



MEMORANDUM

TO: Faculty, Staff, and Students

FROM: Robert A. Altenkirch

DATE: August 15, 2017

SUBJECT: Welcome to a New Academic Year

Welcome to the start of a new academic year, to those returning and to those just joining us. Last academic year much was accomplished. SACSCOC reaffirmed our accreditation with no additional report requested, i.e., a “clean” reaffirmation. For the second year in a row, record enrollment numbers were posted, both for overall and freshman enrollment. Retention of freshmen was the highest in history as was the ACT score of incoming freshmen at 27.6, which was the highest in the state as well.

For the third year running, the Honors College freshman class of over 300 this fall is the largest ever. They bring with them an average ACT score of 31.6 and an average HSGPA of 4.18, the highest either has ever been. More than 25% of this class comes from outside the Tennessee-Alabama area.

Dorothy Davidson, Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of Davidson Technologies, Inc. in Huntsville, committed \$5 million toward the construction of the D.S. Davidson Invention to Innovation Center (I²C), an incubator for startup companies. The gift, coupled with support from the UAH Foundation, the U.S. Economic Development Administration, Madison County, the Alabama Innovation Fund, and directed support from the Alabama State Legislature, allows the I²C to be constructed entirely with external funding. The facility will house spinouts from UAH-generated intellectual property and startups from the surrounding 15-county region. This past year UAH faculty, staff, and students submitted 36 Invention Disclosures that resulted in 15 patent applications to the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office.

In April, the Board of Trustees approved the UAH purchase of Executive Plaza, approximately 58 acres directly across Sparkman Drive from the Beville Conference Center and Hotel. Acquisition of Executive Plaza allows for future campus expansion and possibly the development of a “college town neighborhood,” a walkable space of mixed use residential and retail amenities for students, faculty, and staff common to other college campuses, but now missing from UAH. UAH will take ownership of Executive Plaza by the end of this month.

There were many outstanding accomplishments of UAH faculty, staff, and students this past year. Just a few are highlighted below:

- The UAH Wind Ensemble, under the direction of David Ragsdale, Chair of the Department of Music, performed for the Alabama Music Educators Association – a first for UAH.
- Art/Digital Animation Assistant Professor Vinny Argentina hosted, with a number of community sponsors, ChargerCon, a free gaming and technology exposition. Last year's crowd was nearly 5 times larger than the previous year.
- UAH undergraduate economics students Christopher Brookshaw and Jared Grogan completed an economic impact study for the City of Madison, Alabama. Their paper, "Mallard Fox Creek Industrial Park and Cummings Research Park: Investigating Employment and Income Disparities," was presented at the Southern Regional Science Association meeting in Memphis, Tennessee.
- The first cohort of B.S. in Kinesiology students graduated in spring 2017.
- The Early Learning Center expanded to include Head Start classrooms offered in collaboration with Community Action Partnership of North Alabama (CAPNA) and a state-funded pre-kindergarten classroom.
- Maria Pour, Assistant Professor in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, received the highly prestigious National Science Foundation Faculty Early Career Development Program (CAREER) Award. Her research focuses on advancement of methods to design state-of-the art phased array antennas, with applications in mobile and wireless systems for homeland security, unmanned vehicles, surveillance, remote sensing, and intelligent transportation systems.
- The College of Nursing (CON) will open a Collaborative Care Clinic on Governors Drive in Huntsville this August. The clinic, supported through a partnership between UAH CON and UAB School of Medicine-Huntsville Campus, will focus on wellness and chronic care for diabetic and hypertensive patients.
- SACSCOC approved a BA and BS in Professional Studies in the College of Professional and Continuing Studies.
- Gary Zank, University of Alabama Trustee Professor, Chair of the Department of Space Science, Director of the Center for Space Plasma and Aeronomic Research, and member of the National Academy of Sciences, has been named the 2017 recipient of the International Space Science Institute's Johannes Geiss Fellowship. The fellowship is awarded annually and provides one international scientist of stature with funding for a limited-duration visit to the Institute, which is located in Bern, Switzerland. Zank was also awarded the Indian National Science Academy (INSA) Professor DS Kothari Chair for distinguished scientists, which will support a visit to a variety of institutions in India.

