Academic Program Proposals for January 23, 2026

The following is a list of academic program proposals being reviewed for possible consideration for approval at the January 23, 2026, Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board meeting. The summary contents are subject to change. The finalized version of the summaries will be available in the board book.

The institution's name, program title, and program summary are listed below. Contact ADHE for a copy of the proposals.

If you have concerns, objections, questions, or comments concerning a specific proposal, please send them to **Mason Campbell, Assistant Commissioner of Academic Affairs** (mason.campbell@adhe.edu) no later than January 2, 2026.

ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY BEEBE
Technical Certificate in Precision Agriculture
Certificate of Proficiency in Precision Agriculture

The administration of Arkansas State University Beebe (ASUB) and Board of Trustees of the Arkansas State University System request approval to offer the Technical Certificate in Precision Agriculture and Certificate of Proficiency in Precision Agriculture, effective Spring 2026.

ASUB is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, and the proposed program is within the role and scope established for the institution. The Arkansas State University System Board of Trustees approved the program on September 12, 2025.

Program Description

The proposed Precision Agriculture program consists of a 31-credit-hour Technical Certificate and a 9-credit-hour Certificate of Proficiency both designed to meet growing industry needs in technology-driven farming and agri-technology. This program's curriculum integrates plant and soil science, geospatial technologies, and agricultural systems with specialized training in GPS-guided equipment, unmanned aerial vehicles, control systems, and livestock monitoring tools. This blend of coursework and application will prepare students for entry-level employment in precision agriculture operations or for continued study in related degree programs.

The Certificate of Proficiency in Precision Agriculture is a stackable credential that applies directly toward the Technical Certificate in Precision Agriculture. Students wishing to further their education may apply these credentials toward ASUB's Associate of Applied Science in Agricultural Equipment Technology or Associate of Science in Agriculture, or as a transferable option into Arkansas State University's Bachelor of Science in Agriculture in GIS and Precision Agriculture.

One full-time faculty member will be hired and will join a team of experienced and credentialed faculty. The proposed program will utilize existing resources including

ASUB's 150-acre on-site farm. Additional equipment will be purchased and housed in a newly constructed instructional storage facility.

Program Need

Agriculture remains Arkansas's leading industry, generating approximately $14 billion in annual market value. However, the state has experienced a decline of more than 20 percent in the number of farms since 2002, underscoring the pressing need for innovation and increased productivity within the sector. The emergence of precision agriculture, the application of advanced technologies such as GPS, GIS, data analytics, automation, and unmanned aerial systems, has transformed agricultural practices nationwide. Despite this advancement, Arkansas lacks a dedicated credentialing pathway to prepare students and incumbent workers for careers in this evolving field.

Traditional labor market information proved to be inconclusive based on two factors: the absence of a well-defined Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) code that encompasses the diverseness of the Precision Agriculture field and the predominance of family-owned farms constrains the availability of occupational data specific to precision agriculture.

To assess program need, ASUB surveyed a diverse group of agricultural organizations and businesses, including Greenway Equipment, AgHeritage, Riceland Foods, Farm Bureau Insurance, and other independent producers and cooperatives. This group of stakeholders confirmed the need for workforce-ready individuals trained in precision agriculture. ASUB received several letters of support and can be found in the full proposal.

Program Expenditures and Funding

In 2025, ASUB was awarded a $2.3 million Higher Industry Readiness through Education Development (HIRED) grant to support the design and implementation of a state-of-the-art Precision Agriculture Center. These funds will support a wide range of strategic investments including the hiring of one full-time faculty member, part-time faculty, professional development and travel, consulting services, and marketing and outreach. A significant portion of the grant will support the acquisition of advanced instructional equipment, such as a $261,000 tractor, a $347,000 sprayer, and $61,000 in computer lab technology. These expenditures will enhance hands-on training and applied learning and will support long-term sustainability of the proposed program.

