

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, Division of Higher Education (DHE)
- 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
- 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
- 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
- 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