

EDWARD A. SERNA

EDUCATION

Doctor of Education in Higher Education Administration
University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL

Dissertation: The Academic Dean's Perception of Financial Management Responses to Eroding State Appropriations

Award: Outstanding Doctoral Student in Higher Education Administration

Master of Management Information Systems
Auburn University, Auburn, AL

Master of Science in Industrial Management
Clemson University, Clemson, SC

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration
Winthrop University, Rock Hill, SC

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

University of Arkansas- Fort Smith, Fort Smith, AR | 2015-Present

Founded in 1928, the University of Arkansas–Fort Smith (UAFS) is a public, four-year university located in Fort Smith, Arkansas. UAFS is a member of the University of Arkansas System, which consists of six universities and seven community colleges. Through its five colleges, UAFS provides 36 certificates, 16 associate's degrees, 35 bachelor's degrees, and 1 master's degrees as well as work-based learning and community education. The University has an annual budget of nearly \$80 million; a Foundation with assets in excess of \$97 million; an enrollment of 6,600 students; a workforce of more than 700 faculty and staff; and a base of more than 48,000 alumni. UAFS Athletics competes in 10 NCAA Division II sports. The University has an annual economic impact of over \$301 million to the greater Fort Smith region.

Chancellor (Interim) | September 2018 – Present

Serve as the chief executive officer of the University, reporting to the President and the Board of Trustees of the University of Arkansas System. Provide leadership for all activities of the University and accountable for its overall operation and success. Employ an array of vice chancellors to provide leadership and assistance in all aspects of carrying out the operation and mission of the University.

- Secured more than \$12.5m in fundraising including a \$10.8m gift to endow our honors program. Once fully realized, this endowment will generate adequate revenue to fund 60 scholarships annually. It is the third largest gift in the University's history and the largest gift from an individual donor. Also secured a \$1m corporate gift for equipment in support of our workforce development initiatives.
- Launched the UAFS Promise program. A recruitment and retention initiative focused on providing students with fixed tuition and a streamlined pathway to graduate in four years with their promise to make satisfactory academic progress and adhere to advising guidance. It is unique within Arkansas and has garnered a very positive reaction within the state.
- Gained approval for the University to offer its second master's degree. This program will be a master's in education with two areas of concentration in response to a regional workforce need.

- Provide thought leadership to the River Valley Career and Technology Board of Advisors. As the higher education representative, collaborate with the Fort Smith Regional Chamber of Commerce, Fort Smith Public Schools, and regional employers. The initiative has won critical financial and political support from the Walton Family Foundation, Arkansas Economic Development Commission, and the Governor’s Office to develop a comprehensive regional workforce development solution for the Arkansas River Valley.
- Developed a partnership agreement between the Arkansas National Guard (ANG) and UAFS in support of our Unmanned Aerial Systems degree program. The first of its kind in the state of Arkansas, the agreement will allow UAFS students to gain real world flight and data analysis experience by operating aircraft in restricted airspace at Fort Chaffee. This is a critical partnership that will provide a recruiting pipeline for ANG personnel and veterans into our programs.
- Launched a new First Year Advising Center. The University was losing nearly 40% of its first year class by the beginning of their second year. A series of student focus groups, surveys, and data analysis indicated that the quality of our first year advising was negatively impacting student persistence. All advising for first year students was centralized and an investment was made to add staff and upskill existing personnel.
- Re-chartered the Student Retention Committee expanding membership beyond Academic Affairs to include all areas of the University’s enterprise. The committee now reports jointly to the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. The new Committee has made significant progress in redesigning organizational processes that were not student friendly and negatively impacted student persistence.
- Launched the Adult Degree Completion Program. A recruitment and retention initiative focused on providing nontraditional students with a streamlined pathway to complete their baccalaureate degree. Partnered with the Fort Smith Regional Chamber of Commerce and local employers to recruit incumbent employees to the program’s inaugural class.
- Launched the Associate’s to Bachelor’s (A to B) program. A recruiting campaign for our community college 2+2 programs. The program provides for the centralized recruiting, marketing, and relationship management of the University’s portfolio of five online baccalaureate completer programs with more than 20 partner community colleges across five states.
- Launched the “First to go” initiative focused on helping our large first generation student population transition to the university. Through a series of outreach initiatives, connected first generation students with UAFS faculty, staff, and Foundation Board members who were also first generation college students. The effort has been highly effective in providing this student population with a support network in an effort to aid in their success.
- Realized a more than 20% increase in students enrolling in 15 or more credit hours per semester as a result of our “15 to Finish” initiative. This is a progression and retention initiative in response to the newly implemented performance funding formula in Arkansas.

