

TRANSFORMATION *through* COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS

THE DIVISION OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS ANNUAL REPORT



Student Opportunities to Expand at New Center

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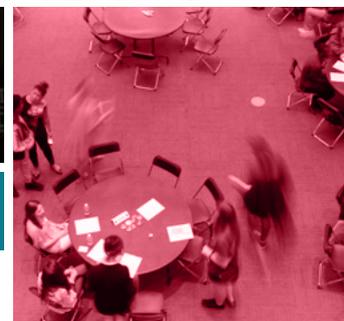
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Division of Community Affairs

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From the **PRESIDENT**

To Members of The University of Alabama Family:

You are holding in your hands a testimonial to the many ways in which our University shares its knowledge, its leadership, its financial assets and especially its heart with the communities with whom we interact. This Annual Report of the Division of Community Affairs is a reminder that we — administration, faculty, staff and students — do not operate in a vacuum but are members of an extended community whose well-being is inseparable from our own.

Our work with United Way and our sister institutions in Tuscaloosa, the annual Realizing the Dream activities and our community-engaged teaching, research and service projects demonstrate the interconnectedness of our institution with the world around us.

This report tells the story of how partnerships strengthen both sides of the arrangement by the sharing of resources and expertise. You will find ample evidence of how our University gives back to communities that visibly support our existence and way of life in more ways than we can count.

I am very pleased that our students played a major role in virtually every project reported in these pages. They are proving to be an integral part of our institution's responsibility to help those who support us. The evidence is strong that when students get the opportunity to go into the field to apply what they are learning in the classroom, they are more likely to graduate and to get good jobs upon graduation. My thanks to those who are taking the time to engage students in this work.

Stuart R. Bell
President



From the
**VICE PRESIDENT FOR
COMMUNITY AFFAIRS**

*Relevance. Reciprocity. Resilience. Research.
These four concepts best summarize how our
University uses its resources and personnel to
address issues and solve problems of critical
importance in our state and in the larger society.*

Because of its Relevance, Reciprocity, Resilience and related Research, community-engaged scholarship is having a profound influence on higher education today, promoting the integration of this institution's long-standing academic mission of teaching, research and service.

The Division of Community Affairs has begun emphasizing Relevance. Reciprocity. Resilience. Research. ("The 4 Rs," as we like to call them) because these four concepts best summarize how our University uses its resources and personnel to address issues and solve problems of critical importance in our state and in the larger society. An added benefit is that community-engaged scholarship allows UA professors to test their hypotheses in the real world and their students to put into practice what they're learning in class — providing hands-on training opportunities for the next generation of community-engaged citizens.

In this Annual Report, you will learn how The 4 Rs are being practiced by the Division in cooperation with faculty, staff, students, alumni and community partners. By reading our report, you'll learn how:

Immersion into the scholarship of engagement while they were students has positively affected the careers of many of our graduates.

A student advisory group — comprised of outstanding early- and mid-career graduates — is giving back to the University that gave so much to them when they were students. The Community Affairs Board of Advisors — a group of 58 outstanding alumni — has, among other things, established a scholarship fund for underrepresented students, a grant fund to foster entrepreneurship and innovation at the Capstone, and a commitment to recruit and retain students from rural and underrepresented areas in Alabama.

A grant-training program is resulting in the acquisition of successful grants totaling in the millions of dollars to

explore a wide range of engaged-scholarship topics. Much of the success is attributed to the training sessions led by the internationally respected grant-acquisition specialist David G. Bauer.

Our first-year implementation of the Engagement Scholarship Consortium's "ESC 20/20 Vision. Focus. Impact." is motivating scholars and students and pushing the boundaries of community-engaged scholarship.

Our support of Realizing the Dream, the Martin Luther King Jr. celebration, the United Way of West Alabama, and our ties with Stillman College, Shelton State Community College and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference are helping unify the community.

Finally, let me express my deepest appreciation to the faculty, staff and students from across our campus for their performance at the 2018 annual conference of the Engagement Scholarship Consortium, an international organization of which I am privileged to be Board president. At this conference, held in October in Minneapolis, Minnesota, UA again was a leader in presentation of scholarly papers and in other ways. Of our 39 delegates, 29 made presentations — among the most of any institution — and others played key roles in various conference activities.

From this report, it is my hope that you will learn more about the many ways our University and its community partners combine their resources to carry out important work while adding to the research literature on community-engaged scholarship. I believe you will not only enjoy our report, but also be inspired by how, through this form of scholarship, we are helping fulfill this University's teaching, research and service mission.

Samory T. Pruitt
Vice President, Division of Community Affairs

TRANSFORMING
HIGHER EDUCATION
THROUGH
ENGAGED
SCHOLARSHIP



Engage
CO

ENGAGEMENT
SCHOLARSHIP
CONSORTIUM

NATIONAL
ENGAGEMENT

TRANSFORMING
HIGHER EDUCATION
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ENGAGED
SCHOLARSHIP

ESC Launches 20/20 Strategic Action Plan

Diane Kennedy-Jackson, Publications Coordinator, Community Affairs

In 2016, the leadership of the Engagement Scholarship Consortium (ESC) adopted ESC 20/20 Vision. Focus. Impact., a strategic action plan intended to guide the non-profit educational organization in future endeavors and growth.

ESC is comprised of 39 public and private higher education member institutions throughout the U.S. and Canada, with one calling Nigeria home. Its goal is to build strong university/community partnerships anchored in the rigor of engaged scholarship, with an emphasis on collaboration designed to develop community capacity.

At the time of the organization's creation, the concept of engaged scholarship was relatively new. Fast forward to today — not quite 20 years later — and its impact can be seen in the increasing number of successful and sustainable community/campus partnerships that address critical societal issues and improve the quality of life for individuals, families and communities.

The University of Alabama (UA) was the first non-land-grant institutional member, and is playing a major role in ESC's success due in no small part to the leadership of Dr. Samory T. Pruitt, vice president for Community Affairs at UA and president of the ESC Board, a position he has held since 2016. He is only the second board of directors' president in ESC's history.

The annual ESC conference regularly draws some 600 academic leaders, students and community partners from around the globe who meet to share their work and to discuss issues, information and theories regarding campus/community partnerships. ESC is exploring ways to offer increased opportunities for those involved in community-engaged scholarship to share their research, build local leadership, increase local and regional recognition and highlight best

practices through ESC-sanctioned regional events, as well as through an Excellence Awards Program that recognizes exemplary engagement scholarship.

"A key priority of ESC 20/20 Vision. Focus. Impact., this program provides important recognition opportunities for students, faculty, community partners and higher education institutions and increases opportunities for enhanced peer learning," said Melissa Maybury Lubin, ESC Awards Committee chair and dean of outreach and engagement, James Madison University. "I am grateful to the Awards Committee for reviewing and selecting these exemplary projects."

The first recipients of Excellence Awards were recognized at the 2018 annual conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Five awards were presented, including the Excellence in Faculty Community Engagement Award, which was presented to Ball State University for its Schools Within the Context of Community Program. The Excellence in Student Community Engagement Award was presented to Western Carolina University for its Student Democracy Coalition Project. Two universities received Excellence in Community Partner Community Engagement Awards. Colorado State University was recognized for its Campus Connections Youth Mentoring Program and The Ohio State University for its Generation Rx Program. The Ryan, Moser, Reilly Excellence in Community Engagement Institutional Leadership Award was presented to University of Wisconsin-Extension for exemplary leadership in advancing the field of community-engaged scholarship.

The 2018 awards presentation marked the beginning of the implementation of ESC 20/20, with much more to come through growth of the consortium membership and the resulting capabilities to expand the field of engaged scholarship for the future.

ESC Hosts First Featured Scholars Panel at Annual Conference

Diane Kennedy-Jackson, Publications Coordinator, Community Affairs

The 2018 Engagement Scholarship Consortium (ESC) conference, held Oct. 2–3 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, included a featured scholars panel convened specifically to explore engaged scholarship and its role in obtaining promotion and tenure (P&T).

“It was important to our committee that panelists could demonstrate how they applied disciplinary knowledge in social and community contexts while moving through the promotion and tenure process,” said Lynnette Overby, ESC Scholarship Committee chair and deputy director of Community Engagement Initiative, University of Delaware. “In this way, we could provide traditional scholars, junior faculty, and graduate students who are interested in community engagement with models and best practices.”

During this Oct. 2 session, titled “Gaining Tenure While Enhancing Teaching, Research and Service Through Engaged Scholarship,” panelists were asked to describe their academic and personal journey as disciplinary scholars with a community-engagement focus, and to provide recommendations for encouraging more faculty to pursue research and creative activities with that focus.

Faculty members from five institutions and a variety of disciplines sat on the panel. They were Tracy Eells, University of Louisville, Andrew Furco, University of Minnesota, Maria Mayan, University of Alberta, Lynnette Overby, University of Delaware and Pauline Johnson, The University of Alabama. The panel was part of the implementation of the ESC 20/20 Vision. Focus. Impact. Strategic Action Plan, which seeks in part to promote excellence in the study, research and practice of engaged scholarship both locally and globally.

