



TRANSFORMATION through COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS

2017



Division of Community Affairs
ANNUAL REPORT 2017

- 1** A Message From the President
- 2** Leading the Engaged Approach to Education
- 3** A Message from the Vice President for Community Affairs

→ **NATIONAL ENGAGEMENT**

- 5** JCES to Mark Tenth Anniversary
- 6** Fulbright Finds Success at UA Through Supportive Advising
- 7** Fostering Global Community: Global Café & Language Partners
- 8** GEAR UP a Natural Fit for UA

→ **CAMPUS-WIDE SUPPORT**

- 10** Council Unites, Motivates Engaged Scholarship, Leadership & Production
- 11** McLean Leads Scholarly Advancements of CCBP
- 12** Grant Workshops with David Bauer Exceed Expectations
- 13** SCOPE Motivates Young Scholars to Become Successful Researchers
- 14** UA and Barnes YMCA Complete Fourth Year of Life-Saving Partnership
- 15** When You Plant a Seed
- 18** Crossroads Community Center Facilitates Intercultural Engagement

→ **COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS**

- 23** PTLA Fills a Void in Schools and Communities
- 24** STEM Entrepreneurship Academy Helps Prepare Students for the Future
- 25** Changing Lives with Computer Science and Robotics
- 26** New Faculty Tour Highlights University/Community Collaborations
- 28** Project SOAR Lifts UA/BBCF Partnership to New Heights



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

To Members of The University of Alabama Family:

Did you know ...

- That a member of our own family is president of the board of directors of the leading international organization in the rapidly growing field of community engagement scholarship?
- That a leading research journal in this field originated on this campus and is about to enter its second decade of publication?
- That departments and offices throughout our University have faculty and staff who are pursuing engagement scholarship projects, many of which involve their students?
- That this field unites our three-pronged teaching/research/service mission in ways every citizen can understand and benefit from?
- That research proposals submitted in this area during the past year have already resulted in several million dollars in funded research projects with many more still under consideration?

To learn about these and other dynamic activities occurring on our campus with implications for a brighter future for us all, I urge you to read the complete *Transformation Through Community Collaborations* document you are holding. In it you will find that UA has become an international leader in the scholarship of engagement.

This report not only demonstrates the power of partnerships, but also tells the story of how a major university and its partnering communities share resources in mutually beneficial ways. On these pages, you will see ample evidence of how our University is giving back to communities that visibly support our very existence and way of life in more ways than we can count.

Stuart R. Bell, PhD
President
The University of Alabama

A large brick sign for the University of Alabama. The sign is white with blue lettering and a blue torch logo. The text reads: "UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA" in large letters, with "FOUNDED" and "1831" on either side of the torch logo. Below that, it says "TEACHING RESEARCH SERVICE". The sign is set against a brick wall and surrounded by greenery and flowers.

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA
FOUNDED 1831
TEACHING RESEARCH SERVICE

LEADING THE ENGAGED APPROACH TO EDUCATION

Broadly defined, the scholarship of engagement means a formal collaboration between institutions of higher education and the larger community for mutual advantage.

The community unit may be local, state, regional, national or global, or any combination thereof. The higher education partner may be from any discipline or field and may include faculty, staff and students.

Throughout the nation, more and more institutions are pursuing the engaged approach. For example, the University of Minnesota reports that 29 of its academic departments, 436 faculty and more than 6,500 students are currently involved in one or more engagement scholarship projects.

The leading organization for the assessment, dissemination and promotion of engagement scholarship is the Engagement Scholarship Consortium (engagementscholarship.org). It holds an annual conference and supports two research journals, including the *Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship*, produced and published on our campus.

Its rapid growth over the past two decades — there are now 38 major member institutions worldwide — is built on the premise that engagement scholarship is central to the nature of knowledge. Its goals are the generation, exchange and application of mutually beneficial knowledge and practices growing out of academy/community partnerships.

Why this interest in engagement scholarship in American universities? Because it is proving to be the best way for

institutions of higher education to share what we have learned — our knowledge inventory — with communities of all sizes. This is as it should be.

Outcomes of community engagement are enriched, practical scholarship, research and creative activity that enhance curriculum, teaching and learning by educating active, prepared students and citizens. Engagement scholarship strengthens democratic values and civic responsibility, contributing to the public good by addressing issues critical to society.

More than 20 years ago, Ernest T. Boyer, the founding father of engagement scholarship, laid the groundwork for the movement in these urgent words: “The academy must become a more vigorous partner in the search for *answers to our most pressing social, civic, economic, and moral problems, [emphasis added]* and must reaffirm its historic commitment to what I call the scholarship of engagement” (*Journal of Public Service and Outreach*, 1(1), 11–20, 1996).

At The University of Alabama, the origin of community engagement can be found at the intersection of our long-standing mission of achieving excellence through teaching, research and service. And as this report demonstrates, thanks to the hard work and collaborative spirit of our faculty, staff, students and community partners, the tradition of engagement scholarship at The University of Alabama is gaining strength and momentum to the benefit of all involved.



A MESSAGE FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

As you read the report you are holding in your hand, I believe you will come away with a fuller understanding of and appreciation for the many ways in which the scholarship of engagement helps this University fulfill its mission to advance the intellectual and social condition of the people of Alabama and beyond.

Hundreds of faculty, staff, students and community members have contributed a tremendous amount of time, talent, leadership, energy and imagination to make all of the things happen that you will be reading about. Although the term “Scholarship of Engagement” has been in widespread use for less than a quarter of a century, it is rapidly becoming an important approach to integrating and enhancing the traditions of teaching, research and service mission of major universities worldwide.

Why is this happening? As scholar Ernest T. Boyer has said, it is our obligation in higher education to be leaders in finding solutions to the most critical problems of our time. Who better to do this than the academy?

But we have a long way to go. According to our research, the number of departments at The University of Alabama pursuing engagement scholarship, that is those actively seeking solutions to the most pressing problems of our time, is around 75. That’s certainly an improvement from 10 years ago when we formed our first Council on Community-Based Partnerships and introduced the concept to our campus. But at the University of Minnesota, Michigan State University and a few others, where engagement scholarship has been a priority much longer than it has here, their engaged departments number in the three and four hundreds (almost every department on campus).

Looking on the positive side, because of the superior research-based projects you will read about in these pages, and others

too numerous to include, it will come as no surprise that The University of Alabama:

- Had its Carnegie Foundation for Community Engagement Classification renewed through 2025! This is a group of some 240 institutions of higher education with a proven commitment to the scholarship of engagement in their teaching, research and outreach. Our University is one of only four in Alabama to have been awarded this classification.
- Hosted the largest conference (in 2012) of the international organization dedicated to this work, the Engagement Scholarship Consortium (ESC).
- Is among the leaders in the number of scholarly papers presented and workshops conducted at the annual ESC conferences. Most recently, at the 2017 conference in Birmingham, UA faculty, staff, students and participating community partners presented/conducted more than 20 scholarly papers/workshops. Some 35 UA personnel played key roles in this conference.

As president of the Board of Directors of the ESC for the past two years, I am gratified and honored to see our institution play such important roles in this prestigious forum. We hope you enjoy reading about the many ways the University and its community partners combine resources for mutual benefit. We believe you will be inspired by the examples of engagement scholarship throughout these pages.

Samory T. Pruitt, PhD
Vice President, Division of Community Affairs
The University of Alabama



NATIONAL ENGAGEMENT



Since its inception in 2004, the Division of Community Affairs has been driven by its mission to form partnerships that combine teaching, research and service in ways that generate mutual benefit for the University and its partners, while addressing pressing societal concerns. I am enthusiastic about the work accomplished through our partnerships to date, and I look to the future with great anticipation.

