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A NOTE FROM THE CHIEF INVESTMENT OFFICER – DAVID LUTOMSKI

David Lutomski
Email: dlutom@uab.edu

UAB’s Green & Gold Fund experienced an extremely successful and educational 2017. With markets reaching all-time highs, assets under student management exceeded $590,000 by the end of the year. As the fund was buoyed by the rising market tides, our group of student officers, portfolio managers, and analysts successfully rebalanced the fund, repositioning ourselves for future growth. While day-to-day fund management provided ample learning opportunities, the Green and Gold fund was challenged by a host of dynamic guest speakers from Regions Bank, Compass Bank, Medical Properties Trust, Highland Associates, and Protective Life. Not only did our speakers provide exposure to different career opportunities in investment-related fields, but encouraged us to take full advantage of the opportunities and faculty available to us through UAB and the Green and Gold Fund.

In 2017, the fund realized an absolute return of 12.71%. As part of our efforts to rebalance the portfolio during the fall semester, the fund increased its position in fixed-income securities by reducing our equity holdings and putting more cash into play. During the Fall 2017 semester alone, we reduced our position or liquidated holdings in 13 different individual securities or funds and invested that money primarily in fixed income ETFs. We also sold 661
shares of the SPDR Financial ETF (XLF) and purchased the Blackstone Group L.P. (BX), which has performed extremely well since.

The table below shows the top 10 equity holdings as of the end of 2017.

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<th>Top 10 Holdings, Excluding Fixed Income</th>
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Looking ahead to the spring semester, we have plans to reduce our position in a few securities and seek opportunities for our capital elsewhere. With recent actions and conversations by the Fed, coupled with PE ratios being at their highest levels since the turn of the century, our goal is to reduce risk and protect our holdings should a significant market correction occur. While Michael Assoue (Chief Economist), Dipanjan Mitra (Energy), Jared Walker (Healthcare), and Cameron McBride (Fixed Income) are returning for the Spring 2018 semester, we will have a group of seven new officers and portfolio managers joining the fund. We welcome Mitchell Carr (Chief Accounting Officer), Riddhi Patel (Chief Marketing Officer), Jeremi Vo (IT/Telecom), Julio Sarabia (Alternatives), Dylan Pugh (Consumer Goods), Eric Komati (Financials), and Ashwin Prabhakaran (Industrials/Materials). I would also like to thank our outgoing cohort of officers and portfolio managers: Stanley Birl, Maud Tanko, Brian Fraser, Blake De Bruyn, Clifton Lewis, Braxton Owen, and Tanner Fulton for their service during the Fall 2017
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semester. I am looking forward to an exciting Spring 2018 semester and a smooth transition to the Fall 2018 semester.

**CHIEF ECONOMIST REPORT – MICHAEL CASSOUE**

President Trump’s tax bill brought optimism to the market as investors experienced tremendous growth in 2017. Several market indexes such as the Dow Jones Industrial Average and the S&P 500 hit new record highs, mostly attributed to strong consumer spending. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 25.3%, the S&P 500 Index was up 19.9% and the NASDAQ Composite was up 29.3% over the year.

In 2017, household spending remained strong and unemployment hovered at 4.1%. Wages were steady in 2017 and predicted to increase in 2018.

Although talks of repealing the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Consumer Protection Act stimulated the market, Congress was unable to pass the healthcare bill into law. The Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System voted to raise interest rates three times in 2017. During the year, we were also introduced to a new Fed Chair, Jerome Powell, who is largely expected to follow the footprint of Janet Yellen. Thus, we do not anticipate any market movements directly related to this change. Although inflation has remained under the two percent target set by the Fed, we expect this forecast to be modified. We expect more interest rate hikes in 2018, and in turn, a greater shift towards fixed income assets.

During 2017, our officers, portfolio managers and analysts did a great job guiding the fund through the current economic conditions. Together,
we spent a great deal of time rebalancing our portfolio and finding the most appropriate investments that fit our strategy as outlined in the Investor Policy Statement. Overall, as the economy strengthens, and ramifications of the new tax bill unfold, the Green and Gold Fund closes 2017 with its sight set on a strong 2018. With much uncertainty, and markets at all-time highs, we expect a volatile stock market and a strong fixed income market in 2018.

