Dear Campus Community,

On behalf of our family, Sharon and I extend our heartfelt appreciation to you for your support throughout my first year as president of HSU. We are eternally grateful for the many kind words and acts of kindness that were extended, especially towards our children, during a time of tremendous transition for our family. As we begin the 123rd year of educating students at Henderson State University, I am looking forward to working with each of you as we strive to make our wonderful university even better.

In order to keep the campus informed of the various activities taking place throughout the university, I am pleased to announce the creation of a new monthly communiqué entitled *Henderson Now*, which will be released the second Friday of each month. In the spirit of the listening sessions conducted last year, I plan to continue our conversation by hosting a monthly *Coffee and Conversation with the President* throughout the academic year. I hope you will attend the next event, which is scheduled for Wednesday, Sept. 18, from 9:30-10:45 a.m. in the Jones Room Foyer in Garrison Center.

The start of a new semester is an ideal time to look at the past year’s successes and plan for the future. I encourage you to visit the Henderson News Blog regularly to stay current on accomplishments like these:

- The School of Business maintained accreditation.
- Henderson’s English/Language Arts program was nationally recognized.
- The Institute for Play Therapy at Henderson earned designation as an Approved Center of Play Therapy Education.

I am pleased to share with you several ways in which Henderson is growing. The university is now offering 22 courses in education and business in Hot Springs this semester via our partnership with National Park Community College. General Improvement Funds (GIF) totaling $1 million have been allocated to HSU to establish a physical presence in Hot Springs. We are identifying a facility to lease and an individual to coordinate the various activities associated with this initiative.

Henderson also has expanded its academic offerings by adding two new bachelor’s degrees: criminal justice and engineering physics. New degree tracks in Biochemistry (Chemistry), Entrepreneurship (Business Administration) and Math Statistics (Mathematics) are available. Additionally, Teachers College, Henderson now offers an online master’s degree in Educational Technology Leadership and a master’s degree in Developmental Therapy.

Henderson received more than $1.6 million in private support last fiscal year, which represents the 10th consecutive year the university has received donations totaling more than $1 million. Private funding helps the university establish new programs, maintain facilities, and attract outstanding students to our campus. Enhancing private support will be a crucial component of our long-term success.
We have commenced the search for our next Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and a search for a Vice President of University Advancement and a Director of Marketing and Communications. Campus interviews for the Advancement position will be held during the week of Sept. 23 while campus interviews for the Provost and Director positions will occur later in the semester. The campus will be provided numerous opportunities to interact with each of the finalists in addition to being provided an opportunity to evaluate them.

Although there have been many accomplishments this year, we have also been faced with challenges. Henderson welcomed 3,583 students to campus this fall, five percent fewer than last year. The decrease is due in part to the lowering of Arkansas Challenge Scholarship awards given to first-time freshmen and Henderson’s focus on continuing to admit high-quality students. We anticipated the decrease, and budgets were planned accordingly.

Throughout this year, the university has engaged the services of several consultants to better help us reach and retain quality students and to communicate the truly transformative nature of Henderson. CREDO has been engaged to assist us in developing a plan to strategically increase enrollment, enhance student quality, improve retention, and provide new services for our students. The first phase of their recommendations has been implemented. In an effort to improve student success rates, increased admission standards were approved by the Board of Trustees in July. Students must now score a 19 or higher on the ACT exam to be admitted unconditionally into Henderson next fall.

The marketing firm Martin-Wilbourn Partners also has been engaged to assist the university in the areas of public relations and marketing. All marketing materials have been completely revamped as we prepare to launch a student recruitment campaign entitled “The Heart of Henderson.” Additionally, audits of our website and social media presence have resulted in ongoing improvements in these areas. The public relations department may be contacting you for assistance in updating website content. If there are changes that need to be made to your department’s webpage, you may contact Martha Bryant (bryantm@hsu.edu; x5402) to have them completed. If you are the administrator of a social media account that is Henderson-related (personal accounts do not apply), Jackie Inouye (inouyej@hsu.edu; x5509) will be contacting you to help manage these.

Last year, I conducted campus-wide listening sessions with the goal of better understanding campus history, your concerns and your dreams for our future. These themes, and concerns expressed during the Higher Learning Commission reaccreditation visit, revealed that the university is in need of a new strategic plan. Tuesday’s Town Hall meeting marked the beginning of our comprehensive strategic planning process with many faculty and staff attending this opening session. Dr. Sal Rinella of Penson Associates is facilitating this process and he has conducted many focus meetings throughout the week. Please log on to My Henderson to read more about our inclusive planning process and to receive updates as they become available.

Thank you for your dedication to furthering the mission of Henderson and serving our students. I remain inspired by your love for Henderson, our students, and each other. I look forward to all we will accomplish together in the coming year.

Sincerely,

Glen Jones

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