Dear Campus Community,

It is Homecoming Weekend! What a wonderful time to celebrate Henderson’s legacy as we welcome alumni and friends back to campus. Please make plans to participate in the various activities, including the big game, as we welcome these very special individuals back home. Additionally, I encourage everyone to attend Saturday morning’s Distinguished Alumni Luncheon. This year’s recipients, Major General Jimmie Keenan and Mr. Paul Leopoulous, have truly inspiring stories that will both encourage and challenge us. Please visit the HSU News Blog for coverage of Homecoming and other events.

Fall is the prime academic recruiting season, and expanding our efforts to attract students is our focus. We have added new Reddie for Henderson Days, because we know that when students actually set foot on our campus, they are more likely to choose Henderson. We will feature a day just for high school seniors on Nov. 12 and another for high school juniors in early April. On Nov. 19, we will host Scholar Day, a new event for high school students who are eligible for ACT scholarships. Reddie Connection will be Feb. 28 - March 1. Even if you are not directly involved in planning these events, please be aware that as representatives of Henderson, we are all tasked with recruiting. Let’s work together to make these students feel welcome. Following the success of our regional receptions last year, we will also host these again on Dec. 1-2 in Little Rock and Hot Springs/Benton.

Another way we are seeking to reach more prospective students is through social media. More and more students prefer to be contacted through these mediums. The overall number of students planning to attend any college is lower than in past years, so it is all the more important to make sure we are addressing these students’ needs and wants. If you have questions about how to increase your area’s social media effectiveness, please contact the Office of Public Relations.

The strategic planning process continues to move forward. The Town Hall meeting and subsequent small group meetings were a tremendous success as a result of the participation of our faculty, staff and students. A town hall meeting was held on Wednesday to secure feedback from the community regarding HSU. Thank you all for participating in these important discussions about Henderson’s future. The data garnered during these sessions has been transcribed and is currently available for campus review on My Henderson.

Two subcommittees have been created to advance the objectives of the planning process. The Guiding Statements Subcommittee has been tasked with reviewing/revising our core values, vision, and mission statements. This subcommittee is being chaired by Dr. Celya Taylor and membership is comprised of the following individuals: Dr. Shannon Clardy, Dr. Angela Boswell, Dr. John Hardee, Ms. Jennifer Boyett, Ms.
Carrie Roberson, Dr. Brenda Ponsford, Dr. Ryan Fox, and Dr. Claudia Beach. The Strategic Research Subcommittee has been tasked with “making sense of” and drawing conclusions from the various data concerning HSU and higher education in general. Their work will also include a comparative analysis of HSU and its contemporary and aspirational peers on select performance indicators. This subcommittee is being chaired by Ms. Lisa Massey and the following individuals are serving as members: Dr. David Evans, Ms. Vikita Hardwrick, Dr. Megan Hickerson, Dr. Judy Harrison, Dr. Bernie Hellums, Mr. Dan Mabery, Ms. Ginger Otwell, Ms. Vicki Taylor, and Dr. Fred Worth.

We continue to be impressed with how prepared our students are for success. Recently, our biology students received their scores for the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT). Two of our students scored in the 97th and 99th percentile of all students taking the exam! Performances such as this are great indicators of the quality of our science programs and the faculty who lead them. When coupled with the fact that six out of seven students who applied for admission into medical school last year were accepted, it is clear that HSU should be considered a school of choice for any student whose goal is to attend medical school.

We have had an abundance of events already this semester. Congratulations to those who received honors at the Founder’s Day celebration last week. We are privileged to have so many accomplished alumni and faculty members associated with Henderson. I want to thank all who attended Family Day in September. It was exciting to watch our students and their families interact with our Henderson community. We plan to make this an annual occurrence.

The turnout for our first three Coffee and Conversation with the President events has been very good, and I encourage you to invite even more of your colleagues to attend our next coffee on Nov. 7 at the Captain Henderson House. I enjoy these agenda-free occasions where we can get to know each other, and I hope you do as well.

Please join me in welcoming Ms. Jennifer Boyett as Vice President of University Advancement beginning Oct. 15. Thanks to all who offered feedback during Ms. Boyett’s campus visit. She is excited about joining us and will be a great addition to the Henderson family. Searches for the next Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and a Director of Marketing and Communications are ongoing. Additionally, the search for our next Dean of Ellis College began Oct. 1 and the search committee is hoping to have on-campus interviews early in the spring semester.

I also want to make you aware that the university is closely monitoring the federal government shutdown situation that continues to unfold in Washington since we have a number of employees who are paid, in whole or part, with federal funds. Governor Beebe issued a memorandum on Oct. 9 notifying all agency directors "that as of Friday, October 11, any programs or employees that are wholly or partially dependent on federal funding and cannot draw on those federal funds during the shutdown are to be suspended until its conclusion." This memo was issued because the "State of Arkansas simply does not have the resources to continue to cover the costs of federal programs..." The Arkansas Department of Higher Education and the Department of Finance and Administration hosted a joint conference yesterday afternoon to clarify Governor Beebe’s memo and to discuss its direct impact on higher education. As a result of this conference call and further communication with ADHE, we have determined that our federally-funded employees will continue their current employment status because the university still has the ability to draw on federal funds at this time. We will continue to monitor this situation very closely and will keep the campus informed if the situation were to change.
This is a time of tremendous opportunity for Henderson. Let’s continue our momentum as we move forward in the semester.

In Reddie Spirit,

Glen Jones