innovation

Innovation; collaboration;
stewardship; responsiveness

Access; student success; stewardship

Responsiveness; innovation;
collaboration

Student success; innovation;
stewardship

Innovation; stewardship;
responsiveness; student success

Innovation; collaboration

Timeline

Fall 2024 — Listening and Discovery

- Conducted a comprehensive listening tour across the college and external stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, alums, and partners.
- Hosted department meetings, open forums, and outreach sessions to gather broad input and identify priorities.

January 2025 — Launch of Strategic Planning Initiative

- Formally launched a collegewide strategic planning effort led by a 36-member steering committee representing all academic units and key constituencies.
- Engaged an external partner (Art & Science Group) to support research, benchmarking, and market insights.

Spring 2025 — Discovery, Research, and Engagement

- Conducted extensive stakeholder engagement, including listening sessions, surveys, and one-on-one meetings.
- Reviewed institutional data, prior plans, and external benchmarks to inform direction.
- Synthesized insights from more than 300 participants into emerging themes.

Spring–Summer 2025 — Development of Strategic Framework

- Translated key themes into strategic priorities and focus areas aligned with the college's mission and public good framework.
- Organized work through subcommittees and focused working groups.

Fall 2025–Spring 2026 — Drafting and Refinement

- Developed draft strategic plan, including goals, initiatives, and success measures.
- Iterated through internal feedback loops with leadership, faculty, and stakeholders.
- Refined plan based on feedback and alignment with university priorities.
- Prepared final document for external communication and implementation.

2026 and Beyond — Implementation and Ongoing Assessment

- Begin phased implementation of strategic initiatives.
- Establish reports and regular review processes to track progress and impact.

Strategic Planning Steering Committee

Co-Chairs

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Trish Starks (HIST)

Executive Sponsor

Brian Raines, Dean

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John Blakinger (ARTS)
Scotti Branton (COMM)
Ana Bridges (PSYC)
Hugh Churchill (PHYS)

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Morgan Hicks (THTR)
Ted Holland (GEOS)
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Yajaira Padilla (ENGL)

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Feng Wang (CHBC)
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Michelle Pribbernow (ARSC)

Christopher Schulte (ARTS)
Shelby Stone, Student

Subcommittee for Public Good

Co-Chairs

Jessica Fugitt (PSYC)

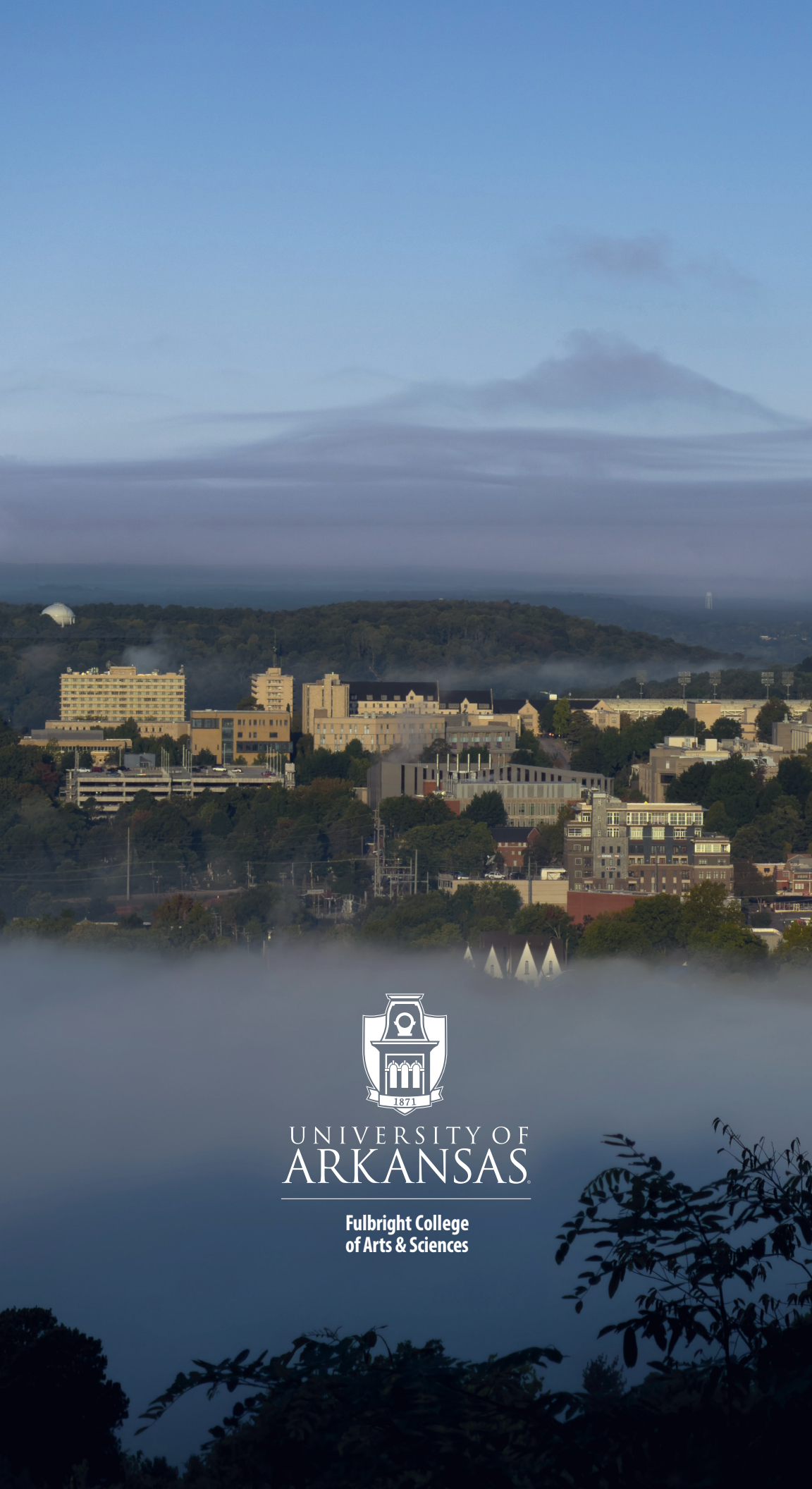
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UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS

Fulbright College
of Arts & Sciences