Samory T. Pruitt, PhD
Vice President for Community Affairs
President of the Board of Directors, Engagement Scholarship Consortium

→ JCES TO MARK TENTH ANNIVERSARY

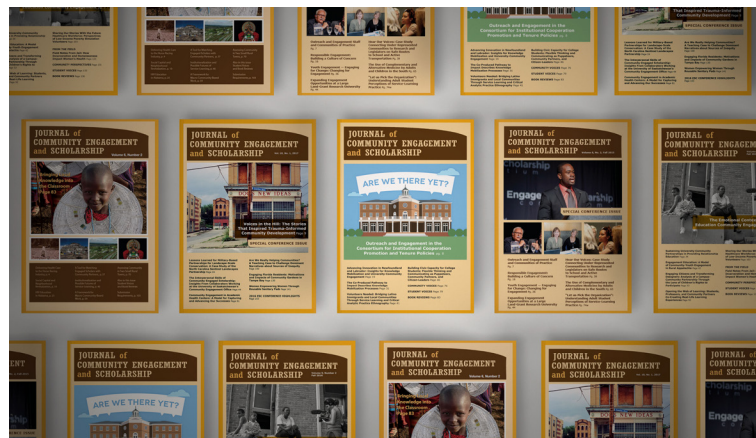
The first issue of the *Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship* (JCES) was published in fall 2008. In the words of founding editor Dr. Cassandra Simon, it would be “a new kind of research journal.” With Volume 10, No. 1 JCES enters its 10th year of publication, a period of unparalleled growth in engagement scholarship.

“Community engagement scholarship represents an effort to effect transformational change in higher education,” Dr. Hiram Fitzgerald wrote in a special message for JCES as it began its 10th year.

“All social movements require public voice and the *Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship* has played a key role in that regard by publishing powerful examples of how university/community partnerships enhance the quality of lived experience, while simultaneously contributing to the scholarship of evidence-based practice.”

Fitzgerald, who served as the founding president of the board of directors of the Engagement Scholarship Consortium (ESC), an international organization of 38 colleges and universities, is one of the leading voices in the field of engagement scholarship worldwide.

Dr. Samory T. Pruitt, vice president of The University of Alabama’s Division of Community Affairs and publisher of JCES, received no mandate to publish the journal. There was not even a request for it. Dr. Pruitt simply had the conviction that the emerging field needed a distinguished research journal and UA had the opportunity, leadership and resources to produce such a journal. In addition to Pruitt and Simon, the original JCES development committee consisted of Dr. Edward Mullins, Mary Allen Jolley,



retired former higher education administrator, and Kyun Soo Kim, a graduate assistant in the Center for Community-Based Partnerships. Today Kim is on the faculty at Chonnam National University in South Korea after serving at Grambling State University in Louisiana. Pruitt, Mullins and Simon are still active with the journal, Pruitt as publisher, Mullins as an editorial assistant and Simon as a member of the editorial board.

From the beginning, JCES set goals of having a different look, being easily read and understood regardless of a reader’s background or level of education and of reaching not only professional scholars but also students, community partners and the lay public. This approach, combined with a 42-member editorial board comprised of members from across the nation and world and representing more than 25 higher education disciplines, as well as a strong editorial team and a robust website, keeps JCES consistently high among the ranks of engagement scholarship journals.

→ Published authors of more than 150 articles represent
75+ INSTITUTIONS
worldwide.

→ FULBRIGHT FINDS SUCCESS AT UA THROUGH SUPPORTIVE ADVISING

Four years ago, the Center for Community Based-Partnerships (CCBP) added a director of Global and Community Engagement position. By creating a position to work directly with prospective Fulbright applicants from The University of Alabama, the Division of Community Affairs effectively expanded the boundaries of UA's community to include every continent. With this action, CCBP magnified its role and commitment to engagement scholarship by doubling the acceptance rate of UA students into the prestigious Fulbright Program in just a few years.

To set the stage for this success, four-time Fulbright Scholar and cultural inclusion professional Dr. Beverly Hawk was selected to lay the groundwork for students interested in the Fulbright experience. She was the ideal choice to lead a cast of students and alumni that has resulted in 15 UA students being selected for Fulbright Awards for the 2017–2018 academic year and the University being named among the nation's "most productive" Fulbright institutions for the second time in three years. The remarkable nature of this number can be seen in the fact that these 15 are among only 1,700 chosen from the more than 10,000 who applied.

Hawk works closely with Dr. Teresa Wise, associate provost for international education and global outreach in the Capstone International Center. "Globally focused academic opportunities and study-abroad experiences help our students develop into world citizens who foster international understanding through programs like Fulbright," Wise said.

Abigail Thompson was selected as a 2016 Fulbright award recipient and worked as an English teacher within Irkutsk University's Department of Services and Advertising.

"The Fulbright process is so stressful and so long," said Thompson, who majored in economics and political science and minored in Russian and UA's Blount Program. She called UA's Fulbright support "insane," adding "I was so lucky that I ... ended up at UA."

Thompson learned about Fulbright when she attended the lecture of a Fulbright ambassador on UA's campus. Information



sessions like the one she attended are held throughout the year and always include former UA Fulbright winners.

As part of the highly competitive application process, students must write a personal statement explaining what they hope to gain from a Fulbright appointment and be interviewed by program officials.

"Dr. Hawk pretty much taught me how to write a personal statement, or at least a good one," said Jenna Reynolds, who served in Madrid, Spain, as an English teaching assistant at a bilingual high school. "She really took the time to make sure my application was the best that it could be and she always made time for me."

The kinds of experiences Thompson and Reynolds had are what make the Fulbright Student Program unique among study-abroad programs.

"Serving abroad on a Fulbright provides a deeper understanding of your profession, its role in your own country and its role in the world. Universities serve as a place for the discussion of societal change and the shaping of new generations of citizens," said Hawk.

As the flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by the U.S. government, Fulbright is designed to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries.

→ FOSTERING GLOBAL COMMUNITY: GLOBAL CAFÉ & LANGUAGE PARTNERS

For many members of The University of Alabama's international community, the Center for Community-Based Partnerships (CCBP) is known for its signature international program, Global Café, which came to life five years ago when Dr. Beverly Hawk, the director of Global and Community Engagement, met with CCBP's community partners to brainstorm ideas on how to engage with diverse international visitors at UA while utilizing CCBP's resources.

After a full year of monthly meetings, community partners decided to establish a place for anyone wanting to come to work on their language skills. The goal was to provide a place and environment where international students and their families could come and practice language for free. This evolved into one of the two initiative components — daytime conversation opportunities, known as the Language Partners Program, and a community resources program, known as Global Café.

The Language Partners Program brings UA's American students together with Tuscaloosa's international community. By engaging one-on-one as partners for a semester, American students from all walks of life and participating international families share experiences and learn about each other's cultures while practicing English.

Sombor Dal moved to Tuscaloosa in 2015. He is studying at UA's English Language Institute while preparing for graduate school.

"The Language Partners Program makes it possible for all new foreigners and their families to have one-on-one English lessons. Most tutors are American undergraduate students so it's an effective way to learn about American society as well," said Dal.

During the 2016–2017 academic year, the Language Partners Program also provided opportunities to develop language ability and cultural understanding among Americans planning to travel by involving them in conversations with international guests. Some of the student volunteers who tutored for language partners have applied to the Fulbright Program with hopes to travel to other countries to be English teaching assistants or researchers.

The Language Partners Program has continuously grown in number of participants, both from international families as well as from American students working or volunteering at CCBP. Almost 1,500 language tutoring contact hours occurred this past academic year as part of the program. But the contact hours are not the only impressive results. The program has not only allowed mutual understanding and appreciation of different cultures and languages among tutors and visiting partners, but also has fostered many friendships.

Global Café aims to build an inclusive campus environment by connecting students and faculty with the community and sponsoring activities where people can share their traditions and cultures, learn language together, access local resources and meet new friends. This partnership benefits UA students by enhancing intercultural hospitality and understanding and by building global skill sets. This initiative was developed with the cooperation of several campus and community partners, including the Capstone International Center, the CCBP Student Leadership Team, the Graduate Parent Support program, Tuscaloosa's One Place, Shelton State Community College, Stillman College, the Tuscaloosa Public Library, Tuscaloosa city and county schools, other UA student groups and community leaders. The resulting relationship between local schools and the University has proven to be a mutual benefit of this cooperative effort.



→ GEAR UP A NATURAL FIT FOR UA

GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) is funded by the U.S. Department of Education. It is a competitively awarded, discretionary grant program designed to increase the number and success of low-income college students.

GEAR UP provides six-year grants to states and partnerships to provide services to high-poverty middle and high schools. It enables grantees to serve an entire cohort of students beginning no later than the seventh grade and continuing through high school. The program also provides college scholarships for low-income students.

