



Changes in the Pack: White assumes chancellor role as Shields becomes System President

ALLIE CARSON

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The ASU System announced Todd Shields, Arkansas State University's fourth appointed chancellor, as its fourth system president. Following Shields' system appointment, Provost Calvin White assumed the role of A-State interim chancellor after a unanimous board vote.

Both changes took effect July 1.

The two leaders said A-State's game plan hasn't changed and White will complete the projects Shields began without missing a step.

Under Shields

"During his time as Chancellor, A-State reached new heights in enrollment, student success, research, academic innovation, athletics, and community impact," Todd Clark, A-State's chief marketing and communications officer, said regarding Shields at a reception held for him following the announcement.

With Shields at the helm, enrollment increased by nearly 30%, going from 14,109 students in 2022 to 17,926 students last fall according to Arkansas State University. Shields also oversaw the construction of the Windgate Hall of Art and Innovation and the first veterinary school in the state.

Shields said the progress made during his time was possible due to the team he built, including White.

"What I'm really proud of is the team, this group of people here. You get smart people working hard together, then things like that are just going to happen," Shields said.

During his three years as chancellor, Shields interacted with the students, listened, and responded.



Interim Chancellor Calvin White (left) and ASU System President Todd Shields gives a keynote speech during the ribbon cutting at the College of Veterinary Medicine at Arkansas State University. White and Shields began their respective roles July first after their appointment in May.

For example, last year, the Student Government Association held a safety walk which Shields participated in. He was able to see some safety concerns firsthand.

"They walked us around campus to places that they didn't think were safe, or they didn't think were appropriate, or places where they thought things needed to be changed from their perspective, and that was really helpful," Shields said.

Beyond safety issues, students also pointed out their wishes for better housing and student-related activities.

"Parking, entertainment, housing, what the students get outside the classroom is a big priority," Shields said. "When I talked to students, they really loved their professors, and they really loved their programs. But they were like Jonesboro doesn't really have anything if you're under 30, and I was kind of going, wow, they're right,"

Shields said.

In response to students' requests the Shields and White team began planning solutions.

As Shields takes on the role of ASU System president, he aims to take what he learned and what he was able to accomplish during his time at A-State and use these ideas System wide to make them all work and be the best they can be.

Changing seats

Shields and White have worked together for 17 years, 14 of which were at the University of Arkansas as dean and associate dean respectively in the Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences college. In 2023, Shields appointed White as vice chancellor and provost of A-State.

"There's nothing that I have been involved in, Calvin (White) hasn't been involved in too," Shields said. "We're not necessarily moving, we're just



Photo by Allie Carson | Editor-In-Chief

changing the seats at the table,"

As White assumes the interim chancellor role, Shields wants students to communicate with White like they've communicated with him the past few years.

"Let Dr. White know what you like, because we can double down on what you like," Shields said.

While White plans to engage with students during his time, he asks the students to bear with him with how many events he can attend.

"I want to get out and be more front-facing with students. And there'll be certain things that you guys will want me at, and I'll make sure that I am," said White.

When you aren't seeing him, he'll be focused on unfinished projects around campus. White plans to complete all of Shields' projects before beginning any of his own.

However, as with most projects, problems have popped up. For example, increased enrollment has also increased the number of problems around the A-State campus.

"Our enrollment is not by happenstance. We don't throw things at the wall and hope students come. The increased enrollment is the result of intentionality," White said.

Increased enrollment is a good problem to have according to both Shields and White.

"The problems that we're going to experience and the students are going to experience are all good problems to have, and a lot of other campuses are not having those problems," White said.

One of the reasons A-State is in such a good position is because the Shields and White team have been in an extended process of solving those problems.

One of A-State's biggest

problems is housing, housing that Shields wants students at bigger schools to be jealous of.

"We want housing that students at the University of Mississippi, the University of Tennessee, or the University of Missouri would be like, 'why don't we have that'," Shields said.

The current plan is for one housing project to open in the fall of 2027 and the other two housing projects to be ready by 2028.

One of White's first public-facing duties as interim chancellor was officiating the official opening of the A-State College of Veterinary Medicine.

"It makes our campus a destination campus. If you want to be a vet and you don't want to leave the state, this is where you come," White said.

To the students

As Shields left the Jonesboro campus, he wanted students to know that the degree they're getting at A-State makes them competitive and that they should apply themselves as much as they can.

"Students, level up in real life, level up right now, because this is your chance," Shields said. "One thing I've learned is that a lot of times life opens doors that you don't really even plan for, but you don't have to have it all planned out. Just apply yourself as much as you can, and see what happens."

White reminds us that Arkansas State is a thriving college and their home.

"This is your campus. This is your home for the next four years, and we want you to feel that there is a place for everyone on this campus. Continue to thrive. I want to see this momentum continue to grow, and I want students to have an experience on our campus," White said.

THIS WEEK IN THE HERALD:

OPINION, 2A

- Letter from the editor: New beginnings
- Break up with your loser boyfriend before college

NEWS, 3A

- The College of Veterinary Medicine makes history with inaugural class of 122 students

ARTS & E, 4A

- HERALDBOXD: 2026 Summer Reviews and 2026 Summer Anniversaries

LIFE, 1B



- Finding Your Home: The different chapters of sorority recruitment

SPORTS, 2B



- RED WOLVES FOOTBALL IS BACK!
- SNAPSHOTS: Volleyball exhibition win vs. Ole Miss

PHOTO, 4B



- First week back: Go Red Wolves!

Community Fair Wednesday

The A-State Community and Organization Fair will be held from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. on Wednesday, Aug. 26. Students are invited to participate in this fun, free event held on Heritage Plaza Lawn.

Social media ambassadors wanted

The Office of Admissions is seeking enthusiastic student social media ambassadors to help showcase authentic campus life and connect with prospective students through digital platforms.

BRIEFS COURTESY OF A-STATE DAILY DIGEST



Photo by Allie Carson | Editor-In-Chief

Systems President Todd Shields and Interim Chancellor Calvin White pose for a photo with members of the board of trustees following Shields' reception celebrating his appointment as systems president.