Federal Aviation Administration

Office of Airports
Central Region

901 Locust, Room 364
Kansas City, MO 64106

February 20, 2026

Via Electronic Mail

Robert Little, C.M. rlittle@ucmo.edu
Airport Manager, Skyhaven Airport
University of Central Missouri
281 NW Us 50 Highway
Warrensburg, MO 64093

Re: Part 13 Complaint, Skyhaven Airport (RCM) — Meeting Request Deferred; Outstanding CAP Obligations and January 30, 2026 Questions Addressed

Dear Mr. Little:

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has received and reviewed the University of Central Missouri's (UCM) January 30, 2026 correspondence, including the attached list of questions submitted in anticipation of a face-to-face meeting regarding the outstanding Corrective Action Plan (CAP) items identified in the FAA's December 8, 2025 letter. For the reasons set forth below, the FAA declines to schedule a face-to-face meeting at this time.

Grant Assurance Framework

The FAA takes this opportunity to frame its response within the context of UCM's federal obligations as an airport sponsor. As a recipient of Airport Improvement Program (AIP) grant funds, UCM accepted binding obligations under the Grant Assurances attached to those grants. The conduct documented throughout this investigation and CAP process implicates four of those assurances.

Grant Assurance 22 — Economic Nondiscrimination requires that UCM make its airport available on fair and reasonable terms, without unjust discrimination, to all aeronautical users. The administrative record demonstrates that UCM has applied its commercial regulatory framework inconsistently and selectively among similarly situated external operators. Most concretely, Kelly Ralston — an original Part 13 complainant, the only non-UCM certificated A&P mechanic operating on the airport, and an operator whose commercial aeronautical activity meets UCM's own published criteria for CVA applicability — remains the only external operator whose resubmitted CVA application has not received a determination. This is occurring while

UCM has executed CVAs for other external operators and while UCM's own operations are now addressed through an internal Memorandum of Agreement. The corroborating pattern is equally documented: Jeff Suhr, also an original complainant, had his CVA applications rejected on three separate occasions through the application of carve-out concepts — "physical presence," "primary location," and "incidental use" — that the FAA has repeatedly and explicitly rejected as inconsistent with the grant assurances. UCM has since executed CVAs for two other Designated Pilot Examiners performing activities identical to that for which Suhr's applications were returned as "not required." The selective processing of CVA applications — executing agreements for some operators while rejecting or indefinitely deferring others performing comparable commercial aeronautical activity — is precisely the form of unjust discrimination Grant Assurance 22 is designed to prevent.

Grant Assurance 23 — Exclusive Rights prohibits UCM from granting any exclusive right to conduct aeronautical activity at the airport. By selectively exempting certain operators from CVA requirements while enforcing those requirements against others performing comparable commercial aeronautical services, UCM has created conditions under which favored operators enjoy a competitive advantage over those subject to the full regulatory burden. The FAA's October 3, 2025 letter, citing GFK Flight Support, Inc. v. Grand Forks Regional Airport Authority, FAA Docket No. 16-01-05, established that selective enforcement of minimum standards — imposing obligations on some providers while exempting others performing comparable services — constitutes unjust discrimination and exclusive rights exposure under Grant Assurances 22 and 23. The administrative record at Skyhaven reflects analogous circumstances.

Grant Assurance 24 — Fee and Rental Structure requires that all fees, rentals, and other charges imposed on aeronautical users be reasonable and applied uniformly. UCM has not yet demonstrated that the commercial fee structure applied to the hangar developer, 423 East Young LLC, is economically equivalent to that imposed on other commercial aeronautical operators at the airport. The FAA's December 8, 2025 letter at Sections 3.B through 3.D identifies this deficiency with specificity. That documentation has not been provided.

Grant Assurance 26 — Reports and Inspections requires UCM to make its airport and all airport records available for inspection upon FAA request and to submit reports in the form and manner prescribed by the FAA. Because the FAA has made no fewer than five specific, documented, and unambiguous requests for executed commercial agreements, CVAs, hangar inventories, and operational documentation since June 3, 2025 — none of which have been satisfied in full — the FAA is formally citing Grant Assurance 26 as an independent basis for its findings in this matter. This citation is distinct from and in addition to the substantive nondiscrimination and exclusive rights violations identified under Grant Assurances 22, 23, and 24. The repeated failure to produce requested documentation is not attributable to ambiguity about what is being requested. Each request has been explicit, specific, and unambiguous, as reflected in the following documented instances:

- **June 3, 2025**: FAA directed UCM to submit copies of all executed CVAs and commercial licenses to verify uniform application of rules.