**ALTERNATIVES SECTOR – JULIO SARABIA**

Catalonia’s push for independence, protests in Iran, tensions between the United States and North Korea all had significant effects on the prices of currencies and commodities in 2017. The dollar suffered during the year, hitting multiyear lows after beginning the year at its highest level since 2002. Since then, the dollar lost around 12% of its value, declining in more than six consecutive months during the year. The euro has experienced a significant recovery and is now at a three-year high against the dollar, driven by an improvement in the Eurozone’s economic outlook.

The Alternative sector portfolio experienced a 2017 annual return of 11.04%. At the end of 2017, our sector held positions in Powershares DB US Dollar Index Bullish ETF (UUP), Permanent Portfolio Class I ETF (PRPFX), Oppenheimer Developing Market Fund (ODMAX), Real Estate Select Sector SPDR Fund (XLRE), and the Global X Silver Miners ETF (SIL). ODMAX, a developing market fund that allows us to diversify our holdings by investing in equity securities in foreign
markets, was our best-performing security in the Alternatives sector with an impressive 30.94% return for the year, outperforming its benchmark (MSCI EAFE) by 8.42%. ODMAX’s success was due to the performance of the fund’s top two holdings—Tencent Holdings LTD and Alibaba Group Holdings—almost doubling in price last year. Our real estate holding, XLRE, posted a 10.67% annual total return in 2017 and outperformed its benchmark, the Real Estate Select Sector Index. With more anticipated rate increases, we expect real estate to slow in 2018.

Low interest rates along with the stock market rally in 2017 prompted some investors to abandon their hedging positions. SIL, tracking companies actively engaged in the silver mining industry, posted a 1.04% total annual return in 2017. These factors reduced demand for silver, which in return, affected the performance of SIL. Even so, PRPFX, holding both gold and silver, had a positive annual total return of 11.43% in 2017. As the dollar struggled, and although it outperformed its benchmark, UUP experienced an annualized return of –9.13% in 2017. Our portfolio experienced a –2.77% annual return on UUP.

An increase in the real GDP of 3.2% in the third quarter of 2017, along with a low unemployment rate of 4.1%, signals that the U.S. economy is growing at a healthy pace and should continue to do so in 2018. The Fed’s announcement to start shrinking its balance sheet and changes in the central bank’s board of governors could shift the Fed’s policies, leading to a swing in gold prices in 2018. We will continue to look for opportunities in assets that have low correlations with traditional asset classes. Including holdings with an inverse relationship to the market allows us to search for firms while also reducing the risk of our portfolio at large. We continue to monitor our holdings and search for opportunities to provide return and reduce the risk of our overall portfolio.
CONSUMER GOODS SECTOR – DYLAN PUGH

Consumer Discretionary and Consumer Staples sectors experienced a positive 2017. As part of our conservative investment approach, the Green and Gold Fund holds the Consumer Staples ETFs, XLP and XLY, respectively, and then selects individual securities to outperform our benchmark. During 2017, we held Dollar General Corp. (DG), Ford Motor Company (F), Whirlpool Corporation (WHR), PepsiCo. Inc. (PEP), and Brunswick Corporation (BC). As part of our efforts to rebalance the portfolio in 2017, we sold 25 shares of WHR, 35 shares of BC, 430 shares of F, 10 shares of XLY, and 30 shares of PEP.
Dollar General was up 25.5% for the year, beating earnings expectations in three of the last four quarters. Dollar General is expected to open 900 stores in 2018 and is expanding their selection of fresh produce. Pepsi performed well in 2017, returning almost 15%. With Pepsi dedicated to reducing the calories in its drinks and snacks, the company outperformed earnings expectations in three reporting periods. We expect positive movement with Pepsi into 2018 as social trends towards healthy living continue to increase. Ford’s earnings exceeded expectations in all three reporting quarters in 2017. The new CEO for Ford James Hackett has ambitious plans to advance the brand. Although we do not expect any dramatic movement in the price of Ford, the Green and Gold Fund values Ford’s impressive dividend yield.