As part of UA's mission of teaching and service, the program was a natural fit, especially in the state's Black Belt Region, one of UA's priority regions. In partnership with UAB and the University of West Alabama, UA selected junior high and high school students as its focus group, initially including five schools. In this way, the program provides an early intervention component to increase college attendance and success and raise expectations among low-income students.

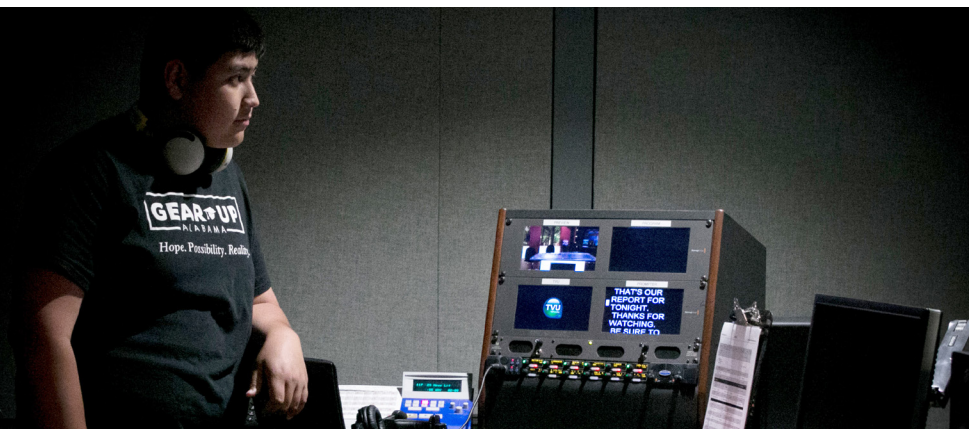
To satisfy the University's overall mission of service, along with education and research, CCBP recruited professors and students to work with and conduct research on the program in a service-learning environment.

The project turned out to be a good fit for engagement scholar Dr. George Daniels, a professor of journalism and an assistant dean in the College of Communication and Information Sciences. Already having partnered with several area schools for various projects, Daniels immediately put college students to work tutoring and mentoring students from several schools throughout the region.

Daniels, who also serves as chair of the Council on Community-Based Partnerships' Excellence in Community Engagement Recognition Committee, chose to get involved with GEAR UP "to stay engaged," even with a heavy teaching and administrative load.

"We do outreach because it is important," said Daniels, who also works with UA's Multicultural Journalism Workshop, which completed its 34th year in June 2017. "GEAR UP is another example of UA's continuous support of high school outreach and its commitment to diversity."

Twenty undergraduate students from UA will serve as "near-peer" tutors/mentors for middle and high school students. Using multiple University partners, GEAR UP serves 10,000 students in 21 school systems in every Alabama Black Belt County and several surrounding counties.





CAMPUS-WIDE SUPPORT



From the development of innovative initiatives that foster its mission, to its provision of funding assistance for learning and travel opportunities that enrich the engagement scholarship efforts of faculty, staff and students, UA's Division of Community Affairs is a campus leader in efforts that create and sustain collaborative partnerships throughout the communities in which the University is privileged to serve.

Kevin Whitaker, PhD
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

→ COUNCIL UNITES, MOTIVATES ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP, LEADERSHIP & PRODUCTION

When the CCBP Council was first created, Dr. Samory T. Pruitt, vice president for Community Affairs, served as chair. Recognizing the need to decentralize the Council, he appointed Graduate School Dean David Francko to that role. When Francko stepped down from his full-time job at UA at the end of the 2015–2016 academic year, Pruitt appointed College of Education Dean Peter Hlebowitsh as chair of the Council on Community-Based Partnerships, utilizing the opportunity to emphasize that this was more than a name change: It made clear that engaged scholarship was not just an activity that occurs within one campus center known as CCBP.

Two of the most important engaged-scholarship events occur annually. They are the campus-wide Excellence in Community Engagement Awards luncheon, held each April, and the annual Engagement Scholarship Consortium (ESC) conference, which occurs each fall in one of the five ESC regions.

At the awards luncheon, University and community participants receive recognition for their engagement scholarship achievements and in some instances funds for their research endeavors.

The annual conference brings together hundreds of like-minded individuals from colleges and universities worldwide, along with scores of community organizations, to advance the work of community-engaged scholarship under the auspices of the ESC. The University of Alabama is consistently among the leading participants in this conference in terms of attendance, faculty presentations and other involvement.

Every college and most academic disciplines are represented on the Council. Its Executive Committee oversees project funding, conducts the annual excellence awards program, awards seed



funds and graduate assistant support, promotes participation in academic conferences through travel fund awards and supports community and student involvement and opportunities for outside research, all with the goal of fulfilling the Division of Community Affairs' motto of "Engaging Communities and Changing Lives."

One of the many functions of the Council is to provide seed funding for student and faculty projects. By establishing grants of up to \$5,000 for engagement-focused research projects, the Division has significantly expanded engaged-scholarship production while offering practical experience for budding scholars and helping experienced professionals and community partners find new ways to touch lives throughout the area. Additionally, the Council provides three annual graduate fellowships.

→ The Council on Community-Based Partnerships includes some

140 MEMBERS

drawn from 47 academic departments, 12 administrative units and a dozen community partners.

→ McLEAN LEADS SCHOLARLY ADVANCEMENTS OF CCBP

In 2014, retired dean Dr. James E. McLean was recruited to return to the University for which he had worked for more than 30 years. Dr. Samory T. Pruitt, vice president for Community Affairs, asked him to work with him as the executive director of the Center for Community-Based Partnerships (CCBP).

McLean was attracted to the position because it enabled him to utilize his mathematics, statistics, research methodology and administrative skills in an area of great interest to him: improving the lives of individuals and communities.

“I have always been philosophically committed to what we now call engagement research,” McLean said from his office in the newly renovated Capital Hall, located on the former Bryce Hospital campus. “It is my belief that a university, especially a state university, should be judged on the impact it has on the well-being of the community where it resides. Community partnerships are the way it really should be done.”

Before McLean became CCBP executive director, this job was one of many hats worn by Pruitt. However, since its inception the center had quadrupled in size and scope and needed a leader to oversee the work of all the offices.

“I foster communication among the directors and make sure Dr. Pruitt knows what’s going on,” McLean said. “I work closely with him to develop initiatives that support the University’s mission.”

From day one, the lifelong scholar saw his new position in CCBP as assisting graduate and undergraduate students alike in finding ways to engage with their community in solving problems. “Students probably learn far more from hands-on involvement than they do in classrooms,” McLean said. “Most of my own research has been based on data from these projects. The schools looked upon that work as a service. Community engagement is one way in which we can be involved in teaching, research and service, thereby addressing the three components of the University’s mission at one time.”

One of his goals is to help the University engage more fully with the broader community. To do this McLean has drawn upon his research background. This includes preparing University and community partners to adopt strategies that jointly address community needs. According to McLean, “It is important to know if our work is effective and if the outcomes are positively improving the lives of our citizens.”

As CCBP executive director, McLean is often called on to explain the role of engagement scholarship at public forums. He used the opportunity of the 2017 CCBP Awards luncheon for this purpose. Following (photo inset below) is an abbreviated version his remarks:

“When you approach The University of Alabama, you encounter one of many welcome signs. Most people do not notice anything other than the name, ‘The University of Alabama.’ However, underneath the name, it reads ‘Teaching, Research and Service,’ the mission of the University. Most see that as three separate missions performed independently of each other. But engagement scholarship addresses all three components simultaneously. Engagement scholarship includes ‘research’ by its very definition, and since engagement scholarship addresses community problems it is also service. Further, most engagement scholarship projects involve students where both traditional and hands-on teaching and learning take place. Not only are students learning how to do research, they are also learning to be good citizens.”



→ GRANT WORKSHOPS WITH DAVID BAUER EXCEED EXPECTATIONS

The Center for Community-Based Partnerships (CCBP) successfully completed its first community-building funding and sustainability program and started its second in 2017. The program is designed to fund and sustain community-engagement research efforts that address community problems, an important part of the mission of both the University and the Division of Community Affairs.

From January 2016 to March 2017, 55 members on 10 University/community teams and 12 off-campus individuals participated. Four workshops and five coaching sessions were led by David G. Bauer, a national leader in grant training, and Dr. Jim McLean, CCBP executive director, an experienced researcher/grant winner.

