Department of Rhetoric and Writing at UALR Strategic Plan SWOT Analysis

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	Strengths	Weaknesses
	Positive	Negative
INTERNAL	▪ **Quality of faculty**: Dedicated to both the program and students.[1] ▪ **Quality of program**:[2] ▪ **Social media presence**: Online engagement with and support of current students.[3] ▪ **Part of UA system**: Benefits from a shared history of excellence in education.[4] ▪ **State funding**: Department is not completely reliant on private funding.	▪ **Reliance on state funding**: Changes in funding metrics makes department vulnerable and in reaction mode.[5] ▪ **Enrollment demographics fluctuations**: Likely enrollment with largest demographic fluctuates with economy.[6]
	Opportunities	Threats
EXTERNAL	▪ **Department website**: Update to immediately engage prospective students.[7] ▪ **Social media presence**: Keep active and keep interesting.[8] ▪ **Enrollment demographics**: Use data to created targeted ad campaign.[9][10] ▪ **Military-Friendly designation**: Use in targeted ad campaign.[11] ▪ **Carnegie classification**: Use in targeted ad campaign.[12] ▪ **Rankings**: Use in targeted ad campaign.[13] ▪ **UALR Handshake**: Use in targeted ad campaign.[14]	▪ **Enrollment trends**: The trend is currently downward across U.S.[15] ▪ **Federal/state funding metrics**: Latest Arkansas funding metrics having a negative impact on rhetoric department.[16] ▪ **Competition**: Bureau of Labor Statistics data will motivate more institutions to offer writing programs and/or to improve programs.[17]

Endnotes

1. Faculty dedicated to the program and to students are a strength. This fact could be captured in student testimonials and strategically placed on department landing page.

2. It is also the only Bachelor of Arts degree in Professional and Technical Writing (PTW) in the state of Arkansas. See "Undergraduate" on UALR official website, accessed November 14, 2018, https://ualr.edu/rhetoric/up/.

3. See the Facebook Rhetoric and Writing at UALR group; Facebook Rhetoric and Writing at UA Little Rock page; and RhetoricWritingUALR on Twitter.

4. See also *University of Arkansas System: UA System Project One* at https://www.uasys.edu/system-office/ua-system-erp-project/. Project One is the "new hub for all information, timelines and progress about the UA System's effort to bring together all of its campuses under one data exchange system. Functional scope will include human capital and student administration."

5. Barbara L'Eplattenier, "Two things: UALR and 12.1 grades/comments," announcement, Blackboard, November 18, 2018 2:53 p.m. Since the non-traditional student demographic is an important market, but is also sensitive to fluctuations in the economy, it is a weakness. If, "[w]hen the economy is good . . . enrollment drops; when the economy is bad, . . . enrollment booms," the department needs to address getting ahead of this. See also note **Error! Bookmark not defined.**.

6. Ibid.

7. The department website directly represents to prospective students the essence of the program. There is an opportunity to update the site in ways that will make it more appealing to prospective students.

8. For example, the latest post on the department's Twitter account is July 17.

9. Barbara L'Eplattenier, "Two things: UALR and 12.1 grades/comments," announcement, Blackboard, November 18, 2018 2:53 p.m. There is an opportunity to increase efforts to target non-traditionally-aged college students in advertising campaigns during periods when the economy is booming and non-traditional numbers are normally down. See also note **Error! Bookmark not defined.**.

10. See also UALR's webpage "Non-Traditional Students," accessed November 27, 2018, https://ualr.edu/campuslife/ntsp/. There is an opportunity to incorporate this rhetoric in targeted advertising, making it more engaging to its audiences.

11. "Quick Facts," on the UALR official website, accessed November 14, 2018, https://ualr.edu/administration/fast-facts/. UALR has maintained a Military-Friendly designation for the past 7 years. According to Military.com, Little Rock Air Force Base has "a population of approximately 30,000." Since the base sits just 17 miles northeast of Little Rock, there is an opportunity to direct

targeted marketing at this demographic. See "Little Rock Air Force Base Guide" at
https://www.military.com/base-guide/little-rock-air-force-base.

12. "Quick Facts," on UALR official website, accessed November 14, 2018, https://ualr.edu/administration/fast-facts/. "UA Little Rock is one of 361 U.S. colleges and universities with Carnegie Community Engagement Classification and the only university in Arkansas with this designation." There is an opportunity to incorporate this quality-control standard in advertising.

13. "Rankings" on *Quick Facts* on UALR official website, accessed November 14, 2017, https://ualr.edu/administration/fast-facts/. Rankings are for UALR as a whole and include the ranking, "Top Online Colleges for 2018 (ranked 11th) by SR Education Group."

14. "UA Little Rock to Launch New Online Career Network for Students Dec. 4," on UALR official website, accessed November 29, 2018, https://ualr.edu/news/2018/11/27/handshake/. There is an opportunity to use this "career network tailored to college students" in advertising. This will be attractive to students who must work while in school and also who are looking to change careers. Internships will also be appealing to prospective students.

15. Barbara L'Eplattenier, "Writing for Business and Government: Unit 5--Complex Projects: The Department of Rhetoric and Writing at UALR Strategic Plan" (handout, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, Little Rock, AR, November 12, 2018). "While the department serves more students overall than any other department in our college, new funding metrics from the state of Arkansas will potentially assign funding not on SSCH but rather on degree completion (how many students complete a degree) and time to degree (how long students take to complete a degree). Because our department serves a wide range of students in our service courses but doesn't have many majors, we run the risk of losing funding through the new funding metric."

16. Ibid.

17. "Occupational Outlook Handbook: Media and Communication: Technical Writers" on Bureau of Labor Statistics official website, accessed November 12, 2018, https://www.bls.gov/ooh/media-and-communication/technical-writers.htm. According to the BLS, "Employment of technical writers is projected to grow 11 percent from 2016 to 2026, faster than the average for all occupations." Median pay 2017 is $70,930 per year, $34.10 per hour. Job outlook 2016-26 11% growth (faster than average).