A few of our holdings experienced significant volatility in 2017. Whirlpool stock plunged in October partly as a result of Sears’ decision to stop carrying its products. Whirlpool did not meet its expected earnings in any of the four quarters of 2017. Brunswick also missed earnings in the third quarter, which significantly affected its stock price. However, the price has since recovered. We are closely monitoring these holdings heading into 2018.

We are also paying attention to the new tax law and its effect on consumer goods. We believe that 2018 will present some interesting opportunities as the repercussions of the new tax laws become clearer. Moving into 2018, we continue to reevaluate the funds we are currently holding and search for new opportunities to position the fund for long-term growth.
2017 was a volatile year for oil and gas, with prices fluctuating between $42 and $60.51 per barrel of Brent Sweet Crude. Added to this volatility was the political situation unfolding in Saudi Arabia, where the crown prince, Mohammed Bin Salman, is cracking down on political and economic rivals, increasing economic tensions in the region. As Saudi Arabia is the largest oil producer in the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, this instability adds even more uncertainty to the price of oil. Although the price of Brent Sweet Crude is over $50 per barrel, it still sits well below the post-recession high of $115 per barrel in March 2011.

With cost reduction objectives resulting from the 2014 oil crisis, firms had to lay off more than 400,000 workers, cancel major capital expenditure projects and streamline supply chains. However, newer innovations and efficiency improvements are gradually showing results. For example, shale oil-producing companies have managed to reduce their breakeven point to the mid-$40s, down from a high of $65 per barrel. Thus, many projects in the industry have started to become profitable. There is also added optimism resulting from a 43% increase in the U.S. rig count between January and December 2017. Additionally, a recent proposal by the Trump administration to open offshore areas for drilling may help the oil and subsidiary companies experience growth in 2018.

The Green & Gold Fund actively holds two energy stocks—Halliburton (HAL) and Valero Energy (VLO). With a 2017 return of –9.57 %, Halliburton has underperformed the energy sector. As an oil and gas servicing company,
Halliburton is heavily dependent on the macro trend of oil prices. Along with their failed merger with Baker Hughes, the company lost millions of dollars in merger preparation. Moving forward in Spring of 2018, we will be selling Halliburton to free up cash for other relevant purchases. On the other hand, Valero Energy (VLO) has demonstrated a consistent positive return of 33.92% and is expected to grow for the first half of 2018. We continue to analyze and monitor Halliburton and Valero Energy moving into 2018. In the utility sector, we have been pleased with the performance and diversification provided by the Vanguard Utilities ETF (VPU). All the underlying holdings in this fund are showing (positive) growth.

Our sector team faces some exciting challenges in 2018. We plan to fine-tune our strategy and implement new filters that will allow us to more accurately identify potential investments moving forward. We foresee several opportunities to invest in high-growth companies. At the beginning of the semester, we will sell Halliburton. At the same time, we are working on creating new industry-focused screens that will help us find value within this sector.
FIXED INCOME SECTOR – CAMERON MCBRIDE

While the return on equities was the talk of 2017, the bond market had a solid year as well. With the dramatic rise in equity prices during 2017 and the maturing of our John Deere bond, the Green and Gold Fund acted in late 2017 to realign our portfolio holdings with the weightings outlined in our fund’s investment policy statement. At the beginning of the Fall 2017 semester, our holdings consisted of six bond ETFs—Vanguard Short Term Bond ETF (BSV), iShares Core Total Bond Market ETF (IUSB), SPDR Bloomberg Barclays Corporate Bond ETF (SCPB), iShares Core 1-5 Year USD Bond ETF (ISTB), iShares Core US Aggregate Bond ETF (AGG), and Vanguard Short Term Corporate Bond ETF (VCSH). After determining that the degree of similarity in the underlying securities was high, we liquidated our positions in BSV, IUSB, and SCPB. With the cash generated from the sales of these ETFs, we purchased 300 additional shares of ISTB, 125 shares of AGG, and 34 shares of VCSH. Additionally, with changes to other sectors of our portfolio, we decided to purchase the Vanguard Long Term Corporate Bond ETF (VCLT) in search of higher average long-term returns. We placed the remainder of the allocated cash into three different actively managed funds—Fidelity Capital and Income Fund (FAGIX), USAA Intermediate Term Bond Fund (USIBX), and Fidelity Advisor Total Bond Fund (FEPIX). These three funds have performed well and, while past performance is no indicator of future performance, we are confident in our exposure to actively-managed funds.
Going into 2018, it appears that the Fed will likely be tightening monetary policy by hiking rates and reducing its balance sheet. The Green and Gold Fund fixed income sector will look to concentrate our holdings in short-to-intermediate term duration bonds to mitigate the risk of rising rates.

