

President's Communiqué

Dr. Ken Kitts

April 24, 2023

Colleagues: We are approaching the end of the 2023 spring semester, and with that in mind I would like to take this opportunity to share important updates from the University of North Alabama.

State Budgetary Process: Governor Kay Ivey and State Finance Director Bill Poole released the Executive Budget for FY24 on March 21. The budget includes a recommended increase of \$3.85 million in recurring state funding for UNA plus an additional \$15 million in one-time funding for maintenance and capital needs. The \$3.85 million is less than what we had requested and would leave us in last place in per-student funding. Even so, we fared well compared to other institutions. Our percentage increase is the second highest of the fourteen public universities in Alabama and, if enacted, would narrow the gap between us and several peer institutions of similar size. The budget now moves to the Alabama Senate, where the Finance and Taxation Education Committee will soon begin its deliberations. In the legislature, we have now met with the chairs of both committees that deal with higher education funding, and last week we hosted a dinner in Montgomery for lawmakers from across the northern tier of the state. We will remain engaged with key officials as the budget moves through the Senate and House. It will likely be early June before we know final details on the state portion of our budget for the upcoming year. Securing sufficient funding for a COLA remains a top priority for me and the members of the Executive Council.

Federal Relations: Our move into the Fourth Congressional District continues to pay dividends for our campus. This past week, Congressman Robert Aderholt informed us that he has made UNA a top priority for FY24 with a request to the House Appropriations Committee for a special \$15 million earmark to assist us with construction of a new Engineering/STEM building. The \$15 million compliments the \$3.5 million he was able to secure for UNA in the current fiscal year. If this new allocation comes to fruition – which we believe is likely, though it is dependent on eventual passage of the spending bill as a whole – we will be able to begin work on this new facility earlier than we thought. Bringing a new building online without having to borrow money or use operating funds helps all parts of campus and underscores the importance of our growing emphasis on federal government outreach.

Chief Diversity Officer:

SACSCOC Review: Last week I received the official report from the SACSCOC Reaffirmation Committee that