

**CENTRAL  
ARKANSAS**

TM

***ANNUAL REPORT  
FISCAL YEAR 2024***



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## ***ANNUAL REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2024***



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## Dear Bear Nation,

This past academic year was impactful for our program. We continue to compete at a high level in all sports and meet the challenges of the ever-changing landscape of college athletics in Division I of the NCAA. We also know that there is much more change to come and we will adapt to continue to meet the needs of our students and coaches.

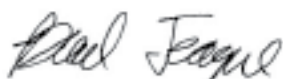
We continued to have large roster sizes in all sports to assist with enrollment at UCA. We have added many non-scholarship student-athletes to our rosters. We started the sport of STUNT this year as our 19th sport to bring more females to our program. You will be amazed when you see this sport, it is four quarters of excitement!

Our third year in the Atlantic Sun (ASUN) continued to fulfill our expectations. The institutions represented and the administrators at each have similar priorities and visions for their programs. Our students enjoy competing at these locations and venues. Our first year in the United Athletics Conference (UAC) for football was also a huge success. We lost in a winner-take-all final game against Austin Peay by two points. We continue to see programs shifting conferences as two of our UAC programs have left the WAC conference for the Southland Conference. The ASUN added West Georgia so we are still at nine teams in the UAC.

We continue to see great accomplishments among our student-athletes. Student-athletes graduate at a high rate and that puts UCA Athletics in a great position. At UCA, we embrace the NCAA DI principles of Academic Integrity, Rules and Governance, Financial Prudence, and Student-Athlete Well-being. These characteristics shape our program as we excel at providing a great place to live, learn, and compete. UCA is a total package program. We succeed in academics, socially, and with life skills; while winning championships. Our goal is to provide a wonderful educational experience for our student-athletes which is further enhanced through athletics success. The fondest memories come from our great teams and programs. We want all to have that experience.

As we enter our 19th year in Division I, and our fourth in the ASUN, our image continues to be very important to our success. Through our branding, facilities, and media; our image is impacted. We will ensure our image elicits a perception of a first-class program. We have been successful due to the re-branding of our logos and trademarks. We have been successful due to our abundant facility improvements since our move to Division I. We have been successful due to our forethought in social media and communications. We have been successful due to our staff's creativity and innovation. And we have been successful due to our willingness to take risks and go against the norms.

As you know, this was my last year as your Director of Athletics. My 17+ years here have been a treat. This is an incredible program with great support. Gina and I are thankful we made the decision to come here in January of 2007 and raised our four children in this great community. I will still be on campus as the Director of the UCA Aviation Academy so you will see me around. I want to welcome Matt Whiting to the AD chair. He will excel and take us to new heights. I look forward to watching the success!  
**GO BEARS! GO SUGAR BEARS!**



**Brad Teague, Ph. D.**  
**Director of Athletics**

# CENTRAL ARKANSAS

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## ANNUAL REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2024



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### MISSION

To AVIDly provide a rewarding and enriching experience for students and coaches leading to excellence and accountability in the classroom, on campus and in their sport.

**AVID - UCA dedicates itself to Academic  
Vitality, Integrity, and Diversity**

### CORE VALUES

1. Student-Athlete Success
2. Excellence
3. Accountability
4. Innovation
5. Collegiality

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Student-Athlete Experience
2. Fan/Donor Experience
3. Program Image

### COACHING EVALUATION

1. Recruiting
2. Academics
3. Athletics
4. Administrative
5. Compliance
6. Student-Athlete Well-Being
7. Public Relations



*Athletics programs utilize several metrics to evaluate the success of their student-athletes in academics. Grade Point Average (GPA), Graduation Success Rate (GSR), Federal Graduation Rate (FGR), Academic Progress Rate (APR) and Completed Athletics Eligibility Graduation Rate (CEGR) are all part of the evaluation system.*

*As detailed below, UCA turned in an overall cumulative GPA of 3.20. UCA also has an FGR greater than the overall student body, had its ninth consecutive year with an APR above 970 and has maintained a department-wide 3.0+ GPA for 12 consecutive years.*

