



MEMORANDUM

TO: Faculty, Staff, and Students

FROM: Robert A. Altenkirch

DATE: September 16, 2018

SUBJECT: Opening of the Academic Year and Highlights from 2017-18

The academic year started off this fall with records set, for the fourth straight year, and new and renovated facilities brought on line. Historic records were set in overall enrollment, 9,736, up from 9,101 last fall, freshman enrollment, 1,428, up 6.2% over last fall and double the 2014 freshman class, and an average ACT score for incoming freshmen of 28.5, up 0.6 from last fall.

The second phase of Charger Village opened up with 400 beds, all of which are assigned. The parking lot south of the parking lot behind the Materials Science Building was completed to provide additional residential parking as the residential population increases. The new house for Alpha Omicron Pi sorority opened up on Greek Row. Ribbon cuttings for Charger Village and the AOPi house are set for Homecoming.

Charger Café renovation and expansion was completed over the summer. The D.S. Davidson Invention to Innovation Center incubator facility construction is well underway with opening slated early 2019. The renovation of and addition to Morton Hall is beginning with completion projected to be at the end of the fall 2019 semester for a spring semester 2020 opening. Additional parking is under construction across from Roberts Hall that will accommodate the removal of parking around Morton Hall during construction and ultimately increase parking availability on the north end of campus.

A rerouting of Ben Graves Drive is being planned that will result in Ben Graves Drive between Roberts Hall and Spragins Hall bending toward the east and toward the entrance to the University on University Drive. The new road will connect to the existing “loop” around campus near the University Drive entrance with a roundabout intersection. The rerouting will push traffic to the perimeter of campus and improve pedestrian safety and traffic flow. Additionally, planning for the redevelopment of Executive Plaza across Sparkman Drive from the Bevill Conference Center and Hotel, which UAH acquired early last fall, will begin following the meeting of the Board of Trustees September 21 with the release of a Request for Proposals to engage a Master Planner.

There is much activity on campus this academic year, as was the case this past academic year. Just a few of the many highlights from the 2017-18 academic year are noted below:

- The Department of Art, Art History, and Design hosted a site for *Global Game Jam* January 26-28, 2018 where participants worked concurrently with developers around the globe, rallied around a central theme, and then had 48 hours to create a game. Forty participants made games at UAH. The Department also hosted *ChargerCon*, a gaming and technology expo, on February 10, 2018 with around 500 attendees.
- Theatre Majors Alex Hilgartner and Anoop Dharmendrakumar were involved in the production of *Unto These Hills*, an outdoor historical drama at the 2,800-seat Mountainside Theatre in Cherokee, North Carolina. Alex worked sound, lighting and projection plus deck crew, and Anoop was an actor, dancer and combatant.
- UAH Cybersecurity Students Kyle O'Rear, Iain Deason, Justin Cole, and Kris Khemphavanh qualified for the finals of the 2018 National Cyber Analyst Challenge. Twenty-two schools submitted highly competitive entries. The UAH team received the GOLD award of \$10,000 to participate in the finals of the 2018 National Cyber Analyst Challenge.
- As part of its Frontiers in Business Series, the College of Business hosted "Blockchains: A New Frontier in Business." The keynote address was given by Rachel Pipan from the Bitfury Group, a leading full-service blockchain technology company.
- New degree program proposals were approved by the Board of Trustees and the Alabama Commission on Higher Education, including a B.S. degree in Sport and Fitness Management, a Master of Arts in Teaching Elementary Grades degree, and an M.S. degree in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA).
- The UAH Early Learning Center added a Preschool Autism and Language Social Skills (PALS) classroom as well as a second Office of School Readiness (OSR) state-funded prekindergarten classroom.
- On August 17, 2018, UAH's Space Hardware Club reported the successful launch of their Active Luminescence For X-Ray Emission Detection (ALFRED) payload system from the Columbia Scientific Ballooning Facility in Ft. Sumner, New Mexico. This was the culmination of a \$50,000 NASA Undergraduate Student Instrument funded project. UAH student members included Adam Bower, Chris Helmerich, Jared Fuchs, Elena Pradhan, Matthew Haskell, Samantha Johnson, Erik Korzon, and Kyle Renfroe representing both the Colleges of Engineering and Science.