Each panelist faced specific challenges along the P&T road, with a common theme being the infancy of the field of engaged scholarship at that time, as well as the perception of it being a “soft science.” UA’s Johnson, professor of Civil, Construction, and Environmental Engineering, noted that her involvement in what was then deemed service learning was cited as a reason not to grant tenure. That changed, however, just four years later.

Johnson acknowledged that initially, she didn’t consider the impact of her work on promotion and tenure. She began with painting, tornado relief, creation of school gardens and the construction of vegetable washing stations. Her work transformed into research-based projects within the Black Belt region of Alabama — from infrastructure improvements including wastewater and drinking water projects for improved health, to working with community partners to bring back a dying Main Street in Greensboro.

“Some of the highlights of my academic career are the projects that we did in partnership with those communities,” said Johnson.

On her P&T path, Johnson shared, “As engineers, we don’t know assessment.” She and her husband, who was also on the engineering faculty at UA, developed an approach that focused on planning around their expertise and then filling in the knowledge gaps with other people on the team — from fellow faculty members to students to community partners. Their work, a study in resilience, grew from service learning to engaged scholarship, and it led them to start UA’s Engineers Without Borders (now Student Engineers in Action, or SEA), which continues to offer engineering students opportunities to put their learning into action in partnership with communities both at home and overseas.



“As administrators, we need to highlight and build a spotlight around it [community-engaged scholarship],” said Furco. “We can’t change the system, we have to nudge the system. Over time, it’s going to have an impact.”

Johnson credited UA’s Division of Community Affairs and the encouragement and support she received as being vital to the success of her work. The seed funding provided through the Division’s Council on Community-Based Partnerships has served as the catalyst for many community-engaged research initiatives across campus that have grown through grant and other funding.

Johnson addressed the importance of thinking past seed funds to where the large dollars will come from, reminding of the necessity for funding and publication on the P&T journey. She also cited the importance of a campus database that allows faculty researchers to connect across disciplines, as well as the need to get new faculty off campus and into the community early on in their academic careers. “It’s really important to get together with an organization that is trusted in the community, because that opens all kinds of doors for you,” she said.

Johnson’s sentiments were echoed by other panelists, who also acknowledged progress in this area, as well as the responsibility to support young faculty in ways that encourage them to pursue engaged scholarship within their disciplines.

“Faculty — and students — want their work to matter,” said Mayan. “They want to make a difference. We have to make sure that when they get into these disciplines, they’re not going to just be destroyed.”

The general observation was that campus culture changes slowly, but progress in support of

community-engaged scholarship can be seen in such things as funding for projects and graduate students, learning opportunities for students, and even something so seemingly small as service learning now being included as a box to be checked on end-of-year faculty reports at some institutions. Each points to the essential nature of faculty who are pursuing this type of research being valued. That perception of value, along with individuals in high-visibility positions engaging in this type of work, continues to provide incentive to draw faculty toward community-engaged scholarship.

“As administrators, we need to highlight and build a spotlight around it,” said Furco. “We can’t change the system, we have to nudge the system. Over time, it’s going to have an impact.”

Mayan shared the importance of working across campus and sitting on committees, often outside your area of scholarship, in addition to being active in your own college. Other areas of importance include sustainability, building a culture of engagement, finding ways to gain support on issues of time and bureaucratic stumbling blocks, and from colleagues, deans and department chairs.

Eells shared the importance of relationship building, networking and developing relationships with colleagues who respect the work you are doing. He emphasized the need to be persistent, and to adapt but not be co-opted. Johnson summed up the session: “We’ve come a long way, and we’re still in transition.”

UA Plays Key Role in Engagement Scholarship Consortium

Diane Kennedy-Jackson, Publications Coordinator, Community Affairs

In 2007, just three years after the formation of its Division of Community Affairs, The University of Alabama (UA) joined the Engagement Scholarship Consortium (ESC), a non-profit educational organization that supports engaged-scholarship work. Among the options available at the time, ESC offered the greatest opportunities in relation to the cost of membership to showcase this type of work taking place at UA.

The University quickly became a leader in the field and in the Consortium, hosting ESC's annual conference in Tuscaloosa in 2012 and joining the other South region institutions to host the 2017 conference in Birmingham. By that time, the growing membership and resulting number of conference attendees had outgrown the possibility of using a campus venue and local accommodations.

ESC membership today includes 39 institutions broken into five regions — North Central, South, East, West and International. The membership is composed of a mix of state-public and private higher education institutions.

Dr. Samory T. Pruitt was named president of the ESC board in 2016. In this role, he is providing essential leadership to the organization as it approaches its 20th anniversary. Part of that leadership entails the creation of a strategic plan for moving forward, and Pruitt, along with other members of the ESC leadership, has spearheaded that objective in the form of ESC 20/20, Vision. Focus. Impact., which

strives to grow the organization's membership roll, as well as its abilities to serve as a valuable and valued resource for faculty, staff, students and community partners pursuing community-engaged scholarship.

Each autumn, UA sends a large delegation to the annual ESC conference, which was held this year in Minneapolis, Minnesota. As is the case each year, academic leaders, staff, students and community partners affiliated with member institutions met to discuss issues, information and theories regarding campus/community partnerships, as well as to network and explore the possible creation of new partnerships across multiple institutions. UA's 2018 delegation was 39 members strong — one of the largest from any single institution. Twenty-nine delegates made presentations at the conference, while the remaining played key support roles.

Tera "CeeCee" Johnson, graduate research assistant in UA's Center for Community-Based Partnerships, expressed the importance of attendance at this annual conference. "Being able to listen to so many engagement research presentations and talk to the people working on them was such a great learning experience. The diversity of topics made it easy to explore all of my interests. All students who attended, myself included, felt inspired and eager to work on our own research projects."

*For more information on ESC, visit engagementscholarship.org.
For more information on the 2018 UA delegates and their presentations at the ESC annual conference, visit communityaffairs.ua.edu/ua-sends-39-member-delegation/.*





CAMPUS-WIDE SUPPORT

New Center to Expand Student Opportunities for Community-Engaged Scholarship

Joon Yea Lee, Graduate Assistant, CCBP

After reviewing national trends, Dr. Samory T. Pruitt realized that not one of the institutions researched had a designated space for students in different disciplines to work together around community-engaged scholarship. This realization, along with recognition of the importance of collaborative activities between student organizations and partners, led to the creation of the Student Community Engagement Center (SCEC), the newest addition to UA's Division of Community Affairs.

SCEC will be located in Capital Hall, home of the Center for Community-Based Partnerships (CCBP), and will support the work of students, faculty, staff and community partners. Currently under renovation, the space is divided into three areas: individual offices for student organizations where members can work on projects and leave supplies behind, an open area for sharing ideas and collaborating with other organizations, and a conference room.

The design reflects needs shared by students, as well as SCEC's purpose — to support students' and academic units' efforts to collaborate with community partners on projects and research and to encourage more student/community partnerships.

Future expansion will accommodate more organizations interested in this work and portable design will provide flexibility.

As part of the Center, student organizations work with other organizations and community partners. Fourteen groups and one course affiliated with six academic units will comprise the first cohort. They are:

College of Communication and Information Sciences

- Capstone Advertising Federation
- Graduate Communication Assembly
- Minerva (a specialization within the advertising program)
- Public Relations Student Society of America
- Student Chapter, Public Relations Council of Alabama
- Advertising & Public Relations Student Initiative Board

College of Community Health Sciences

- Medicine & Community (an experiential learning course for pre-med Honors College students)
- Project DIET

College of Education

- Alabama Literacy Project

College of Engineering

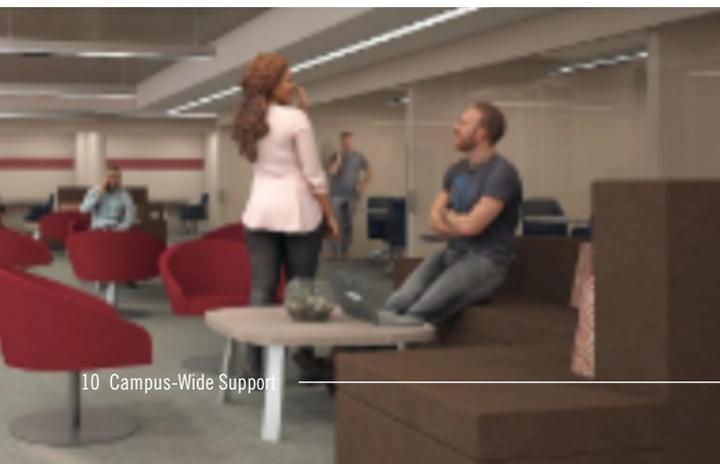
- Student Engineers in Action
- Rockets & Racecars

College of Human Environmental Sciences

- Eta Sigma Gamma

School of Social Work

- Phi Alpha honorary
- Social Work Association for Cultural Awareness
- Undergraduate Social Work Organization



UA's student chapter of the Public Relations Council of Alabama (PRCA), while looking for ways to expand its community outreach projects two years ago, reached out to Community Affairs. Rather than using a personal network, PRCA faculty advisor Matthew Wisla wanted to utilize the university structure and take the institutional approach. He thought this approach would be more sustainable and of more value overall for his college and the University. "And the timing was perfect," he said, "because when I reached out, Dr. Pruitt was thinking about the Student Community Engagement Center. So it all came together."

