

Alumni Association Annual Meeting Remarks
Robert A. Altenkirch
August 22, 2013

Welcome to The University of Alabama in Huntsville's Alumni Association Annual Meeting and Alumni of Achievement Presentation. UAH by university standards is a young university. Our alumni ranks are growing as is alumni involvement in the life of the university. You have a strong Alumni Association and a support structure available to assist in the Office of Alumni Relations within Advancement.

Alumni Relations partnered with the Alumni Association is one of the elements of an Advancement organization, often depicted as a pyramid. The base of the pyramid is Communications and Marketing, broad-based communications with a variety of stakeholders, including alumni. On top of the base is Alumni Relations, more personally focused on involved alumni and friends and on increasing their numbers. The top of the pyramid is finished with Development, or fundraising, in partnership with the UAH Foundation. We are making a number of efforts to strengthen the Advancement effort, including strengthening Alumni Relations and, a very visible strengthening you will see emerge in the next several months is a redesign of the UAH web site and use of social media as the internet continues to grow in importance in communications and marketing efforts.

We have many notable alumni. High-temperature superconductivity was discovered in 1987 by Professor M.K. Wu and his graduate students, UAH alumni, Jim Ashburn and C.J. Torng. Ashburn developed the compound, Yttrium Barium Copper Oxide, and successfully tested it in Wilson Hall. An historical plaque stands in front of Wilson Hall commemorating the event. Another famous graduate of UAH is history graduate John Hendricks, who launched the Discovery Chanel. Wikipedia co-founder Jimmy Wales attended UAH.

We recently completed a Strategic Plan, Expanding Horizons, setting priorities of enrollment growth of a diverse student body, recruitment and retention of a diverse faculty and staff, broadening and expanding the research portfolio, strengthening Advancement, and being a nationally recognized leader in five areas: Aerospace and Systems Engineering; Cybersecurity and Big Data; Earth, Atmospheric, and Space Science; Biotechnology; and Gaming and Entertainment Arts. Tactical execution is underway.

A number of construction projects have been completed, Phase I of the Greenway over to your right being recently completed, or underway. The new student center, Charger Union, is at the north end of Phase I of the Greenway on Holmes Avenue. Charger Union is a 100,000 square ft. facility housing an auditorium, lounges, meeting spaces, food venues, and student club offices. Charger Union consists of two two story components connected by a second-floor skybridge under which the Greenway passes. The Greenway will be extended, Phase II, across Holmes to the north to Roberts Hall.

Also underway is renovation and expansion of the Nursing Building, construction of the Severe Weather Institute and Radar and Lightning Laboratories, and recently completed, the Rise School of Huntsville, a preschool providing the highest quality of early childhood education services to children with developmental disabilities and children without disabilities. For UAH, the Rise School will serve as a laboratory learning environment for Nursing and Education students.

Our Athletics teams continue to excel, competitively and in the classroom. Six teams won conference championships this past year. 95 student-athletes won all-academic team honors. The hockey team gained membership in the Western Collegiate Hockey Association and will play a 38 game schedule with 16 games at the VBC, all on Friday and Saturday at 7:00 pm. I hope to see you at many of our athletic events. Good way to meet fellow alumni and students.

Thanks for being here this evening, and we look forward to your continued involvement in the life of your university.