

Report to the Board of Trustees

September 14, 2018

Good morning. And War Eagle! As always, I appreciate the time to provide an update during Board meetings.

I plan to speak to you today on a number of items, including updates on new personnel additions and ongoing searches, our strategic planning efforts, research endeavors, and a few other things to show that Auburn is on the move.

Since we were last here together, a new academic year has begun. Roughly 4,800 new freshmen arrived on campus in August. The demand for an Auburn degree is high, which is evidenced by the 21 percent increase in applications this year.

We continue to deliver a tangible value to our state by fulfilling our instruction mission. Nearly sixty percent of our freshman class are Alabama residents, and this is an increase over last year.

We also welcomed the most academically talented class in Auburn history. There was an increase in the average ACT scores and GPA of incoming first-time freshmen, which tells us that while more students want to enroll at Auburn, we're enrolling the best and the brightest.

Our FTE count this fall is 27,486, with total enrollment at 30,440. While the number of first-time freshmen didn't increase, our retention rates are up among upperclassmen. This is a key indicator of academic strength. Increased retention rates show that Auburn continues to offer students the classes and services they need to succeed.

Within the enrollment data, there is a stronger showing of Auburn employees who are enrolled at the university. It's very inspiring to know that our instruction mission comes full circle, transforming the lives of staff members who are committed to serving our institution.

We're always focused on the safety of our campus community, and we remain vigilant when it comes to preventing the tragic and unfortunate incidents that can happen at a university of our size. While we have witnessed some very difficult issues and incidents, we're committed to constantly improving our campus safety procedures. There is always work to do.

To that end, I am pleased to report that our entire Tiger Transit fleet—70 buses—are now equipped with a bus surveillance system that is monitored remotely.

Football season is off to a great start. We started strong with two huge wins, one over another top-10 team and another over an in-state rival. Our student-athletes are performing well on and off the field, and we're looking forward to great things from them this weekend and all season.

I also want to applaud our women's soccer team. For the first time in program history they are 7 and 0. And we learned on Tuesday that the team is ranked number 9 in the country—the second-highest ranking in the program's history. They face Mississippi State later today in the SEC opener, and we wish them luck as they battle the Bulldogs here in Auburn.

I have several additional items, so I'll jump right in with an update on new personnel and ongoing searches. I'm thrilled to welcome two new leaders to Auburn: Frank Ciluffo and Kelvin King.

Frank Ciluffo will officially begin his new role directing the McCrary Institute on Monday. He is a globally renowned cyber expert, and was appointed by President George W. Bush to serve in the Department of Homeland Security after the September 11 attacks. Frank brings the stature and expertise that will take Auburn another step forward as a leader on the national stage of cybersecurity. Welcome to Auburn, Frank.

And Kelvin King joins us after a 27-year career with the FBI. His extensive law enforcement experience will be invaluable as he leads Auburn in keeping our campus safe. Kelvin has lived and worked in our community for part of his career, and for the past five years, he's served as the supervisory special agent in charge of the bureau's Montgomery office. He is highly respected among law enforcement agencies. Welcome, Kelvin.

I also want to extend my sincere appreciation to Chance Corbett for his service as interim executive director for the Department of Campus Safety of Security. Thank you for all you've done—and continue to do—to keep this campus safe.

National searches are still underway for the Vice President for Enrollment Services, Vice President for Research, Chief of Staff and Vice President for Economic Development. We are getting closer to selecting the exceptional leaders for these key positions.

If all goes according to plan, we will be able to announce the selected candidates in the fall. I will keep the board informed of any updates.

Also of interest to the board is our ongoing strategic planning process.

We just completed 14 off-campus listening sessions, and we will commence with on-campus sessions next week. I made it a priority to ensure that I or one of my senior-most team members—Provost Bill Hardgrave, Senior Vice President for Student Affairs Bobby Woodard or Chief Operating Officer Ron Burgess—was present at each listening session. The dialogue at the sessions has encompassed critical institutional priorities and is laying the groundwork for our eventual plan. The sessions I have attended have been incredibly insightful, and I hear the same from all who joined us. I know members of the board have also been active participants at the sessions and individual interviews. Your participation in the group sessions is greatly appreciated.