Workshops covered the basics, from forming teams to discovering ways to fund team initiatives. These included identifying different types of grants available, team building techniques and quality circles (mock reviews) and learning ways to sustain programs through funding. Of those participating, all 10 teams developed refined plans, seven of which were submitted to one or more funding agencies.

The second round of grant-funding workshops, taking place during the 2017–2018 academic year, began in August, with the final coaching session scheduled for June 2018.

→ Grants proposed for 2016–2017 totaled \$248,585,832. Approximately

\$10 MILLION

in funding has been received, with several projects under consideration.

“David Bauer is simply the best in the business of helping enthusiastic researchers find funding for their research,” McLean said. “He has taught the art of grantsmanship to more than 45,000 grant seekers.”

McLean first came up with the idea of holding grant education seminars several months after joining CCBP in October 2014.



After numerous faculty and community members asked him if CCBP or Community Affairs could fund their projects, he realized a program that could help win funds would be more beneficial than one-time or limited support through CCBP’s seed fund, travel fund or graduate assistant awards. McLean developed the workshop with Bauer, whom he met when both were at The University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Bauer, owner/president of David G. Bauer Associates, Inc., has 45 years of experience as a grant trainer and has written 11 books on the art of successful grant writing.

“This series of training workshops is the brainchild of Dr. Jim McLean,” said Dr. Samory T. Pruitt, vice president for Community Affairs. “This work has major implications for CCBP’s future direction, and we are pleased to be able to offer this valuable service to our campus and community — a service that will pay dividends for years to come.”

McLean is also working on developing a program to train grant coaches. Rather than just coaching University/community teams and individuals, this program will train individuals to become grant coaches themselves, so that even more can benefit.

For one example of program results, visit ccbp.ua.edu/hobson to learn about “#blackgirls4change: The Hobson City 9, Using PhotoVoice to Cultivate Community and Create Change.” The project, under the direction of workshop participant Dr. Michelle Robinson and Hobson City Mayor Alberta McCrory, received a two-year grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

→ SCOPE MOTIVATES YOUNG SCHOLARS TO BECOME SUCCESSFUL RESEARCHERS

In support of the University's research mission, the Center for Community-Based Partnerships (CCBP) created a young scholars' organization that guides them along the route to becoming published researchers. Scholars for Community Outreach, Partnership and Engagement (SCOPE), has helped scores of students — both graduate and undergraduate — and other emerging scholars to attend scholarly conferences, to present their research and to convert their papers into published work.

Doctoral candidate Adriane Sheffield served as SCOPE president in 2016–2017. She credits SCOPE with exposing her to community-engaged scholarship, leading to opportunities to publish and present her work in a variety of settings. As an elementary education scholar and teacher, Sheffield pursues research on how mentoring improves behavior and academic achievement of elementary school students.

CeeCee Johnson, graduate research assistant at CCBP and the 2017–2018 SCOPE president, reports that while the group may be small in number, members and regular meeting attendees are making a significant impact. At the April 2017 SCOPE Showcase, students involved in SCOPE took part in 13 Showcase presentations. Through the fall 2017 semester, nine of the 11 students who regularly attend the organization's meetings are involved in a community engagement project.

The SCOPE initiative is mentored by Dr. James McLean, CCBP executive director, and is guided by experienced researchers who help students transform their research interests into such finished products as conference papers, workshop presentations, research posters and articles in refereed journals. In addition to providing a forum for sharing their research, SCOPE helps students explore the best way to optimize their own research as well as help them connect with a community organization that can benefit from and contribute to their program.

An accomplished researcher, McLean believes the program has high potential for helping young scholars. Each spring, SCOPE holds a research showcase on campus, with panel discussions and poster presentations. Typically, more than 100 students from various colleges and disciplines participate in the event.

"This many students took part and we still haven't reached out enough," said McLean, who has plans to increase SCOPE's visibility among students. "The training and some of the resources we provide assist these students in doing things they never imagined. It makes you proud to see their excitement for research."

→ Typically, more than
100 STUDENTS
participate in the annual SCOPE Showcase.

In addition to the research training SCOPE provides for students, McLean says CCBP and SCOPE reinforce student retention by keeping students engaged in the community and the academy.

Dr. Edward Mullins, director of CCBP's Office of Communication and Research, has examined final programs of engaged-scholarship conferences and publications since CCBP was created in 2006. "I count more than 200 competitive articles, presentations, posters, reports and other research by our young scholars over the past 10 years," he said. "This is an impressive showing and SCOPE, in keeping with our University's mission to engage the community, has played a major role in these results. It also bears mentioning that SCOPE has received favorable acknowledgment from those in leadership roles of the Engagement Scholarship Consortium, the leading organization for engagement scholarship."



→ UA AND BARNES YMCA COMPLETE FOURTH YEAR OF LIFE-SAVING PARTNERSHIP

Swim to the Top, a swim training and survival program, completed its fourth year in June 2017. The Center for Community-Based Partnerships, the Department of Kinesiology, UA's swim team and the Benjamin Barnes YMCA joined forces to help save the lives of children and youth at risk of drowning.

The program, started by former UA kinesiology graduate student Zachary Wahl-Alexander, has specific implications for African-American children. Swimming pool drowning rates among blacks aged 5–19 years are five and a half times higher than those among whites the same age, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Nearly 70 percent of African-American children are unable to swim, according to a 2012 survey by the USA Swimming Foundation.

In addition to swimming lessons, participants receive leadership training, nutrition education and fitness training, as well as golf lessons with the assistance of Tuscaloosa's First Tee nonprofit. Teaching the importance of exercise for cardiovascular health and good nutrition is a key part of the fitness segment.

UA kinesiology professor Dr. Matthew Curtner-Smith emphasized that swimming is more than recreation. He said research shows that physically active children perform higher academically and psychological satisfaction is higher than that of inactive children.

Dr. Holly Morgan, CCBP's director of Community Education, announced at the 2017 closing ceremony that Tuscaloosa's First Tee had contributed six scholarships of \$2,500 each to the program.

For 2017, the closing ceremony was moved to the early evening from its previous lunchtime scheduling in order to include parents and community members. More than 150 people attended the event, which celebrated students' achievement across all three components of the program.

In 2017, the swim-safety program received prominent local television coverage. Fox 6 News interviewed program leaders after a near drowning in Blount County over the pre-Independence-Day weekend. The child survived, but the incident served to emphasize the importance of partnerships like Swim to the Top.



→ WHEN YOU PLANT A SEED

The Council on Community-Based Partnerships annually awards fellowships, travel funds, seed funds and supplements for existing research projects. The work allowed by this support of faculty — especially young faculty — and graduate students and their travel to present their work at national and international conferences has greatly increased the University's reputation in community engagement research in recent years.

Fellowships Support Students, Fill Community Needs

Since 2015, the Council on Community-Based Partnerships has awarded three fellowships annually to graduate students working on community engagement research projects. The \$15,000 stipend covers fall and spring semesters, full tuition grant for both semesters and health care. The 2016–2017 recipients were Megan Briggs, Andrea Newman and Jessica M. Bertram.

Briggs is a master's student in geography. She created a watershed management plan for Cribbs Mill Creek in partnership with the Sassafras Center for Arts and Environment titled "Perceptions and Assessment of Stream Health for a Watershed." The project, which will be her master's thesis, identifies land use and water management practices to improve and protect the overall quality of the creek. Briggs will turn her study over to the Sassafras Center, which will use it to acquire funding to test and improve water quality. Through this fellowship, the community receives a free service and Briggs completes her thesis while conducting research that produces real-world benefits.

Putting classroom knowledge to work on community problems is the cornerstone of engagement scholarship. Andrea Newman's graduate fellowship research with her faculty advisor, clinical psychology professor Dr. Beverly E. Thorn, provided her with the perfect opportunity to do just that. Her research examines psychological factors linked to increases in healthcare visits and opioid prescriptions for patients with chronic pain, with an objective to decrease the burden of frequent trips to the doctor and to reduce the number of prescriptions.