- **September 4, 2025**: FAA demanded copies of all executed commercial agreements, contracts, and licenses, including agreements covering UCM's own Flight School and FAA Certified Repair Station.
- **October 3, 2025**: FAA reiterated its expectation for executed CVAs for all aeronautical service providers, including both University-operated and external entities, and proof of executed CVAs prior to any compliance monitoring.
- **November 7, 2025**: FAA requested a current hangar inventory identifying reserved hangars, public-lease hangars, and current occupancy, as well as the public hangar waitlist showing date received, queue order, and status of each request.
- **December 8, 2025**: FAA explicitly directed UCM to conduct and maintain a complete inventory of all aeronautical and non-aeronautical activities occurring at Skyhaven Airport, with documented classification of each activity and identification of the applicable regulatory instrument for each.

Moreover, the FAA has been required to identify, through outside channels and eyewitness reports, multiple categories of commercial aeronautical activity that UCM had not inventoried, recognized as commercial, or actively regulated, further evidencing UCM's failure to maintain the operational, oversight, records availability, and enforcement of its own rules pertaining to its federal obligations. The following are reiterated to illustrate FAA’s findings:

- **After-hours maintenance by students and staff**: Identified by the FAA on April 15, 2025, through eyewitness observations and deposition transcripts. Following UCM's claim to have addressed the issue, the FAA received notice from non-party airport users on June 3, 2025, that after-hours commercial activities were continuing in UCM facilities.
- **RAW AERO LLC aircraft rental operations**: Identified by the FAA on October 3, 2025. Multiple aircraft affiliated with RAW AERO LLC had been displayed with "For Rent" signs on the terminal ramp since at least December 2024. UCM had no executed agreements or investigation logs for these operations. UCM acknowledged in its October 15, 2025 response that the FAA had to bring this matter to its attention.
- **Designated Pilot Examiner checkride activity**: Identified by the FAA on November 7 and December 8, 2025. DPEs were conducting commercial checkride activity outside the scope of UCM employment from terminal office space without CVAs.
- **Hangar development agreement**: Identified by the FAA on September 4, 2025, through outside channels. The FAA had to explicitly request a copy of the development agreement with 423 East Young LLC to evaluate its compliance with federal grant assurance obligations.

The FAA's December 8, 2025 letter characterized this pattern accurately by stating the recurring emergence of previously unidentified commercial activities at Skyhaven is indicative of a broader systemic lack of comprehensive operational visibility and classification. The failure to maintain adequate records, respond to FAA documentation requests, and proactively identify commercial activity on the airport are collectively an independent basis for a finding of non-compliance under Grant Assurance 26. They are also the most direct and preventable contributors to the prolonged duration of this proceeding.

It is within this framework of grant assurance obligations — not merely as a matter of administrative procedure — that the FAA addresses UCM's meeting request and submitted questions below.

I. The "Miscommunication" Characterization Is Not Supported by the Record

UCM's January 30, 2026 email states that "there was some confusion and we were both waiting on the other to respond." The administrative record does not support this characterization.

In UCM's December 23, 2025 CAP update, UCM explicitly committed to two preconditions for a productive meeting: submission of questions to the FAA by January 20, 2026, and submission of revised Minimum Standards for FAA review prior to the meeting. UCM stated: "UCM can provide a list of those questions on January 20th. UCM is further requesting the meeting to take place the following week, which should allow the FAA time to review UCM's revisions to its Minimum Standards as requested and submitted questions from UCM."

UCM did not submit questions by January 20, 2026. UCM did not submit revised Minimum Standards at any point prior to or accompanying the January 30, 2026 correspondence. The FAA's January 28, 2026 email reflected the FAA waiting on UCM to fulfill its own stated commitments — not a mutual miscommunication. The FAA's position throughout this process has been consistent and clearly documented. The record reflects that it is UCM's own unmet commitments, not confusion on the part of either party, that have contributed to delays in resolving this matter.

