2026 ANNUAL TRUSTEES CONFERENCE

Connecting Higher Education Governance to Arkansas Workforce Needs

Wednesday, December 9, 2026

AGENDA

8:30 a.m. Registration and Continental Breakfast

9:00 a.m. Welcome
Dr. Ken Warden, Commissioner, Arkansas Division of Higher Education (ADHE)

9:05 a.m. Remarks
Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders

9:30 a.m. Remarks
Jacob Oliva, Secretary, Arkansas Department of Education (ADE)

10:00 a.m. Panel Discussion – Aligning Policy, Funding, and Workforce Needs: Arkansas's Higher Education Agenda for the Future
Moderator: Dr. Tina Moore, Assist. Commissioner for Workforce and Strategic Alignment, ADHE
Senator Jane English, Chair, Senate Education Committee
Representative Keith Brooks, Chair, House Education Committee
Danny Games, Vice President of Business and Economic Dev., Entergy Arkansas
Justin Majors, Director, Arkansas Industry Connect

10:45 a.m. Focusing Board Decisions on Student Outcomes and Workforce Needs
Dr. Amber Garrison Duncan, Executive Vice President, C-BEN

11:30 a.m. Panel Discussion – Universities and the Role of Workforce Education
Moderator: Dr. Ken Warden, Commissioner, ADHE
General Jay Silveria, President, University of Arkansas System
Dr. Todd Shields, President, Arkansas State University System
Dr. Houston Davis, President, University of Central Arkansas
Richard Dunsworth, President, University of the Ozarks

12:15 p.m. Lunch/Keynote Speaker
Higher Education National Landscape and Trends
Dr. Rob Anderson, President, State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO)

1:00 p.m. Governance, Compliance, and Accountability: What Trustees Need to Know
Thomas Pennington, Professor of Legal Studies, Arkansas Tech University

1:45 p.m. Panel Discussion - What Employers Wish Trustees Knew
Moderator: Mason Campbell, Chief Academic Officer, ADHE
Tammy Jones, Chief Nursing Officer, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences
Steve Presley, VP and General Manager, Virco Manufacturing Corp.
Cody Waits, Executive Director, Arkansas Workforce Connections
Shannon Newton, President, Arkansas Trucking Association

2:45 p.m. Higher Education Update
Dr. Ken Warden, Commissioner, Division of Higher Education (DHE)

3:30 p.m. Closing Remarks/Adjournment
Dr. Jim Carr, Chair, Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board