The grant will be implemented over a two-year period, beginning January 2025 and concluding in December 2026. After the HIRED grant ends, ASUB will assume full responsibility for the new precision agriculture faculty member's salary and fringe benefits as well as ongoing minor program supplies which will be integrated into the Agriculture Department and Farm budgets within the Division of Career Education.

Program Duplication

While there are 70+ agriculture programs offered across all award types at many Arkansas public institutions, there are no active certificate programs similar to the proposed Certificate of Proficiency and Technical Certificate in Precision Agriculture.

Program Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion, a student will be able to:

1. Apply geospatial technologies such as GPS, GIS, and remote sensing to collect, analyze, and interpret agricultural data for crop and livestock systems.
2. Operate and maintain precision agriculture equipment and software, including UAVs, variable rate applicators, planting monitors, and livestock sensors.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of agronomic and livestock production principles, and how they integrate with precision technologies to improve efficiency and sustainability.
4. Evaluate and troubleshoot precision systems, including application control, sensor networks, and automated monitoring tools, to ensure optimal performance in agricultural operations.
5. Communicate technical information effectively, using appropriate terminology and digital tools to support decision-making in precision agriculture environments.

Program Enrollment and Graduation Projections

Technical Certificate in Precision Agriculture		
Academic Year	**Projected Enrollment**	**Projected Graduates**
2025 – 2026	15	
2026 – 2027	25	10
2027 – 2028	35	17
2028 – 2029	40	24
2029 – 2030	50	28

Certificate of Proficiency in Precision Agriculture		
Academic Year	**Projected Enrollment**	**Projected Graduates**
2025 – 2026	15	10
2026 – 2027	25	18
2027 – 2028	35	25
2028 – 2029	40	28
2029 – 2030	50	36

Program Curriculum

Technical Certificate in Precision Agriculture

ENG 1003	Freshman English I
GEOG 1233	Introduction to Geographic Information Systems
MATH 1013	Technical Math or higher
JDAT 1104	Precision Farming Technologies
PSSC 2803	Field Crops
ASTM 1XX3	*Introduction to Precision Agriculture*
ASTM 1XX3	*Precision Livestock Applications*
ASTM 1XX3	*Unmanned Aerial Vehicles in Precision Agriculture*
ASTM 2XX3	*Application Control*
ASTM 1XX3	*Planting and Harvesting Systems*
ASTM 2XX3	*Precision Farming with Farm Simulator*

Italics – New Courses

Certificate of Proficiency in Precision Agriculture

ASTM 1XX3	*Introduction to Precision Agriculture*

Complete 6 credit hours from the following:

JDAT 1104	Precision Farming Technologies
GEOG 1233	Introduction to Geographic Information Systems
ASTM 1XX3	*Precision Livestock Applications*
ASTM 1XX3	*Unmanned Aerial Vehicles in Precision Agriculture*
ASTM 2XX3	*Application Control*
ASTM 1XX3	*Planting and Harvesting Systems*
ASTM 2XX3	*Precision Farming with Farm Simulator*

Italics – New Courses

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE BATESVILLE
Associate of Applied Science in Farm and Ranch Management
Technical Certificate in Precision Agriculture
Certificate of Proficiency in Agriculture Drone Technology

The administration of the University of Arkansas Community College Batesville (UACCB) and Board of Trustees of the University of Arkansas System request approval to offer the Associate of Applied Science in Farm and Ranch Management (CIP 01.0104), Technical Certificate in Precision Agriculture (CIP 01.0000), and the Certificate of Proficiency in Agriculture Drone Technology (CIP 49.0109), effective Fall 2026.

UACCB is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, and the proposed program is within the role and scope established for the institution. The University of Arkansas System Board of Trustees approved the program on November 19, 2025.

