

Fellow Alumni,

I hope that this message finds you well. As many of you have heard through media outlets, changes have occurred within our alma mater over the last 24 hours. It is with this in mind that I feel it important to correspond with you today.

Let me begin by saying that these are my personal comments as president of the UNA Alumni Association and does not reflect the opinion of the University. Likewise, it is important to recognize that my comments are offered as your representative to the University.

Today the University of North Alabama Board of Trustees held their annual meeting. On the agenda were updates about various departments within the university as well as several critical votes. Before I get into the "Division I" report I would like to report on several other matters that have importance to our constituency groups.

First, I am proud to announce that (so far this year) Alumni giving is up from 2.8% to over 8%. Please thank the alumni in your area for their support of the future of our students.

Secondly, the board voted to move forward with seeking a new master level program in professional studies. The new program will have three concentrations (Information Technology, Community Development, and Security Issues). The program is designed to be given in an online format and apply to those working in the professions of information technology, community development (primarily those in the non-profit sectors), and security related fields (i.e. - Homeland Security, Law Enforcement, Internet Security, etc.). The issue will now be vetted statewide with a presentation to the State in December.

Third, the board voted to increase tuition by 10.3% for the fall semester in an attempt to account for budget cuts from the state.

As you can see there is a lot going on at your University.

Lastly, today the board held a vote regarding the University and a move to Division I athletics. As I have stated in the past, I find it to be a great honor to serve each of you as your UNA Alumni Association President. In this capacity I have had the privilege to participate in the Board of Trustees Subcommittee on Athletics. This group began meeting over a year ago to encourage

discussion about the state of UNA athletics. Over the last year we have met numerous times and have heard testimony both for and against moving athletics out of Division II and into another classification. As many are aware, there have been mitigating circumstances within Division II athletics which have increased the need for further exploration. Last fall we gave our alumni an opportunity to provide comment regarding a move in athletics. We posted presentations from Athletic Director Mark Linder and provided a copy of the initial cost based study provided by President William Cale. The responses we received from our alumni were virtually split 50/50. As a result, your Executive Board adopted the position that “we as alumni of UNA will support the decision of the University Board of Trustees, so long as it is made with the students’ best interest in mind.”

I will concede that I was firmly against a move in athletic divisions going into this process. However, with the departure of the Arkansas schools from the GSC, compounded by a move three weeks ago to also remove those schools from our region, I have seen that a move is of crucial importance for our current and future students if we are to remain in collegiate athletics. In short, a stay in Division II would likely compromise the education of our student athletes by

incurring substantial travel costs and additional time away from school in order to compete against “in region” programs.

At today’s meeting two resolutions were introduced (one by Board of Trustees President Pierce and a second by Trustee Jordan). President Pierce’s resolution (attached) lays the ground rules for seeking admittance into Division I athletics. The second resolution presented by Trustee Jordan would have asked the administration to conduct more research and present that information to the board at a later time. Upon passage of the first resolution, Trustee Jordan removed hers from consideration.

At this point I hope that I have clearly defined the events leading up to and including today.

As we will all see, many people will attempt to interpret the resolution and the intent of the Board. Speaking from my first hand knowledge of the process let me make it clear to you that the vote today does NOT mean that we are going to Division I. Today’s resolution accomplishes two things; 1) it allows the decision makers within the institution to take necessary steps to see if there is interest from any conference to add UNA as a Division I institution and 2) establishes benchmarks

that must be met in order to insure success outside of Division II athletics.

What does this mean for us as Alumni?

In the spirit of honesty, I recognize fully that today's decision will have a significant impact on our fellow alumni. I recognize that we will, unfortunately, lose some support from within our ranks. I also recognize that we may very well see support from many who have never shown support before. In short, our association will evolve through this process.

I would encourage you all to speak with your clubs and associates about the issue. I would encourage each of you to remain informed as the University begins unveiling their plans for UNA athletics. But most importantly I would ask that you have an open mind. It is not often that one can say that he or she has full trust in the decision making efforts of an organization. However, I would put UNA's administrative and trustee team up against any university in our region. I (personally) fully support each and every member of our administration and the efforts they have accomplished in these difficult times.

I hope that you will join me in educating our ranks

about these matters and I stand ready to continue in my service to our alumni.

Respectfully,
Brad Holmes, President

Brad Holmes



UNA Alumni Association
UNA Box 5047
Florence, Alabama 35632
256-765-4201
Join OnLION <https://alumni.una.edu>



UPDATE YOUR RECORDS