

MEMORANDUM

TO: Faculty, Staff, and Students

FROM: Robert A. Altenkirch

DATE: August 18, 2014

SUBJECT: Welcome to a New Academic Year

Welcome to the start of a new academic year at The University of Alabama in Huntsville, always an exciting time on campus. This past year was a very productive one for UAH, and we look to build on its momentum. There were many noteworthy faculty, staff, and student accomplishments from 2013-14, as well as progressive changes on campus. Just some of the many highlights include:

- Undergraduate Philosophy student Rachel King (UAH Honors College) was recently awarded the prestigious Penn State Bunton-Waller (Graduate) Fellowship. Only 18-25 students are selected annually to apply for four openings in the program.
- Joseph Conway (Assistant Professor, English) won The Best Essay of the Year award from the Nathaniel Hawthorne Society for his article *Hawthorne's Backwoods Puritan: "Sir William Phips" and the Democratic Clown Tradition*.
- UAH Student Government Association (SGA) organized The Big event in which 250 UAH students performed acts of service within our communities.
- SGA launched Chargercycle, a free campus bike share program.
- In January 2014, three Industrial and Systems Engineering (ISE) seniors, Anna Hester, Sarah Cates, and Rachel Stewart, visited their senior design project collaborators at ESTACA, a University in Paris, France, to work on the design of an interplanetary mission.
- In the summer of 2014, three faculty members in the Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering received new research grants from the National Science Foundation: Babak Shotorban, dusty plasmas through computer simulations; George Nelson, micro-scale energy transport in energy storage systems; and Sarma Rani, particle-laden turbulence in atmospheric clouds.
- The Association of Nursing Students was awarded the Most Outstanding Community Service Project at the Alabama Association of Nursing Students Annual Convention in Montgomery, Alabama, October 2013. The

- project focused on weekly volunteering at the Community Free Clinic in Huntsville.
- Kacy Taylor, Senior Nursing Student, UAH Association of Nursing Students Chapter President served as President of the Alabama Association of Nursing Students.
 - Jatinder (Jeet) Gupta (Professor and Associate Dean, College of Business Administration) received the Distinguished Service Award from the Indian Subcontinent Decision Sciences Institute (ISDSI) for his long-term contributions to the growth of the ISDSI.
 - The national professional organization for human resource managers, the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), awarded its Superior Merit Award to the UAH Student SHRM Chapter for its excellence and achievement for the second year in a row.
 - Undergraduate student Markus Murdy (Aerospace Engineering, UAH Honors College) completed a 10-week NASA summer internship as part of a team developing a light, composite fuel tank for future launch vehicles for deep space missions.
 - Udaysankar Nair (Assistant Professor, Atmospheric Science) received a prestigious NSF CAREER award to study land use and land cover changes on the Asian islands.
 - Undergraduate student Casey Calamaio's (Earth System Science) innovative research on forest cover in Panama was selected for the Council on Undergraduate Research's Posters on the Hill at the U.S. Capitol Building in Washington, D.C.
 - The UAH Cheerleaders won 1st Place in the International Open Co-Ed Cheer Competition and the Open Partner Stunt events at the JAMfest National Series in Mobile, AL.
 - The UAH Fraternity and Sorority community donated the most money in its history to the various philanthropies and charitable organizations associated with their organizations with almost \$100,000 in gifts.
 - Virginia (Suzy) Young (Director, Proposal Development Office) was elected to the Board of the Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International (AUVSI) the World's largest non-profit organization devoted exclusively to advancing the unmanned systems and robotics community.
 - UAH reported to the National Science Foundation total research and development expenditures for FY13 of \$99 million, the largest in history.
 - UAH athletic teams finished second in the Gulf South Overall All-Sports Trophy Standings and second in the Women's All-Sports Trophy Standings. The

UAH Women's Track & Field Team won the Peach Belt Conference Championship for the second year in a row.

- The UAH Ice Hockey Team completed its first season in the Western Collegiate Hockey Association.

There are many more to be added to the above. We established the Department of Space Science and the UAH Honors College. The Rise School of Huntsville, a preschool, 18 months to six years, for children with developmental disabilities and typical children opened on campus. Charger Union opened in January 2014 and has proven to be a focal point for student gatherings and activities.

A number of administrative changes will be in place for this academic year. Christine Curtis, formerly Senior Vice Provost and Director of Strategic Planning at the University of South Carolina, joined UAH as Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, Marsha Adams, former Senior Associate Dean of Academic Programs in the Capstone College of Nursing at The University of Alabama, joined us as Dean of the College of Nursing, Sundar Christopher, former Chair of the Department of Atmospheric Science, is now Dean of the College of Science, and Bill Wilkerson, former Chair of the Department of Philosophy, assumed the position of Dean of the Honors College. Additionally, The Board of Trustees of The University of Alabama approved the establishment of a Division of Student Affairs at UAH to be led by a Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA). The search to select the new VPSA is well underway.

A number of new faculty were hired, and, looking forward, a number of faculty searches will be conducted throughout this academic year with focus on the emphasis areas identified in the Strategic Plan: Aerospace and Systems Engineering; Earth, Atmospheric, and Space Science; Biotechnology; Gaming and Entertainment Arts; and Cybersecurity and Big Data. In Cybersecurity and Big Data, under the leadership of Ray Vaughn, Vice President for Research, UAH was awarded a \$4.2 million grant from the National Science Foundation to support full-tuition scholarships in cybersecurity;

Together we made a lot of progress this past year, and we can all look forward to the year ahead. We plan to propose a number of new academic programs, at both the graduate and undergraduate level, establish a College of Education, and assimilate the Rise School into UAH within the College of Education. These changes, along with our transition to "block tuition," establishment of Charger Foundations, our revised General Education Program, the establishment of the Honors College, and changes to approaches to student recruiting should all contribute to the enrollment growth called for in the Strategic Plan, Expanding Horizons.

Thanks for all your efforts and enjoy this academic year.

Bob