![Fixed Income ETFs 2017 Performance](image)

**FINANCIALS SECTOR – ERIC KOMATI**

The Financial sector experienced strong growth in 2017, driven by hawkish rhetoric by the Fed to raise interest rates for a third time, the positive news of tax reform and corporate tax rates dropping to 21%, continued talk of deregulation in the financial industry, and a strengthening domestic economy. With the sector up approximately 20% for the year, our holdings outperformed
the S&P 500. We believe this momentum will continue into 2018.

Heading into the Fall 2017 semester, the Green & Gold Fund’s Financial Services positions were comprised of four holdings: Spyder Financial Services ETF XLF (51% of sector), PowerShares S&P SmallCap Financials Portfolio ETF (31% of sector), Verisk Analytics (9% of sector), Discover Financial Services (3% of sector), and Assured Guaranty (6% of sector). Our goals were to rebalance the portfolio, set updated price targets for our holdings, create a watch list for our sector based on current trends, invest in new securities, and optimize our holdings to position the portfolio for growth while also minimizing risk.

Finding our holdings in Spyder Financial ETF XLF and PowerShares Small Cap Financials ETF representing more than 80% of our sector holdings, and considering recent global and domestic trends, our sector wanted to reduce the weight of our ETF holdings and find individual securities that might provide significant growth relative to our benchmark. Relying on relative market valuation techniques to arrive at target price ranges for our holdings, we decided to sell all of Verisk and Discover Financials, and purchase Blackstone Group, a company that appeared to be undervalued according to our valuation models. We are optimistic about Blackstone moving into 2018.

As unemployment falls, inflation increases, and the Fed remains hawkish, we are well positioned for strong growth. Current talks of relaxed regulation, tax cuts, and fiscal stimulus provide further impetus for a positive portfolio return.
The industrial sector performed exceptionally well in 2017. Gains were widespread throughout the sector resulting from exceptional performance in aerospace, manufacturing, heavy equipment and package delivery businesses. An upswing in manufacturing coupled with the progression of tax reform fueled the rally in industrial stocks at the end of the year. Indications of an industrial revival in the United States are strong because of increased output and steady growth in employment. Over the course of 2017, ISM’s purchasing managers index has tightened from 54.5 to 59.3 because of the growth exhibited by most of the companies in this sector. One notable exception to this trend was General Electric, whose exposure to power and energy businesses resulted in major setbacks.
The Green and Gold Fund’s holdings within the Industrials sector performed 3.13% better than the overall sector ETF during 2017. We maintained exposure to the sector by holding the SPDR Industrial ETF, and then held United Parcel Service (UPS) and Xylem Inc. (XYL) in an effort to outperform the benchmark.

XYL returned 40.93% for the year. XYL outperformed analysts’ earnings projections during every quarter in 2017. Revenues improved 7%. The company believes that the improving water infrastructure, applied water measurement and control solutions segments’ performance will prove conducive to revenue growth. In 2018, revenues are expected to grow between 4% and 6%. The company realized $148 million in cost savings and a remarkable amount of volume leverage from its productivity initiatives, and it expects to increase cost savings to $160 million in 2018. Xylem has also been steadily boosting its free cash flow on the back of working capital improvements across all businesses.

UPS returned 15.97% for the year. The company’s revenues increased by 8.2% in 2017. Tonnage gains in Freight Forwarding, UPS Freight and Coyote Logistics contributed to improved top-line results. The adjusted diluted EPS for 2017 was $6.01. UPS paid dividends of $2.9 billion, an increase of 6.4% per share from 2016. UPS is likely to continue with its shareholder-friendly activities in 2018 due to the new tax laws. The extra cash provided by these savings are expected to be used for capital expenditures, stock buybacks and acquisitions. Capex investments will enable UPS to be well-positioned for 2018 and beyond. UPS expects 2018 adjusted diluted EPS to be in a range of $7.03 to $7.37.

