



## **Evidence Document**

for Higher Learning Commission Reaccreditation

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**Document Title:** Students in 26 Arkansas Counties to Benefit from \$2.4 Million Gift

**Office of Origin:** Student Affairs

### **Document Summary:**

The Walton Family Foundation gave the university a \$2.4 million grant to launch the Accelerated Student Achievement Program (ASAP). The program serves first-generation and low-income students in 26 Arkansas counties and is a joint effort by the Center for Multicultural and Diversity Education and the Office of Graduation and Retention.

## Students in 26 Arkansas Counties to Benefit from \$2.4 Million Gift

May 19, 2016      

HELENA-WEST HELENA, Ark. – The Accelerated Student Achievement Program, or ASAP, is being established at the University of Arkansas thanks to a \$2.4 million grant from the Walton Family Foundation.

The program will serve first-generation and low-income students in 26 Arkansas counties and is a joint effort by the Center for Multicultural and Diversity Education and the Office of Graduation and Retention at the university. University of Arkansas Chancellor Joseph Steinmetz, a first-generation college graduate, made the announcement today while meeting with high school administrators in Helena-West Helena as a part of a five-day bus tour of Arkansas.

“We’re excited about this program and the opportunities it will provide to so many deserving students,” Steinmetz said. “The Walton Family Foundation understands that this is the type of gift that will not only deliver benefits to individuals and their families but to entire communities, regions and the state as a whole as well.”

The program is a four-year pilot initiative designed to accelerate academic success, college completion and career readiness among students from the Delta region.

“We are very grateful to the Walton Family Foundation for their generous support of this summer bridge program,” said Charles Robinson, vice chancellor for student affairs. “It is great to partner with an organization that shares our passion and commitment to enhancing the college retention and completion rates of these very deserving Arkansas students.”

ASAP will serve 100 first-generation and low-income incoming U of A freshmen from the following counties: Arkansas, Ashley, Chicot, Clay, Craighead, Crittenden, Cross, Desha, Drew, Greene, Independence, Jackson, Jefferson, Lawrence, Lee, Lincoln, Lonoke, Mississippi, Monroe, Phillips, Poinsett, Prairie, Randolph, St. Francis, White and Woodruff.

“I plan to take part in the program that was announced today,” said Zabrian Mitchell, a senior at Central High School in Helena-West Helena, who met Chancellor Steinmetz. “I feel like I will be able to start relationships with students and meet people on campus more quickly. The chancellor’s visit to our campus makes me feel like I can get the support I need to transition to



Photo by Eric Pipkin

*U of A Chancellor Steinmetz visits with Zabrian Mitchell.*

college. I feel assured that I can do it and make that transition from leaving a small town and go to college and be successful."

ASAP staff will identify all students from those counties who are first-generation to attend college or low-income and who qualify to be admitted to the U of A. During the four years of the program, schools in the region served by ASAP will receive targeted outreach tailored to their needs on college admissions counseling and college readiness support. ASAP-eligible students will also receive help with early advising and financial and college planning. They will also attend new student orientation at the U of A as a group.

The students selected as ASAP Scholars will earn the opportunity to complete three courses during a summer session before their freshman year at the university. Students will take a one-hour course designed to improve successful college transition and completion and two freshman-level courses in partnership with the J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences. They will continue to receive priority advising and course registration throughout their first and second years on campus. As sophomores and beyond, these scholars will be encouraged to serve as leaders and mentors to their younger peers.

**About the University of Arkansas:** The University of Arkansas provides an internationally competitive education for undergraduate and graduate students in more than 200 academic programs. The university contributes new knowledge, economic development, basic and applied research, and creative activity while also providing service to academic and professional disciplines. The Carnegie Foundation classifies the University of Arkansas among only 2 percent of universities in America that have the highest level of research activity. *U.S. News & World Report* ranks the University of Arkansas among its top American public research universities. Founded in 1871, the University of Arkansas comprises 10 colleges and schools and maintains a low student-to-faculty ratio that promotes personal attention and close mentoring.

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Congratulations and God Bless the Gifters and the Receivers. Most importantly, my prayers and hopes for a success-filled future for the young people impacted by this magnanimous gift.

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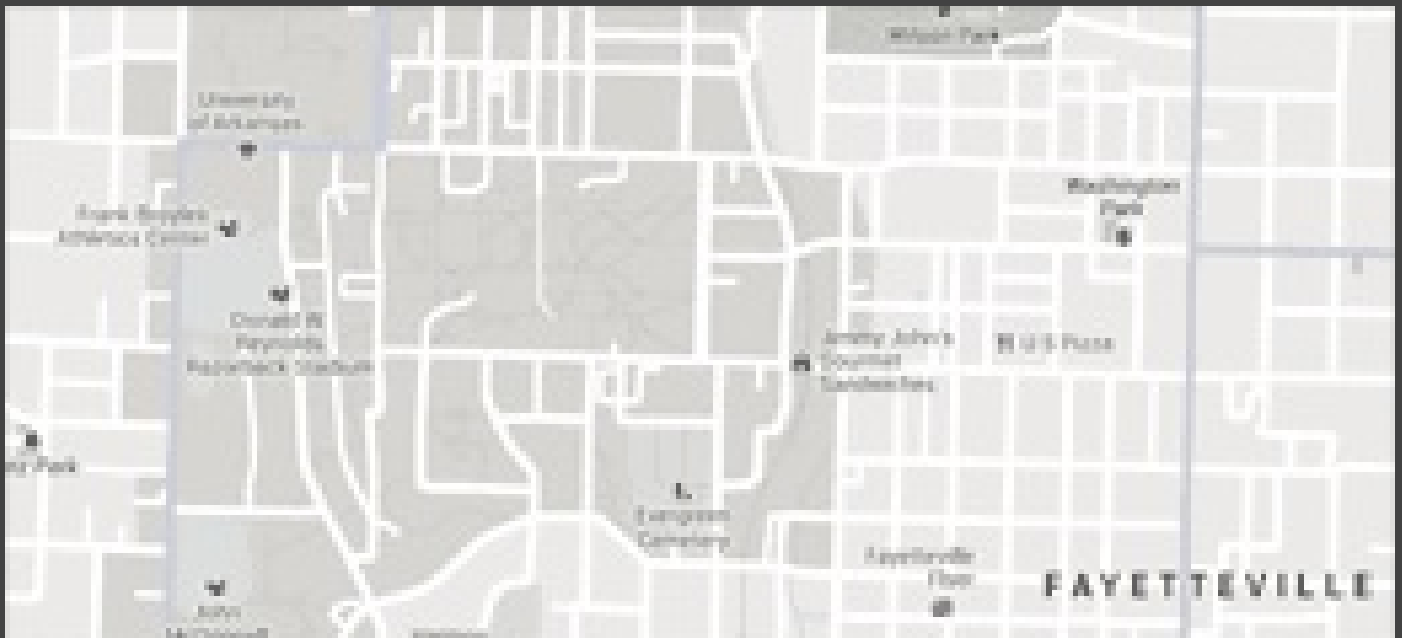
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