



President's Communiqué
Dr. Ken Kitts
February 14, 2017

Colleagues: Please see below for updates on projects and developments of interest to our campus community.

Enrollment: Census date for spring semester was February 3. We ended up in good shape in both headcount (6,872, an increase of 5% over last spring) and credit hour production (78,717, an increase of 4.0% over last spring). Spring CHP was 91.8% of fall CHP – slightly below our goal but a good result nonetheless given that our December 2016 graduating class was much larger than usual. The final headcount represents a spring enrollment record for UNA.

Searches: The search for the next VPAA and Provost is on schedule. The search committee, under the leadership of Dr. Brenda Webb, is nearing the end of Skype interviews and will soon make recommendations on which candidates to bring to campus. The search for the VP for Business and Financial Affairs is getting organized under the leadership of Dr. Doug Barrett, who has accepted my invitation to chair that search committee. Other committee members on the VPBFA search include the following: Dr. Sandra Loew and Dr. Nikita Duke (Faculty Senate Appointees); Melissa Medlin and Mike Thompson (Staff Senate Appointees); Dean Melvin Davis (COAD Representative); Ron Patterson (EC Representative); Salena Denton (presidential staff appointee); and Andy Mann (UNA alumnus and presidential community appointee). The VPBFA position was advertised the first week of February. Stay tuned for updates and an invitation to meet candidates for both of these important positions.

Athletics: Pursuant to the press conference and announcement on December 6, we have signed membership agreements with the ASUN and Big South Conferences. We will continue as a member of Division II and the Gulf South Conference for one more year, with 2018-19 marking our first year in Division I play. The reclassification process takes four years to complete. If you have not already done so, I encourage you to read the FAQ on this topic that is available on the “Rise and Roar” page that links to the UNA Athletics website. I will work with AD Linder to schedule a time later this semester for us to provide an overview of next steps in the reclassification process and to answer questions on this topic.

Faculty and Staff Forum: The second annual EC Forum with faculty and staff was held on January 31 in Norton Auditorium. All EC members were present to answer questions, and there were just over 100 attendees. We are committed to continuing to offer this opportunity each year, but I intend to work with the Shared Governance Executive Committee to identify a different location (Norton is too large) and to move to a more interactive format that will encourage greater attendance and audience participation. In response to a question that was raised about the decision to hold the forum in late afternoon, the short answer is that there is no time that works well for all. Even so, we are mindful of this concern and will work with faculty and staff leaders to consider alternatives as we plan for future events.

Status of Braly Stadium: Today's edition of the *Times Daily* published a guest column I wrote ("Let's Work Together to Find the Right Answer") to explain our concerns about the proposal to build the new Florence Middle School on the property adjacent to Braly Municipal Stadium. Please know we are doing everything within our power to work with city and FCS officials to find a resolution to this difficult issue. If those efforts are not successful, we will need to consider our options. The parking situation at Braly has long been problematic and has been made even more so by the preparations to construct the new school within feet of the home side of the stadium (much closer than the old Coffee High School). What other stadium with capacity of 15,000 has limited pedestrian access to the home side and little to no dedicated parking? Moreover, I find it troubling that we ask hundreds of our students -- Pride of Dixie band, spirit squads, and the football team -- to perform in a venue that is not fan-friendly and that does not carry our University's logo or colors. Those of us speaking on behalf of UNA will continue to push these issues with vigor.

Legislative Session: The 2017 legislative session began on February 7. Along with key members of my staff, I met with members of our local delegation prior to the start of the session to remind them of the funding equity issue that continues to place UNA at a disadvantage relative to other public universities in Alabama. (If our per-student funding were at the median, we would receive an additional \$9.7 million each year in state support.) We discussed options for improving our position by building our request for new funding around programs that align with state initiatives in economic development and workforce development. Funding remains very tight, however, and it is likely that any increase to our base appropriation for FY 18 will be modest.

Miscellaneous:

- The downtown building formerly known as Keystone Business Centre is now the proud home of the Connie D. McKinney Department of Human Sciences, Hospitality, and Design.
- Construction of the new parking lot on Circular Road is now underway with a revised completion date of mid- to late March.
- Moe's Southwestern Grill opened in the GUC on January 26 and is drawing big crowds. We experienced delays in working with the Alabama Building Commission on approval to begin work on Panda Express. That approval finally came through last Friday, so renovations to accommodate that outlet are now underway with an expected opening in approximately eight weeks.
- Bids for the new nursing building will be opened on March 28. Demolition of Floyd Science Building will begin shortly thereafter.

I hope you find this summary useful. If you have questions regarding these or other topics, please feel free to ask your EC representative or send an email to my office so we can direct you to the appropriate officer. Thanks for all you do for the University of North Alabama!