

## A Letter from the President

When we embarked upon a new iteration of the Arkansas Tech University strategic plan in fall 2021, I asked the University Strategic Planning Steering Committee (USPSC) to consider the following charge as we contemplated the future of our institution.

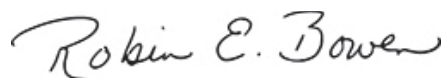
- Develop a university-wide strategic plan that supports the current vision and mission of the university.
- Develop 3-to-5 overall major and measurable goals with a life span of no more than three years. Under each overall major goal consider no more than 3-to-5 measurable sub-goals.
- Utilize the stretch goals from the final year of our previous strategic plan as a starting point for thought and reflection.
- Consider external drivers such as enrollment, job market analysis for local, regional, state and global demands, post-pandemic effects, new business models for efficiencies and others.

The USPSC answered that charge and poured significant time and thought into developing a draft of the ATU 2025: Strategic Plan. One of the most important steps in the process came when ATU Faculty Senate, ATU Staff Senate, ATU Student Government Association and participants in a series of open forums reviewed the draft through their lenses and offered vital, constructive feedback.

Through the collective intellect, experience and passion for student success and access that exists within our university community, we developed a strategic plan that establishes priorities and will help guide decisions for the next three years.

To all who participated in the development phase and to all who will engage in the implementation phase, thank you for making ATU 2025 a strategic plan that will allow Arkansas Tech to continue the pursuit of its vision and the promise of its mission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robin E. Bowen".

Dr. Robin E. Bowen  
President

## **ATU 2025: Strategic Plan Introduction**

Arkansas Tech University, through a deliberative and inclusive process, has developed a strategic plan that identifies measurable goals reflective of its institutional vision. The plan will be implemented beginning in fall 2022 and continuing through 2025 in support of its institutional mission.

This university-wide strategic plan aligns with the vision and mission of Arkansas Tech University. Arkansas Tech's vision and mission statements were approved by the ATU Board of Trustees on Oct. 19, 2016, and are reaffirmed through the strategic planning process of 2022:

### **Vision Statement**

Arkansas Tech University: where students succeed, innovation thrives, and communities flourish.

### **Mission Statement**

Arkansas Tech University is dedicated to student success, access, and excellence as a responsive campus community providing opportunities for progressive intellectual development and civic engagement. Embracing and expanding upon its technological traditions, Tech inspires and empowers members of the community to achieve their goals while striving for the betterment of Arkansas, the nation, and the world.

ATU 2025: Strategic Plan benefits from the achievements from the previous iteration of Arkansas Tech's strategic plan, which was created during the 2015-16 academic year, approved by the ATU Board of Trustees on May 19, 2016, and implemented from fall 2016 through spring 2022. Arkansas Tech's collective success in the pursuit of that strategic plan sets the foundation for what it seeks to achieve over the next three years. The time frame for implementation of "ATU 2025: Strategic Plan" was intentionally compressed as compared to the previous strategic plan due to the rapidly evolving nature of higher education.

ATU 2025: Strategic Plan is based upon an integrated planning model adapted from the Society for College and University Planning. As such, the plan detailed in this report represents overarching goals identified by the university community as priorities for the next three years. Additional strategic planning at the division, college and department levels will lead to the development of activities designed to support the university-wide plan and will ultimately allow for the accomplishment of the university's strategic goals.

Previously adopted plans and plans in development that provide context and influence the strategic plan include, but are not limited to: the campus master plan, the academic restructuring plan, the strategic plan for inclusive excellence, the comprehensive plan for internationalization and global education, the rolling five-year budget model, the strategic enrollment and retention plan and the plan for research and graduate studies.

Institutional assumptions that provide additional context for ATU 2025: Strategic Plan include, but are not limited to:

- Academics permeate all of Arkansas Tech's goals, tasks and activities.
- Arkansas Tech is student focused with an emphasis on access and success.
- ATU operates as one university with multiple physical locations
- The stackable nature of its courses and programs makes ATU unique among its peer institutions.
- Personal growth and developing essential skills are integral elements of student success.
- Diversity, equity and inclusion are valued and embedded in this plan.
- Arkansas Tech prioritizes upward social mobility.
- Technology and innovation are pervasive throughout this plan and essential in all aspects.
- Arkansas Tech's collective persistence, as demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic and university-wide restructuring, is a strength that will drive implementation of this plan.
- ATU's five-year rolling budget model addresses sustainability and allows the institution to maintain a sound and stable financial position.