Program Description

The proposed Farm and Ranch Management program will provide students with stackable credentials that integrate applied learning with essential technical and business competencies, preparing graduates to successfully operate or support modern

farm and ranch enterprises. The 60-credit-hour Associate of Applied Science in Farm and Ranch Management, a primarily hands-on program, will prepare students to manage crop or livestock production by integrating best practices of agriculture operation with practical tools to start or manage a small-scale farm business. The 30-credit-hour Technical Certificate in Precision Agriculture will provide students with foundational knowledge in safety principles and practices, equipment operation, maintenance, and repair, resource management, efficiency, and sustainability. The 12-credit-hour Certificate of Proficiency in Agriculture Drone Technology offers essential training in agricultural drone operations and precision agriculture tools. Together, these credentials will prepare graduates for entry-level employment in precision agriculture, farm operations, and related fields, while supporting a skilled workforce capable of meeting the technological demands of modern agriculture.

Although UACCB offers an Associate of Science in Agriculture Business and Associate of Science in Agriculture Technology, these programs were designed as transfer pathways for students seeking a bachelor's degree. In contrast, the proposed Farm and Ranch Management program is an applied, workforce-oriented program intended to lead directly to employment or advancement within agricultural production settings rather than transfer into a four-year program.

One full-time faculty member and one adjunct faculty member will be sufficient for the first three years of enrollment. However, in year four, UACCB will hire one additional full-time faculty member. The proposed program will utilize existing resources including UACCB’s two farms totaling 259 acres which includes a 100,000 square foot building. Additional equipment will be purchased through the HIRED grant received in November 2024.

Program Need

With over 41,000 farms statewide averaging 324 acres, agriculture remains Arkansas’s leading industry by generating approximately $14 billion in annual market value and employing over 250,000 people annually. In Independence County, where UACCB is located, agriculture and forestry is one of the top five industries for employment, accounting for 8.3% of employed residents. With an industry led by animal and crop production, UACCB is positioned to serve both with crop farming of the Delta to the east and the livestock operations of the Ozark foothills to the west.

Traditional labor market information proved to be inconclusive based on the absence of a well-defined Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) code that encompasses the diverseness of agriculture management when paired with technology like precision agriculture. Additionally, the predominance of family-owned farms constrains the availability of occupational data. This was especially evident in the reporting of median salaries for current employees in this industry.

Program Expenditures and Funding

In December 2023, UACCB received a $277,440 National Science Foundation grant supporting drone technology and precision agriculture, which subsequently served as the catalyst for the revitalization of the College's agriculture program. The following year in November 2024, UACCB also received a $5 million Higher Industry Readiness through Education Development (HIRED) grant to support its workforce training program focused on precision agriculture, which aims to enhance farming efficiency and productivity. Together with regional employer and community contributions, these funds will support a wide range of strategic investments including the hiring of one full-time faculty member, renovation of existing facilities to include classrooms, a green house, a command center, a conference room, and instructional equipment for the Farm and Ranch Management program.

With both grants concluding in late 2026, UACCB will assume full responsibility for the new faculty member's salary and fringe benefits as well as ongoing minor program supplies which will be integrated into the Skilled Trades and Agriculture department budgets.

Program Duplication

While there are 70+ agriculture programs offered across all award types at many Arkansas public institutions, there are no active associate-level or certificate-level credentials similar to the proposed Farm and Ranch Management program.

Program Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion, a student will be able to:

1. Operate and maintain agricultural equipment and machinery safely while applying industry safety standards and protocols.
2. Apply precision agriculture technologies including GPS, GIS, remote sensing, and data management tools to optimize crop and livestock production systems.
3. Implement integrated crop or livestock management practices including nutrient management, pest control, and sustainable production strategies.
4. Develop and analyze farm business plans, financial statements, and production records to support data-driven management decisions.
5. Demonstrate technical proficiency within a chosen concentration area through applied projects and hands-on assessments.

