

Welcoming Remarks
8th Annual Wernher von Braun Symposium
October 28, 2015, 8:00 A.M.
Chan Auditorium

- **Good morning.**
- **On behalf of the Faculty, Staff, and Students of the University of Alabama in Huntsville, welcome back to our campus.**
- **And a special welcome to my friend Patrick Scheuermann, who has done an outstanding job leading the Marshall Space Flight Center, and who will be soon be beginning another exciting chapter in an already accomplished career.**
- **It's our honor to host this event, allowing our students the opportunity to learn from and interact with key leaders from the government and commercial aerospace sectors.**
- **This year's Symposium agenda will include key conversations on a number of timely topics, all of which are important at UAH.**
- **Whether it's breaking the bonds of Earth's gravity with SLS and Orion, Technology Development, Scientific Discovery, Space in the interests of National Security, or Sustaining a Healthy Space Transportation Industry, our faculty, staff and students are engaged.**
- **Our students utilize a combination of enthusiasm, a sound understanding of fundamental principles, hands-on experience under the guidance of UAH faculty, and innovation to help solve problems and push the boundaries of the barely possible.**
- **UAH continues to be ranked among the premier universities in the nation through its designation as a "Very High Research Activity" institution by the Carnegie Foundation.**
- **I'm proud to say that according to the latest data from the National Science Foundation, we rank 15th among U.S. universities as measured by NASA-funded research, and 16th as measured by DOD-funded research.**
- **We are among the nation's top universities in federally-financed research in key disciplines relevant to this Symposium's topics, including:**
 - **4th in Aeronautical/Astronautical Engineering;**
 - **10th in Computer Sciences;**
 - **18th in Astronomy;**
 - **15th in Atmospheric Sciences;**

- **And moving into the future, we expect growth in the core areas as laid out in the UAH Strategic Plan, Expanding Horizons, including:**
 - **Aerospace and Systems Engineering;**
 - **Earth, Space and Atmospheric Science;**
 - **Big Data and Cybersecurity;**
 - **and Gaming & Entertainment Arts...all areas relevant to this year's Symposium theme of Space Exploration and Discovery.**

- **Some of our ongoing exciting initiatives include:**
 - **building a supersonic wind tunnel to understand better heat transfer in turbomachinery;**
 - **developing radiation protections mechanisms for future crewed space exploration missions;**
 - **creating an on-campus, high-tech incubator for driving our innovation out to commercial markets through start-up companies;**
 - **building CubeSats to study Terrestrial Gamma-ray Flashes from Earth's severe storm systems;**
 - **using friction stir welding to understand better how to better bond metals for aerospace structures;**
 - **developing tools to forecast the radiation environment of interplanetary space beyond low-Earth orbit;**
 - **and pushing the boundaries of technology by repurposing 50 tons of equipment originally built for nuclear weapons effects research into a test facility for a spacecraft propulsion system based on nuclear fusion.**

- **And I'm happy to report that all of this excitement has generated a 45% increase in freshman enrollment compared to last year.**

- **I hope that I've given you a little taste of the enthusiasm and innovation on our campus, and I invite each of you to come back and spend more time with us to explore how we can partner together.**

- **Before I step down, I'd like to say a thank you to the corporate sponsors for the Symposium's corporate sponsors, whose support makes this event possible.**

- **Thank you to the American Astronautical Society for their valued partnership on this annual event.**

- **And thank you to each of you for honoring UAH with your presence on our campus.**

- **Best wishes to each of you for a productive and enjoyable Symposium.**