MEMORANDUM

TO: Faculty, Staff, and Students

FROM: Robert A. Altenkirch

DATE: August 17, 2016

SUBJECT: Welcome to a New Academic Year

Welcome to the newest members of the UAH community, and welcome back to those returning for the start of another academic year. Last year was particularly exciting, record enrollment, both total and incoming freshmen, record ACT scores, 27.2 average and 31.1 average for the Honors College, top 20 expenditure rankings in research in five research areas tracked by the National Science Foundation and in NASA (#13) and DoD (#19) research expenditures. There were many outstanding accomplishments of UAH faculty, staff, students, and alumni. Just a few are highlighted below.

- The College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences hosted the third annual Peace on Earth Holiday Extravaganza at the Von Braun Center on December 4, 2015. In addition to performances by the Huntsville Symphony Orchestra, the Huntsville Community Chorus Association, and the Army Materiel Command Band, this year's program featured special guest performers Act of Congress, a Birmingham-based "newgrass" band. The extravaganza featured many talented UAH students and faculty. The Department of Music will celebrate its 50th Anniversary this academic year with a year-long Golden Jubilee celebration.

- The UAH Humanities Center celebrated its 25th Anniversary in April with a series of commemorative events, including performances by award-winning musicians, talks by renowned academicians, and readings by critically acclaimed contemporary writers.

- Women's Lacrosse finished its inaugural season as NCAA Division II team scoring champion after finishing the season with a 14-4 overall record.

- Men's basketball was Gulf South Conference regular season champions.

- Of our 334 student-athletes, 192 have at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA.

- Jeet Gupta, Associate Dean and Professor of Information Systems in the College of Business Administration, was rated as one of the top one hundred production
and operations management research authors (ranked #30 in the World) by the International Journal of Production Research. Gupta was also elected President-Elect of the Decision Sciences Institute (DSI), the international association for decision sciences professionals. He will serve as President of DSI in 2017.

- The Boeing Company awarded student scholarships to five College of Business Administration student teams as part of the Boeing New Business Challenge. Student winners included Michael Boereman, Melissa Monaghan, Megan McAllister, Armando Mejivar, Teresa Berry, Niall Rogers, Brandon Dean, James Loudin, and Cole Rickles.

- The Department of Kinesiology in the College of Education, established beginning in the 2015-16 academic year, far exceeded enrollment projections with 130 new majors enrolling in its first year.

- The UAH Rise School, the College of Education’s pre-school for children with and without special needs, finished its final year in temporary facilities behind Olin B. King Technology Hall and will move into renovated space in University Place School this fall giving it a permanent home.

- GeneCapture, a company co-founded by Krishnan Chittur, Professor and Interim Chair of the Department of Chemical and Materials Engineering, received an award from Alabama’s Launchpad competition to assist in the development of a low-cost, portable instrument to screen for dozens of pathogens within an hour.

- UAH’s Space Hardware Club received an award from NASA’s Undergraduate Student Instrument Project to develop active radiation shielding for NASA’s X-ray telescopes.

- Betsy Patterson, UAH BS graduate in Industrial and Systems Engineering and currently an MS student in the Department of Industrial Engineering and Systems Engineering and Engineering Management, was named the first Bastion (Technologies, Inc.) Technical Fellow. Bastion Technical Fellows maintain a residency at Bastion Technologies’ facilities in Huntsville to gain industry domain specific knowledge while completing their coursework requirements and thesis research.

- For the second year running, this fall’s Honors College freshman class is the largest ever, 285 students. They bring an average ACT of 31.4 and high school GPA of 4.15, the highest either number has ever been. One third of last year’s class maintained a 4.0 GPA in their first year at UAH.

- The College of Nursing’s Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) ranked #5 of 50 Best Value Online Doctor of Nursing Practice Degree Programs according to BestMedicalDegrees.com.
• The College of Nursing will deploy four new telehealth robots, Charger Blue I, II, III, and IV, for clinical simulations training and research collaborations. The mobile robots marry an iPad onto a mini Segway. Their acquisition was made possible by a grant from the Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Alabama Foundation.

• Tommy Morris, Associate Professor in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering and Director of the UAH Center for Cybersecurity, in his first year at UAH received extramural awards of over $2.4 million in the area of cybersecurity, one of UAH’s education and research strategic priorities.

• Gary Zank, Distinguished Professor and Chair of the Department of Space Science and Director of the Center for Space Plasma and Aeronomic Research (CSPAR), was elected to membership in the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), one of the highest honors a scientist can receive. Zank is the only member of NAS in The University of Alabama System and in the state of Alabama.

• Atmospheric Science PhD graduate Andrew Molthan, NASA Marshall cloud microphysics researcher, received the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers, the highest honor bestowed by the United States Government on science and engineering professionals in the early stages of their independent research careers.

• The Staff Senate established a scholarship for UAH staff members working toward earning a degree at UAH.

• Twenty-five new student organizations were formed last year.

Following about a year and a half of work by many individuals at UAH, we hosted a SACSCOC Reaffirmation Committee in March. By all accounts, the visit was a resounding success. A brief response to the Reaffirmation Committee report is to be submitted this month, and the Commission will vote on reaffirmation of accreditation for UAH in December.

The College Academy at Jemison High School in Huntsville welcomed its inaugural freshman class this month. The Academy is a magnet program in which 9th through 12th grade Huntsville City School students take a blend college courses from UAH faculty and high school courses from Jemison High School teachers. Upon graduation from high school, the students will have earned 60 credit hours from UAH.

The Board of Trustees approved three new programs, a BA in Writing, an MA in Professional Communication, and a Bachelor of Professional Studies. In addition, the Board approved establishing the College of Professional and Continuing Studies, formerly the Division of Professional and Continuing Studies, and the Department of Professional Studies within that College, the Collaborative Learning Center, part of our Quality Enhancement Plan for SACSCOC, and establishing the Doctor of Nursing
Practice as a distinct program rather than its previous format as a joint program with UA and UAB.

Thirty-one new faculty will be joining us this fall including tenured, tenure track, and non-tenure track faculty. Also joining us as Dean of the College of Business Administration is Jason Greene, who comes to us from Southern Illinois University, and Karen Clanton, former Director of the Division of Professional and Continuing Studies at UAH, assumed the position of Dean of the College of Professional and Continuing Studies.

The Student Services Building (SSB) opened in May allowing for consolidation of student services in one location and for administrative offices to relocate to the east side of Sparkman Drive. The SSB also houses a conference center and a welcome center for visitors to campus. The vehicular entrance to University Park has been rerouted from the neighborhood to the east through campus at the northwest corner of the park, a foot bridge to the park from Charger Park was constructed, and a practice lacrosse/soccer field was installed at the south end. Plans for future construction are well underway. The Innovation to Invention Center (I2C), an incubator for startup companies, with the construction funded with federal, city, county, UAH Foundation, and private funds, is under design, and construction should start next summer. The Board of Trustees in June approved the first step toward construction of a new residence hall, essentially a mirror image of Charger Village just to its south that is slated to open in fall 2018. In addition to a new residence hall, planning is proceeding for the construction of three new Greek houses located on the “horseshoe” just south of the Fitness Center.

Projections and registrations to date indicate that this year will be another record enrollment year, both total enrollment and new freshman enrollment. We are well on our way to meet the enrollment objective delineated in the strategic plan Expanding Horizons. Continued enrollment growth and the fact that our current residence halls are at capacity necessitates the need for more on campus housing as described above.

We made a lot of progress this past year and are on pace to do so this coming year as well. It’s your hard work and perseverance, which is much appreciated, that has made what you see happening at UAH possible.

Thanks,

Bob