

April 23, 2025

The Honorable Mindy McAlindon
Arkansas House of Representatives
P.O. Box 324
Centeron, AR 72719-0324

The Honorable Jim Dotson
Arkansas State Senate
P.O. Box 651
Bentonville, 72712

Dear Representative McAlindon and Senator Dotson,

On behalf of the James G. Martin Center for Academic Renewal, thank you for your sponsorship and of House Bill 1696, the Strengthening Arkansas Education Act. Your leadership in enacting this legislation demonstrates a commendable commitment to enhancing the quality and coherence of higher education in Arkansas.

By establishing a comprehensive 35-semester credit hour core curriculum across state-supported institutions, HB1696 ensures that all baccalaureate graduates receive a well-rounded education grounded in essential disciplines. The inclusion of courses in English composition, mathematics, laboratory sciences, humanities, social sciences, U.S. history and government, economics, and visual arts reflects a thoughtful approach to cultivating informed and engaged citizens. Emphasizing foundational themes such as Western liberty, republican self-government, and constitutional principles further reinforces the Act's alignment with the core values of our democratic society.

This legislation not only promotes academic rigor and intellectual diversity but also fosters a shared educational experience that prepares students for meaningful participation in civic life. It is gratifying to observe the similarities between Arkansas House Bill 1696 and the Martin Center's model General Education Act.

We commend your dedication to advancing policies that prioritize educational excellence and civic responsibility. Thank you again for your leadership and unwavering commitment to the betterment of higher education in Arkansas.

Sincerely,



Jenna A. Robinson
President