Demonstrating PRCA's enthusiasm, the group has elected student officers and selected teams and community partners for their initial project. PRCA student president McClelland Schilling, a senior from Dayton, Ohio majoring in public relations, is excited to see teams and projects coming together. "Over the summer," he said, "we finalized four different community groups that need immediate communication strategies. We conducted interviews to identify and match students to these four projects and found student leaders for each of the groups to work as teams."

Groups include S.D. Allen Ministry & Missions, Catholic Social Services of West Alabama, Good Samaritan Clinic, and Five Horizons Health Services. All have either recently rebranded or need to build brand and reputation and expand fundraising efforts.

Fifteen PRCA members comprise these four teams; led by student director Anna McAbee, who is in charge of recruiting members, conducting training sessions and collaborating with other student organizations in the Center.

In the midst of these activities, PRCA came up with the name Student Community Engagement Center as well as the tagline "More Than Just A Space." "We were working on naming the Center, but as we talked about the projects, we kept coming back to how there's something bigger to it. It was the community coming together, students coming together, and we found ourselves repeatedly saying that it's more than just a space. And it really just fit what we are trying to do by being a part of SCEC," said Schilling.

Representatives of the Alabama Literacy Project are also looking forward to joining forces with other student organizations. Faculty advisor Dr. Carol Donovan, who is co-director of the Belser-Parton Literacy Center, said,

"The purpose of the Center is to get different groups together and what I see as benefit is if it allows us to use our expertise in getting books out to the community and supporting literacy with other groups. One idea is to partner with the engineering group, since they do a lot with schools already, to teach the kids to read science and they teach kids to do science. Our education students can be volunteers and support projects that help students read."

The renovation is being funded through the Office for Academic Affairs, Dr. Kevin Whitaker, executive vice president. The Center is scheduled for an early spring 2019 opening, with a new director responsible for SCEC joining the CCBP staff in February 2019.

Note: The images on these pages show artist renderings of the finished SCEC space.



Crossroads Cultivates Civic Learning on Campus and Beyond

Lane McLelland, Director & Paige Bolden, Assistant Director, Crossroads Community Engagement Center



As an initiative of the Division of Community Affairs, the Crossroads Community Engagement Center fosters civic learning and respectful democratic engagement. The relevance of this work in combating discord and misunderstanding is perhaps greater than ever in today's polarized political climate. Crossroads draws on the principles of deliberative dialogue and the international work of the Sustained Dialogue Institute to provide an array of dynamic experiences for improving civic life. Through its signature programs, including its Practicing Inclusive Engagement (P.I.E.) workshops, the weekly Campus Dialogues, the Sustained Dialogue course and the Political Dialogues at UA project, Crossroads supports The University of Alabama and other higher education institutions and community-based organizations throughout the state and nation in promoting a more inclusive environment.

For example, working from the premise that being inclusive requires daily practice, not one-time training, Crossroads' P.I.E. workshops offer an innovative approach for students, faculty, staff and community members to intentionally practice using the cultural competency skills they will find critical to effective citizenship in today's global society. Each workshop utilizes well-researched practices to engage concepts of social identity, intersectionality, inclusive language and implicit bias. These interactive workshops are tailored to meet the host organization's specific goals, audiences and timeframes. Because of its flexible format and positive engagement strategies, the P.I.E. workshop program reaches approximately 2,000 participants each year.

Crossroads further develops skills for bridging traditional social divides by intentionally bringing diverse participants together for dialogue in its

weekly Campus Dialogues, the Sustained Dialogue course and its Political Dialogues at UA project. Each semester, Crossroads hosts these groundbreaking programs to model the power and promise of dialogue as a civic engagement strategy. These campus-based initiatives offer hands-on, face-to-face opportunities for members of the UA campus community to learn how to talk and listen better to one another without defaulting to adversarial arguments.

At the Campus Dialogues, held in the Ferguson Student Center each Wednesday during the fall and spring semesters, Crossroads facilitates an open and honest environment for students, faculty and staff to address issues related to identity, current events and campus life. Crossroads hosts these weekly dialogues in collaboration with the Office of Student Involvement and the Ferguson Student Center to ensure students, faculty and staff gather regularly and proactively to share diverse perspectives. These candid, respectful conversations invite direct engagement on challenging topics where each participant's experience is honored and valued.

As the sponsor of UA's chapter of the Sustained Dialogue Campus Network (SDCN) — the higher education branch of the international Sustained Dialogue Institute (SDI) — Crossroads offers a credit-earning course to introduce Sustained Dialogue's 5-Stage Dialogue-to-Action model to 120 students each academic year. This course provides a structure for students to positively engage their peers and build relationships on campus with individuals they likely would not otherwise encounter. The Sustained Dialogue (SD) course develops in students the communication skills necessary to address differences of race, gender and sexuality and become positive change agents in the increasingly diverse academic, social and work environments of which they are a part.

UA's SD course contributes to SDI's national assessment and research. Each semester, participants in the course complete pre-, mid-, and post-dialogue surveys. The data from their

responses are included in SDCN's statistically significant national network findings. As a result of participation in Sustained Dialogue, students increase crucial civic and leadership skills that benefit their campus community. SD participants:

- more frequently think critically about the experience of others
- more frequently try to better understand someone else's view
- are better able to explain the college climate toward diversity and why some of their peers may not feel welcome on campus
- more frequently learn something that changes the way they view an issue or concept
- are more comfortable talking about their own identities

In fall 2017, Crossroads launched Political Dialogues at UA (PDUA), a pilot project made possible by support from UA's Division of Community Affairs and a Healing the Heart of Democracy grant from the Fetzer Institute and the Interfaith Youth Core. Ten politically diverse student leaders — representing key student organizations and religious/philosophical backgrounds — were selected to learn how to dialogue across their political differences. The long-term goal of this program is to develop a strong, sustained network of student leadership for reducing political tensions and encouraging collaborative relationships to address challenging campus issues.

At the conclusion of the 2017–2018 PDUA, 10 new politically active student leaders were recruited to form the fall 2018 cohort. In 2018, Crossroads established a research protocol to learn from the pilot PDUA group, as well as from each successive cohort, how to offer more effective civic engagement practices in higher education and local communities. The initial findings of Crossroads' PDUA research demonstrate extraordinary promise for promoting respect and community understanding in today's politically contentious environment.

CCBP Experience Helps Graduates Succeed at the Next Level

Ed Mullins, Director of Research and Communication, CCBP

During most semesters, the Center for Community-Based Partnerships (CCBP) has as many as two dozen graduate assistants working in various capacities. They work hard and assume responsibilities that help them acquire skills that will be useful in their careers.

These alums credit their time working with CCBP as critical to their current success. A common thread in their stories is how each took advantage of opportunities and resources through CCBP to further their abilities. Of the many who have served in these roles, we asked four to describe their current jobs and how their CCBP work helped them prepare to join the next generation of engaged scholars.

Dr. Jessica Averitt Taylor served as the student assistant to the editor of the *Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship (JCES)*. She had other duties, but *JCES* was her main job and she credits working with sometimes prima donna faculty authors as a valuable part of her education.

All of her degrees are in Social Work — master's (2007) and PhD (2012), both from UA, and bachelor's

from UAB. Today, she is an associate professor at Northern Kentucky University (NKU). She has been published twice in the journal of which she was a founding staff member and she conceived and designed a highly successful food-scarcity program at NKU.

Seeing that college students were subject to many of the same hunger challenges others in their locale faced, she and her students created FUEL NKU, a campus hunger initiative. (FUEL is an acronym for Feeding the University and Enriching Lives.)

What started in space not much larger than a closet will, by 2020, take up 2,300 square feet thanks to a partnership with the Kroger Foundation. Using social media, the student-led, faculty-supervised initiative developed an awareness campaign to help students get needed food supplies across campus.

Interviewed by a local television station, Taylor said, "When you are worried about food, it is hard to focus on anything else." In approximately one year's time the program had served 1,400 NKU students.

"We planted a seed at Alabama that is still growing," Wahl-Alexander said, and shared that the main benefit of his work at UA was "getting to see an idea become a reality. Dr. Pruitt (Samory T. Pruitt) listened and gave us the funding and encouragement we needed."



