Academic Program Proposals for July 25, 2025

The following is a list of academic program proposals being reviewed for possible consideration for approval at the July 25, 2025, 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 July 1, 2025.

NORTH ARKANSAS COLLEGE
Certificate of Proficiency in Uncrewed Aerial Systems and
Technical Certificate in Uncrewed Aerial Systems and Data Applications

The administration and Board of Trustees of North Arkansas College (NAC) request approval to offer the Certificate of Proficiency in Uncrewed Aerial Systems and Technical Certificate in Uncrewed Aerial Systems and Data Applications, effective Fall 2025.

NAC is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and the proposed program is within the role and scope established for the institution. The North Arkansas College Board of Trustees approved the program on March 13, 2025.

Program Description

Developed with support from a three-year NSF grant, the proposed program in Uncrewed Aerial Systems and Data Applications will prepare students for careers in commercial drone operation, data analysis, and related emerging applications across industries such as agriculture, criminal justice, digital media, real estate, and construction. Graduates will earn their FAA Part 107 certification and gain skills in mission planning, drone maintenance, aerial data analysis, business practices, and cybersecurity considerations.

The proposed 16 credit hour, 100% online Certificate of Proficiency in Uncrewed Aerial Systems will focus on the skills necessary to operate and troubleshoot the various types of drones and equip students with the knowledge to apply industry regulations and standards to ensure safe, responsible drone use in commercial, governmental, and recreational environments. The proposed 31-32 credit hour Technical Certificate in Uncrewed Aerial Systems and Data Application aims to educate students on the analysis, interpretation, and application of aerial data, effective communication, and the evaluation of ethical issues, privacy implications, and cybersecurity threats associated with drone use in different professional contexts.

All faculty, equipment, and instructional resources will be funded through the NSF grant, ensuring no new costs or allocations will be required. Existing facilities, including classrooms, laboratories, and mobile drone training enclosure, will be utilized.

Program Need

ADHE was unable to provide NAC with usable data to support the creation of the proposed program. This was due, in part, to the novelty of the program and the lack of an existing relationship between the CIP code and the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) Code, as defined by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. ADHE consulted the AR Data team's Chief Research Officer at the Arkansas Department of Transformation and Shared Services and requested data showing program need. They were also unable to provide labor market information based on current job openings. However, they were able to provide historical data from similar programs that included the number of completers and their employment rate upon exiting the program.

In September 2023, North Arkansas College faculty and administration met with regional employers to discuss current and anticipated Uncrewed Aerial System (UAS) workforce needs. Three employers (Harrison Police Department, Entergy, and Garver USA) predicted a cumulative need for 21-26 new drone workers in the region within the next 3 years. Additionally, in April 2025, a follow-up survey was given to three regional employers (UVT – Unmanned Vehicle Technologies, MW Claims, and Garver USA) who predicted a cumulative need for 8-11 new UAS workers over the next year and 21-27 new UAS workers over the next three years.

NAC received letters of support from local and regional employers expressing their support of the proposed program. These letters can be found in the full proposal.

Program Expenditures and Funding

NAC received a three-year National Science Foundation (NSF) grant in the amount of $582,171. These funds will cover faculty development, personnel expenses for adjunct faculty, and instructional equipment needed for the proposed program. Existing facilities will be utilized.

Program Duplication

The University of Arkansas Fort Smith offers both a Certificate of Proficiency in Unmanned Aerial Systems and a Technical Certificate in Unmanned Aerial Systems Data Analysis, as well as an additional Technical Certificate in Unmanned Aerial Systems Flight Operations and an Associate of Applied Science in UAS. Although these programs are active and currently meet ADHE viability standards, UAFS reported only one graduate in the Associate of Applied Science degree and no enrolled/declared students or graduates for the CP and two TCs for AY2024.

Arkansas Tech University offers a Certificate of Proficiency in Small Unmanned Aerial Systems (sUAS), created in AY2024. Henderson State University offers a Certificate of

Proficiency in Small Unmanned Aerial Systems that currently meets ADHE viability standards. Ozarka College deleted their Certificate of Proficiency in Small Unmanned Aerial Systems in AY2020 after graduating no students since the program's inception in AY2017.

Program Learning Outcomes

Certificate of Proficiency in Uncrewed Aerial Systems
Upon successful completion, a student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate proficiency in the operation, maintenance, and troubleshooting of uncrewed aerial systems (UAS), including multi-rotor and fixed-wing drones, for various applications.
2. Apply FAA Part 107 regulations and industry standards to ensure safe and legal drone operations in commercial, governmental, and recreational settings.

Technical Certificate in Uncrewed Aerial Systems and Data Applications
Upon successful completion, a student will be able to:

1. Analyze and interpret aerial data collected from drone missions for applications such as mapping, surveying, photography, and environmental monitoring
2. Communicate technical information effectively in written reports, flight logs, and verbal briefings, ensuring clarity in regulatory compliance, operational planning, and client interactions.
3. Evaluate ethical considerations, privacy concerns, and cybersecurity risks in the use of drone technology across various industries.

Program Enrollment and Graduation Projections

Certificate of Proficiency in Uncrewed Aerial Systems		
Academic Year	Projected Enrollment	Projected Graduates
2025-2026	5	4
2026-2027	12	9
2027-2027	20	18
2028-2029	22	20
2029-2030	25	23

Technical Certificate in Uncrewed Aerial Systems and Data Applications		
Academic Year	Projected Enrollment	Projected Graduates
2025-2026	3	3
2026-2027	9	8
2027-2027	18	16
2028-2029	20	17
2029-2030	23	20

Program Curriculum

Certificate of Proficiency in Uncrewed Aerial Systems
CIT 1153 Introduction to Cybersecurity

ENGL 1013 English Composition I
UAS 1004 UAS Multi-Rotor Operations
UAS 1013 UAS Safety & Maintenance
UAS 1023 Aviation Weather
Italics – New Courses

Technical Certificate in Uncrewed Aerial Systems and Data Applications
CIT 1153 Introduction to Cybersecurity
ENGL 1013 English Composition I
UAS 1004 UAS Multi-Rotor Operations
UAS 1013 UAS Safety & Maintenance
UAS 1023 Aviation Weather
UAS 1103 UAS Remote Sensing
CIS 1123 Introduction to GIS
ECON 2313 Principles of Macroeconomics
TECH 1013 Technical Math or higher
Choose one of the following Electives – 3 credit hours
MDIA 1113 Introduction to Creative Media
AGRI 2313 Introduction to Agribusiness
MDIA 2253 Video Editing
AJ 1003 Intro to Criminal Justice
BIOL 1314 Field Biology
DVSC 1003 Introduction to Data Science
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 April 2025.

Arkansas Colleges of Health Education, Fort Smith, Arkansas
Master of Medical Science

Claremont Lincoln University, Claremont, California
Bachelor of Arts in Organizational Leadership
Master of Arts in Healthcare Administration
Master of Arts in Human Resources Management
Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership
Master of Arts in Public Administration
Master of Arts in Social Impact
Master of Arts in Sustainability Leadership

Evangel University, Springfield, Missouri
Master of Science in School Counseling
Master of Science in Clinical Mental Health Counseling

Pepperdine University, Malibu, California
Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT)
Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology program (Speech)
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership (EdD)

University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California
Master of Science in Spatial Economics and Data Analysis
Doctor of Education in Mental Health Leadership