- In April 2018, the UAH team *Chargernaut* captured first place in the NASA Human Exploration Rover Challenge. Nearly 100 teams took part in the competition, coming from 23 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, as well as several different countries, including Brazil, Germany, India, and Mexico. UAH team members received a note of congratulations from US Senator Doug Jones.
- A Joint Nursing Science PhD program between the UAH College of Nursing and the UA Capstone College of Nursing has been approved by the Board of Trustees and the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) to begin summer 2019.
- The College of Nursing in partnership with the UAB School of Medicine-Huntsville campus begins its second year of the Collaborative Care Clinic, which is a nurse practitioner led clinic run by UAH College of Nursing faculty.
- UAH Testing and Certification Services, located within the College of Professional and Continuing Studies, received national certification from the National College Testing Association.
- The Fermi Gamma-ray Burst Monitor (GBM) team, led by NASA astrophysicist and UAH alumna Dr. Colleen Wilson-Hodge, comprises scientists from NASA, the Universities Space Research Association, the UAH Center for Space Plasma and Aeronomic Research (CSPAR), and the UAH Department of Space Science. The GBM team was the 2018 recipient of the Rossi Prize. The team was recognized for their role in the first joint detection of gravitational and electromagnetic waves from the same cosmic event – the spectacular smashup of two neutron stars in a distant galaxy. Members of the UAH team include CSPAR researchers Dr. Michael Briggs, Dr. Charles "Chip" Meegan, Dr. Peter Jenke, Dr. Narayana Bhat, and Dr. Peter Veres, as well as Department of Space Science faculty member Dr. Robert Preece and graduate students Matthew Stanbro, Rachel Hamburg, and Suraj Poolakkil.
- Associate Professor Robert Griffin and Lecturer Ryan Wade, Atmospheric Science, were awarded a National Science Foundation Research Experiences for Undergraduate (REU) site. The site, named "Remote Sensing of Land-Atmosphere Systems," allows top undergraduates from around the country to come to UAH and work with Atmospheric Science faculty and NASA/NOAA partners.
- The Honors College welcomed in our largest and most successful freshman class: 377 Honors Students with an average ACT of 31.89 and a high school GPA of 4.19.

- The "Annual Ability Career Fair" drew over 300 students, caregivers and community members to the UAH campus. Individuals with disabilities are the largest untapped labor force in the country. The goal of the fair is to connect employers to job-seeking individuals with disabilities.
- Dr. Gary Zank led the team that won a 5-year, \$20M NSF EPSCoR (Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research) grant to study low-temperature plasma science.
- UAH formed a not-for-profit Research and Technology Corporation (RTC) to provide more flexibility in performing research with commercial and university partners, to facilitate the success of entrepreneurial startup companies on the UAH campus, and to assist the University community better manage its intellectual property for the benefit of UAH faculty, staff, and students.
- University Advancement developed the largest number of gift agreements since 2005.
- The first journal of undergraduate research at UAH, *Perpetua: The UAH Journal of Undergraduate Research*, published its first three issues, with the most recent in spring 2018. A total of 20 manuscripts have gone through the review process and have been published to date. Topics have covered a wide range of disciplines from many of the Colleges. A fall issue is planned for November 2018.
- 1,838 students and family members participated in 2017 Family Weekend.
- UAH Dining maintained a 92% Student Satisfaction Score for fall and spring semesters.
- Men's Track & Field won the Gulf South Conference (GSC) Championship in 2018 and also had student-athletes participate in the NCAA National Meet in Charlotte, NC. David Cain was named GSC Men's Track Coach of the Year and South Region Coach of the Year.
- Softball earned its 16th straight NCAA tournament berth, won the NCAA South Regional, and advanced to the NCAA South Super Regional.

We continue to make substantial progress, from record enrollment to prize-winning research, and this academic year looks to be no exception. Faculty, staff, and students deserve congratulations for what is being accomplished at UAH.