



UNIVERSITY OF
CENTRAL
ARKANSAS™

Autism Support Center for
Executive Functioning and
Neurodiversity

EXHIBIT D



ASCEND: Program Overview

Launched in Fall 2025 as part of UCA Living Learning Communities ([LLC](#))

Housed within the Residents in Service and Education ([RISE](#)) LLC in Hughes Hall

Designed to support neurodiverse students through inclusive, low-sensory, and community-based programming

Program emphasis on access, connectedness, and voluntary participation



**LIVING LEARNING
COMMUNITIES**

Program Goals



1

Increase
student
participation

2

Support
retention of an
at-risk student
population

3

Strengthen
sense of
belonging and
community

4

Expand
academic and
transition
supports

Program Leadership and Coordination

- One faculty member serves as the ASCEND Academic Coordinator
- Coordinator has expertise in neurodiversity and student support
- Coordinator is responsible for program development, partnerships, and student programming



Sensory-Supportive Environments and Housing

- Sensory-friendly space established in Hughes Hall
 - Open to all residents
 - Designed to reduce sensory overload and support self-regulation
- Space complements two additional sensory-supportive areas advertised campus-wide
- Partnership established with UCA Housing
 - Option for ASCEND participants to reside in a block of rooms near the sensory-friendly space
 - Sensory-supportive lighting adjustments available upon request
- No housing requests submitted for Fall 2025



Student Identification & Outreach



Interest form developed for students to self-identify interest in ASCEND



Form housed on the Living Learning Communities website



Allows students to receive information and support without formal disclosure



Supports connection to affiliated programs, such as the Autism & Neurodiversity Alliance ([ANA](#))



ASCEND: Activities and Participation

**Inclusive, low-pressure
community-building
events open to all UCA
students (monthly)**

August: Lunch on the Lawn Alternative Space

- Low-sensory lounge option provided during campus-wide event
- Attendance: 4 students
- Participants included neurodiverse and non-neurodiverse students
- Included in Welcome Week schedule as an inclusive option

September: Terra Cotta Pot Painting

- Attendance: 7 students
- Approximately half identified as neurodiverse

October: Planting Rooted Clippings

- Attendance: 3 returning participants
- Mixed neurodiverse and non-neurodiverse identification







POTTING POTENTIAL

Create, cultivate, and connect!
Let's paint a pot, add a plant, and
bring color and life to our campus.

 **Paint A Pot:** Tuesday, September 30th
at 1:40 PM in Old Main Room 28

 **Add A Plant:** Tuesday, October 7th
at 1:40 PM in Old Main Room 28

RSVP on CubConnect

Sponsored by ASCEND at RISE







ASCEND: Promotion & Communication

Events promoted
through flyers in
Hughes Hall and Old
Main Hall and targeted
email communication

Targeted email
communication to
students who
complete the interest
form

Continued emphasis
on opt-in participation



Spring 2026 Programming

- Similar low-sensory social events planned
- Continued monthly gatherings
- Ongoing collaboration with campus partners



Future Program Development



Develop structured break opportunities during study day and finals week



Continue refining housing options



Proposed early arrival of ASCEND participants 3–5 days before standard move-in (Fall 2026)

Calmer, lower-sensory transition to campus

Early exposure to key campus resources



Use participation data to guide continuous improvement

Thank you

For More Information

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