The FAA draws UCM's attention to this pattern because it is not isolated. Throughout this CAP process, the FAA has observed a recurring sequence in which UCM commits to action, fails to deliver within its own stated timeframe, and subsequently attributes the resulting delay to miscommunication or uncertainty about FAA expectations. This pattern has been documented across the full timeline of this proceeding:

- UCM claimed on May 15, 2025, that the informal complaint had been found to amount to no violations. The FAA corrected this mischaracterization on June 3, 2025, stating explicitly that its April 15, 2025 determination did not find Skyhaven Airport in compliance.
- UCM claimed on August 11 and 19, 2025, that it was uncertain what was being asked and that no allegations had been substantiated. The FAA had to reiterate on September 4, 2025, that it had provided explicit written direction as early as June 3, 2025.
- UCM claimed during the CAP process that the FAA had agreed with UCM's practice of "taking users at their word" on whether a hangar is used for incidental or commercial activity. The FAA explicitly rejected this characterization in its October 3, 2025 letter.
- UCM claimed in its November 2025 CAP updates that the FAA's position on physical presence represented a "change from previous conversations." The FAA's December 8, 2025 letter documented no fewer than four prior written communications, dating to January 2024, in which the FAA had consistently articulated the same position.

This pattern of attributed miscommunication, recycled questions, and unmet commitments is itself a material contributor to the prolonged resolution of this matter — most concretely, to the continued absence of a determination on Kelly Ralston's CVA application, most recently submitted December 23, 2025, which remains pending without resolution.

II. A Face-to-Face Meeting Is Not Warranted at This Time

The FAA declines to schedule a face-to-face meeting for the following independent reasons. First, UCM has not fulfilled the preconditions it established for a productive meeting in its own December 23, 2025 correspondence. The revised Minimum Standards document, which UCM committed to submitting for FAA review prior to any meeting, has not been received. UCM's January 30, 2026 letter acknowledges that the revised Minimum Standards remain a work in progress and that "some of the revisions are contingent on discussion with the FAA." The FAA notes that questions pertaining to the development and implementation of an effective Minimum Standards document are addressed comprehensively in FAA Advisory Circular 150/5190-8, Minimum Standards for Commercial Aeronautical Activities, which UCM has been directed to consult throughout this process and which the FAA has cited consistently as the appropriate guidance framework.

Second, no meeting will be scheduled without a prior agreed agenda. The FAA will not convene a meeting for the purpose of re-examining positions and determinations that have already been made, documented, and communicated in writing.

Third, and most fundamentally, the questions submitted by UCM on January 30, 2026 do not present new issues requiring discussion. As detailed in Section III below, each question corresponds directly to matters the FAA has already addressed in prior correspondence. A meeting to re-litigate those determinations would not advance compliance and is not an appropriate mechanism for resolving outstanding CAP obligations.

III. UCM's Submitted Questions Have Already Been Answered in the Administrative Record

The FAA has reviewed each question submitted in UCM's January 30, 2026 letter and finds that each corresponds to a matter already addressed in prior FAA correspondence. The FAA will not re-answer questions that have been exhaustively addressed in the written record. UCM is directed to the following specific sources for each area of inquiry.

Item 1 Questions — Commercial Activity Definitions, CVA Applicability, and the "Incidental" and "Physical Presence" Concepts
UCM's Item 1 questions ask whether any activity may still be classified as "incidental," whether physical space may be used as a determining factor for CVA requirements, and whether a "tier 1 or category 1" designation could exempt commercial activity that does not occupy space from CVA requirements. Each of these questions has been answered directly and repeatedly in the administrative record.

The FAA's framework for determining commercial status — based on the nature of the public-facing aeronautical service, not physical footprint, itinerant status, or frequency of activity — was articulated in the FAA's December 8, 2025 letter at Sections 1.B and 1.C, the November 7, 2025 letter at Section 1, the October 3, 2025 letter at Section 1, and the September 4, 2025 letter. The impermissibility of footprint-based carve-outs is addressed at December 8, 2025, Sections 1.C and 1.J. The FAA's limited and specific use of the term "incidental" — restricted to non-public, subordinate activity that is not offered to the public — is addressed at December 8, 2025, Sections 1.D and 1.J.5, and October 3, 2025, Section 1.