To understand how West Alabama residents might reduce healthcare visits and opioid prescriptions, Newman and Thorn

partnered with Whatley Health Services, a community health center that oversees several federal health programs and provides primary health care to the medically underserved. Her work on this project greatly improved her research skills and has not only led to publication, but has also set the stage for future research. Newman is the lead author of an article in the September 2017 issue of *Pain*, a journal sponsored by the International Association for the Study of Pain. The article, "The Relationship of Sociodemographic and Psychological Variables with Chronic Pain Variables in a Low-Income Population," was co-authored by Thorn, along with Benjamin P. Van Dyke, Calia A. Torres, J.W. Baxter, J.C. Eyer and Shweta Kapoor.

In partnership with the Alabama-Tombigbee Regional Commission, Jessica M. Bertram, a third-year doctoral student in social work, received a fellowship to work with principal investigator Dr. David L. Albright, social work associate professor, on a project to assess veterans' needs in Dallas and Marengo Counties as part of a larger project that covers several other counties in South Alabama. The purpose of the project is to work with community members to identify unmet needs and perceived gaps in services to veterans and their families. Some 4,000 veterans reside in the two counties.

Bertram, the granddaughter of two veterans, said her project required a "boots on the ground" approach to meet as many of her subjects as possible. She spent numerous hours interviewing and speaking with veterans who reflect a diverse population with different needs. "I talked to veterans who were homeless, veterans who had healthcare needs that weren't being met and to veterans who were on the [VA hospital] wait list for too long a time," said Bertram, who went on to say that she appreciated the opportunity to build a closer relationship with the veteran population in these distinct rural counties. The fellowship convinced her this was the population she was supposed to be working with. "It's given me an opportunity to work one-on-one with people I would've never met otherwise," said the Lexington, Kentucky native, adding, "My hope is that the report leads to more resource allocation to those counties."

The awardees encouraged other students to apply for the fellowships, noting that they not only advanced their own academic careers but also improved the lives of people in the community.

Seed Funds Take Root; Grow Additional Resources

For the past 10 years, the Division of Community Affairs, in conjunction with the Graduate School and the Office of Academic Affairs, has provided seed funds to faculty to stimulate research production. These funds have been instrumental in overall annual increases in major funding for and publication of engagement research. Their impact is also shown in the increase in faculty receiving promotion and tenure with engagement scholarship publications and presentations included in their dossiers, according to reports from the Graduate School.

Seed funds of various amounts totaling almost \$400,000 have been awarded since 2008. The purpose of these funds is to help scholars get a project off the ground, with the ultimate aim of converting the seed funds into larger grants from outside sources — that today total some \$10 million.

While all of the additional funds listed cannot be attributed to the seed funds, all seed fund recipients are quick to credit the funds with the initial success of their projects. Following are some of the projects that have flourished, in part because of the Community Affairs Seed Funds Program and collaboration with community partners.

- Parent Teacher Leadership Academy, whose partners are the Center for Community-Based Partnerships (CCBP), the Colleges of Education and Human Environmental Sciences and various school systems throughout the state, with funds and in-kind contributions totaling more than \$250,000.
- Sumter County School System STEM, whose partners are CCBP, mechanical engineering and computer science, with additional funds exceeding \$2 million under the leadership of engineering professors Dr. Beth Todd, Dr. Jeff Gray and others.



The Council awards 3 graduate fellowships worth

\$15,000

each on an annual basis.

- Engineers Without Borders, whose partner is CCBP. Led by Drs. Pauline and Philip Johnson in civil, construction and environmental engineering, who lent their talents to various sites at home and abroad and turned two seed fund grants totaling about \$5,000 into additional grants and in-kind contributions that exceed \$250,000.
- Programs under the leadership of Stephen Black, director of the Center for Ethics and Social Responsibility, have had a statewide impact. Seed funds have led to additional grants exceeding \$5 million. One of its programs, SaveFirst, is a statewide project involving 600-plus UA students who help lower-income taxpayers complete their tax returns at no charge.
- Seed funds also provided initial funding for an award-winning Civil Rights documentary and other documentaries produced by UA Telecommunication and Film artist Andy Grace and his students.
- Graduate students in the School of Library and Information Studies have opened digital avenues for elders who are physically challenged, beginning with a \$2,500 seed grant with additional grants now totaling almost \$1 million.
- Boosted by several Community Affairs seed grants over the years, the nationally recognized Journalism Multicultural Workshop, now in its 34th year, has opened opportunities for hundreds of minorities to become professional journalists and has led to additional funding from outside grants.

CPE Project Models Effective Use of Seed Funds

The Collective Parent Engagement (CPE) project provides another good example of the effective use of seed funds. Dr. Tania Alameda-Lawson, assistant professor of social work, received a \$5,000 seed fund award in 2017 from the Council on Community-Based Partnerships to expand the Alabama TOPS project she has been conducting with colleagues Dr. Michael Lawson, Dr. K. Andrew R. Richards and doctoral student Victoria Shiver for several years.



Geography, Psychology, and Social Work are the

3 DISCIPLINES

represented by 2016–2017 graduate fellowship awards.

The project, which is part of an ongoing after-school program with Tuscaloosa's One Place, operates throughout the academic year at Holt Elementary School. The additional grant enabled the researchers to expand the project to Davis-Emerson Middle School in Cottondale.

The program has two primary intervention strands — an after-school program to foster positive youth development through sports-focused activity and a parent involvement program called collective parent engagement (CPE), which is a best-practice intervention for parent engagement and family support. The CPE approach — led by Alameda-Lawson, is designed to engage groups of parents in the design and delivery of programmatic solutions to school, family and community challenges.

"The theory that guides this effort is that, in order to be able to support the kids, we need to be able to support the families," said Lawson, who also noted that the ultimate goal is that the two components of the Alabama TOPS program connect organically and develop the programmatic networking support system that not only meets the needs of children but also the needs of parents, families and the community.

"One of the most important contributions the Division of Community Affairs provides to faculty is its extremely strong commitment to engaged research," said Alameda-Lawson.

Alameda-Lawson and her team are now preparing a large grant application to submit to the National Science Foundation to extend the program beyond its current funding.

Travel Funds Support Conference Presentation

Among the most sought-after awards CCBP makes available to faculty and students are travel funds to support presentation of their research at national and international conferences. Research indicates that the publication rate of conference-presented papers varies by discipline but on average, almost one in five papers presented at the Engagement Scholarship

Consortium conference results in publication in a research journal, making these resources coveted.

The first year in which travel funds were awarded by the division was 2015. Among the recipients that year were Dr. Zachary Wahl-Alexander, then a doctoral student in kinesiology and Dr. Wanda Burton, at the time a doctoral student in health science. Both have converted their UA support into publications in journals of their disciplines. Wahl-Alexander's manuscripts have been published by *Camping Magazine*, 88(6), 52–54; *Strategies*, 28(2), 17–20; and *Sport Education and Society*, 20(7), 838–854, with three others in press.

Burton's manuscripts have been published in the *Journal of Health Disparities Research and Practice* [10(2), 142–156] and in the *American Journal of Health Education* [1–13. doi: 10.1080/19325037.2017.1292876].

In 2017, travel funds resulted in these conference presentations: "Water Conservation and Effective Watershed Management" in Punta Gorda, Belize, by Brenna Sweetman, geography graduate student; "The Development of an After-School Program for Youth Placed At-Risk: A Collaborative Approach," in Savannah, Georgia, by Dr. K. Andrew R. Richards and Victoria Shiver, kinesiology; "From Greensboro to Greensboro: Contrasting Two Community Partnerships to Propel Men of Color to Success," in Greensboro, North Carolina, by Douglas Craddock Jr., then doctoral student in higher education administration; "Reducing Disparities with Literacy-Adapted Psychosocial Treatments for Chronic Pain: The Effect of the LAMP Intervention on Patients' Pain and Psychosocial Functioning," in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, by Calia Torres, psychology doctoral student; and "Telemedicine Perceptions of Rural Patients With HIV and Mental Health Issues," in Paris, France, by Dr. Safiya George, associate professor of nursing.

The projects mentioned are but a sampling of what has been achieved in the field of community engagement with the financial support provided through the UA Division of Community Affairs and its partners.



Seed funds totaling almost

\$400,000

have been awarded since 2008, in efforts to assist scholars in getting projects off the ground.



Five Travel Fund awards totaling

\$3,951

were awarded in 2017.

