

Annual Address by President Kitts
August 18, 2020

Good afternoon, colleagues. This is the first time we've ever had to hold this annual meeting in a virtual format. I'm grateful that we have the technology to do so, but I must tell you that Dena and I miss seeing you in person.

had to say goodbye to Una, the beloved lioness that had called our campus home for most of her 17 years.

But even as we reflect on the disruptions of the past nine months, it's important to note what hasn't changed.

Our most recent reports show us trending up in headcount and up in credit hour production over last fall's record class. If you've been reading the news about what's going on elsewhere, you will know that's nothing short of amazing, and I thank all of you for your part in generating these great outcomes. It's a team effort.

Tomorrow morning classes will take place on our campus for the first time in 160 days, and they will launch under some of the most unusual conditions in our history. Are things going to be a little different this fall? Of course. But as a campus community we are smart, tough, and resilient. We're going to see this thing through, and we're going to do the job that this University was put here to do. And if we continue to work together, we'll set more records, serve our students well, and do our part to avoid financial disruptions.

As you go about navigating the changes that have been thrust upon us by the pandemic, know that Dena and I are doing the same thing. We've been working and living on this campus every day since the pandemic hit. We're trying to plan events this fall that meet our campus guidelines but also keep us connected to you, our students, and our alumni and friends. That's important. And on Thursday morning, I'll be heading up to the Commons to greet my students and teach a traditional, face-to-face class that meets twice a week.

As issues arise, which they surely will, my pledge is that we will continue to be thoughtful, inclusive, and deliberative in our decision making. We have used the shared governance system to listen to you, and we will continue to do so, just as we will continue to consult with experts on and off campus to stay abreast of developments and best practices.

I'll wrap up these remarks with the observation that our forebears handed us the gift of this wonderful, beautiful, and historic institution, now in its 190th year. That's a precious gift, and it's one that we must nurture and protect. With your help, we can do that, and UNA will continue 0 g0 792 5()07