Chief of Staff & Vice Chancellor for Strategic Initiatives | July 2017 – Present

Charged by the Chancellor to proactively identify and lead a portfolio of cross-divisional initiatives that are critical to successfully meeting strategic goals. Direct the development, tracking, and refinement of progress indicators for the implementation of the strategic plan. Develop and execute relationship management and communication strategies with key constituencies that advance the institution’s workforce and economic development missions. Represent the University at public events engaging elected officials, business leaders, and community leaders. Restructure underperforming organizational units and provide leadership to a broad cross-section of departments focused on driving revenue capture, enrollment growth, and strategic partnerships in new markets. Additional responsibilities and accomplishments include:

- In collaboration with Academic Affairs, successfully developed the first degree programs in unmanned aerial systems (UAS) in the state of Arkansas. Led the cultivation of partnerships with commercial organizations and garnered support from our state's congressional delegation to assist with the growth of the new program. Recruited the program's founding director. Developed a national recruiting strategy focused on active duty military personnel, military veterans, and commercial organizations requiring incumbent workforce training.
- Continue to collaborate with faculty to build a grant writing culture on campus that to date has resulted in greatly increased faculty participation, external partnerships, and more than \$12m in new awards to the institution.
- Leading the institution's efforts to preserve a county sales tax that generates over \$6m in annual revenue. Directed the development of an analysis, timeline, and strategy with key community stakeholder input, a roadmap of critical milestones required for a special election, and an electorate educational campaign.
- Developed the UAFS Promise Program. This is a recruitment and retention initiative focused on providing students with fixed tuition and a streamlined path to graduate in four years with their promise to make satisfactory academic progress and adhere to advising guidance.
- Developed the Adult Degree Completion Program. In collaboration with Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management, this is a recruitment and retention initiative focused on providing nontraditional students with a streamlined pathway to complete their baccalaureate degree.
- Directing the newly created Office of Student Retention. Collaborating with Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management to identify and implement institution-wide, data-driven solutions for student persistence. This includes creating the new position of Executive Director for Student Retention.
- Established the newly created Office of Corporate and Foundation Engagement in a collaborative effort with the UAFS Foundation and Academic Affairs to implement a more holistic approach to engaging our partners in strategic, long-term relationships. This includes creating the new position of Director for Corporate and Foundation Engagement.
- Directed the migration of the Office of Strategic Analytics and Institutional Research from Academic Affairs to the Office of Strategic Initiatives. The office focus has increased in scope to managing data at the institutional level including all UAFS divisions and the UAFS Foundation. This has led to greater data integrity and transparency driving a culture of data-driven decision making on campus.
- Developed an internal consulting capability focused on providing analysis with actionable recommendations to the Chancellor on core organizational challenges. To date, reports have been delivered in the areas of new student onboarding, advising, nontraditional students, and our digital presence. As part of this capability, we established a mechanism for capturing the voice of students through focus groups and surveys. This has resulted in a richer analysis with a more complete understanding of the needs of our core stakeholders. These reports have led to significant changes in our policies and procedures to better serve our students.
- In an effort to transform our International Relations Office into a profit center, redirected our recruitment efforts to focus on markets that value our more technical degree programs. To date, this effort has resulted in a substantial increase in revenue generation per student and positions the University for a significant increase in headcount. Based on newly established partnerships in Latin America and Asia, the office will be revenue positive in 2019 with projections for substantial revenue growth in subsequent years.

- Leading the newly centralized recruiting, marketing, and relationship management efforts for the University's portfolio of online baccalaureate completer programs with more than 20 partner community colleges across five states.
- Coordinating the institution's partnership efforts with the Restore Hope Alliance addressing the region's criminal recidivism and foster care crisis through grant proposal development and new educational programs aimed at serving this at risk population.
- Served on the Executive Steering Committee for the University of Arkansas System's Workday ERP selection project for 18,000 employees and 60,000 students across 20 campuses and affiliates.

