

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sept. 24, 2026

CONTACT: Katie Emerson

(909) 324-0345

katharine.emerson@vmapr.com

Going for the Gold: UACCB Becomes Second Caring Campus Institution to Earn Gold Certification

LONG BEACH, CA – The University of Arkansas Community College at Batesville (UACCB) is the second institution nationwide to earn gold Caring Campus Certification, distinguishing the college for its commitment to implementing and sustaining a culture of care that extends across the entire campus and empowers every student to succeed.

When Director of Institutional Research and Caring Campus Task Force lead Rhonda Loper was tasked with revitalizing the college's Caring Campus efforts in 2024, her immediate goal was to go for gold.

"To me, nothing is more important than caring," Loper said. "My goal from the very beginning was achieving that gold standard, and everyone across our entire campus knew we were going for the gold. It has been unbelievable to finally achieve it after months of making sure we were doing everything we could. Earning gold tells the story of UACCB and the outstanding job we're doing to care for our students and campus community."

UACCB has implemented numerous strategies to make care part of the everyday campus experience. In addition to the traditional Caring Campus commitments of wearing nametags to increase visibility, following the 10-foot rule to greet and help anyone in a 10-foot radius, making warm referrals by walking people to their destinations, and creating a cross-department reference guide, UACCB staff have developed their own commitments tailored to the campus community.

The college has replaced the term "visitors" with "guests," building on the idea that a visitor is someone who shows up, while a guest is someone who you prepare to host. UACCB also creates reserved parking signs for guests, expanded the 10-foot rule into a "Within Eyesight" commitment, uses a "call ahead" practice to create seamless transitions for students in need of help, and creates banners and electronic signage for events to ensure guests receive a special welcome.

Care extends to employees, too. UACCB has several employee recognition initiatives, including a birthday tradition in which a balloon and dessert are hand-delivered to every employee on their birthday.

"Nobody wants to work on their birthday, and this is just a small token to show our employees we care about them too," Loper said. "Implementing employee shout-outs, selecting a Caring Campus Champion each semester, and sending cards to staff or faculty members having a hard time helps to promote that culture of care even more and empowers them to, in turn, care for our students."

Employees are encouraged to get involved with student organizations, recruiting events, and other campus activities, helping ensure Caring Campus commitments are visible at every event.

MORE

Students have also played a role in fostering a caring environment by passing out flowers to every student, staff, and faculty member in honor of Suicide Prevention Month, blanketing the campus in care.

UACCB has also embedded Caring Campus into its institutional practices through job descriptions, new employee orientations, and all-campus meetings at the beginning of each semester. Care is also built into the college's strategic plan as one of its goals and values.

"The success of our students is telling the story of the success of Caring Campus," Loper said. "We're a small institution, but we saw the highest enrollment we've had in six years this past fall. We also reported high retention and graduation rates last school year."

Loper said Caring Campus has helped UACCB strengthen its ability to identify and respond to students' needs. After survey data showed students were experiencing food insecurity, the college opened free food stations across campus. UACCB also partnered with White River Health to help faculty and staff better understand how to identify and more quickly support those in need. The college's new HyFlex courses provide additional flexibility for students balancing college, work, and personal responsibilities.

"Congratulations to UACCB for this incredible and well-deserved achievement," Caring Campus CEO Ken Sherwood said. "UACCB has demonstrated what it means to make care an integral part of the campus experience, and the college's commitment to continually finding new ways to support students and employees is truly inspiring."

[Caring Campus Network](#) (CCN) members can earn [Caring Campus Certification](#), showcasing their institution's commitment to care. CCN members also receive discounted registration rates for the [Caring Campus Conference 2026: Developing a Legacy of Impact](#), taking place Nov. 11-13 in Nashville. Loper will be presenting at the conference about UACCB's journey to gold Certification.

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

IEBC_UACCB1: The University of Arkansas Community College at Batesville (UACCB) is the second institution to earn gold Caring Campus Certification, distinguishing the college for its commitment to creating a culture of care and support that extends across the entire campus.

IEBC_UACCB2: Students at UACCB passed out flowers to every student, staff, and faculty member in honor of Suicide Prevention Month, blanketing the campus in care. UACCB is the second Caring Campus to earn gold certification.

IEBC_UACCB3: UACCB has several employee recognition initiatives, including a birthday tradition in which a balloon and dessert are hand-delivered to every employee on their birthday.

###



(562) 688-5721



iebcnow.org



3711 Long Beach Blvd., Suite 6044 | Long Beach, CA 90807