The FAA further notes that UCM's question regarding whether commercial activity that does not occupy space may be designated "tier 1 or category 1" and exempted from CVA requirements reflects a continued attempt to anchor commercial regulation to physical footprint — the precise framework the FAA has directed UCM to abandon since at least January 14, 2025. UCM's January 30, 2026 letter suggests that the FAA previously encouraged space-occupancy-based tiering as "a common practice at other airports" and "something you encouraged us to consider in the past." This assertion is not supported by the administrative record. The FAA has never advised UCM that placing increased requirements on vendors based on exclusive use of physical space was an appropriate or encouraged practice under the grant assurances. To the contrary, the FAA has consistently and repeatedly directed UCM away from this approach across multiple written communications. What the FAA has encouraged — consistently and in writing — is a transition to a service-category-based minimum standards structure, as described in the FAA's December 8, 2025 letter and AC 150/5190-8, in which different requirements may be established for distinct aeronautical service types, provided those requirements are reasonably related to the nature and risk profile of the specific activity and applied uniformly to all similarly situated providers within each category, without exception, informal carve-out, or footprint-based exemption.

UCM's question regarding its ability to act on information made known to it regarding undisclosed commercial activity points directly to an outstanding CAP obligation. The FAA directed UCM in its December 8, 2025 letter at Sections 1.G and 1.J.6 to conduct and maintain a complete, centralized inventory of all aeronautical and non-aeronautical activities occurring at Skyhaven Airport, with documented classification of each activity and identification of the applicable regulatory instrument. UCM's claim in its January 30, 2026 letter that it "has identified all commercial operations at the airport" is not a substitute for this requirement. As documented in the Grant Assurance 26 findings above, self-reporting by airport users is precisely the mechanism the FAA has found inadequate throughout this investigation — UCM was required to be informed by the FAA itself of multiple ongoing commercial operations it had failed to identify. The FAA-directed inventory, not UCM's self-assessment, is the required and proper mechanism for determining who is operating on the airport, what activity is being performed, and what regulatory framework applies. That inventory has not been submitted.

Item 2 Questions — Designated Pilot Examiners and CVA Requirements
UCM asks whether DPEs who do not occupy physical space are required to obtain a CVA and whether DPEs must promote their services to the public for their activity to be considered commercial. These questions were answered in the FAA's December 8, 2025 letter at Sections

2.A through 2.G, and in the November 7, 2025 letter at Section 2. The FAA reiterates that whether DPE activity is commercial is determined by the nature of the activity — specifically, whether it is conducted outside the scope of UCM employment — not by whether it occurs in a public or private office and not by whether the DPE maintains a physical footprint at the airport. Offering a public office alternative does not resolve the commercial regulatory requirement. These determinations are not subject to reconsideration through a face-to-face meeting.The FAA additionally notes UCM's question regarding the reference to FAA Order 8900.2 in the Minimum Standards document. The FAA's December 8, 2025 letter at Section 2.F.4 directed removal of FAA Order 8900.2 practical test requirements from the Minimum Standards. UCM states in its January 30, 2026 letter that there is no such language in its current Minimum Standards document.

Item 3 Questions — Commercial Fee Structure and the Hangar Developer
UCM asks whether it may establish additional fees or requirements for a commercial operation depending on the type of activity and whether the East Young operation's agreement satisfies the FAA's fee parity requirement. These questions were addressed in the FAA's December 8, 2025 letter at Sections 3.B through 3.D, and in the November 7, 2025 letter at Section 3. The FAA's concern has never been whether UCM may establish activity-specific fee structures — it may, provided those structures are applied uniformly and without discrimination. The FAA's outstanding concern is whether the commercial fee structure applied to the hangar developer is economically equivalent to that imposed on other commercial aeronautical operators and whether that equivalency is objectively documented. That documentation has not been provided.The FAA reiterates that the resolution of this matter does not require a face-to-face meeting — it requires action. The outstanding obligations are clearly documented in the administrative record and are not ambiguous. The questions UCM has submitted do not alter the analysis or conclusion. They do not introduce new issues, they do not present unresolved interpretive questions, and they have no bearing on the most concrete and immediate action item before UCM: the execution or formal denial of Kelly Ralston's Commercial Vendor Agreement application.