### **Additional Historical Context**

The institution known as Arkansas Tech University was founded as the Second District Agricultural School by Act 100 of the 37<sup>th</sup> Arkansas General Assembly, which was signed into law by Gov. George Donaghey on April 1, 1909. The first day of class on the Russellville campus was Oct. 26, 1910.

The school evolved to become Arkansas Polytechnic College in 1925 and Arkansas Tech University in 1976. It has been accredited as a senior, four-year college since 1951. It has offered master's degrees since 1976.

Arkansas Valley Technical Institute merged with Arkansas Tech University and became ATU-Ozark Campus on July 1, 2003.

ATU-Ozark assumed fiscal and administrative oversight of the Area Career and Technical Center at Russellville High School and the name of the facility was changed to Arkansas Tech Career Center (ATCC) on July 1, 2011. ATCC has subsequently grown to include satellite locations in Clarksville, Danville, Ozark and Paris.

On July 25, 2014, the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) granted a change in role and scope that allowed Arkansas Tech University to offer doctoral degrees for the first time. Three years later, the first graduates from the ATU Doctor of Education in school leadership program earned their degrees.

AHECB voted on Oct. 29, 2021, to recognize the Arkansas Tech Institute as a non-formula unit of Arkansas Tech University. The Arkansas Tech Institute will be implemented and sustained through collaborative regional partnerships with public and private entities, including ATU and other higher education institutions, chambers of commerce, industry partners, K-12 public schools, the Arkansas Division of Workforce Services, adult education providers and third-party education and training providers.

As a result of the programmatic diversification it has pursued and successfully implemented, comprehensiveness in academic programming is a point of distinction for Arkansas Tech.

As of fall 2021, ATU has an overall enrollment of 9,640 students. Of those, 7,931 are served through the Russellville campus and 1,709 are served through the Ozark campus. Twenty-five percent of ATU students self-report as coming from diverse racial and/or ethnic backgrounds. There are 272 full-time faculty members on the Russellville campus and 52 full-time faculty members on the Ozark campus. ATU has a total of 784 employees, 94 of which (12 percent) selfreport as coming from diverse racial and/or ethnic backgrounds.

The operating budget at ATU for fiscal year 2022 was \$170.4 million.

# Goals

## **Goal 1: Student Access and Opportunity**

.....will provide access and opportunities to a diverse population of students.

## **Goal 2: Student Success and Support**

....will provide programs and support for the success of students.

## **Goal 3: Our People and Resources**

.....will invest in facilities and provide support for recruitment and retention of university faculty and staff.

## **Goal 4: Programs and Deliveries**

.....will provide students with quality and accessible academic and co-curricular programs.

## **Goal 5: Partnerships and Innovations**

....will strengthen the university and its offerings through innovative and engaging partnerships, internally and externally.

# Goals and Action Items

## Goal 1: Student Access and Opportunity

In keeping with the vision and mission of the institution, Arkansas Tech University will provide access and opportunities to a diverse population of students.

### Item 1:

Recruit and enroll, both domestically and internationally, first-time freshmen, transfer students, new graduate students, and students who have dropped out/stopped out.

### Item 2:

Enhance our programs and procedures in providing access to underrepresented student populations.

### Item 3:

Make educational opportunities more financially accessible to prospective and current students.

### Item 4:

Identify innovative opportunities to make college more affordable.

### Item 5:

Increase the number of incoming students who participate in ATU college preparation and outreach programs.

## Goal 2: Student Success and Support

In keeping with the vision and mission of the institution, Arkansas Tech University will provide programs and support for the success of students.

### Item 1:

Increase student persistence, retention, and graduation rates in all monitored demographic categories.

### Item 2:

Increase opportunities for high-impact practices, experiential learning, and student engagement.

### Item 3:

Provide increased support and embed opportunities to promote awareness of differing life circumstances, cultures, and world views.

### **Goal 3: Our People and Resources**

In keeping with the vision and mission of the institution, Arkansas Tech University will invest in facilities and provide support for recruitment and retention of university's faculty and staff.

**Item 1:**

Establish new and begin implementation of compensation targets.

**Item 2:**

Expand recruitment for minority candidates for faculty and staff positions.

**Item 3:**

Increase resources and opportunities for stakeholder professional development.

**Item 4:**

Expand resources and support for faculty and staff overall health and well-being.

