

Convocation Remarks
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August 20, 2014

Welcome to The University of Alabama in Huntsville. We're confident that you will enjoy your time here, and that what you will take away when you graduate will serve you well in your personal and professional lives. Christine Curtis, our Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, will give you this evening some advice on being successful in your academic career. Mital Modi, a UAH alumna, I'm sure will share with you her experiences at UAH and how they have contributed to where she is today. And, the UAH Student Government Association President, Nandish Dayal, will, hopefully, although you never can tell what Nandish will say when you give him the microphone, let you know what to expect as a student at UAH.

Let me share with you what changes in the campus that you can expect to see over your time at UAH. You already saw one today with the launch of a new UAH web site redesign.

UAH by university standards is a young university, and, in a sense, evolved rapidly from its founding as an autonomous campus of The University of Alabama System in 1969.

Expansion and renovation of the Nursing Building, doubling it in size, is underway and should be completed in the fall of 2015, allowing us to enroll more Nursing students. The Greenway, the park-like area on which we are now located that provides convenient pedestrian and bicycle pathways for movement around campus, will be extended further north alongside the Library and the Nursing building all the way to Roberts Hall. This extension should be complete, again, in the fall of 2015. Renovation of the Roberts Recital Hall should be complete by the end of this month incorporating acoustic enhancements and technology upgrades in sound and light.

The Severe Weather and Radar and Lightening Laboratory building across Sparkman Drive from the entrance roundabout and behind Robert "Bud" Cramer Research Hall should be completed by the end of September. The Laboratory will serve as a severe weather research campaign center to enable command and control direction of deployed mobile research assets in the midst of severe weather events.

This fall we will begin construction of a new Welcome Center and Student Services Building, a one-stop-shop for student services, to replace Madison Hall, the building behind you on my left. Madison Hall has outlived its useful life and will be demolished. The Welcome Center and Student Services Building, to be completed in spring 2016, will be situated in the parking lot just behind you and have an entrance way on the Greenway as well as the main entrance facing Sparkman Drive. Parking will be provided in front of the main entrance and on the side of the building where Madison Hall is now. An additional parking lot will be constructed along the third base fence of the baseball field. The net result is an addition of about 50 to 60 parking spaces in the

center of campus. I wanted to get that in, that we are increasing parking, because I get a lot of suggestions about parking!

We are planning to add new graduate programs in the College of Business Administration and in the Department of Space Science, which you may want to consider following graduation if they fit with your undergraduate degree. Undergraduate concentrations in Gaming and Entertainment Arts are planned in Computer Science and Art and Art History and are in the implementation stages.

We are also proposing to establish a College of Education, a natural progression for our Department of Education, which, in addition to academic programs, will house the Rise School of Huntsville, a preschool for developmentally disabled and typical children, as an outreach and service unit of the College. Currently the Rise School is a private preschool, but we are working with the Rise School to assimilate it within UAH. As part of the College of Education we are seeking approval this September to put in place secondary education degrees and will be proposing to offer a bachelor's degree in Kinesiology within the College of Education as well.

We've made a number of changes in admissions policies for this fall, and so you are the first class to benefit from them. We revised our AP credit award criteria and will be accepting more AP scores. The credit hour limit for Merit Tuition Scholarships increased from 16 to 18 hours per semester. Transcripts for admissions and scholarship awards are now re-valuated on the basis of the most recent one sent. And, the tuition structure is transitioning over a three year period to a block model in which tuition is charged by the credit hour up to 12 credits, from 12 to 18 credits there is no additional charge, and beyond 18 credits the charge is again by the credit hour. The impact for you is that if you take 16 credits hours this fall, next fall, and the fall of 2015, you will see your tuition decrease. Sixteen credit hours per semester is generally what you need to take to graduate in four years. Some of you may have also benefited from the Freshman Summer School Incentive in which summer classes taken by entering freshmen in the fall were included with the fall semester when computing tuition for the summer and fall. This may result in a tuition refund for you this fall.

There are numerous student clubs and activities available in which I would encourage you to participate. You'll have opportunities at UAH that are unique, from Engineering students building and launching rockets, to Nursing students participating in Let's Pretend Hospital for first graders, to Business students managing an investment portfolio, to Science students travelling to Panama for study abroad, to Liberal Arts students, and students across campus as well, participating in music ensembles, choirs, and theatrical performances, to Honors students publishing a thesis through the UAH Salmon Library.

You have a strong Student Government Association. They were instrumental in Charger Union becoming a reality and were intimately involved in the design. There are a lot of faculty and staff here ready to help you succeed. I would encourage you to call on them.

I'll see you around campus and at various UAH events I'm sure. I'm glad to communicate with you as well via e-mail from time to time, but I'd suggest loftier issues than parking! As I said, I seem to get a lot of suggestions about parking!

Best of luck in your academic career.