The sessions have enabled a variety of voices to share their diverse perspectives on where Auburn is headed and what the Auburn of the future will be. Our faculty leaders Drs. Guertal and Tatarchuk are doing a great job. A final draft of the plan will be presented at your meeting in February 2019. It's an exciting time to be here at Auburn, as we stand at the cusp of a new era.

Now, I want to talk a little about our alumni.

Our alumni have incredible talents and expertise, and they are valuable stakeholders in Auburn's future. I've been thrilled to have the opportunity to attend a series of premier alumni events recently, including Black Alumni Weekend and an event at Delta's corporate headquarters in Atlanta. I applaud Gretchen VanValkenburg and her team for continuing to offer inspiring ways for our alums to deepen their connection to Auburn.

I very much enjoy engaging with off-campus stakeholders like our alums, but it's also essential to spend time with stakeholders on campus.

In this instance, I'm talking about our faculty. I enjoy learning about their work and am always ready to discover ways our shared governance can continue to make Auburn an even better university. There's always room for improvement, and here are a few ways we're working to strengthen the relationship with our faculty.

This semester, I began hosting informal lunches with faculty at my home, and the first one was last week. I called on deans and chairs to nominate faculty from all ranks and disciplines. It's important there is a culture of trust among the administration and faculty, and an informal, unstructured dialogue is very helpful to ensure we continue have shared institutional goals. It's also incredibly helpful for me to learn firsthand of issues faculty encounter in their roles and get their perspectives on issues of interest to me. This setting afforded me that opportunity. I am already looking forward to the next lunch.

And also last week, Janet and I hosted the Promotion and Tenure dinner at our home. We decided to elevate the event this year by hosting it at our home because our faculty are extremely valued, and they're an essential component of our land-grant mission. We had a fantastic time honoring their accomplishments, but most importantly, it gave Provost Hardgrave and me the opportunity to engage with some of our most successful faculty.

Our faculty are doing great things, and they are making great strides in our work to elevate Auburn's profile.

You've heard me mention PAIR before, so I'll give you a brief update on the future of Auburn research.

Auburn's investment in the PAIR teams had multiple objectives, and one was to serve as seed money. The teams were expected to secure new, external funding. I'm pleased to report we already have a great initial return of 60 percent on our investment.

A few weeks ago, we learned that one of our PAIR teams is the recipient of a grant from the US Department of Commerce's National Institute of Standards and Technology. This \$3 million grant will help a PAIR team focused on additive manufacturing further their research that's focused on improving the industry.

The funding gives Auburn the unique opportunity to innovate and empower engineering industries. It will propel the growth of our state's manufacturing sector. It will help us in our goals of becoming a go-to partnership university, continuing our service as an economic engine for the state and raising our national visibility as trusted resource for forward-thinking solutions.

To remain on the move, we must continue to adapt to the changing needs of our students and faculty.

Over the summer, 47 projects were completed. That's huge! Auburn's poultry science department is internationally recognized and the Miller Poultry Research and Education Center will significantly advance the university's standing as a global leader in poultry research, instruction and outreach. We're very proud that the administrative building has been completed and we're making progress toward completing the overall complex.

The Auburn Research Park is growing, and it's a hub of entrepreneurial innovation and activity.

Other projects completed this summer include the Harbert Family Recruiting Center and the Gavin Engineering Research Laboratory, both of which are beautiful additions to our campus that we will celebrate later today.

There is growth and progress at every turn on campus. It's important to remember that while we're expanding and improving facilities and programming, we are committed to remaining true to our traditions and the things that make Auburn so special to all of you.

We also want to share with the world those things that make Auburn so special.

To achieve this, we're working diligently to position Auburn as a national leader in instruction, research and outreach. A major part of this effort involves placing Auburn leaders and faculty experts in high-profile forums and organizations that serve to create partnerships and opportunities.

Innovative minds and great talent are all around us at Auburn, and we will earn a national reputation for our commitment to excellence.

In closing, I thank you for all you do to keep Auburn moving forward. Thank you for your time.

I'm happy to respond to any questions.