**Item 5:**

Provide and maintain physical and digital learning/working environments that meet the needs of all stakeholders.

### **Goal 4: Programs and Deliveries**

In keeping with the vision and mission of the institution, Arkansas Tech University will provide students with quality and accessible academic and co-curricular programs.

**Item 1:**

Identify and implement academic and non-credit programs in alignment with the current market and emerging trends.

**Item 2:**

Increase the number of enhanced technology classrooms and the availability of online/virtual courses and programs.

**Item 3:** Identify and implement new pathways for course articulation and stackable credentials.

**Item 4:**

Increase co-curricular program opportunities for in-person and online students.

**Item 5:**

Create an environment that encourages innovation.

## **Goal 5: Partnerships and Innovation**

In keeping with the vision and mission of the institution, Arkansas Tech University will strengthen the university and its offerings through innovative and engaging partnerships, internally and externally.

### **Item 1:**

Form inter-and intra-campus/college/department partnerships.

### **Item 2:**

Enhance and expand community and industry partnerships.

### **Item 3:**

Develop and implement a career coaching model under the Arkansas Tech Institute in partnership with P-12 schools, business, and industry.

### **Item 4:**

Expand partnerships with other 4-year and 2-year colleges and universities, domestic and international.

### **Item 5:**

Increase the economic impact on the Arkansas River Valley region and the state.



## Strategic Plan Definition of Terms

**Articulation:** Articulation is the process of developing a formal, written agreement that identifies courses (or sequences of courses) from a "sending" campus/unit that are comparable to, or acceptable in lieu of specific course requirements at a "receiving" campus/unit.

**ATI:** Arkansas Tech Institute (ATI) is a non-formula entity that provides institutional support for collaborative partnerships that ATU builds with the community partners, P-12 schools, and business and industry to support and promote economic development in the region.

**Diversity plan:** a plan detailing the efforts and actions the university will take to create a community that is fair, inclusive of all persons, and better reflects current society, and allows each member of the university to achieve their full potential by removing barriers, addressing impacts of historical injustices, and adopting just policies, practices, and structures.

**Drop out:** A student who left the institution without earning their declared credential and has not returned.

**High Impact Practices (HIPs):** Teaching and learning practices (such as capstone courses and projects, collaborative assignments and projects, common intellectual experiences, diversity/global learning, ePortfolios, first-year seminars and experiences, internships, learning communities, service-learning, community-based learning, undergraduate research, and writing intensive courses) are designated as "high-impact practices," or HIPS, based on evidence of significant educational benefits for students who participate in them—including and especially those from demographic groups historically underserved by higher education. These practices take many different forms, depending on learner characteristics and on institutional priorities and contexts.

(Adapted from <https://www.aacu.org/trending-topics/high-impact>)

**Monitored Demographic Categories:** Including but not limited to low-income and, high-ability students, gender, first-generation, all students, race/ethnicity, age, veteran/active military.

**Non-credit programs:** Courses that generally offer no credit toward an academic degree but are taken for workforce advancement, professional development, or personal enrichment.

**P-12 Schools:** An entity that provides pre-kindergarten-12<sup>th</sup> grade education.

**Persistence:** This is an institutional metric that looks at students as a cohort. Typically defined as the ability to keep students enrolled from fall to spring.

**Retention:** This is an institutional metric that looks at students as a cohort. Typically defined as the ability to keep students enrolled from year to year.

**Short-term credentials:** Any type of educational attainment that takes less time to earn than a degree. These can be anything from a single course to a certificate program. These credentials can lead to employment or advancement opportunities or simply provide continued educational training for personal or professional benefit. Short-term credentials could be part of a stackable degree.

**Stackable credentials:** Sequence of credentials that can be accumulated over time and move an individual along an educational pathway or up a career ladder.

**Stop out:** A student who left the institution without earning their declared credential and returned at a later date.

**Student access:** The ways in which educational institutions and policies ensure—or at least strive to ensure—that students have equal and equitable opportunities to take full advantage of their education.

**Student engagement:** Experiential learning; participation in faculty research, memberships in student organizations; student employment; attendance at campus events, etc.

**Student success:** Achievement of favorable or desired student outcomes.

**Underrepresented groups:** These are groups that are less represented in a specific population

## University Strategic Planning Steering Committee: ATU: 2025

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- Dr. Julie Mikles-Schluterman, Faculty At-Large

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- Wyatt Watson, Director of Institutional Research
- Dr. Christine Austin, Director of Assessment
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