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
• GPA													
Women	3.18	3.19	3.28	3.28	3.32	3.35	3.40	3.37	3.43	3.44	3.51	3.49	3.45
Men	2.82	2.88	2.87	2.88	2.88	2.98	3.02	3.04	3.08	3.02	3.02	2.97	3.02
Total	2.98	3.02	3.04	3.04	3.10	3.14	3.18	3.19	3.22	3.19	3.22	3.19	3.20
• GSR													
Women	95%	82%	83%	73%	81%	89%	88%	90%	93%	92%	96%	95%	95%
Men	75%	67%	66%	69%	70%	73%	74%	69%	71%	77%	79%	84%	87%
Total	81%	73%	72%	74%	75%	80%	80%	78%	80%	83%	86%	89%	90%
• FGR													
Women	58%	50%	49%	66%	60%	64%	65%	65%	79%	76%	68%	68%	68%
Men	43%	43%	42%	65%	56%	49%	51%	45%	61%	56%	66%	74%	47%
Total	50%	47%	46%	65%	58%	56%	58%	54%	68%	64%	67%	71%	55%
Student Body	41%	41%	41%	45%	45%	42%	43%	42%	43%	45%	49%	50%	53%
• APR													
Women	988	972	990	980	997	987	986	994	994	990	992	984	#
Men	952	939	933	971	971	980	980	978	982	969	984	962	#
Total	971	957	963	976	985	984	984	987	989	981	989	974.3	#
• CEGR													
Total	93%	96%	100%	94%	99%	97%	99%	97%	93%	95%	96%	99%	#

Graduation Success Rate (GSR) - no cohort - transfers count

Federal Graduation Rate (FGR) - freshman cohort

Academic Progress Rate (APR) - NCAA metric - Retention and academic eligibility

Completed Athletics Eligibility Grad Rate (CEGR) N=60

# Official in October each year



## COMPLIANCE

- 1. The most important part of Compliance is that all individuals associated with UCA Athletics promote and support the interest of the athletic department to ensure full compliance with NCAA, ASUN/UAC Conference and University Rules.***
- 2. Increased rules education and updates to coaches, staff, boosters, and student-athletes. These updates occur in a variety of ways from face to face, email blasts, website notices, and individual meetings with coaches or student athletes.***
- 3. Conversion to e-filing system for all student-athlete records.***
- 4. Financial Aid can enter student-athlete data without the assistance of athletics staff.***
- 5. Implementation of ARMS to make tracking many aspects of Compliance easier for coaches as well as the compliance office.***
- 6. Compliance staff and general counsel will continue semi-annual meetings.***

## FACILITY ENHANCEMENTS

- 1. UCA's softball field was renamed Natalie Shock Stadium on April 30, 2024 in honor of retiring associate AD Natalie Shock, who started the UCA softball program in 1996, the first collegiate program in the state.***
- 2. New state-of-the-art videoboards installed at Bear Stadium (baseball) and Natalie Shock Stadium (softball) in Spring 2024.***
- 3. New seating in the Men's Soccer House in the spring of 2024.***
- 4. New banners installed in the Indoor Facility in spring of 2024.***
- 5. New Bear head in the women's soccer locker room in spring 2024.***

## ON-CAMPUS EVENTS HOSTING

- 1. Hosted the Arkansas Activities Association High School State Championships in baseball, softball and soccer at Estes Stadium,***

***Bear Stadium and Farris Field in May 2024. Those championships were televised statewide on Arkansas PBS.***

***2. Arkansas Activities Association All-Star Week, which includes high school All-Star games for football, boy's and girl's basketball, boy's and girl's soccer, volleyball, baseball, softball and cheer and dance student-athletes from around the state was hosted on the UCA campus in June 2024.***

***3. Numerous high school and youth baseball tournaments were held at Bear Stadium, UCA's baseball facility.***

***4. Hosted the Top 25-ranked University of Arkansas Razorbacks in a softball matchup at Farris Field for the fourth consecutive season and drew a crowd of nearly 2,500 fans.***

