Dear Campus Community,

Thank you for the role each of you played in the lives of the 164 students who graduated from Henderson last month. Their smiles and the pride of their parents were great reminders of the incredible difference we make in the lives of our students and their families. Several parents shared with me that they never imagined having a college graduate in their family, let alone their own son or daughter. Other parents were excited to see their child have the opportunity to pursue the career of their dreams. All consistently commented on “the great experience at Henderson” with two families stating that their other students will attend Henderson as well. These feelings of joy, pride and excitement were all made possible by our collective efforts as university in preparing our graduates for the future that awaits them.

As we complete the second week of classes, I hope everyone is feeling refreshed and energized as we seize the opportunities of a new semester. Earlier this week, we celebrated the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In the 50 years that have passed since his famous “I Have A Dream” speech we having seen significant progress in the area of human equality. While much progress has been made during the years since Dr. King’s untimely death, the struggle for equality continues to persist in many areas of our society. As a result, we will have significant opportunities as a campus community to advance civil rights and human equality by challenging our students, and ourselves, to dream, think, and act beyond the current “boundaries” of our society.

**Strategic Planning**

Consistently, I hope you will continue to join me throughout the year as we demonstrate our collective commitment to our emerging core value of Human Value and Difference:

> We celebrate every human being and, embracing our differences, strive together to prepare students to become responsible citizens in a diverse, global, and knowledge-based society. We value an inclusive community where all individuals can explore, discover, and develop their unique abilities and interests.

I recently received a letter from a parent of a student with learning disabilities. The letter exemplifies how this core value is demonstrated through the efforts of faculty like Dr. Jim Harper, who go above-
and-beyond to assist students during a time of significant need. I want to share a passage from the parent’s letter:

You have no idea what this means to our family. In order for [my son] to avoid another academic suspension, he had to maintain a 2.0 GPA. Without Professor Harper’s help, this most likely would not have been possible. If [my son] had missed an entire year of college, he probably would have never gone back. In short, Professor Harper rescued my son’s college education. Your institution is truly fortunate to have a compassionate professor like Jim Harper. My wife probably best described him when she said, “Mr. Harper is what being a teacher is all about.”

This is one of the many ways in which we personify “The School with a Heart” on a daily basis. Efforts such as these, make a tremendous difference to our students and are a significant component of Henderson’s unique identity.

The December Strategic Planning Town Hall produced draft statements of our vision, mission, core values, and strategic position. You can view this document under the Strategic Planning tab on MyHenderson. Additionally, the following six strategic priorities have been identified: (1) Enrollment, Student Life and Retention to Graduation; (2) Academic Program Enhancement; (3) Faculty and Staff Quality of Life; (4) Physical Environment and Infrastructure; (5) Expanding and Diversifying Revenues; and (6) Marketing & Public Relations. You will begin to hear more about these strategic priorities as they are refined throughout the spring semester and the expected outcomes are developed. Please feel free to contact me or any member of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee if you have any questions about any of the above-referenced items.

University Budgeting Process

The University Budget Committee is tasked with developing budgetary recommendations for the president’s consideration. Led by committee chairman and Vice President for Finance, Bobby Jones, the committee will begin to plan for next year’s budget using the strategic priorities that emerged last semester. The committee had an initial meeting on Thursday and will continue meeting through much of the spring. All of the budget committee meetings are open to the campus community. The committee’s membership roster is as follows: Bobby Jones, Maralyn Sommer, Lewis Shepherd, Jennifer Boyett, Elaine Kneebone, Kenneth Taylor, John Hardee, Judy Harrison, Brenda Ponsford, Fred Worth, Jacob Mills, and Phillip Turner.

Our goal is to use the new strategic plan – as it emerges over the semester – as a blueprint for budgeting decisions. This will help ensure that our spending supports the priorities we have identified as most important to the fulfillment of the university’s mission. Enrollment decline over the past year, coupled with limited new resources expected from the state will result in a very conservative 2014-2015 budget. However, the new budget will still reflect the strategic planning priorities of the university.

State Funding Forecast
The Joint Budget Committee held its initial meetings last week and voted to advance the Department of Higher Education’s budget recommendations for 2014-2015. Among the recommendations, was a Governor Beebe-supported 1.7 percent increase in new funding for all institutions of higher education. This percentage correlates with the Higher Education Price Index and would amount to $162,164 in new funds to HSU if approved by the full legislature during the upcoming Fiscal Session of the Arkansas General Assembly. The allocation of new funds to higher education is completely contingent upon the legislature re-authorizing the state's participation in the private option component of Medicaid Expansion. As I shared in detail last spring, we can anticipate that cuts will occur to higher education if this item does not pass.

Relatedly, we are still working diligently to mitigate the potentially adverse impact of Performance Funding on our budget for next year and subsequent years. Currently, up to 10 percent of our budget or $1.85 million will be held in abeyance depending upon our performance under the key measures of student retention, student graduation, and total credentials awarded. The impact of the formula's outcomes for the past year will be known by April at which time we would make any necessary adjustments to the budgeting process.

**New Hires**

Please join me in welcoming Dr. Stephen Adkison as our new Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs. Dr. Adkison brings a wealth of creative experience and we are excited to have him join our leadership team on July 1. We are equally excited to have Tonya Oaks Smith join us as Director of Marketing and Communications. She will start Feb. 3 and we look forward to having her creative energy at Henderson.

In Reddie Spirit,

Glen Jones