President's Communiqué
Dr. Ken Kitts
February 9, 2021

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Colleagues: Please see below for important information and updates.

Governmental Relations: Our outreach to lawmakers has been in high gear recently with the beginning of the 2021 legislative session. Last month we hosted lunch meetings both here and in Huntsville to continue to push Project 208, our quest for funding equity for UNA, with vigor. We used that opportunity to remind key lawmakers of our growing academic profile, record enrollment, and outstanding record of service to region and state. In addition to most members of our local delegation, attendees at the luncheons included the Speaker of the House, the House Majority

Enrollment: UNA continues on track to set a new record for spring enrollment. We are one month away from census date and are already ahead of last spring in both credit hour production and headcount. We expect the second 8-week term, which begins on March 1, to further enhance the numbers for the current semester. For Fall 2021, we are seeing an increase over this same point in time last year with applications and acceptances for both freshmen and transfer students. These indicators, coupled with the recent uptick in our retention rate, give us confidence that we will meet and exceed last fall's record census figure of 8,361 students.

Network Security: As has been widely reported, there have been several high-profile ransomware attacks on the computer networks of business and public entities in Alabama over the last several years. The organizations targeted include a north Alabama school district, an Alabama hospital system, and the City of Florence. The increasing frequency and seriousness of these attacks dictate that we take steps to ensure our own network is protected against these types of intrusions. With that goal in mind, we have solicited advice on next steps from campus experts in Information Technology, Educational Technology Services, and the Department of Computer Science and Information Systems. This has resulted in a recommendation to engage an external consultant who can come in and evaluate our system, identify vulnerabilities, and make recommendations to help us guard against attacks. As part of this process, Provost Alexander and VP Thornton will see to it that any recommendations that would involve changes in our computer use policy are referred to the shared governance system for review and additional study.

COVID Response and Vaccinations: The number of confirmed coronavirus cases on our campus continues to fall with yesterday's report listing only 19 cases at UNA. In addition, almost all the key tracking metrics used by the Alabama Department of Public Health show that the post-holiday surge that affected our state has now abated. Both Lauderdale and Colbert Counties are in the "8 (e)3..3 (s)-9.8 (n8.2 (u):