→ CROSSROADS COMMUNITY CENTER FACILITATES INTERCULTURAL ENGAGEMENT

Crossroads Community Engagement Center facilitates meaningful intercultural engagement for students, faculty, staff and community members throughout the state. The Center builds relationships across traditional campus divides through its weekly Campus Dialogues, a Sustained Dialogue class and Better Together interfaith projects and dialogues. In all these contexts, participants are invited to share their perspectives on challenging social issues in a respectful, inclusive environment.

Additionally, Crossroads supports students, faculty and staff in developing intercultural competency skills through its Practicing Inclusive Engagement (P.I.E.) workshops. The P.I.E. interactive experiences focus on concepts of identity, inclusive language, implicit bias and creative ways to ask questions that invite and engage diverse perspectives.

Throughout the year, Crossroads also fosters campus-wide collaborative programming through its monthly Networking for Inclusive Campus Engagement breakfasts. Additionally, by coordinating a campus calendar for the cultural heritage months, Crossroads seeks to encourage appreciation of the rich cultural traditions on campus and in the local community.

Crossroads Bridges Differences Through Networking for Inclusive Campus Breakfasts

Over plates of golden-brown biscuits, grilled sausages and fresh fruit, approximately 35–40 UA faculty, staff and students gather on the first Wednesday of every month at Crossroads' Networking for Inclusive Campus Breakfast to collaborate, network and design innovative intercultural engagement programming. Divided into workgroups based on specific areas of interest, they focus on topics such as inclusive classroom teaching practices, student dialogue initiatives, support for trans students and ideas for celebrating cultural heritage months.

"Seeing the creative energy and mutually supportive environment at each breakfast has been an exciting part of our work these past two years," said Lane McLelland, director of

Crossroads. "We started the breakfasts in 2015 simply to get campus partners in the same room to explore how we could foster an inclusive campus climate. The ideas have flourished, but so has the sense of community. We have a diverse array of students, faculty and staff who regularly attend, and there are new people joining us every month."

→ Each Networking for Inclusive Campus Breakfast hosts up to

40

faculty, staff and students during the monthly meetings.

The relationships created foster a positive, collaborative environment. Each month, Crossroads invites new participation, new ideas and updates from campus partners about their efforts devoted to making UA more inclusive and welcoming.

UA's Better Together Promotes Campus Unity

Crossroads works to improve interfaith relations through its support of Better Together, a student organization that seeks to unite students of different faiths and philosophies by engaging them in community service and civic engagement. Instead of seeing personal beliefs as differences that divide, Crossroads' interfaith initiative draws on the work of the national organization Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) and its Better Together program to encourage students from different backgrounds to build a foundation for interfaith cooperation.

Since spring 2013, Crossroads has supported Better Together in hosting at least one service project and one dinner and dialogue event each semester. The 2016–2017 academic year's programming included the fall and spring Serve Better Together, Explore Better Together and Talk Better Together. In addition to community service and dialogue interfaith events, Crossroads also sponsors Play Better Together, an interfaith soccer team that participates in UA's intramural sports program.



Serve Better Together

Each fall and spring, Crossroads collaborates with UA's Center for Service & Leadership to engage more than 60 volunteers a semester in a day of community service and interfaith understanding. Students from the Crimson Secular Student Alliance, Bama Hillel, the Muslim Student Association and various Christian denominations work at Northport's Crestmont Elementary School to improve the learning environment.

After a morning of resurfacing the playground, scraping wax from hallway tiles and completing an assortment of other helpful projects, UA's interfaith volunteers return to campus for lunch and to dialogue about challenging issues.



Since 2013, Crossroads has

HOSTED 15

Better Together service and dialogue events.

Explore Better Together

Explore Better Together is an interfaith dinner and dialogue held each year during UA's Week of Welcome to introduce the campus community to the diversity of religious and non-religious beliefs represented on campus. This event is collaboratively sponsored by Crossroads, Better Together, the Crimson Secular Student Alliance and the various religious organizations represented in UA Interfaith, a consortium of campus ministries.

As in previous years, participants at the 2017 event were invited to take part in a "speed-faithing" activity that rotates participants from one "belief table" to the next, every seven minutes, until all had had an opportunity to ask questions and learn from the representatives at each table. Since 2014, Explore Better Together has provided an inspiring start to the academic year, building the foundation for increased interfaith cooperation.

Talk Better Together

In spring 2017, Better Together collaborated with Spectrum, UA's student organization supporting members of the LGBTQA+ community on campus, to host a dinner and dialogue about sexuality and religion. Guest speaker Dr. Tommie Watkins from Canterbury Chapel Episcopal Church & Student Center shared his own experiences as an openly gay priest.

"Participating in Better Together programs at UA provides members of our campus community the opportunity to foster new connections for increased interfaith understanding," said McLelland. "The strong relationships that are built through these dinners and dialogues and doing community service work together will be important for building bridges between groups on campus who might normally be divided by religious and philosophical differences."

Crossroads Launches P.I.E. Workshops

In addition to engaging differences over monthly breakfasts, Crossroads also served up "P.I.E." to more than 3,100 people at 98 workshops during 2017. The Practicing Inclusive Engagement (P.I.E.) workshops, developed and facilitated by Crossroads, provide a series of interactive experiences designed to increase cultural competency skills. Offered in 1-4 hour modules, the workshops are tailored to meet the specific goals, target audiences and limited time frames of a department or organization. Addressing concepts of social identity, intersectionality, inclusive language and implicit bias, the workshops introduce practices that foster a more inclusive culture, whether in the classroom or in any organizational context on campus or in the broader community.



In 2017, Crossroads conducted 98 P.I.E. Workshops for

3,102 PEOPLE.

A new program for Crossroads, P.I.E. was launched in fall 2016, and the workshops are provided on a by-request basis. In these workshops facilitators lead activities purposefully designed to allow participants to be in an environment in which they can experience, process and brainstorm application of the concepts to their campus or organizational contexts. P.I.E.'s reach extends far beyond UA's student population; in fact, Crossroads staff have facilitated P.I.E. workshops that focus on community problem solving and inclusive leadership for high school students, professionals and church members in Tuscaloosa and Birmingham.

In response to increasing demand, Crossroads established the P.I.E. Team, a group of students trained to assist the Crossroads staff in facilitating the workshops. The team meets weekly with

Paige Bolden, Crossroads' intercultural engagement coordinator, to learn and practice skills for effective leadership and workshop facilitation. Student intern and team facilitator Fiona Coupe, a family financial planning and counseling major, said the workshops provide both participants and facilitators an added awareness to consider perceived and identified differences.

"Through P.I.E., we teach the leadership of organizations and departments to create spaces that help others to be open to different ideas and to people that are not like them," said Coupe, a Buenos Aires, Argentina native and Miami, Fla. resident. "[P.I.E. activities] also address the power of our words and actions and help us realize how hurtful they can really be to others." Coupe described the "Intent vs. Impact" P.I.E. activity that helps participants and facilitators identify positive intentions and potential negative impacts of common statements made in everyday discussions.

Coupe emphasized that learning to ask "strong, inclusive questions," a key tenet of P.I.E. workshops, has changed how she approaches disagreements, both professionally and personally. For Coupe, P.I.E. has been an all-encompassing program that truly works to enhance the campus climate of the University and that of its surrounding community.

"It brings together so many useful skills," she explained. "You learn to engage your differences in meaningful ways, avoid getting caught up in an argument, and work at getting toward the root of the problem while you're in conversation."

Crossroads Serves as Home for SDI Campus Network

Crossroads is home to the UA chapter of the Sustained Dialogue Institute's (SDI) Campus Network, a growing international consortium of Sustained Dialogue (SD) programs at over 46 colleges and universities. SD's five-stage dialogue-to-action model helps participants understand perspectives of individuals they would not otherwise meet, build relationships across traditional lines of difference on campus and gain the communication skills necessary for increasingly diverse academic, social and work environments. Crossroads offers the SD experience via a credit-earning course in the Honors College and New College. Approximately 120 students enroll in the SD course each academic year, learning to understand

their peers and develop intercultural competencies that will prepare them for life in the global society in which they will live and work.

→ The Sustained Dialogue course has approximately

120 STUDENTS

enrolled each academic year.

The innovative UA course, a model for advancing the work of SD, was featured in a national online learning exchange hosted by SDI in December 2016. The UA chapter also gained recognition as former Crossroads graduate research assistant Bre Swims received the National Dialogue Award. McLelland won a similar distinction the previous year.