Chief of Staff & Associate Vice Chancellor for External Funding | July 2016 – June 2017

Provided counsel to the Chancellor on a wide variety of executive duties, special projects, and initiatives involving the Chancellor's Office and its priorities. As an advisor and support to the Chancellor, provided coordination and liaison with Senior Staff members on matters of interest to the Chancellor; handling questions, concerns, issues and requests on the Chancellor's behalf; coordinating communications; and serving as a liaison between the Chancellor and a variety of internal and external constituencies. Led the institution's external funding efforts focused on increasing faculty proposal writing. Additional responsibilities and accomplishments include:

- Principal architect of the institution's 2017-2022 Strategic Plan. Directed key aspects of the plan's development including competitor analysis, benchmark analysis, and environmental scan. Worked collaboratively with the Chancellor and Vice Chancellors in facilitating working sessions to articulate and capture key institutional priorities in the development of the plan and implementation scorecards. Directed the development of the published plan and communication to key internal and external stakeholders.
- Leveraged business contacts in the aerospace industry to develop programming in unmanned aircraft systems. Brokered introductions between the Chancellor and aerospace executives to form partnerships, identified and contracted with UAS subject matter experts to advise the institution on establishing a program that meets an emerging need within the industry, and connected UAFS with the broader national UAS network. This effort resulted in an industry-driven workforce development solution that will place the institution on the national stage in an emerging market.
- Co-authored a winning proposal for more than \$4m over a four-year period of performance to deliver concurrent education to six areas high schools in robotics and cyber systems. The two awards from the Arkansas Department of Higher Education were the largest Regional Workforce Grant awards in the state.
- Continued to lead the institution's rapidly growing discretionary grant portfolio. Eclipsed \$37m in proposal volume for CY2017. This represents more than a tenfold increase from my first year at UAFS.

Director, Grants Management & Compliance | January 2015 – June 2016

Directed the full lifecycle of external grant activities including the identification of new funding opportunities, development of winning proposals, and delivery of contractually-compliant technical and financial reports. Fostered collaborative relationships with external organizations to form competitive grant partnerships. Worked with faculty and staff across campus to promote and support the development of highly competitive proposals to government, corporate, and private agencies. Cultivated a portfolio of nonprofit, corporate, and government funding that aligned with institutional needs and goals. Additional responsibilities and accomplishments include:

- Increased the institution's annual proposal volume from less than \$1m in CY 2014, to \$2.6m in CY 2015, and \$12.85m in CY 2016.
- Captured more than \$6m in new discretionary grants from federal, state, and foundation sources.
- Facilitated the development of a strategic planning framework for Academic Affairs. Collaborated with the Provost and Deans to define strategic objectives and performance measures, which were delivered as part of the institution's strategic plan.

Athens State University, Athens, AL | 2013-2014

Assistant Professor of Management, College of Business

Full-time business faculty teaching both online and classroom-based undergraduate courses in leadership, project management, information systems, and organizational change. Advised undergraduate business students within the College of Business.

Science & Engineering Services LLC, Huntsville, AL | 2011-2014

Program Manager II, Unmanned Aircraft Systems

Senior program manager for a portfolio of prototype development, logistics, and training contracts for the U.S. Army Project Management Unmanned Aircraft Systems (PM UAS) Office. Directed geographically dispersed teams providing logistics and training support to U.S. Army units. Developed statements of work, evaluated proposals, and negotiated/managed subcontracts across multiple delivery orders. Provided management and technical content for proposal efforts. Managed financials for the company's small and tactical UAS programs to ensure all delivery orders met organizational profit targets. Held U.S. Government Secret clearance. Additional responsibilities and accomplishments include:

- Member of the core leadership team that grew the company's small UAS (s-UAS) program portfolio from the ground up to more than \$20m in contract awards.
- Successfully delivered a three-year, \$12m program for the development and fielding of 2 prototype and 36 production, classroom-based s-UAS training systems to U.S. Army and National Guard units both domestically and internationally.

