



**President's Communiqué**  
**Dr. Ken Kitts**  
**March 14, 2016**

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**Colleagues:** I hope this message finds you well and that you are having a good year. It's hard to believe that we have just two months left in this spring semester. Please see below for my summary of current issues and developments at UNA.

**Capital Campaign:** The kickoff of the public phase of the Campaign for UNA will occur next week. We have already made significant progress toward our initial goal of \$25 million and now are beginning to think about new targets of opportunity for fundraising. The upcoming faculty and staff campaign is very important in this context. A high rate of internal giving will send a great message to alumni and other prospective donors. Please keep in mind that the rate of faculty and staff giving is calculated based on the number of individuals who give rather than the amount of the gift, so I encourage everyone to use the campaign as an opportunity to make a statement for UNA.

**Advancement:** Dr. Dan Hendricks has ended his service as UNA's Vice President for University Advancement. In his place, Dr. Judy Jackson is now serving as interim VP, with Dr. Debbie Shaw (former VP for Alumni Affairs at Auburn; UNA class of 1982 and Alumna of the Year in 2013) providing additional support as my liaison to the Office of Advancement during this time of transition. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dan for his hard work and dedication to the University of North Alabama. Dan and Barb mean a great deal to this community, and I know you join me in wishing them well as they move through this transition to retirement.

**Marketing:** Following a competitive selection process, we have contracted with the firm GrahamSpencer out of Nashville and Rockford, Illinois, to guide the university's branding effort. GS Partner Jay Graham will be spending a significant amount of time on our campus this spring talking with various groups in order to better understand what makes UNA special. Good branding is an important step toward our goal of telling the UNA story with clarity and vigor.

**D-I Athletics:** When engaging with our community stakeholders, the question I get asked more than any other has to do with the status of our transition to Division I athletics. By way of refresher, our Board of Trustees passed two resolutions, one in June 2011 and the other in September 2012, to endorse a move to D-I. The Board acted again in March 2014 to approve a Strategic Plan brought forward by a committee of faculty, staff, and administrators that included the goal of "expansion of the mission of the athletic program to the Division I level." The main obstacle to realization of this goal has been the lack of an invitation from a D-I athletic conference. Athletic Director Mark Linder and I have spent considerable time working on this issue, both to gauge interest from D-I conferences as well as to take stock of our current position as a member of the D-II Gulf South Conference. We have concluded that the holding pattern we have been in for over five years now (i.e. declaring intent to move without actually making a move) is not beneficial for UNA and should not continue indefinitely. Accordingly, we intend to begin a process of active reengagement with the trustees, some of whom are new to the Board since these votes were taken, to resolve this issue so we can move beyond the uncertainty and focus on the excellent work being done by our student-athletes in the classroom and on the field of competition.

**Floyd Hall / Nursing:** Our recent acquisition of the Keystone Business Centre means that we can begin planning for the move of the HES Department from Floyd Hall at the end of the Fall 2016 semester. Demolition of Floyd Hall and work on the new nursing building will begin soon thereafter. Funding for this new building is made possible by private gifts and a special state appropriation. In addition to those sources, we are pursuing a major federal grant that could assist with this project.

**Legislative Update:** The Alabama House of Representatives approved the education budget last week, and attention now moves to the Senate. There are still many steps in this process before the budget will be finalized. Changes will occur. Currently, we are sitting on a 4% increase in our base appropriation but would like to see that percentage move up as deliberations continue. We are also looking for opportunities to secure or increase earmarks that could further enhance our overall level of state funding. Our best chances for earmarks appear to be with nursing (a possible increase to an existing appropriation for the new building) and forensics (a possible new earmark to enhance educational opportunities for our students and to provide continuing education for professionals working in this field). The proposal to create an optional retirement plan for new employees is on a different schedule in the legislature. We should know more about the viability of that proposal in the next week or so. In addition to the communications already shared with campus and the information sessions held last week, I have asked officials in our Division of Business and Financial Affairs to prepare and distribute an FAQ on this issue to help answer questions and provide accurate information on this proposal.

