Even in Tough Economic Times, A&T Must Stay on Course

“Our institutional guiding principles remain the same: keep our people first, protect the classroom and continue the Futures planning process,” he said.

Despite a bleak outlook on the state budget, Renick was upbeat and optimistic about where A&T is and where it is headed this school year. He cited the university’s increased enrollment and student retention, recruitment of top-notch faculty, national and international visibility, expansion of partnerships, new buildings and other capital improvements, and the progress of Futures.

“This planning process, Futures, is designed to fit the times that are emerging instead of the times that have passed,” said Renick. “Behind our vision for the future is a single story — a story of how we are creating our own destiny.

“Our strategic intent is to be the leaders and the best,” said Renick.

Other opening activities held Aug. 12-13 included a welcome workshop for new faculty, second-year faculty and administrators; a customer service workshop; a breakfast for faculty who teach freshman introductory and core courses; a benefits orientation for new faculty, college and school meetings; and the annual faculty and staff picnic.

The Academy for Teaching and Learning hosted the Welcome Workshop for New Faculty. Administrators from the Academy, Teaching, Learning Systems and the Center for Distance Learning provided information on integrated media services, video conferencing and Blackboard and how these tools can be useful to classroom teachers.

Greg Gray, founder and president of Atlanta-based Renaissance Unlimited, Inc., presented “Desperately Seeking Service,” a customer service seminar that has become an integral part of the Futures initiative to provide operational excellence. This was the third time that Gray has conducted the seminar on campus.

The Benefits Administration New Faculty Orientation covered a variety of topics that would be of interest to new employees. The orientation — which was mandatory — included an introduction to human resources, direct deposit, payroll services, university benefits, retirement plans, and a tour of the campus. At the end of the orientation, new employees completed paperwork for their benefits.

For detailed information about Futures, visit the A&T website, www.ncat.edu.
Researchers Examine Aircraft Repair Reliability

A team of researchers at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University is hoping to improve the way that technicians make minor repairs to aircraft components. Drs. Kunigal Shivakumar, Sameer Hamoush and DeRome Dunn of A&T’s Center for Composite Materials Research have their sights set on repairs made to composite aircraft materials.

Composite materials are considered a lightweight, high-performance alternative in the construction of aircraft. Composites are formed from a combination of materials, including resin and textiles, to make materials for use in a variety of applications, from engine components to bulletproof vests.

"Composites are unique because of the way that they are manufactured," said Shivakumar. "This unique structure makes repairing them different from repairing traditional materials, such as aluminum and steel. We will study what factors lead to the eventual breakdown of repairs and recommend ways that the repair process can be improved, to enhance the safety of aircraft."

To help them better understand the structure of composite repairs and how different environments affect their performance, A&T researchers will study defective composite components resulting either from actual use or laboratory simulations. They will also perform composite repairs according to common procedures, and then test those repairs in a variety of settings.

Once all of the data from these experiments are collected, researchers will devise a model which they believe will help the aircraft industry improve its repair processes and accurately predict the expected lifetime performance of a repair.

"Ultimately, we hope that the work we do can improve the safety of aircraft, while extending their periods of service," said Shivakumar.

The project was funded $300,000 through a subcontract with Iowa State’s Center for Aviation Systems Reliability, which is funded by the Federal Aviation Administration and is a collaborator on the project.

For more information, contact Shivakumar, (336) 334-7411, ext. 2112.