***5. Hosted the ASUN Outdoor Track & Field Championships in May of 2024 at the Richard Martin, Jr. Track.***





### ● PURPLE CIRCLE ANNUAL FUND

*The Purple Circle is the official annual fund of the University of Central Arkansas Department of Athletics and is a top fundraising priority. The Purple Circle Fund provides essential operating resources and is critical to the continued success of UCA Athletics in supporting all sports. The Purple Circle fund focuses on three key areas to positively impact the lives of our 450+ UCA student-athletes. These areas of focus are: Academic Support; Student-Athlete Success Initiatives; Facility Enhancements.*

*Our membership once again responded in 2023-24 with Purple Circle contributions totaling more than \$500,000. This year on UCA's Day of Giving, donors contributed \$276,005 to the Purple Circle Fund, continuing the exciting trend of the previous years.*

### ● CORPORATE SPONSORSHIPS

*The arrangement with Peak Sports MGMT/UCA Sports Properties has proven to be extremely beneficial for UCA Athletics and corporate partners alike, as our property has grown from \$300,000 per year to over \$1,000,000, and the Central Arkansas brand continues to enhance its image and visibility. During this time, local and regional businesses have realized an increase in value in their relationship with Central Arkansas Athletics.*

### ● BUDGET

*UCA & UCA Athletics are committed to reducing the amount of state funding for Athletics while increasing the amount of external funding from ticket sales, fundraising, corporate sponsorships, and NCAA Revenue. This trend is demonstrated below.*

REVENUE	FY24		FY23		FY22		FY21		FY20*		FY19	
Student Fees	\$5,200,000	34%	\$5,035,635	33%	\$5,093,498	35%	\$5,028,798	38%	\$5,276,664	41%	\$5,215,840	38%
Auxiliaries	\$3,720,000	..... 24%	\$3,655,602	..... 24%	\$4,627,723	..... 32%	\$3,776,049	..... 28%	\$2,770,932	..... 21%	\$3,698,946	..... 27%
E&G	\$2,892,000	..... 19%	\$2,943,203	..... 19%	\$1,410,887	..... 10%	\$1,391,407	..... 10%	\$1,362,789	..... 11%	\$1,333,453	..... 10%
External Funds	\$3,450,000	..... 22%	\$3,437,603	..... 23%	\$3,410,392	..... 23%	\$2,999,990	..... 23%	\$3,395,029	..... 26%	\$3,258,809	..... 24%
Federal	\$115,000	..... 1%	\$114,790	..... 1%	\$73,807	..... 1%	\$73,495	..... 1%	\$150,205	..... 1%	\$130,672	..... 1%
TOTAL	\$15,377,000	..... 100%	\$15,186,833	..... 100%	\$14,616,307	..... 100%	\$13,269,739	..... 100%	\$12,955,619	..... 100%	\$13,637,720	..... 100%
<b>EXPENSES</b>												
Salaries & Fringes	\$4,599,648	30%	\$4,411,420	29%	\$4,135,509	28%	\$4,096,343	31%	\$4,236,859	33%	\$4,140,814	30%
Scholarships	\$5,038,409	33%	\$4,939,617	33%	\$5,083,190	35%	\$4,628,112	35%	\$4,290,018	33%	\$4,554,909	33%
Travel	\$2,225,000	14%	\$2,235,150	15%	\$1,751,994	12%	\$1,213,611	9%	\$1,418,134	11%	\$2,032,145	15%
M&O	\$1,552,000	10%	\$1,634,705	11%	\$1,459,320	10%	\$1,257,973	9%	\$1,362,577	11%	\$1,182,049	9%
Debt Service	\$670,412	4%	\$669,657	4%	\$670,412	5%	\$671,057	5%	\$669,102	5%	\$672,746	5%
Medical	\$225,000	1%	\$235,820	2%	\$517,297	4%	\$471,137	4%	\$153,697	1%	\$152,211	1%
Federal	\$115,000	1%	\$114,790	1%	\$73,807	1%	\$73,495	1%	\$150,205	1%	\$130,672	1%
Facilities	\$575,000	4%	\$569,670	4%	\$583,316	4%	\$440,802	3%	\$450,110	3%	\$474,377	3%
Other	\$376,530	2%	\$376,004	2%	\$341,462	2%	\$417,209	3%	\$224,917	2%	\$297,797	2%
	\$15,377,000	100%	\$15,186,833	100%	\$14,616,307	100%	\$13,269,739	100%	\$12,955,619	100%	\$13,637,720	100%

\* - Covid-19

## SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS



The University of Central Arkansas Bears and Sugar Bears had another successful year in their third season in the Atlantic Sun Conference. UCA student-athletes won both individual and team championships during the 2023-24 school year with some record-setting performances, while continuing to excel in the classroom and the community as well.

