



President's Communiqué Dr. Ken Kitts June 27, 2019

Colleagues: I hope this message finds you well. As we near the midway point for summer break, I would like to take this opportunity to provide a few updates from the University of North Alabama:

Enrollment: We continue to monitor enrollment indicators for Fall 2019. Currently, we are running ahead of this same point last year with SOAR attendance/reservations, housing deposits, and overall registrations for fall term. If these trends hold, we should have a new enrollment record to celebrate in a few months. That would be a significant achievement given data just released on the number of students who graduated from UNA this past year. Across summer, fall, and spring of the 2018-19 academic year, we graduated a total of 1,634 students -- an increase of 172 graduates (+12%) over the old record set a year ago. Allow me to be clear on this point: educating and graduating students is what we are here to do, so these numbers testify to institutional success and represent great news for our students, our region, and our area employers. At the same time, the large outflow of students presents an enrollment challenge in that we now have that many more seats to fill for the upcoming year.

Project 208: The Alabama Legislature concluded its 2019 session on May 31. The final education budget for FY 20 was signed into law by Governor Ivey on June 6. That budget increases UNA's annual state appropriation from \$29,912,446 in FY 19 to \$32,766,141 in FY 20. Our increase of 9.54% compares favorably with the average of 7.9% across all Alabama public universities and is a direct reflection of our Project 208 efforts to bring UNA into the consciousness of key state lawmakers. The infusion of almost \$3 million in new, recurring funding will be helpful as we address campus needs. Despite this good outcome, I must tell you that we are still far away from our goal of equity in per-student funding from the state. Consider the state appropriation for the three Alabama universities closest to us in size (all between 5,000 and 8,000 FTE). We'll forego names of these peer schools but otherwise use confirmed enrollment and budgetary data to make the point:

University	FTE Enrollment Fall 2018	Total State Funding FY 19	Percentage Increase for FY 20	Total State Funding for FY 20
XXXXXXX	7,995	\$49,694,224	6.08%	\$52,714,943
XXXXXXX	6,631	\$39,973,732	6.73%	\$42,664,287
UNA	6,126	\$29,912,446	9.54%	\$32,766,141
XXXXXXX	5,697	\$39,846,264	6.52%	\$42,443,721

The illustration above represents but one year in what has become a century of persistent, severe, and inequitable underfunding by the state. Consequently, we have accumulated well over \$100 million in deferred maintenance and capital improvement needs. As we head into the third year of Project 208, the challenge for us is to build on the promising start of this initiative and to find new ways to communicate with officials about the outstanding job UNA is doing in serving our region and state – and the need for fairness in funding if we are to continue to do so.