Booz Allen Hamilton Inc., Huntsville, AL | 2004-2011

Associate, Strategy & Organization

Consulting task order lead and subject matter expert in strategic planning, change management, knowledge management, and process reengineering for U.S. Army and NASA customers. Provided management and technical content for proposal efforts. Held U.S. Government Secret clearance. Additional responsibilities and accomplishments include:

- Managed a knowledge management program for the U.S. Army Materiel Command's Chief of Staff.
- Provided subject matter expertise towards the development of IT architecture and process models for the U.S. Army Aviation Field Maintenance Directorate.
- Developed an IT lifecycle management plan for the U.S. Army Aviation & Missile Research, Development & Engineering Center.
- Developed external stakeholder interview protocols, staff competency models, and a strategic planning framework as part of an organizational review of the U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command.
- Managed content development and requirements analysis efforts for the creation of a knowledge management system for the NASA Ares Project Office.

- Conducted an assessment and made recommendations to the NASA Marshall Space Flight Center's Office of the CIO (MSFC OCIO) for transformation initiatives to better position the organization to support the Constellation Program.
- Developed a 5-year integrated IT plan for the NASA MSFC OCIO.
- Managed analysis efforts of the current state architecture and made recommendations as part of an NASA-wide ERP implementation.

AFLAC Inc., Columbus, GA | 2003-2004

Project Leader, Administrative Technology Services

Senior business analyst and project leader directing junior analysts on an enterprise-wide reengineering initiative of core client management business processes. Managed efforts to identify opportunities for business process reengineering initiatives and new technology infusion. Contributed to the design of the future-state business architecture and development of a 5-year implementation roadmap including a change management and communications plan.

Circuit City Stores, Inc., Norcross, GA | 1998-2001

Logistics Manager, Distribution & Service Division

Manager for warehouse and fleet operations at two regional service centers providing logistical support to more than 40 retail locations across four states.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

For 12 years, I have taught management courses in both an online and on-ground format.

- Organization Ethics- University of Arkansas- Fort Smith (2017-2018)
- Decision Support Systems- University of Arkansas- Fort Smith (2015-2016)
- Project Management- Athens State University, Athens, AL (2014)
- Management of Change- Athens State University, Athens, AL (2012-2014)
- Principles of Management and Leadership- Athens State University, Athens, AL (2011-2014)
- Management Information Systems- Athens State University, Athens, AL (2011-2012)
- Introduction to Information Systems and Data Analysis, Troy University, Troy, AL (2011-2013)
- Computer Concepts and Applications- Troy University, Troy, AL (2007-2011)
- Advanced Microcomputer Applications- Calhoun Community College, Huntsville, AL (2009-2010)
- Microcomputer Applications- Calhoun Community College, Huntsville, AL (2007-2010)

GRANT AWARDS

As a strategic partner, I have worked with faculty to build a grant writing culture at UAFS. The result has been an increase in grant writing from less than \$1m a year to over \$37m in a matter of three years. The awards selected below represent new awards that were significant due to their origination from a new funding sources, their funding amount, or both:

- Select Federal Awards
 - U.S. Department of Education- TRIO Upward Bound Classic: \$1,341,000
 - U.S. Department of Education- TRIO Math/Science Upward Bound: \$1,341,000
 - U.S. Department of Education- TRIO Student Support Services: \$1,250,000
 - U.S. Department of Labor- Sub-award from Arkansas State University: \$100,000
 - National Endowment for the Arts- Big Read: \$15,000

- Select State Awards
 - Arkansas Department of Higher Education- Regional Workforce Grants: \$4,000,000
 - Arkansas Natural and Cultural Resources Council: \$1,217,000
 - Arkansas Department of Higher Education- Perkins : \$75,000
 - Arkansas Department of Education- Computer Science Professional Development: \$65,000
- Select Private Awards
 - Great Lakes Foundation: College Completion Grant: \$200,000
 - Great Lakes Foundation: DASH Emergency Grant: \$157,000
 - Jumpstart: \$80,000
 - Windgate Foundation: \$64,000
 - Blue & You Foundation: \$30,000
 - Walton Family Foundation: \$25,000
 - Bank of America Foundation: \$20,000
 - Verizon Foundation: \$15,000

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Since arriving at UAFS, my professional development has focused on senior leadership training and building a network of government, community, and business leaders across the state of Arkansas.

- Executive Leadership Academy, American Academic Leadership Institute, 2018-2019
- Institute for Educational Management, Graduate School of Education, Harvard University, 2017
- Leadership Arkansas, Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce, 2016-2017