"Our efforts work to provide students with access to nutritional assistance and other useful items while maintaining a compassionate and confidential environment," Taylor said. At the same time, practicum students learn case management tools, supervise volunteers, perform training sessions and direct volunteers while in the pantry.

As a graduate assistant in kinesiology at UA, **Dr. Zachary Wahl-Alexander** worked with CCBP to create Swim to the Top, a swim training and survival program designed to save lives of at-risk children and youth. The program is now in its fifth year and is led by Dr. Holly G. Morgan, director of Community Education. Today Wahl-Alexander is a highly active scholar in the Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education at Northern Illinois University (NIU).

He received his BA in Health and Physical Education in 2009 from the University of Georgia, his MA in Sport Pedagogy and his PhD in Human Performance from UA in 2012 and 2015, respectively.

Swim to the Top was funded by a grant from the Division of Community Affairs. Building on this experience, he has received funding for a project at NIU called Project Flex, for underrepresented youth in DeKalb, Illinois.

"Project Flex is a fitness program that is a combination of body exercise, muscle strength, cardio exercises, everyday life skills, and communication/relational skills for young men with special needs." The project is funded by an internal fund similar to the one that funded Swim to the Top.

"We planted a seed at Alabama that is still growing," he said, and shared that the main benefit of his work at UA was "getting to see an idea become a reality. Dr. Pruitt (Samory T. Pruitt) listened and gave us the funding and encouragement we needed."

Already published in several peer-reviewed journals, Wahl-Alexander said the experience in and support for engagement scholarship at Alabama has made the difference in his early career.



Dr. Adriane Sheffield is an assistant professor of Foundations, Curriculum and Instruction at Coastal Carolina University. "My work through UA's SCOPE (Scholars for Community Outreach, Partnership and Engagement) helped me develop a research agenda that I could be passionate about and gave me a focus for my professional growth," Sheffield said. "I continue to collaborate with faculty I met through my work with CCBP as we develop projects in Alabama and South Carolina."

Sheffield received her PhD from The University of Alabama in Educational Psychology in 2017. Her other degrees are from Vanderbilt: bachelor's in Early Childhood Education in 1996, MEd in Special Education in 1998 and MS in Community Research and Action in 2005.

In 2014, through CCBP she received seed funds for her research on a study of student strengths and talents and available resources. She was also a participant in a Grants Fellows program led by David G. Bauer, which helped her develop a skill-set specific to grant-writing and development as well as a passion for engaged scholarship centered around teacher empowerment.

She sees both personal and professional benefits from the kind of work she did in Tuscaloosa. She said that as a graduate student she found herself in an internal struggle with her practitioner and researcher selves. She loved being in a research environment, but also found herself wanting to be in the trenches with fellow educators having a direct impact on the lives of students.



"The collaboration and cooperation required to carry out an engaged scholar project taught me how to establish and nurture relationships with the community in a way that could be mutually beneficial," she said. "University/school/community partnerships are essential to having lasting impacts on educational transformation and I am grateful for the chance to be a part of that."

Dr. Jermaine Mitchell received his BS in biology from Stillman College in 2003, his MEd in Exercise Physiology from UAB in 2005 and his PhD in Exercise Science from UA in 2015. Today he is an assistant professor of Exercise Science at the University of Montevallo.

"Being a graduate assistant in CCBP during my final year of doctoral training," Mitchell said, "allowed me to gain experience in community-based participatory research designed to serve children and adults residing in disadvantaged, minority communities."

His principal experience was with two CCBP programs, Saving Lives and Swim to the Top. "These programs expanded my research interests to include aging and health disparities in underserved communities. In addition, CCBP seed funding allowed me to serve as a principal investigator, along with Dr. Angelia Paschal, on a pilot project designed to promote healthy diets and physical activity in a rural community."

Among his takeaways from his time with CCBP, Mitchell said, was that engaged research increases

program sustainability. "Because of my experience with the Swim to the Top program, I have continued to work with researchers at The University of Alabama and the University of Montevallo, along with city leadership to seek additional funds to develop and implement a parent-involved component."

Other benefits of working with CCBP, he said, were learning to be an active listener and to lean on community members as experts. He says he has learned patience in working with community members and to respect their differences. "No two communities are alike," he said.

As a graduate and postdoc fellow of The University of Alabama, Mitchell was given the opportunity to assist with several existing CCBP projects, develop his own, and gain additional training via the Engagement Scholarship Consortium.

CCBP helped him develop and expand the types of courses he could teach, Mitchell said. For example, two of his current four courses have service-learning components. In one, students develop and implement structured low- to moderate-intensity exercise sessions for senior adults at two local senior centers, very similar to projects he worked with at CCBP.

He echoed the sentiments of the UA alums we interviewed: "I have received tremendous gratification knowing that I could empower people to make decisions that could improve their health and wellness."

Council Brings Campus/Community Forces Together

Kirsten J. Barnes, Graduate Fellow, CCBP

The Council on Community-Based Partnerships, now in its 13th year, exists to connect faculty, staff, students and community partners in research-based projects designed to solve critical problems identified collaboratively by community members and the University.

The organization was created under the leadership of Dr. Samory T. Pruitt after he became active nationally in what today is the Engagement Scholarship Consortium (ESC), a global organization that focuses on the integration of engagement scholarship into the higher education mainstream.

“Any time we are discussing university goals, we have to start with faculty who set the culture for the campus,” said Pruitt, who is currently president of the ESC Board. “Faculty have to own a campus’ teaching, research and service, and they have to be able to identify ways to help them engage in this type of work and integrate it into their scholarly specialty. I am very pleased to say that is what is happening here and across the nation.”

For example, faculty suggested the idea to provide seed funding for engaged research as well as graduate assistantships to help with the scholarly work.

“We’ve taken input from faculty, students and community partners. By listening to the three we have been able to build a strong community engagement infrastructure on campus. All academic disciplines are represented on the Council, which is made up of campus and community members, with leadership coming from the senior-most faculty members or deans,” Pruitt said.

Because elite faculty members are actively participating and highly visible, they are able to make sure faculty from all parts of campus are involved and engaged.

“We have never separated it from regular scholarship; we just focused our efforts on the integration of teaching, research and service to enhance reciprocity between the University and the community,” Pruitt said.

“Amazing things can happen for West Alabama and the greater community when the resources and expertise of The University of Alabama are linked with community partners,” said Dr. Billy Kirkpatrick, chief executive officer of Five Horizons Health Services. “The combination of empirically led approaches and boots-on-the-ground activities creates a powerful force for change. The Council on Community-Based Partnerships is the preeminent example of bringing academia and community agencies together. I am proud to be a part of this Council as I see how lives across Alabama are impacted by these partnerships.”

Through collaborative efforts, students and faculty create relevant research driven by community needs, which provides reciprocal benefits for community partners and University stakeholders.

“The Council is not a political group,” said Dr. Peter Hlebowitsh, dean of the College of Education and chair of the Council Executive Committee. “It is not moved by political commitments at all, but instead aims to simply be helpful where help is needed. Drawing from elements across the University and the wider community, the Council represents a promise to bring resources and insights to a variety of problems facing the public. It seeks to engage in work that brings hope and lift to the lives of people.”

Pruitt said that other ESC member universities are looking to develop a council similar to UA’s. “I think a number of our faculty and staff will likely provide leadership to other campuses that have decided to use this model.”

Ed Mullins: A Scholar and Professional for All Seasons

Kirsten J. Barnes, Graduate Fellow, CCBP

Dr. Ed Mullins has a knack for bringing out a person's highest potential. He can see talent instantly and put people in the right position to be successful. He credits this talent to his growing-up days. "If I was in a group, I organized what we would do, especially if it was a baseball game or a chore. That way, I could pick the job I wanted to do or the position I wanted to play," he said with a laugh.

No matter the age, the level of expertise, or the subject matter, in his more than 60 years of working as a reporter, editor, a U.S. Army officer, professor, or dean, Mullins has used his non-stop work ethic and no-nonsense style of mentorship to propel others to realize their greatest potential, in a couple of cases all the way to the Pulitzer Prize.

The longest-serving dean of UA's College of Communication and Information Sciences (C&IS) brings a wealth of experience to his current position as director of Research and Communication in the Center for Community-Based Partnerships (CCBP) within UA's Division of Community Affairs.

In this position, before anything goes out to be viewed by the public it must first be — in the words of Dr. Samory T. Pruitt, Community Affairs vice president, "Ed-ified."

After leading C&IS's climb to national prominence as dean for 13 years, Mullins soon embarked on a new career in engagement scholarship, where he once again helped to bring national prominence to the University when he originated the design and editing responsibilities of the *Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship (JCES)*, a peer-reviewed journal published at UA. Though many of these duties have been passed on to others, he remains an editorial assistant for *JCES* and writes many of the Community Affairs press releases.

"He's a genius," says Pruitt. "He made *JCES* look and read differently, without conceding any of the necessary academic rigor of a peer-reviewed publication. He was able to do this not only because of his experience as a professional journalist and a dean, but also as a scholar. He, along with founding editor, Dr. Cassandra Simon, made *JCES* the premier research journal for engaged scholarship."