### **WOMEN'S SOCCER:**

- The Bears clinched a spot in the ASUN Championships for the third-straight season after going 7-1-3 in ASUN games.
- The team ended the regular season on a five-game unbeaten streak, earning the league's No. 2 seed in the ASUN Tournament.
- Junior Kelly Van Gundy was named a United Soccer Coaches All-South Region third-team midfielder after leading the team with seven goals and four assists.

### **MEN'S SOCCER:**

- Earned a 0-0 draw in an early-season match against No. 7 Florida International.
- Sophomore Pietro Fontana tied a program record with four goals in an ASUN match against Queens.
- The Bears defeated Queens again in the ASUN Championships, winning at least one postseason game for the third straight season.

### **VOLLEYBALL:**

- Opened their home schedule in front of the fourth-largest crowd ever in the Prince Center against Big 10 member Michigan State.

- The Sugar Bears had two players earn ASUN weekly awards (Alexis McDaniel – Defensive Player of the Week, Caylan Koons – Setter of the Week).
- Senior April Conant was awarded a spot on the ASUN Winners for Life team.

### **MEN'S GOLF:**

- Closed the regular season with two top-five finishes in Columbia, Missouri and Iowa City, Iowa.
- Mark Stockdale won the team's first individual medal since 2018, winning the Everett Buick GMC Classic.
- Stockdale was named the ASUN Freshman of the Year, and was named All-ASUN golfer along with Zach Little.

### **WOMEN'S GOLF:**

- The women's golf team won a tournament for the fourth-straight year after claiming top honors at The Judson.
- Madison Holmes was named a Second Team All-ASUN golfer, and Gudrun Thorsteinsdottir was added to the ASUN All-Freshman team.
- The Bears claimed four Top 5 finishes as a team.

### **MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY:**

- The Bears set five personal-bests at the NCAA South Central Regionals.
- Jack Dingman was named an Academic All-ASUN runner after posting a 3.75 GPA as he pursues a computer science degree.
- The Bears earned a sixth-place finish at the



# **SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

ASUN Championships in Nashville.

## **BEACH VOLLEYBALL:**

- The Beach Bears won eight matches this past season, including wins over McNeese, Austin Peay and Tarleton.
- Central Arkansas defeated the Governors in its lone home weekend of the spring.

## **SOFTBALL:**

- Head coach Jenny Parsons became the fastest coach to 100 wins at Central Arkansas, doing so in 157 games.
- The Bears advanced to the ASUN Championship quarterfinals for the third-straight year.
- Kylie Griffin was named the ASUN Defensive Player of the Year, and was one of four Bears to earn All-ASUN honors.

## **BASEBALL:**

- The Bears earned their way into their first ASUN Championship Tournament, making a run to the ASUN Semifinals.
- Senior Jesse Barker was named the ASUN Pitcher of the Year and became Central Arkansas's all-time strikeout leader.
- The Bears picked up a win at SEC foe and No. 23 Mississippi State, the fifth win in eight games in Starkville, Miss.

## **MEN'S TRACK AND FIELD:**

- The Bears finished second at the ASUN Outdoor Championships and third at the ASUN Indoor Championships.
- The men's 4x100 team (Kobe Gill, TyJuan Huff-

man, Wesley Suen, Aaron Webb) qualified for the NCAA Semifinals in Eugene, Ore., after posting a program-record 39.53 at the NCAA Quarterfinals in Fayetteville.

- TyJuan Huffman was named the ASUN's Most Outstanding Track Performer for the outdoor season.

## **WOMEN'S TRACK AND FIELD:**

- The Bears finished second at the ASUN Outdoor Championships in the spring.
- The 4x100 team (Raghan Allen, Kendelle McCoy, Troynelle Miller, Ciara Tucker) competed at the NCAA Quarterfinals, posting a time of 44.74 seconds.
- Raghan Allen was named the ASUN's Most Outstanding Freshman of the Year for the indoor season.