Beyond the campus community, Crossroads also provides expertise with community problem-solving by making its SD moderators available for local organizations addressing challenging social and cultural issues.

As a former undergraduate SD moderator now involved as a graduate assistant for the SD course, UA master's student Gevin Brown said the course prepares moderators to engage others in difficult topics, such as gender and race.

By offering students experience with the SD model, Crossroads hopes to improve the campus community while enhancing the lives of students during and following college.

"I think Sustained Dialogue continues to change our social climate in very small ways," Brown said. "But I also think as Crossroads grows and these efforts increase, we'll see people thinking differently and see some kind of cohesion from those conversations. It won't be overnight — long past when I am here — but those seeds are being sown right now by the work done at Crossroads."



COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS

DISCOVERY WALL



Support from The University of Alabama's Division of Community Affairs, by way of the Council on Community-Based Partnerships, has opened up a world of great opportunities and partnerships that would not otherwise exist. These partnerships, along with the nearly 2,000 student, faculty and staff volunteers the University provides each year, have allowed us to serve a far greater number of people and have added capacity and value to the work being done in the community.

Amanda Lightsey
Executive Director, Tuscaloosa's One Place

→ PTLA FILLS A VOID IN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES

Since 2007, the Center for Community-Based Partnerships (CCBP) has directed a program that develops participants' knowledge and abilities as leaders within their school communities. Now known as the Parent Teacher Leadership Academy (PTLA), the initiative has grown from only a parent academy to six complete academies; four in elementary and two in middle school. The academies include Elementary Parent, Pre-K Parent, Hispanic Parent, Elementary Teacher, Middle School Parent and Middle School Teacher. Each school team, comprised of members from multiple academies, completes a project that is aligned to at least one goal in their school's improvement plan.

Four school systems — Tuscaloosa City Schools, Tuscaloosa County Schools, Alabaster City Schools and Lamar County Schools — participated in the PTLA program during the 2016–2017 academic year. For the 2017–2018 academic year, the Academy has grown to include two additional school systems — Fayette and Sumter Counties. The program was created to promote working relationships between parents and teachers that benefit the students and the entire school community. Parents and teachers meet monthly throughout the school year. These meetings include two collaborative sessions designed to foster effective communication and collaboration.

"PTLA has shown us new ways to connect with our parents and our community," said 15-year veteran Buhl Elementary School teacher Emily Glasgow.

Along with parent Kim Pate, Glasgow created weekly Betsy Bulldog posts on the school's Facebook page, where parents submit questions and Pate, dressed as Betsy Bulldog, is videotaped with a school official providing the answers. The posts create a video archive that allows parents to view them anytime.

Pate said many parents have questions, but are reluctant to ask them. Facebook allows them access to two-way information. With more than 400 views each week, "parents, grandparents and people in the community are logging on," Glasgow said.

What participants learn from these forms of interaction includes supporting student academic achievement, developing skills and



techniques to use when working with others, and innovative ways to build and sustain strong family/school partnerships. These contacts thus create a cadre of leaders — all with the goal of increasing parent/family/teacher engagement.

Dr. Holly Morgan, CCBP director of Community Education, said the goal is to create a school, family and community partnership in which each team is working on a project tied to the same goal. But the process does not follow a one-and-done model: PTLA creates an ever-evolving template. "With PTLA," said Morgan, "we have the freedom to assess a need, review current research, and evaluate current practice in order to design effective school/family/community partnerships."

With 16 years of combined educational experience in teaching and administrative roles, Morgan believes "PTLA fills a void that our schools desperately need. It's a structured vehicle for parents and teachers to come together to build community while improving schools."

→ Since its inception, the Academy has grown from 20 participants in two school districts to

206 PARTICIPANTS

from six school districts in 2017.

→ STEM ENTREPRENEURSHIP ACADEMY HELPS PREPARE STUDENTS FOR THE FUTURE

A University of Alabama summer enrichment program spearheaded by the Center for Community-Based Partnerships (CCBP) helps Alabama high school students see themselves as future high-tech professionals with a taste for entrepreneurship. The STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) Entrepreneurship Academy puts West Alabama youngsters on a path toward becoming STEM professionals.

In just five days, campers explore career interests, learn about college life, and answer an “entrepreneurship challenge” by designing a product or service to be used by their school or community, according to Dr. Holly Morgan, CCBP director of Community Education.

A secondary mission is to expose students to University resources and college life experiences. “Students this year enjoyed the hands-on activities at The Gateway and a mini career fair,” Morgan said. The Gateway is a digital innovation and discovery center in downtown Tuscaloosa, operated by the city. The career fair helped students visualize how to turn their hard-earned knowledge into money-making careers.

Camp faculty and other experts are recruited from such fields of study and departments as engineering, biological sciences, math, computer science, the Career Center, the UA Entrepreneurship Institute, education and psychology. For the first time this year, most of the participating schools’ teachers attended STEM Entrepreneurship Academy workshops to help them refresh and expand their STEM skills.

The camp, in its third year in 2017, expanded to include students from 11 schools from throughout rural, West Alabama counties and the Black Belt region. The goal is to offer a fun but challenging hands-on approach to help students understand STEM as fields of study but also to think creatively about fulfilling consumer needs with their STEM knowledge.

The Academy not only helps students with their problem-solving skills, it also helps them learn ways to serve their communities in order to implement projects brainstormed at the camp. The closing ceremony, on July 21, was attended by 110 youngsters, their families and friends.



→ CHANGING LIVES WITH COMPUTER SCIENCE AND ROBOTICS

When Sarah Oswald was in high school, she knew she wanted to be a computer scientist. When her brother, a student at UA, told her about a summer camp for high school students focused on the field, she instantly wanted to attend.

“The camp was two weeks and strictly focused on java programming, application development and robotics,” said Oswald, who was one of hundreds of students to attend and who is now a rising sophomore at UA.

Dr. Jeff Gray, who has been awarded nearly \$11 million in grants since 2003 for his research, enjoys bringing students from all over to UA's campus and introducing them to the diverse learning environment. Since 2004, he has hosted the Alabama Summer Computer Camp for high school students and an annual Robotics Competition for K–12 students.

Additionally, he has initiated various K–12 outreach events and competitions, and has visited several dozen K–12 schools each year with two PhD and six undergraduate students. The personal interaction creates relationships that can be built upon as the students’ knowledge of the field expands.

Not only do Gray’s programs help students who already know they want to pursue computer science as a career, they also open up the possibilities to at-risk students.

“The competition shows how robotics as an academic activity can bring a group of students together and help them realize their potential,” Gray said.

For example, Gray and his students began working with students at Oak Hill School in Tuscaloosa.

“We walked into Oak Hill and there were gang fights,” Gray said. “By the time the competition was held, they took third place in the state contest.” Gray and his students accomplished the same thing at Birmingham’s Carver High School, with a population that is 95 percent African American.

After getting students excited about the program and seeing how teachers reacted to the tools he and his students shared with their students, Gray decided to create a new component to train teachers in computer science in an effort to increase the number of advanced placement courses offered in high schools throughout the U.S.

“We’re taking math teachers and turning them into computer science teachers,” Gray said. “We now have 79 high schools offering the course, teaching 1,800 students with 49 percent of those enrolled identifying as female.”

Aided by a grant from the National Science Foundation, Gray is spearheading a project with Tuskegee University. In fall 2017, they worked with 27 high schools located in Alabama’s Black Belt region.

Gray is a past recipient of the Council on Community-Based Partnerships’ Outstanding Faculty/Staff-Initiated Engagement Effort Award.



→ NEW FACULTY TOUR HIGHLIGHTS UNIVERSITY/COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS

The University of Alabama's Division of Community Affairs conducted its first New Faculty Community Engagement Tour of West Alabama counties May 10–12, 2017. The tour, "Exploring New Places, Meeting New People and Engaging New Communities," was aptly titled, as before the trip most participants had only limited exposure to an area so important to the state's history. The tour was created to help researchers connect with community partners through research partnerships that help fulfill the University's mission.

"It is our hope that the knowledge gained by participation in these tours will assist both faculty and community partners in identifying community needs that overlap with research interests and coursework, as well as facilitate innovative partnerships that connect community learning opportunities with University partners who can both contribute to, and grow from, the experience of authentic and innovative community engagement," said Kevin Whitaker, provost and executive vice president for academic affairs, prior to the tour.