Mullins retired from the C&IS faculty in 2007, and after listening for a few minutes as Pruitt outlined his ideas for bringing community-engaged scholarship to the forefront at UA, Mullins said, "I get it. Give me a desk and a computer. I think I can help."

As dean of C&IS, Mullins saw the student body and faculty numbers double. "I spent the majority of my time hiring people, which meant way too many desserts — especially the famous almond ball at the University Club," Mullins said.

"He has always had a gift for finding and developing talented people," Pruitt said. "In the same way that he built the College of Communication, he helped us build CCPB. He identified developing students and staff consistent with the goals that we had outlined for the Division."

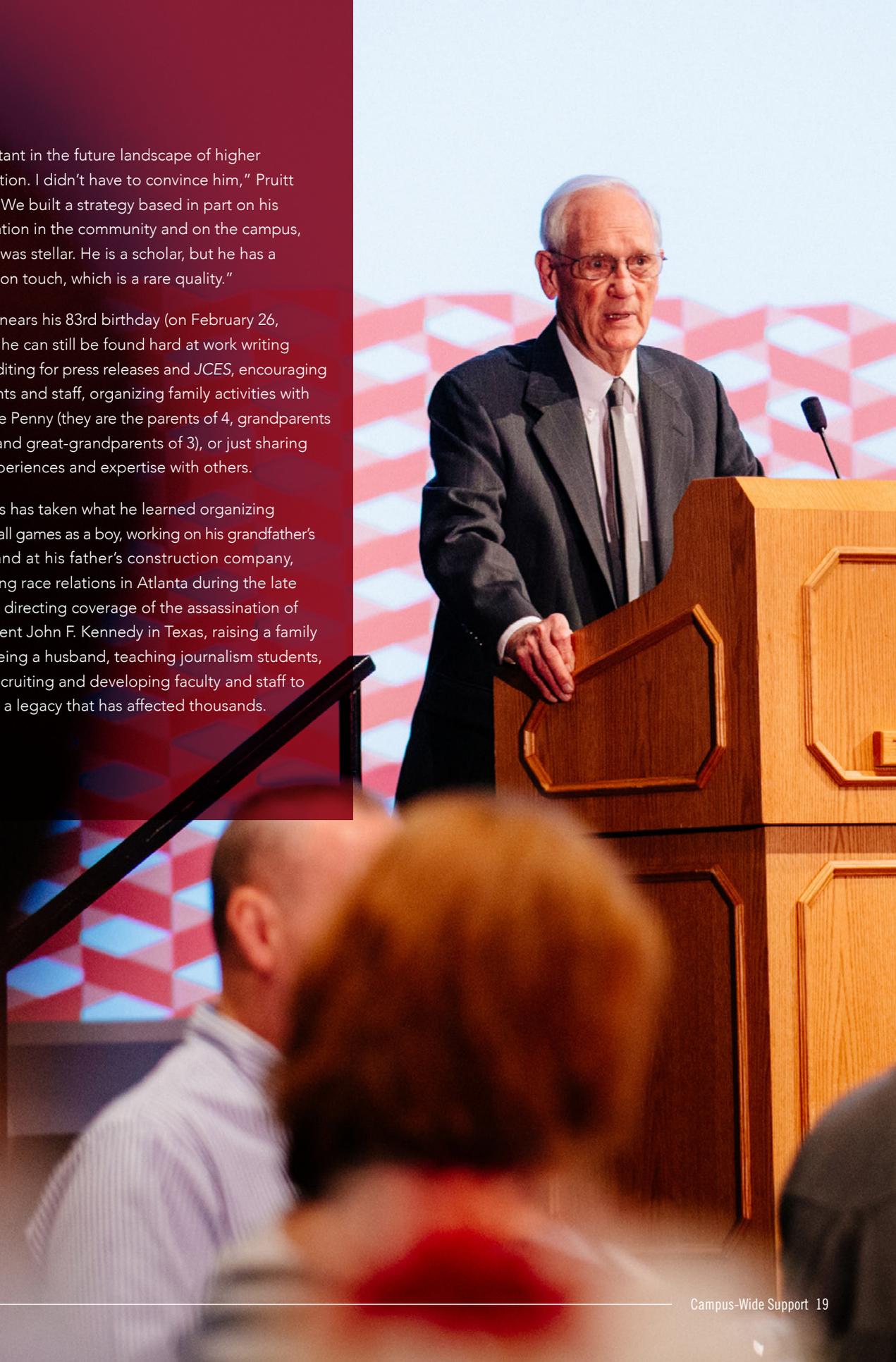
Because of his track record, it was no surprise, then, (except for the recipient) when the Division selected him for the Outstanding Special Achievement in Community Engagement Award for 2018. "The decision by our committee was unanimous," Pruitt said. "No one has had a greater impact on our Division than Dr. Mullins, who has been with the Center since its inception and continues to work to improve everything he touches."

"He immediately recognized the importance of this type of work and that it was going to become more

important in the future landscape of higher education. I didn't have to convince him," Pruitt said. "We built a strategy based in part on his reputation in the community and on the campus, which was stellar. He is a scholar, but he has a common touch, which is a rare quality."

As he nears his 83rd birthday (on February 26, 2019), he can still be found hard at work writing and editing for press releases and *JCES*, encouraging students and staff, organizing family activities with his wife Penny (they are the parents of 4, grandparents of 11 and great-grandparents of 3), or just sharing his experiences and expertise with others.

Mullins has taken what he learned organizing baseball games as a boy, working on his grandfather's farm and at his father's construction company, covering race relations in Atlanta during the late 1950s, directing coverage of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in Texas, raising a family and being a husband, teaching journalism students, and recruiting and developing faculty and staff to create a legacy that has affected thousands.



Community Affairs Sponsors Second Grant-Training Class Led by David G. Bauer

Ed Mullins, Director of Research and Communication, CCBP

In 2018, the Center for Community-Based Partnerships (CCBP) graduated its second cohort in the Community-Building and Winning Grants and Sustainability Program, led by David G. Bauer, a nationally known grant-training specialist.

“Based on information I have received from the first two cohorts, participants have raised more than \$40 million in grants and fundraising efforts following their completion of the program,” said Dr. James E. McLean, CCBP executive director. “Not only has the program proved its value in terms of successful grant proposals, it has also resulted in participants becoming strong advocates for the University.”

To participate, each team must be co-directed by a community member and a UA faculty or staff member. All teams learn principles of teamwork and keys to successful grant writing.

“In my almost 50 years of experience in applying for and directing grants, I believe Dave Bauer is by far the best. His approach is based on the values of the funder and the grant applicant,” said McLean, himself an experienced researcher/grant winner.

Tuscaloosa-area teams for 2018 were:

- Team A — Members were from the College of Nursing, College of Community Health Sciences (CCHS), Maude Whatley Health Center. Project: Filling the Gap: An Innovative Emergency Medical Service Heart Failure Program. The purpose is to increase access to education and care for patients in their home environment to prevent re-hospitalization while lessening the burden on the Tuscaloosa Fire and Rescue Service, which answers 13,000 calls annually and assists nearly 105,000 residents.
- Team B — Members were from the College of Nursing, School of Social Work, CCHS, Tuscaloosa Fire and Rescue Service and Friendship Baptist Church. Project: Community Health Workers and Chronic Disease Management.
- Team C — Members were from the School of Law, Tuscaloosa’s One Place and Tuscaloosa Juvenile Court. Project: JUSTICE (JuvEniles Supported Through Integrated Community Engagement). The purpose is to meet the needs of youth re-entering the community from secure confinement or out-of-home placement. This program will strengthen the juvenile justice system by providing resources to the youth and their families who need support.
- Team D — Members were from Tuscaloosa County School System and College of Education. Project: Support English Language Learners and Families.
- Team E (composed of three groups: health, education and social services) — Members were from CCHS, Pickens County Board of Education, Pickens County Industrial Board, Pickens County Public Library, Pickens County Family Resource Center, Pickens County Medical Center and Pickens County 4-H House. The teams are seeking funds to meet a variety of needs, e.g., drug prevention, jobs for the unemployed and the Family Resource Center, which provides resources for patients in need. The program will provide a variety of resources and items not normally available.
- Team F — Members were from Forest Lake United Methodist Church, Celebrate Recovery and Culverhouse College of Business. Project: Working United.
- Team G — Members were from Alabama Public Safety Division, UA Grants/Contracts Compliance, City of Tuscaloosa, the Akribos Group. Project: Development of an Emergency Operations Center. The program has a goal to assist in reducing hospital re-admissions for chronically ill patients and to fund more emergency medical providers.

Because of the resounding success of the first two cohorts, this training has been funded for another year. The third class began in August.



COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS

Vision Days Broadens College Insights for High School Students

Kirsten J. Barnes, Graduate Fellow, CCBP

In order to be successful in college, students should begin thinking about their higher education options early in high school. This is the message behind Vision Days, sponsored by UA's Center for Community-Based Partnerships (CCBP).

The idea came out of the New Faculty Community Engagement Tour, sponsored annually by CCBP, as well as from an institutional effort to reach more in-state students from traditionally underserved areas.

Ashley Meadows, who teaches English at Thomasville High School, said the opportunity to bring dozens of ninth graders to UA's campus was a great experience.

"My ninth graders were saying they needed to know more about this stuff now because by the time they are juniors or seniors it is too late," said Meadows, now in her 12th year of teaching. "It's good for them to know that the classes they are taking now, those grades are cumulative and will affect scholarships down the line, and affect them just getting into college."

Meadows, who brought 30 students on both Oct. 23 and Oct. 25 to visit UA's engineering, nursing, business, arts and sciences, education, social work, human environmental sciences and communication programs, said the exposure alone was invaluable.

"It's so good for these young kids to be able to see the world outside of our small town and classroom," she said.

Students from both rural and urban high schools attended Vision Days. They not only learned about different majors, but also about the requirements for admission and scholarship opportunities.

"I wanted to learn more about what I need to do to get into college and what kinds of clubs they have at college," said Henry Smoot, a ninth grader from Woodlawn High School. Smoot said he dreamed about "owning my own business and being a mechanical engineer. I feel better now that I see other students from the school I come from that made it, and it makes me feel like I can make it."

Keontay Madison said he attended the tour to find out about scholarships and academic requirements. "I learned that if you want a scholarship you need at least a 3.5 GPA and I learned about things you can do to qualify," said Madison, who was visiting UA for the first time.

Vision Days targets high school students who might not otherwise have the opportunity to visit campus with their parents or guardians "to give them an idea of what their options are early in their high school careers so that they are not scrambling their junior and senior years to fix their grades or try to get into college," said Daniela Susnara, a kinesiology doctoral graduate assistant in the College of Education. "We're trying to put college at the front of their minds so they can be proactive their freshman and sophomore years and also get them to set some early goals."

In addition to students from Woodlawn and Thomasville, students from Amelia Love Johnson, Berry, Greene County, Sumter Central, Carver, Greensboro, Wenonah and Pickens County High Schools attended Vision Days Oct. 16, 18, 23 and 25.



United Way Campaign a Reflection of Support for Community

Diane Kennedy-Jackson, Publications Coordinator, Community Affairs

Each year the Division of Community Affairs leads the coordinating efforts for the UA United Way Campaign, utilizing a structure that provides opportunities for colleges and administrative units across campus to serve as campaign hosts. This campus-wide role is but one example of the Division's commitment to the community.

For 2018, Intercollegiate Athletics hosted the UA United Way Campaign, which had a goal of \$385,000. The 2018 theme — Champions United: A Tradition of Caring, Serving, and Giving — expressed not only the overarching message for this year's campaign, but also the impetus behind the initiatives of the Division, its Center for Community-Based Partnerships, its Crossroads Community Engagement Center and the Council on Community-Based Partnerships.

The Division's efforts are positively affecting people and communities throughout the area. The Council connects faculty, staff, students and community partners in research-based projects designed to solve critical problems identified by community members and the University. The Center brings a significant number of engaged-scholarship initiatives into the community and surrounding area. Crossroads fosters respectful intercultural engagement throughout the state by facilitating a variety of workshops and dialogues utilizing inclusive engagement practices, as well as sustained dialogue principles. All seek to fulfill the Division's motto: "Engaging Communities and Changing Lives."

Whether accomplished through a host of collaborative initiatives driven by the United Way of West Alabama's (UWWA) 26 partner agencies or other entities, the reach of those associated with



the Division, in reciprocal endeavors with community partners, is assisting those in the Tuscaloosa area and throughout the Black Belt region to improve their lives and is helping the University to fulfill its mission of advancing the intellectual and social condition of the state, nation and world.

"Each year our campus shows great support to the United Way of West Alabama, revealing the University community's commitment to improve the quality of life for individuals throughout the area," said Carol Agomo, director of Community and Administrative Affairs and employee campaign champion for UA's annual United Way campaign. "Every donation to this annual fundraising campaign is an investment in the community, but that investment does not end with dollars given. It is seen in the collective efforts of countless faculty, students, staff and community partners who work diligently and tirelessly toward a common goal that strives to enrich lives and communities."

The 2018 campaign total, announced Nov. 28, was \$469,483 — the highest dollar giving total in UA's United Way campaign history.

Inaugural Board of Advisors Sets the Bar High

Diane Kennedy-Jackson, Publications Coordinator, Community Affairs

When the inaugural Division of Community Affairs Board of Advisors (BOA) gathered for its fall gala in September, the fundraising event marked the culmination of three years of innovative work.

For several years, Dr. Samory T. Pruitt had been thinking about ways he might engage former students with whom he had interacted while they were on campus. He pursued the formation of the Division's first BOA, recognizing that there were young alumni at a prime age and place in their lives and careers to reconnect with their alma mater in ways that could have a positive impact on UA.

Katie Boyd Britt, who was SGA president while a student, worked with Pruitt to identify individuals who were campus leaders — maybe even campus go-getters — at a time of unprecedented campus growth and change between 2003 and 2013. They believed these former student leaders were the right candidates to serve in an advisory capacity and to engage current and prospective students in meaningful and influential ways. A core group was identified by late 2015, and with their input, it didn't take long to establish a 52-member group (currently

58) that came together around the theme "Coming Back, Giving Back." The group held its first meeting on campus in April 2016.

"Dr. Pruitt had a vision before any of the rest of us did to bring young leaders together who wanted to go ahead and plug back in and make a difference," said Board President Britt, who earned her undergraduate degree in 2004 and her UA law degree in 2013. She serves as chief of staff to U.S. Sen. Richard Shelby and will begin a new position as president of the Business Council of Alabama in early 2019.

"I know a lot of us were lost in our efforts to reconnect, to know what was going on so that we could be able to make a difference and an impact," Britt continued. "You changed that for all of us," she said to Dr. Pruitt from the podium at the fall gala. "This is a group of change agents. You hand-picked this group. You believed in us. You have funded it and made sure that you gave us a voice again. Your leadership is unparalleled and we are so grateful for the time, energy and political capital that you spent to make this group happen."

The Board is comprised of three committees. Each has made a profound impact in a short time.



The Entrepreneurship and Innovative Initiatives Committee began raising funds early on, which put the group on track to partner with The EDGE on two projects: the fall 2017 River Pitch

Competition and the spring 2018 Edward K. Aldag Jr. Business Plan Competition.

The purpose of the River Pitch Competition, which attracted 53 contestants to Tuscaloosa's River Market, was to help people learn how to pitch their business ideas and to network while also boosting the Tuscaloosa entrepreneurship community. Eight competitors each won \$500 in BOA awards at the event.

Before the Aldag competition, teams that wished to qualify for BOA awards were required to attend a series of business development workshops — a resounding success, as all four

winner of the separate Aldag Awards, including the grand prize winner, were workshop products, as were all six of the teams that made it to the semifinal round of competition.

The first-place winner of a BOA Innovation Grant at the Aldag competition was The Artemis Company, a self-defense jewelry company created by a sexual assault survivor. The grant award of \$5,000 has set the stage for creator Lauren Gwin to get her products to market.

“The business pitch competition was a huge success — a huge learning experience for me,” said Gwin. “I really kind of went from there and made the changes that I needed to [make] to my products based on the feedback I got from the judges, and we’re going to start selling our products!”

The second-place award of \$3,000 went to Woof!, an app to connect young people to shelter dogs based on the user’s lifestyle and interests in an effort to produce more committed adoptions and decrease the number of canines euthanized. The third-place award of \$2,000 and the competition’s \$50,000 grand prize went to High Five Studios, a video-game studio developing augmented reality games.



The Academic Success and Student Retention Committee is focused on mentorship — in particular, working with UA on in-state recruitment with an emphasis on Alabama’s Black Belt counties, which are home to many underrepresented populations and prospective first-generation students. In this way, committee members share the advantages of higher education and the lifelong value of a degree from UA.

The Global and Community Leadership Development Committee also began raising funds early, and in spring 2018 announced the



recipients of its first Study Abroad and Domestic Scholarships, worth \$2,500 each.

Kiari Kinnie, a senior nursing major, served on a medical mission trip to Zambia, Africa, and Justin Washington traveled to Washington, D.C., to learn from industry leaders in the social impact arena through the Obama Foundation.

To date, BOA members have donated \$20,075 to fund their initiatives. Additionally, Board member Tyrell F. Jordan pledged \$25,000 for an endowed scholarship to support students from underrepresented urban communities. The gala contributions totaled almost \$11,000, bringing the total given or pledged since the Board’s creation to \$56,075. The time, effort, commitment and tenacity of its members are far more difficult to measure, but equally important.