- Biological Sciences Assistant Professor Eric Mendenhall is conducting NIH Genomics Research as Co-Principal Investigator with Richard Meyers, President, Science Director, and a Faculty Investigator at the HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology. The research is part of a four-year, \$31.5 million National Institutes of Health Encyclopedia of DNA Elements (ENCODE) Project to further the construction of a comprehensive parts list of functional elements in the human genome.
- For the second year running, 1/3 of Honors freshmen maintained a 4.0 in their first year at UAH.
- Aerojet/Rocketdyne committed a \$1 million endowment to establish the Aerojet/Rocketdyne Chair in Space Science.
- For the over 300 university dining programs serviced by Sodexo, the UAH dining program ranks in the top 25 nationally and 11th in the southeast for overall customer satisfaction based on student satisfaction surveys.
- Kevin Cardno and Irene Thorpe of the UAH Rowing Club placed 1st and 2nd, respectively, at the American Collegiate Rowing Association National Championship in Gainesville, Georgia.
- UAH successfully completed year one of the College Academy, an early college high school operated in partnership with Huntsville City Schools. The second freshman class enters this fall.
- Forty two new faculty members have been selected and hired since fall 2016.
- Class schedule changes developed last year go into effect this fall. These will be the first changes to class start times in over 10 years.
- The UAH Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs in conjunction with the Huntsville Area Inclusive Community Initiative (HAICI), the City of Huntsville's Office of Multicultural Affairs, and The Human Relations Commission hosted a year-long series of campus and community forums that brought together UAH faculty, staff, and students and community leaders to address racial concerns. UAH faculty in the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, in collaboration with the Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs, will continue the dialogue this fall with "Bring It to the Table" campus forums.
- Several UAH projects were launched to space:
 - FNS, the Fast Neutron Spectrometer, built and tested at UAH, launched to the International Space Station (ISS) in October. The FNS is being tested in space to monitor radiation for future crewed NASA space missions.

GLM, the Global Lightning Mapper, developed jointly by Lockheed Martin and UAH for NOAA, launched to orbit in November as a part of the GOES-16 satellite.

LIS, a lightning imaging sensor co-developed by NASA Marshall Space Flight Center and UAH, launched to the ISS in February.

- Several Athletic teams won regular season Gulf South Conference Championships: Men's Basketball, Men's Track and Field, Softball, and Women's Lacrosse.
- The UAH Athletic Department honored 57 student-athletes who achieved 4.0 grade point averages at the Annual 4.0 Night in Spragins Gymnasium.
- Head Men's Basketball Coach Lennie Acuff recorded career win number 500, and Head Softball Coach Les Stuedeman recorded career win number 1,000, which was also the 1,000th win in UAH Softball history.

As was the case last year, projections and registrations to date indicate that we will have another record year in enrollment, both in total and freshman enrollment. We are on track to meet the enrollment goals of the strategic plan "Expanding Horizons." Our research program continues to be robust with the average expenditures over the last four years being the highest in UAH history. While DoD and NASA continue to be our largest research funding partners, we are making progress in expanding our research portfolio with, for example, expenditures from NSF grants increasing over 25% from FY14 to FY16.

During this academic year, several construction projects will progress. The parking lot under construction south of the parking lot behind the Materials Science Building should be completed early this fall. Phase II of Charger Village, now underway, should be ready for occupancy fall 2018 as will the new sorority house under construction for Alpha Omicron Pi. Groundbreaking on the I²C should take place in several weeks with the facility opening early spring 2019. Renovation of the Conference Training Center to provide needed additional classrooms is scheduled to begin early December and to be completed mid-summer. And, expansion of Charger Café in the Conference Training Center will occur next summer to accommodate larger crowds in fall 2018.

We continue to make great progress, and we appreciate your contributions that make that all possible.

Thanks,

Bob