The materials sector returned over 24% in 2017. Major drivers that prompted this growth were leaders in the production of chemicals, agricultural products, industrial gases, and base metals. One of the biggest moves affecting the sector in 2017 was the
merger of Dow Chemical and DuPont into DowDuPont, which by itself accounts for almost a quarter of the sector’s assets. The stock soared 30% in 2017 thanks in large part to its merger.

Our Materials holdings, Kaiser Aluminum Corp (KALU), Lockheed Martin Corp. (LMT), and Vanguard Materials ETF (VAW) helped our sector portfolio outperform the SPDR benchmark by more than 12% in 2017. We believe this momentum will continue into 2018 as the economy grows.

KALU returned 40.5% for the year despite a weaker than expected third quarter that was affected by increases in underlying contained metal costs. Its operating performance over the year has been relatively good compared to its peers. KALU has had relatively high profit margins while operating with median asset turns. Strong growth in automotive extrusions and solid industrial demand were the major drivers behind increasing revenues. Its current return on assets compared to its historical numbers suggest that its relatively high operating returns are sustainable. Solid aerospace demand growth driven by military and commercial aircraft applications is expected to provide KALU with another strong year in 2018.

LMT returned 41.12% in 2017. LMT’s four main segments, Aeronautics, Missiles and Fire Control, Rotary and Mission Systems, and Space, all saw improvements in net sales, and operating profit. The F-35 fighter jet project for the US military is expected to provide a steady stream of income for the next four years. Congress’ proposal to increase the budget for defense spending over the next few years could greatly benefit LMT.

VAW returned 20.22% for the year. VAW offers extremely broad exposure to the US basic materials segment thanks to a highly representative market-cap-weighted index. While it has a noteworthy large-cap tilt, there is considerable overlap between VAW’s holdings and our segment benchmark. DowDuPont
accounts for 17% of the ETF and was the primary driver behind its strong performance. DowDuPont obliterated the analysts’ estimate for EPS by 23.88% in the last quarter in 2017. The chemical industry is riding high on an upswing in the world economy and strength across major end-use markets such as construction, automotive and electronics. Another positive for the industry is a recovery in demand in the energy space - a key chemical end-market that had been out of favor for a period.

Over the next few years, the new tax reform legislation could greatly accelerate depreciation, which in turn could increase capital spending and perk up activity in the sector. The regional producers’ manufacturing index readings have also hinted at higher capex intentions. If President Trump can come through with his pledge of increased infrastructure spending, it would greatly benefit the industrial/materials sector. The spending would be aimed at improving roads, bridges and telecommunications.

Around the developed world, central banks maintained policies focused on stimulating economic activity. Countries are also looking at rolling back on some of the austerity related fiscal policies. These developments could help boost spending and demand for industrial goods. On the flip side, because of overall economic growth, if inflation starts to reach concerning levels, the central banks could raise interest rates at a faster pace dampening the growth prospects for industrial stocks.

We continue to reevaluate all our holdings moving into 2018. We are paying close attention to the situation evolving in North Korea. Conflict resolution in the area could lead to potential gains in the aerospace and defense segments within the industrials/materials sector. We are tracking these developments closely and looking for opportunities to grow our industrial/materials sector within the
Green and Gold Fund portfolio. Because of the bullish market over the last twelve months, we believe most of the stocks are currently overvalued. Our goals for the next few months are to reevaluate our current holdings after taking the new tax legislation into account, identify and invest in fundamentally strong, growth-focused industrial and material stocks if they have the potential to provide better returns than our current holdings over the next few years.
Overall, the IT and Telecom Sector saw significant growth throughout 2017 with the rise of new technological innovations in cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and virtual reality. Additionally, U.S. consumer confidence was at an all-time high after 2017, and certainly contributed to large IT revenues during the year. The S&P 500 IT Index returned 38.83% for the year, its highest return since 2009.

