President's Communiqué
Dr. Ken Kitts
March 20, 2019

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

Enrollment: Our excellent trajectory on enrollment continues. Yesterday was census date for spring semester, and the final tally is **7,053 headcount**, an increase of 3.2% over last spring with credit hour production also up 3.2%. This represents a new spring enrollment record for UNA and bodes well as we begin to look ahead to Fall 2019.

Fulbright Awards: In the spring of 2017, we announced UNA's first student recipient, Mollie Schaefer (Art), of a grant from the Fulbright Program. I am pleased to inform you that UNA continues to assert itself in this prestigious national awards program. This year, we already have three students who have been notified of Fulbright awards. Those awarded in the current cycle include Barbara "Jimmie" Waites (Marketing/Economics), Bradford Carter (CIS), and Peyton Byrd (Art). In addition, applications from five other UNA students are still under review by the program with decisions expected soon. Success at this level means that UNA is in the running for inclusion in the "Top Producers of Fulbright" list that is released annually by the U.S. Department of State. Please join me in congratulating these high-achieving students and in thanking Dr. Matt Price, UNA's director of premier national and international awards, for his excellent work in this area.

Doctoral Programs: Last week, the members of the Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management Committee of the UNA Board of Trustees voted to endorse resolutions to launch UNA's first two doctoral programs in the fall of 2020. The programs include an online/low residency Executive Doctor of Business Administration and a traditional, site-based PhD in Exercise Science and Health Promotion. Those resolutions now move to the full Board of Trustees for final consideration. Simultaneous with these Board actions, University officials are working with the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) and the SACS Commission on Colleges to submit all materials necessary to secure approvals from those bodies. This development, coupled with the recent expansion of the Honors College and the aforementioned success we have experienced with the Fulbright Program, serves to underscore our commitment to ensuring a Division I standard of excellence in academics as well as in athletics.

Transition to NCAA Division I: I am pleased to report that year one of the reclassification of UNA athletics from Division II to Division I has gone very well. Financially, we have met and exceeded the benchmarks set forth in the pro forma approved by the Board of Trustees in 2016. Revenue from game day guarantees ("money games" versus high profile opponents) and athletic fundraising are ahead of schedule. Academically, our student-athletes continue to perform well with a cumulative GPA over 3.0. We are on track to meet and exceed requirements for the all-critical Academic Progress Rate metric that applies to all Division I programs. (There is no comparable academic standard at the Division II level.) Finally, we have all been heartened by the early success of our programs on the fields and courts of

athletic competition. Our Lions have competed with Top 10 programs, played for conference championships, advanced to a post-season invitational tournament, and experienced several signature wins against major opponents from well-known conferences – and all of this happened in the first year of our transition to D-I. Roar Lions!

Project 208: Work on the higher education budget for FY20 is just now beginning in earnest. ACHE released its recommendations on February 5, followed by release of the Governor's budget recommendations yesterday. Both have recommended UNA for an 8.5% increase which would increase our annual state appropriation by $2.5 million. Our recommended percentage increase is the second highest of all Alabama senior institutions and compares very favorably with the average 5.9% increase for that group. However, these are only recommendations. The respective Senate and House committees that deal with the Education Trust Fund allocations will now begin to take up these funding decisions, and it is very likely that additional changes will occur. We are working very hard to ensure that any changes better our position. It is important to remember that UNA's deficit is staggering as measured by per-FTE funding: $11M-$25M per year depending on how the numbers are crunched. This deficit developed over a century and will not be corrected in one budgetary cycle, but we need to make significant progress this year and in subsequent years to begin closing the gap. Accordingly, Project 208 must remain a top priority for all those who care about the future of the University of North Alabama.

Quick Hits:

- The tremendous amount of rain in the last three months has presented challenges in the construction of Harrison Hall, future home of the Anderson College of Nursing and Health Professions. Even so, the contractor informs us that a December 2019 opening remains the goal.
- This year's Light the Fountain celebration drew over 600 people to Harrison Plaza. My thanks to those of you who attended. We want this to continue to build this tradition into a signature spring event for our students and for our faculty, staff, and alumni as well. Special thanks to the Division of Student Affairs for taking the lead in planning this event.
- The development of exclusive learning agreements with major organizations and businesses is carrying the UNA academic brand across Alabama and our neighboring states. Among the agreements recently signed: North Alabama Medical Center, Huntsville Hospital System, Manufacture Alabama, and North Mississippi Health Services.
- According to *Birmingham Business Journal*'s rankings for 2018-2019, UNA's Master of Business Administration (MBA) program once again is the largest in the State of Alabama….and our lead continues to grow. Congratulations to the College of Business on this signature recognition.

Dena and I wish you an enjoyable and safe spring break. Looking ahead, please note that the Faculty/Staff Appreciation Luncheon will be held this year on Thursday, May 2. It's a great way to wrap up the academic year as we celebrate service milestones and individual accomplishments. Thank you for all you do for the University of North Alabama. Roar Lions!