## **FOOTBALL**

- The Bears went 7-4 in 2023, with four one-score wins and three wins being decided in the final 2:15.
- David Walker added plenty of hardware to his resume, earning the UAC Defensive Player of the Year and three more All-America nods.
- Quarterback Will McElvain crossed the 5,000-yard passing career mark after throwing for 2,477 yards and 24 TDs.

## **TENNIS:**

- Vichitraporn Vimuktananda earned an All-ASUN Second Team nod after a successful season at the No. 1 spot.
- The Bears won 11 matches in the spring, in-





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# SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

cluding wins over ASUN foes ECU, Queens and Bellarmine.

- Central Arkansas was competitive on the road, going 6-7 away from home.

### **WOMEN'S BASKETBALL:**

- First-year head coach Tony Kemper led the Sugar Bears to 21 wins, reaching the 20-win mark for the first time since 2017-18.
- The Sugar Bears hosted the first round of the WNIT after reaching the ASUN Championship Final for the first time in program history.
- Kinley Fisher was named the ASUN's Sixth Player of the Year, and Randrea Wright and Jade Upshaw were named Second Team All-ASUN guards.

### **MEN'S BASKETBALL:**

- The Bears hired John Shulman on March 18 to lead the men's basketball program.
- Tucker Anderson was named the ASUN Freshman of the Year, the second such award in three

years for the Bears.

- Central Arkansas set a program-record with 73 rebounds in a nonconference game against Champion Christian.

### **WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY**

- The Bears peaked at No. 9 in the USTFCCCA South Central Rankings.
- Madeline Hill finished 36th of 180 runners at the NCAA South Central Regionals.
- The junior from Waxhaw, N.C., was also named to the Academic All-ASUN Team

### **STUNT:**

- Central Arkansas debuted its 19th sport on February 16th, and earned its first win the next day.
- The Bears landed two First Team All-Americans, one Second Team All-American and two Honorable Mention All-Americans.
- Central Arkansas finished fourth at the Division I National Championships.





## STUDENT-ATHLETE ADVISORY COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

- *Stoby's Pancake Breakfast benefiting Samaritan's Feet, with a shoe distribution at Marguerite Vann Elementary School in Spring 2024.*
- *Student-Athletes participated in Toys for Tots, Operation Christmas Child and Angel Bear around the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays.*
- *Swab Drive for Blood Cancer Donor Registry, partnering with Earl Young's Team and DKMS.*
- *Multi-sport canned food drive to benefit the UCA Bear Essentials Food Panty, gathering more than 800 pounds.*
- *Three student-athletes (Wesley Suen, April Conant, Alexis McDaniel) participated in the ASUN SAAC in-person meetings.*

## LIFE SKILLS AREAS COVERED THIS YEAR

- *Sexual Misconduct/Title IX Training*
- *HealthSpace Wellness Training*
- *Student-Athlete Suicide Awareness & Education - Tyler Talk and Hilinski's Hope*
- *Financial Literacy - Simmons Bank*

## ● COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS

*Throughout the year, our teams volunteer at numerous community events, school programs, youth & elderly programs and charity functions, in addition to on-campus events and organizing and volunteering for fundraisers for a variety of charities. In all, our student-athletes logged more than 500 hours of community service over the past year even during the pandemic. Some of the projects UCA student-athletes & staff were involved in over the past year include:*

- *Conway Optimist Club Youth Football Clinic*
- *Numerous reading programs at local elementary schools*
- *5K Walk for Diabetes*
- *Collecting toys for annual Toys for Tots*
- *Packing boxes at Operation Christmas Child warehouse*
- *Volunteering at Boys & Girls Club of Conway*
- *Assisting with Tacos4Life Mobile Pack program to provide food to underdeveloped nations*
- *Staffing "The Big Event" volunteer day in Conway*
- *Working UCA "Brake For Bears" safe driving/pedestrian awareness event*
- *Participating in morning Meet & Greets at local elementary schools.*