“The leadership shown by the members of this group has impressed me from day one,” said Carol Agomo, director of Community and Administrative Affairs at The University of Alabama, who oversees the group’s members and subcommittees. “Through the successful creation and implementation of student-focused initiatives the Board has supported increased opportunities for education, for workforce development and for the development of the next generation of leaders.”

“It has been incredible to see from the first day we gathered until today, how far we’ve come as a board,” said BOA Treasurer Divya Patel, a 2006 UA graduate who currently works as director of operations for Windsor Hotel and Quality Inn in Americus, Ga. “Dr. Pruitt told us we were paving the road and driving over it at the same time. Today, we can successfully say we have built a road. It’s very exciting to be at this point, but this is just the beginning on our journey of coming back and giving back.”

Realizing the Dream Events Bring Community Together

Diane Kennedy-Jackson, Publications Coordinator, Community Affairs

Of the many responsibilities that fall under the Division of Community Affairs, perhaps none is more important than the annual community celebration known as Realizing the Dream (RTD), which honors the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Each year, Tuscaloosa celebrates Dr. King's legacy during the King holiday weekend. While some may see the holiday as an opportunity for a day with no classes or an extra day away from the office, it is one of the busiest times of the year for the Division of Community Affairs, which oversees the presentation of the banquet, concert, the Distinguished Lecture Series and several related community events, all of which are coordinated through a partnership consisting of UA, Stillman College, Shelton State Community College and the Tuscaloosa chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).

Begun in 1990, with the Legacy Awards added in 2009, the events not only honor Dr. King, but also serve as a way to build unity within the community. The theme changes each year to be relevant to

current circumstances.

"Annually, we see the community come together to celebrate Dr. King's life and legacy, as well as the impactful work of our very own community members, whose efforts mirror Dr. King's ideals of promoting peace and equality," said Director of Community and Administrative Affairs Carol Agomo, who serves as program planning chair. "The Dream events serve to remind the Tuscaloosa community and beyond the importance of keeping Dr. King's dream alive."

The Legacy Awards Banquet recognizes Realizing the Dream founders, as well as three individuals who have made significant contributions to Dr. King's legacy. The speaker for the 2018 banquet, held Friday, Jan. 12, was actor and producer Danny Glover. Awards went to UA doctoral student Marissa Navarro, who received the Horizon Award for founding the first campus Hispanic Latino Association, and Dr. Ellen G. Spears, associate professor in New College, who received the Call to Conscience Award for research on the environment and interpretation of the historic Scottsboro Boys trials. Frank Dukes was





honored with the Mountaintop Award for his lifetime of commitment to social justice, equality and peace. Dukes worked with King for many years. He helped organize the Voter Registration Drive of 1960, the Easter Sunday March of 1963 and a public campaign to increase minority hiring.

Two evenings later, on Sunday, Jan. 14, Mary Mary, the Grammy-winning gospel recording sister duo of Erica and Tina Campbell, performed to a sold-out audience in the Moody Music Building Concert Hall. The evening concluded with area college choirs joining the performers on stage and the audience joining in singing “We Shall Overcome,” which has become an annual tradition at the RTD concert.

Prior to the concert, attendees had the opportunity to view artwork on display in the lobby. Created by students in Tuscaloosa City Schools, this annual exhibition of new work is also a Realizing the Dream concert tradition.

The 2018 RTD Distinguished Lecture, on March 27, featured Julissa Arce, who came to the United States undocumented at age 11 and was undocumented for almost 15 years before becoming a U.S. citizen in 2014. She built a successful career on Wall Street during part of this time, and now serves as an advocate for immigrant rights and education in order to help other young people in circumstances

similar to her own. Previous Distinguished Lecture speakers include attorney/civil rights activist Bryan Stevenson, novelist Alice Walker and the late Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth.

Since the inaugural concert in 1990, when actor James Earl Jones narrated Aaron Copeland’s “A Lincoln Portrait,” the campus and community have shared this annual celebration with such luminaries as Cicely Tyson, Maya Angelou, Vivian Malone Jones and John Legend, as well as a host of insightful speakers — all at events that shine a spotlight on courage and compassion, inspiring all of us to do our part in making a better tomorrow.

The concept for the Realizing the Dream tradition was born in 1989, when Dr. E. Rogers Sayers, then UA president, met with King’s widow, Coretta Scott King, to discuss ways that would appropriately recognize her husband for his contributions to the state of Alabama, the nation and the world. The result was the Realizing the Dream celebration, now approaching its 30th anniversary.

“We are indebted to Dr. Sayers for our University’s Realizing the Dream tradition,” said Dr. Samory T. Pruitt, Community Affairs vice president. “Thanks to President Sayers, we became one of the first academic institutions to recognize King’s life and career with special activities.”

Community Engagement Tour Sparks New Partnerships

Xiangyan (Sophia) Xiong, Volunteer, CCBP

The University of Alabama's Division of Community Affairs conducted its second annual New Faculty Community Engagement Tour May 9–11. During the three-day bus tour, faculty, staff and student participants visited schools, museums, community centers and historic sites throughout West Alabama and the Alabama Black Belt Region. Approximately 50 people participated in the tour, enabling them to discover research opportunities and improve their knowledge about the region and needs of the communities visited.

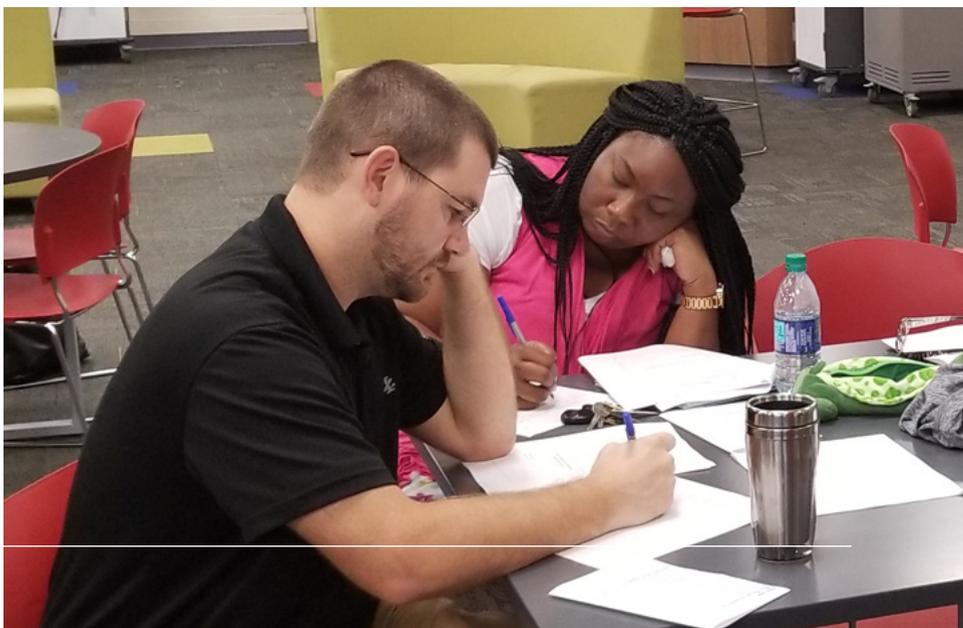
Dr. Tracey Hodges, a second-year assistant professor of Elementary and Literacy Education in the College of Education, decided to participate in the faculty tour this spring based on a colleague's recommendation. "I enjoyed the tour because of the community members, business professionals and education professionals who participated," she said at a recent meeting of the Council on Community-Based Partnerships.

She said she appreciated being given the schedule of panelists ahead of time, allowing her to look up people she might be interested in talking with prior

to the tour. This resulted in making a connection with Katie Andoe, assistant principal at Hale County Middle School (HCMS) regarding literacy needs. "Mrs. Andoe and I talked briefly after one of the panels on the tour, and then we connected through email. Within a week, I was at HCMS, touring the school and discussing potential partnerships," Hodges reported recently.

During the fall 2018 semester, Hodges conducted 26 hours of professional development for the teachers at HCMS, with an intentional focus on literacy strategies and supports. "I now spend time at Hale County Middle School three to five times each month, working with the teaching professionals there," she said. These sessions have resulted in a collaborative effort to create a new writing curriculum for the 6th grade, and ongoing consulting with teachers across all grade levels. "The teachers come to me with questions about their lesson plans, student work samples, and general strategies, and I act as a resource for them," Hodges said.

Since the tour, Hodges has been collecting data at HCMS through interviews, classroom observations



and questionnaires. "It's a positive relationship that benefits students, teachers and my own research," Hodges notes. "I'm thankful that these tours are provided as they allow important connections to be made between faculty and community members. Through these interactions, we can begin to solve problems, develop relationships, and work to improve the educational needs of students in the area."