**Spring Commencement:** Commencement for this spring semester will be held at 10:00am and 2:00pm on Saturday, May 14. By action of the UNA Board of Trustees, we will present honorary degrees to Dr. and Mrs. Don Harrison. Dr. Harrison is a retired heart specialist who has served as Chief of Cardiology at Stanford University and Senior Vice President and Provost for Health Affairs at the University of Cincinnati. He will deliver the spring commencement address. Mrs. Laura Harrison is a 1955 graduate of UNA and a recipient of the Keller Key. The Harrisons have been generous supporters of UNA over the years and are serving as co-chairs of our capital campaign. We look forward to welcoming them back to campus and showing our appreciation for their many contributions to UNA.

**Faculty and Staff Forum:** The forum held in Norton Auditorium on February 2 was a success, and I wish to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Shared Governance Executive Committee for their excellent work in sponsoring the event. We will make this an annual tradition at UNA. Please contact Dr. Marilyn Lee or Dr. Scott Infanger if you have any suggestions to enhance the format of next year's forum. I have shared the list of unanswered questions -- those that were not drawn from the bowl during the forum -- with members of the Executive Council and asked each member to find a way to address questions having to do with their area through divisional newsletters or other means. If you submitted a question and do not find it addressed between now and the end of the term, please feel free to reach out to the appropriate administrator for feedback.

Most of the questions submitted for the forum revolved around budgets, programs, and plans. Then there was this one for members of the EC:

*If you could have dinner with anyone from history, who would it be and why?*

We thought that one too good to pass up as a group. So, our dinner companions are as follows:

- Clinton Carter: Abraham Lincoln. I would talk with him about his decision process leading up to the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation.
- Amber Fite-Morgan: Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Wilma Mankiller and Gloria Steinem (although Ms. Steinem is still living). The two women were best friends for many years, and I imagine the conversation would be very entertaining and educating. They have both always appeared very inclusive and have paved a way for all young women.

- Judy Jackson: I would have dinner with David in the Bible to learn about his heart toward God. He was definitely human with many flaws, but he knew how to dance in praise and worship with abandonment and knew how to step into and walk in the grace and mercy of God. And he was in the Old Testament, where he had to follow all the rules and regulations. Since I have the Holy Spirit inside me today, how much more should I be able to freely praise and worship and walk in that grace and freedom. And I also consider myself a writer, and David wrote the most beautiful prose there is. He knew how to express his heart with words. He knew how to ask for help when he needed it and when to be thankful. He knew how to fight hard and he knew how to be quiet.
- Ken Kitts: Dwight D. Eisenhower. I have always admired Ike's leadership style. He had his share of blind spots, but on balance he was a good man and a good leader. He was more complex, intelligent, and interesting than most people realized then or realize now. It's also hard to argue with a résumé that included victory as Supreme Allied Commander in Europe during World War II and two terms of peace and prosperity as president. I would love to talk with him about his farewell speech.
- Mark Linder: The Apostle Paul. I believe having lunch with him would be a great experience. I have questions about his writings. He could give me insight, wisdom, knowledge and bring his epistles to life. I have a lot of questions, so I am hopeful it would be an extended lunch!
- David Shields: Joshua Chamberlain. He was a college professor of languages, a Civil War general, and a Medal of Honor winner. He was the hero of Gettysburg by defending Little Round Top. After serving in the Civil War he served five times as governor of Maine, and finally served as the president of Bowdoin College in Maine. I would like to talk with him because of his very exciting and varied life. I would like to talk to him about his motivations for volunteering in the Union Army and talk with him about his life and experiences. I would also like to talk with Alexander Hamilton. He was the father of our current financial system and was a very brilliant man.
- John Thornell: Harry Truman. I would like for him to share the thoughts and feelings he had when he decided to drop the atomic bombs on Japan at the end of WW2. It had to be an agonizing decision, knowing it would change the course of history.