The IT and Telecom sector within the Green and Gold Fund had a strong 2017 as well, with an overall annual return of 36.07%, largely attributed to Apple’s (AAPL) successful year. In addition to our holdings in AAPL, we also held Oracle Corp (ORCL), Cisco Systems Inc. (CSCO), Verizon Communications (VZ) and the Technology Select Sector SPDR Fund (XLK).

Most of Apple’s growth can be attributed to the response to Apple Park and its new iPhone offerings. Apple not only continues to see new customers, but an intensely loyal existing clientele. With its $163B in cash, Apple may also increase its dividend payouts in the future.

Cisco, the portfolio’s most recent addition, was attractive due to its $60 billion in cash reserves, allowing the company the opportunity to pursue new advanced technology startups to include in its existing portfolio. Over the course of 2017, Cisco successfully acquired seven companies, including an agreement to purchase the software company BroadSoft for $1.9 billion. Additionally, Cisco’s CEO, Chuck Robbins, was named the new executive chairman charged with directing the company into the future. Since this
announcement, CSCO’s share price jumped almost 22%.

Verizon outperformed the S&P Telecom Index by 0.41%. While Verizon has remained the leader in the U.S. Telecom sector, the company’s stock was down 0.84% in 2017. Verizon announced a plan to cut $10B from operations in the next four years as well as offer unlimited data plans to its customers to better compete with other major Telecom companies.

Because our sector holdings largely consist of Apple, our goal is to diversify our holdings by adding other IT securities. Although Apple has performed extremely well, our team of analysts are compiling a watch list of companies to replace a portion of our Apple holdings. During the Spring 2018 semester, the IT and Telecom portfolio will continue to search for undervalued companies. Because we believe Telecom is underweight in our existing portfolio, we will concentrate our search for undervalued securities in the area.
Last year was a strong year for Healthcare. Despite having to once again face drastic changes to the Affordable Healthcare Act (ACHA), health insurance companies continued to expand rapidly into new frontiers of health insurance technology. While the new tax bill dismantled many of the key parts of the AHCA, companies are reaping the benefits of expected lower and less intrusive taxes, spurring one of the fastest bull runs in the history of the S&P 500 and Dow Jones.

Gilead Sciences (GILD) acquired Kite Pharmaceuticals, solving the pressing drug pipeline issues that it faced. Baxter International (BAX) continued to expand its portfolio of innovative surgical products and became the first infusion pump vendor to provide in-house end-to-end asset tracking solutions for infusion pumps.
UnitedHealth Group (UNH) began working with technology manufacturers to create wearable devices for people affected by a variety of ailments. The healthcare portfolio outperformed the S&P 500 by 5% and the S&P 500 Healthcare index by 4.7%.

After much deliberation and research, the healthcare managers developed a new portfolio structure that we will finalize and begin to implement in 2018. This change in structure will allow the portfolio to find more value in an industry where valuations have been soaring for the past two years. We plan to identify and evaluate companies based on a variety of parameters and screens, which we believe will help us to find undervalued companies despite Price-to-Earnings ratios soaring at the end of the fourth quarter of 2017.

With valuations exploding, we expect a large correction for the market in the next one to two years. Valuations have exceeded the levels that caused the Black Tuesday crash of 1929, and are looking to potentially surpass the levels seen during the Dot Com bubble of 2000. We expect the opportunity to unwind some of our positions throughout the year, while we add more attractive companies to our portfolio.

Looking ahead to 2018, we plan to reevaluate our price targets for the securities we hold, as well as set stop orders to limit downside risk. We also plan to write covered calls on some of our holdings, based on our target prices. This plan will be used as an income generation strategy, as defined in the Green & Gold Fund investment policy. 2018 is going to be an exciting year for the healthcare sector, and we look forward to providing reliable returns for the fund in the future.
UAB’S GREEN AND GOLD FUND IS AN INNOVATIVE, SUCCESSFUL STUDENT-MANAGED INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO THAT ALLOWS FUND MEMBERS TO PERFORM INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT WITH ACTUAL MONEY, PROVIDING THEM WITH VALUABLE EXPERIENCE FOR THEIR FUTURE CAREERS.

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