James Gilbreath, a research and instructional services librarian at Gorgas Library, made the tour for a second year. "I am from Birmingham," he said, "and I went to school here (at UA), but I didn't know much about other counties before I went on the engagement tour. So I can imagine how this might be an eye-opening experience for other new faculty members."

By making connections with communities and knowing their needs, Gilbreath hopes the Black Belt Libraries Association will serve as a center to connect libraries in different counties and to share resources.

Different counties may face various issues, but there are some common themes, including lack of access

to medicine, healthcare and jobs. Gilbreath believes that libraries can serve as a helpful platform for people to come together and gain basic information, to have Internet access, to apply for and find jobs and to participate in educational programs informing basic medical and healthcare information.

"Traditionally, libraries are repositories of knowledge, but what we are moving to is to make libraries serve as community meeting spaces, and serve community information needs," said Gilbreath.

At the Black Belt Community Foundation in Selma, Gilbreath met the head of the foundation, Felecia Lucky, and shared his idea about starting the Black Belt Libraries Association.

"We found that we had the same idea," he said. "Whatever help they need, I would be willing to give suggestions. I can help connect people, but the most important thing is that the initiatives have to start from the community. If the library can serve as a place where people can come together and coordinate their efforts, and share ideas with each other, it would be a help to the community."



Neighborhood Partnership Committee Gives a Voice to City/Campus Stakeholders

Diane Kennedy-Jackson, Publications Coordinator, Community Affairs

The Neighborhood Partnership Committee (NPC) was established in 2003 to improve town-gown relationships while proactively addressing issues of mutual concern to the groups represented on the committee. NPC is comprised of students, off-campus neighbors, business owners, community leaders, Tuscaloosa city officials, police officers from The University of Alabama (UA), the Tuscaloosa Police Department, ABC Board officials and a wide variety of UA faculty, staff and administrators. The committee meets twice a year, while specialized working sessions occur throughout the year.

The 2017–2018 academic year began with NPC adopting the concept of creating a neighborhood registry to facilitate communication among residents, the city and neighborhood associations. This was in response to a current issue identified by Tuscaloosa Neighbors Together, which acts as a coordinating body for the efforts of Tuscaloosa residents and neighborhood groups. This priority led to a long-term goal to develop a sense of identity for city residents while improving communication among the University, residents and city officials.

At NPC's recommendation, UA's Department of Geography and the city — as part of the neighborhood registry plan — are developing a neighborhood map prototype. Future implications of this work include opportunities to build a sense of place and increase quality of life in neighborhoods.

During a 2018 NPC meeting, Dr. Samory T. Pruitt, vice president for Community Affairs, said: "Here in Tuscaloosa, our students are everywhere, in every neighborhood. Anything we can do to strengthen neighborhood associations so that they have collective voices in some of the decisions that are made about the city, that's something we look forward to being a part of."

Also during the 2017–2018 year, the City of Tuscaloosa launched a long-range planning effort to establish a vision and policies for how and where the city will grow over the coming decades. The effort will create a comprehensive plan and update zoning and land development regulations. The plan is being built on the values, needs and aspirations of the community. A diverse group of community members, including members of NPC, is helping to guide the planning process while seeking extensive input from members of the community.

Dr. Nicole Prewitt, director of Programs and Partnerships for Community Engagement in the Center for Community-Based Partnerships, coordinates NPC and serves as co-chair of the city's comprehensive planning efforts.

"This group is an excellent example of people coming together in common purpose," Prewitt said. "We have a full agenda of things to do and we are looking forward to another year of progress in our combined efforts."



→ QUICK UPDATES

The programs and activities described throughout this report are a sampling of the Division's work. Additional highlights include:

Community Education

In 2018, Johns Hopkins University's National Network of Partnership Schools recognized The University of Alabama Parent Teacher Leadership Academy (PTLA) with a national Partnership Organization Award for establishing successful community partnerships with area public schools.

Also in 2018, Drs. Blake Berryhill, assistant professor, Department of Human Development and Family Studies, and Holly Morgan, director of Community Education, CCBP, published "Impacting Rural Communities through School-University-Community Collaboration Partnerships: The Parent Teacher Leadership Academy," in the text *Innovation and Implementation in Rural Places: School-University-Community Collaboration in Education*. This chapter highlighted the work of PTLA and its impact on the rural school community.

Finally, the Academy awarded eight PTLA Partnership Team Grants to five elementary and three middle schools from among the 2017–2018 graduates. These projects were selected from among 50 participating schools due to their project development and plans for sustainability.

CCBP expanded its partnerships to additional campus and community entities for the 2018 **STEM Entrepreneurship Academy**. Partners included the Alabama Entrepreneurship Institute, the UA Career Center, High Five Studios and Tuscaloosa's Gateway to Discovery. Alex Haisting of High Five Studios, spring 2018 UA graduate and winner of the 2018 Edward K. Aldag Jr. Business Plan Competition, spoke with students about his experiences as a young entrepreneur. The goal of each partnership,



including that of each experience provided by UA's STEM faculty, was to provide a personal, relational experience for the students. As a start to the week's STEM and entrepreneurial activities, Dr. Morgan collaborated with UA's award-winning EcoCAR3 team, led by graduate student Ashley Phan. Students learned about air pollution and its effects on the human respiratory system, as well as ways to minimize it. They received a basic overview of how hybrid cars work and how their use reduces air pollution. They then worked together to build their own model cars, which were raced in the lobby of the AIME Building (Alabama Institute for Manufacturing Excellence).

In its fifth year, **Swim to the Top** provided swimming, enrichment and physical education services to 125 children during the month of June. As a program enhancement, a parent outreach component was introduced. Weekly water safety skills, nutrition components and final assessments were shared with families to build community knowledge. In November, the program was awarded a \$1,500 grant from the Community Foundation of West Alabama for needed swim platforms.

Crossroads

In addition to its own signature programs, the Crossroads Community Engagement Center encourages collaborative engagement through its monthly campus breakfasts, the Cultural Heritage Month Calendars and its weekly Engage UA newsletter. Each first Wednesday, approximately

50 students, faculty and staff attend **Crossroads' Networking for Inclusive Campus Engagement** breakfast to meet others who are working to make UA a vibrant and welcoming community. The workgroups offer campus partners the structure to gather regularly, brainstorm ideas and plan programs such as events that celebrate the rich diversity of experiences and identities on campus during the cultural heritage months. Crossroads further supports these collaborative efforts with the production of a calendar to promote the events campus-wide. On a weekly basis, Crossroads provides a digital newsletter each Monday to more than 3,000 contacts, highlighting campus events and programs that focus on culture, diversity and equity in our community.



Global and Community Engagement

Established in 2013, **Global Café** provides one-on-one conversation opportunities, leadership seminars, evening community resource programs, welcome activities for international visitors and advising resources for prospective Fulbright applicants. In 2017–2018, 60 language tutors engaged in 1,987 contact hours (up from 1,341 the previous year). The program continues to grow, with 67 language tutors engaging 121 language partners in 1,920 contact hours for fall semester 2018 alone. Through this work, Global Café introduces international students and faculty to community resources, provides opportunities for language learning and offers UA students exciting new paths in international community engagement.

UA was recognized in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (February 18, 2018) as a national **Top Producer of U.S. Student Fulbright Awards** for the second time in three years. Fifteen UA students received Fulbright Awards and served abroad in 2017–2018. Additionally, the Global Café Fulbright Advising Initiative and Capstone International Center celebrated 15 new winners in May who embarked in August for their assignments abroad.

Resource Development

Christopher H. Spencer, director for resource development, CCBP, spends a significant amount of his time working with the Black Belt Community Foundation (BBCF) to raise funds and obtain grants for community initiatives. Included in the funding received in 2018 was a \$3 million, three-year Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Additionally, Spencer has helped secure grants in the amounts of \$860,000 from the NOVO Foundation, \$200,000 from the Mary Babcock Reynolds Foundation and \$106,000 from the Wellspring Philanthropic Fund. He is also the founder and manager of the Black Belt Throw & Go Contest, which generates more than \$10,000 each year to support local community grants while providing citizens at all levels an opportunity to contribute to the success of the region, as well as increasing the BBCF donor base. He also assists on-campus researchers. In September, Dr. Hee Yun Lee, professor and associate dean for research in the School of Social Work, sought Spencer's expertise in the formation of a partnership with the BBCF to apply for a \$2 million National Institutes of Health grant that focuses on significant health disparities that exist in rural Alabama breast cancer patients. Additionally, Spencer continues to meet with the Project SOAR team to seek external funding for research projects, and assisted the Project SOAR research team and Dr. Pamela D. Witt, research project manager from Penn State College of Medicine, with a 50-subject research project in rural Sumter County.

→ GET PLUGGED IN

For more information about engagement scholarship or to learn how you can become involved, visit us online at communityaffairs.ua.edu or contact the following offices or individuals.

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The stories throughout this publication are but a sampling of the Division's efforts. To learn more about the work of the Division of Community Affairs and its initiatives, visit us online at communityaffairs.ua.edu.



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