Kelly Ralston — Primary Finding

Mr. Ralston is an original Part 13 complainant and the only non-UCM certificated A&P mechanic operating on the airport. His commercial aeronautical maintenance business operates from a dedicated, licensed space on the airport. His operation meets UCM's own published definition of commercial aeronautical activity and satisfies on its face the physical presence standard UCM has repeatedly asserted as the threshold for CVA applicability. There is no definitional ambiguity, no unresolved question of incidental use, no footprint question, and no interpretive uncertainty presented by any of UCM's January 30, 2026 questions that has any bearing on the processing of his application. The questions UCM has submitted regarding

operators without physical presence, tiered categories, and incidental use are simply inapplicable to Mr. Ralston's situation.

The continued absence of a determination on Mr. Ralston's CVA — while UCM executes agreements for other external operators, seeks answers to questions that do not concern him, and requests meetings to re-litigate settled positions — reflects the precise pattern of selective treatment and unequal application that this investigation was initiated to address. Mr. Ralston is effectively precluded from conducting his commercial aeronautical business while his application remains unresolved. This is not a consequence of regulatory ambiguity. It is a consequence of inaction.

The record documents this inaction with specificity. In August 2024, UCM began enforcing hangar license restrictions against Mr. Ralston that had not previously been applied to any operator on the airport, effectively removing him from commercial operation. The Part 13 complaint was filed on his behalf in October 2024. His initial CVA application was filed until approximately March 2025 and left pending without a clear timeline or communicated requirements for over ten weeks before UCM offered an agreement Mr. Ralston ultimately declined to sign. Mr. Ralston resubmitted a revised CVA on December 23, 2025. As of the date of this letter, that application remains under review without determination. On January 30, 2026 — the same date UCM submitted its meeting request and questions to the FAA — UCM's Airport Manager advised Mr. Ralston that a final reviewed agreement would be provided by the end of the following week. The FAA notes that no executed agreement or denial has been received in the record before this office.

The FAA further notes that UCM's own publicly available Commercial Operations Vendor Application webpage, retrieved from Skyhaven Airport's website by FAA as of the date of this letter, sets forth an estimated application approval timeline of approximately 30 to 33 business days across seven documented steps, including Airport Management review, Dean of the Harmon College of Business and Professional Studies review, Office of General Counsel review, Authorized UCM Decision Makers review, applicant review, contract system entry, and signature collection. Mr. Ralston's December 23, 2025 submission has exceeded UCM's own published processing timeline as of the date of this letter. Mr. Ralston’s original application was also subject inspections and scrutiny not outlined in the airport’s CVA timeline. The FAA expects UCM to process Mr. Ralston's application consistent with its own publicly stated standards, applied uniformly and without discrimination, as required under its agreed to grant assurances.

Jeff Suhr — Corroborating Pattern

Jeff Suhr, also an original Part 13 complainant, provides corroborating evidence of UCM's pattern of selective and inconsistent CVA processing. Mr. Suhr's CVA applications were rejected

on three separate occasions — March 25, March 31, and July 25, 2025 — through the successive application of "physical presence," "primary location," and "incidental use" rationales the FAA has rejected as inconsistent with the grant assurances in each of its substantive responses. The FAA has admonished UCM for this treatment in its April 15, June 3, September 4, October 3, and December 8, 2025 correspondence. UCM has since executed CVAs for Dave Card and Ashley Windsor, two Designated Pilot Examiners performing commercial aeronautical activity identical in nature to that for which Mr. Suhr's applications were returned as "not required." Mr. Suhr's commercial regulatory status under RCM's Rules remains unresolved. The required corrective actions are set forth in the FAA's December 8, 2025 letter at Sections 2.C through 2.F.

