Thank you to all who participated in the strategic planning Town Hall Meeting earlier this month. The discussion surrounding the various expected outcomes and the strategies that will be utilized to achieve them was informative and reflective of the many hours of hard work that have been invested into this process. As we approach the end of the planning phase, please share your ideas regarding potential strategies that will enhance our ability to achieve the various expected outcomes. The co-chairs of our six planning priorities subcommittees will need your input as they strive to complete their work before the next Town Hall Meeting on May 1.

The shift from strategic planning to implementation will give rise to continuing discussion throughout the campus as we begin to execute the different strategies that will continue the advancement of our university. These discussions will give rise to many critical decisions over the next five to ten years and we must have a stronger framework within which to have these discussions and to make subsequent decisions. A strong, vibrant and transparent system of shared governance will provide this much-needed framework for Henderson.

I believe shared governance begins with a spirit of trust, collaboration, transparency, and mutual engagement with the common goal of making the best decisions for our university. Shared governance is often expressed as the formal mechanism whereby individuals who are most impacted by a decision are allowed to participate, at some level, in the process of making that decision. Specifically, it extends opportunities to our faculty, staff, and students to share in the responsibility of the process by ensuring multiple perspectives are reflected throughout the critical stages of the decision-making process.

A vibrant system of shared governance requires commitment of all to shared responsibility. Each one of us has a responsibility to stay informed of the issues facing the institution and to be engaged with the various groups and systems that comprise Henderson’s system of shared governance. Further, we must disseminate information within our various constituency groups. Finally, we must come to trust and to support the mutually-developed shared governance system and the decisions that will result from our collective efforts.

A good example of shared governance currently at work on our campus can be seen in our strategic planning process. For the past seven months, our campus has been engaged in
determining the appropriate path for Henderson’s future. Our vision, mission, core values, strategic position, and strategic priorities have been developed by the campus through committees, subcommittees, Town Hall meetings, focus groups, classroom discussions, informal conversations, e-mail exchanges, and even some one-on-one meetings. Our collective diversity of thought and opinion is producing an emerging plan that is comprehensive and innovative while staying true to the unique character of Henderson State University.

In my various discussions with faculty and staff regarding shared governance, it has become clear that two critical shared governance components have been absent at HSU for some time: (1) A common, working definition of shared governance for the university; and (2) A formal structure for pursuing opportunities and addressing challenges. One of the expected outcomes that emerged from last week’s strategic planning Town Hall Meeting was the establishment of “a strong, vibrant and transparent system of shared governance.” As the first step of progressing towards this objective, I am appointing a Shared Governance Taskforce that will be comprised of the following individuals:

- Dr. Steve Adkison (Incoming Provost)
- Ms. Elaine Kneebone (Chair, Committee on Committees)
- Mr. Jacob Mills (President, Staff Senate)
- Dr. Brett Serviss (President-elect, Faculty Senate)
- Dr. Fred Worth (President, Faculty Senate)

Given the importance of shared governance to me, I will also be engaged with the taskforce throughout this process. The Taskforce will be charged with developing a campus-wide definition of shared governance and with recommending a more formal, comprehensive framework for shared governance at Henderson. The majority of the taskforce’s work will occur over the summer and their work will be presented to the campus for consideration in the fall. I truly believe that a strong system of shared governance will lead to a stronger university as we engage each other in the process of making decisions that are always in the best interests of the university and the students we serve. We all desire a strong system of shared governance on our campus and I am committed to working with our campus community to develop a model system for our university. Will you join me in this endeavor?

In Reddie Spirit,

Glen Jones