Program Enrollment and Graduation Projections

Associate of Applied Science in Farm & Ranch Management		
Academic Year	**Projected Enrollment**	**Projected Graduates**
2026 – 2027	20	
2027 – 2028	40	13
2028 – 2029	65	26
2029 – 2030	85	55
2030 – 2031	100	65

Technical Certificate in Precision Agriculture		
Academic Year	**Projected Enrollment**	**Projected Graduates**
2026 – 2027	10	
2027 – 2028	20	7
2028 – 2029	35	14
2029 – 2030	45	29
2030 – 2031	60	39

Certificate of Proficiency in Agriculture Drone Technology		
Academic Year	**Projected Enrollment**	**Projected Graduates**
2026 – 2027	8	
2027 – 2028	14	5
2028 – 2029	20	8
2029 – 2030	26	17
2030 – 2031	32	21

Program Curriculum

Associate of Applied Science in Farm & Ranch Management

General Education

ENGL 20203 Technical Writing for the Workplace
MATH 10103 Technical Math
SPCH 10003 Oral Communication
PLSC 20003 United States Government OR
SOCI 10103 Sociology

Agriculture Core

AGRI 19003 Making Connections in Agriculture
AGRI 10103 Farm and Ranch Safety
AGRI 10203 Agriculture Mechanics and Equipment
AGRI 20103 Farm Operations and Management
AGRI 11103 Agriculture Operations I
AGRI 11203 Agriculture Operations II
AGRI 11303 Agriculture Operations III

BUSI 26543 Internship

Precision Agriculture

AGRI 12103 Precision Agriculture I
AGRI 22103 Precision Agriculture II
AGRI 14103 Unmanned Aerial Systems
AGRI 24103 Remote Sensing

Agriculture Emphasis – choose one

AGRI 28103 Livestock Production
AGRI 27103 Poultry
AGRI 28203 Animal Nutrition
AGRI 28303 Animal Health

OR

AGRI 26103 Crop Production
CSES 20203 Soils
AGRI 26203 Crop Management
AGRI 26303 Pest Management

Italics – New Courses

Technical Certificate in Precision Agriculture

General Education

ENGL 20203 Writing for the Workplace
MATH 10103 Technical Math
SPCH 10003 Oral Communication

Precision Agriculture

AGRI 19003 Making Connections in Agriculture
AGRI 10103 Farm and Ranch Safety
AGRI 11103 Agriculture Operations I
AGRI 11203 Agriculture Operations II
AGRI 12103 Precision Agriculture I
AGRI 28103 Livestock Production OR
AGRI 26103 Crop Production
AGRI 10203 Agriculture Mechanics and Equipment

Italics – New Courses

Certificate of Proficiency in Agriculture Drone Technology

AGRI 19003 Making Connections in Agriculture
AGRI 12103 Precision Agriculture I
AGRI 14103 Unmanned Aerial Systems
AGRI 24103 Remote Sensing

Italics – New Courses

OUT-OF-STATE AND ARKANSAS PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS

The following applications may be reviewed by ADHE for possible consideration at the AHECB meeting in January 2026.

Initial Program Certifications – Distance Technology

Evangel University, Springfield, Missouri
Associate of Applied Science in Accounting
Associate of Applied Science in Addiction Studies
Bachelor of Science in Accounting
Bachelor of Science in Addiction Studies
Bachelor of Science in Biology
Bachelor of Science in Psychology
Bachelor of Science in Social Science
Master of Science in Sport Performance

San Jose State University, San Jose, California
Master of Science in Instructional Design and Technology
Master of Science in Speech Language Pathology

Walden University, Minneapolis, Minnesota
Bachelor of Science in Integrative Health

Initial Program Certifications – Arkansas Campus
Arkansas Colleges of Health Education, Fort Smith, Arkansas
Doctor of Executive Leadership
Doctor of Medical Science

Initial Program Certifications – New Institution
Community Christian College, Quartzsite, Arizona
Associate of Arts in Liberal Arts

Southwest University at El Paso, El Paso, Texas
Associate of Applied Science in Business Management in Healthcare Support Systems
Bachelor of Science in Healthcare Leadership Management