Taken together, the treatment of Mr. Ralston and Mr. Suhr — the two original complainants whose filings initiated this investigation — documents a consistent and ongoing pattern of selective enforcement, unequal application of CVA requirements, and procedural delay that directly implicates Grant Assurances 22 and 23. The FAA expects this pattern to be remedied through action, not through further requests for meetings or clarification of positions already stated in writing.

Outstanding Documentation Requirements

UCM is directed to submit the following items, each of which has been previously requested and remains outstanding:

- The completed operational inventory required under the FAA's December 8, 2025 letter at Sections 1.G and 1.J.6, classifying all aeronautical and non-aeronautical activities occurring at Skyhaven Airport with identification of the applicable regulatory instrument for each.
- The revised Minimum Standards document UCM has committed to producing, consistent with the service-category-based framework described in AC 150/5190-8 and the FAA's December 8, 2025 letter.
- Documentation demonstrating that the commercial fee structure applied to the hangar developer is economically equivalent to that imposed on other commercial aeronautical operators, as required under the FAA's December 8, 2025 letter at Section 3.D.

Due Process

Regarding UCM's references to due process and administrative procedural rights, raised in UCM's August 11, 2025 correspondence and again in UCM's December 23, 2025 letter: the FAA addressed these concerns directly and completely in its September 4, 2025 letter. The informal Part 13 process does not constitute a formal adjudication under 14 CFR §13.11. The zero-pay special condition is not an enforcement action requiring notice or a hearing. The FAA's position on these matters has not changed and is fully set forth in the September 4, 2025 correspondence.

The FAA will not address these arguments further in this proceeding absent a material change in circumstances.

Conditions for Scheduling a Meeting

Upon UCM's submission of a determination on Mr. Ralston's CVA application, a completed operational inventory, and the revised Minimum Standards document, the FAA will assess whether a face-to-face meeting with a prior agreed agenda would serve a productive purpose in advancing resolution of the remaining CAP items. Bi-weekly CAP reporting obligations remain in effect for all open items.

The FAA has communicated the zero-pay special condition consistently since June 3, 2025, first as a warning tied to UCM's failure to submit an adequate CAP, and subsequently as a compliance safeguard clarified in the FAA's September 4, 2025 letter to be neither an enforcement action under 14 CFR Part 13 nor a condition requiring notice or a hearing. As the FAA has stated, the zero-pay special condition is a compliance safeguard applied at the time of grant issuance to ensure federal funds are not reimbursed until obligations are met. As reflected in the FAA's December 8, 2025 letter, the FAA's position has progressed from reserving the right to impose this condition to active application: the zero-pay clause will continue to be included on all existing and future grants until corrective actions are fully accepted, documented, and implemented to the FAA's satisfaction.

Further, the FAA has not received an adequate Sponsor response that addresses the FAA’s concerns. As of the date of this letter, the FAA Central Region Airports Division is placing University of Central Missouri (Sponsor) into **full noncompliance with your federal grant obligations** as you have not completed the Corrective Action Plan to our satisfaction and within a reasonable amount of time. Therefore, FAA cannot consider the Sponsor for Competitive Discretionary Airport Grant funding until the Sponsor provides the FAA with an acceptable resolution and completion to resolve its pending noncompliance at Skyhaven Airport. The FAA requests that this resolution of remaining findings is provided within fifteen (15) days from the date of this notice for FAA review.

If the sponsor does not provide documentation withing the 15 days stated above or the provided documentation still does not resolve the issues, to the FAA's satisfaction, FAA will consider taking further financial actions up to and including withholding the airport's Non-Primary Entitlement funds. These conditions will remain in effect until the outstanding CAP obligations identified in this letter, and in prior correspondence, are fully resolved.

Sincerely,

ANGELA M MUDER

Digitally signed by ANGELA M MUDER
Date: 2026.02.20 10:04:05 -06'00'

Angela Muder
Compliance Specialist

cc: Rodney N. Joel, FAA Director, Central Region – rodney.joel@faa.gov
Jonathan P. LacKamp, Cooling & Herbers, P.C. jlackamp@coolinglaw.com
Michael G. Jones, Martin Pringle Attorneys at Law mgjones@martinpringle.com
Kyle LePage, MODOT Administrator of Aviation Kyle.Lepage@modot.mo.gov