Early each morning, a diverse group of UA faculty, staff and students boarded a charter bus in preparation for the day's travels. Each day found them visiting various stops in multiple counties in West Alabama.

The first day included stops in Greene, Hale and Tuscaloosa Counties, where panelists expressed their pride in and demonstrated their knowledge of their communities and institutions. From the Greene County Hospital to The Safe House Museum, participants learned about the area's history, as well as about ongoing initiatives involving the University and a variety of community partners.

Dr. James Gilbreath, a UA reference and instructional librarian, spoke for many when he said that although he has lived in Alabama his entire life, the tour of landmark civil rights sites and the opportunity to observe so many effective examples of community-engaged scholarship in action constituted an unforgettable experience.

On day two the tour visited the Pickens County Medical Center and Pickens County Courthouse; Hill Hospital and Coleman

Center for the Arts and Culture in Sumter County; and Judson College and Marion Military Institute in Perry County.

At the Pickens County Medical Center, the UA group attended a panel discussion made up of county representatives, who described some of the key engagement projects being implemented in the area and the possible partnerships they hope to attract.

Jim Marshall, CEO of Pickens County Medical Center, described cooperative efforts to increase the volume of business of the hospital. According to Marshall, communication and education are very important to rural hospitals. He hopes future partnerships with UA will focus on beneficial information dissemination and follow-ups.

In Sumter County, the group visited Coleman Center for the Arts and Culture, a local museum and art education center for grassroots artists. The group also attended a panel discussion at Hill Hospital, where administrator Loretta Wilson stressed the need to maintain partnerships with different organizations to deliver medical services to the community. Networking with organizations like UA helps these goals.

The third stop was Perry County. The group made a brief visit to Judson College's Jewett Hall. At their last stop, Marion Military Institute, Col. David J. Mollahan, president, outlined the college's history. Chris Joiner, executive director of Renaissance Marion, a local community non-profit, and Davis Jackson, coordinator of 57 Miles, a student/faculty engagement program named for the distance between UA and Marion, expressed their desire to continue the establishment of sustainable partnerships with UA to fulfill the promise of Marion's tomorrow.

After each discussion, UA faculty members described their research interests and discussed the possibility of future collaboration. Division of Community Affairs and Center for Community-Based Partnerships (CCBP) staff members also explained some of UA's ongoing initiatives and programs.

After the second day of the tour, participants expressed their appreciation. "What I liked most was how varied the different visits were ... we can really see the scope of potential involvement for UA," said Dr. Susan Carvalho, UA Graduate School dean.



Katherine S. Eastman, a UA clinical and technical services librarian originally from California, said, “I have written down probably 500 different ideas. I’m definitely going to pursue more projects.”

The third and final day included stops in Wilcox, Marengo and Dallas Counties. The day began at the Thomasville Civic Center, followed by a stop at the Golden Dragon Plant.

“I haven’t seen enough of Alabama since I’ve been here and I wanted to understand how student projects are sustainable and what kind of projects can create continuity between the University and the community,” said Carvalho, who came to UA in July 2016. “I’ve been impressed with the innovation within each of the communities as they work with the assets they have, and I’ve learned more about the resources UA can bring to bear.”

After lunch, the group arrived in the Gee’s Bend community, where they met quilter Mary Ann Pettway, manager of the quilting cooperative, who told them how the quilters began their craft out of necessity, then sang a religious hymn for the group. Pettway now travels throughout the country telling the story of the Gee’s Bend Quilters.

The final panel discussion of the day took place in Selma and was led by then CCBP Community Development Director Chris

Spencer, joined by representatives from the non-profit, religious and business communities. The group discussed ideas for a reimaged and inclusive Selma with a thriving arts district.

The tour would not have been complete without walking across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in the footsteps of 600 marchers led by now U.S. Rep. John Lewis on Bloody Sunday, March 7, 1965. Felecia Lucky, president of the Black Belt Community Foundation, said, “To this day, when I see the Edmund Pettus Bridge I am often moved and in awe of what took place here and the impact that it had not only on this city, but on the world.”

“This tour showed us some amazing things that are happening right in our own backyard,” said Dr. Samory T. Pruitt, vice president for Community Affairs. “It’s the first time the University has done something like this. We saw firsthand how our core mission of teaching, research and service is having a positive impact on communities in Alabama and beyond. It was especially helpful for some of our new faculty to get out and meet some of the people we are working with and have conversations that will strengthen current partnerships, lead to the development of others, and further spur the momentum of engagement scholarship at the University.”

→ PROJECT SOAR LIFTS UA/BBCF PARTNERSHIP TO NEW HEIGHTS

Since 2004, the Selma-based Black Belt Community Foundation (BBCF) has established partnerships with institutions in 12 of the traditional Black Belt counties in Alabama. Its mission is to forge a collective stream of giving from the community and other sources so that the people of the Black Belt can lift themselves by “taking what we have to make what we need.”

The BBCF addresses community needs by funding grants in areas of arts and culture, education, health and wellness and community economic development. Since its inception, the BBCF has funded approximately \$3.8 million in small grants to local non-profit organizations and groups across its service area, which consists of Bullock, Choctaw, Dallas, Greene, Hale, Lowndes, Macon, Marengo, Perry, Pickens, Sumter and Wilcox Counties. The vision of the BBCF is of a transformed Black Belt where all people live and work in healthy, prosperous, inclusive, educated, creative and giving communities.

→ In 2017, the BBCF was awarded over
\$1.4 MILLION
to oversee Head Start programs
in four Black Belt region counties.

On June 23, 2017, BBCF, a 501(c)3 entity, was awarded over \$1.4 million by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to oversee Head Start programs in Dallas, Choctaw, Marengo and Wilcox Counties, phase one of a \$2.8 million grant. BBCF and UA’s Center for Community-Based Partnerships (CCBP) have joined forces to apply for \$8,000,000 in grants over the past 12 months. Half a dozen research proposals resulting from UA/BBCF collaborations are still under active review with more expected in 2018, according to BBCF President Felecia L. Lucky.

For 10 years, the Division of Community Affairs, its Center for Community-Based Partnerships and BBCF have shared personnel and resources. Currently, CCBP Director of Resource

Development Chris Spencer spends numerous hours each month at the BBCF as a loaned executive. He is responsible for grassroots leadership development and assisting with fundraising efforts. President Lucky is an active member of UA’s Council on Community-Based Partnerships and is a past recipient of the prestigious Distinguished Community-Engaged Scholar award as a community partner.

A key component in the collaboration between the CCBP and the BBCF is connecting professors and staff from the University to people in the community to fulfill the University’s mission of teaching, research and service.

The \$250,000 Project SOAR (Sharing Opinions and Advice about Research) engages UA with Sumter County residents and the Holt Community. SOAR members are from both CCBP and BBCF, and work closely with citizen community leaders to convey information and provide feedback between UA and the community.

“It is important that our researchers understand the culture and the language of the people where the research is being conducted,” said Spencer, who drives more than 150 miles some days to support the efforts of the BBCF, and who describes his work as both challenging and rewarding. Project SOAR gathers community experts to provide tools to the faculty, staff and student researchers, helping them become better communicators with the community and vice versa.

There are 120 community associates who give their time, talents and treasures to support the philanthropic efforts of the BBCF. These volunteers serve as the eyes and ears of the foundation, and Lucky considers them its heart and soul.

The CCBP partners with the BBCF to provide space and formal training to community associates and assist in equipping them with skills in such areas as evaluation and assessment, public relations, social media, grant writing, etc. It is the belief of the leadership team that when we strengthen an individual we are strengthening the community.

→ 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.

DIVISION OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

communityaffairs@ua.edu

CENTER FOR COMMUNITY-BASED PARTNERSHIPS

James E. McLean, PhD | *Executive Director*
jmclean@ua.edu

CROSSROADS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CENTER

Lane McLelland, MDiv, MA | *Director*
crossroads@ua.edu

CAROL AGOMO, MPH, MBA

Director of Community and Administrative Affairs
cnagomo@ua.edu

BEVERLY HAWK, PHD

Director of Global and Community Engagement
beverly.hawk@ua.edu

HOLLY G. MORGAN, PHD

Director of Community Education
hgmorgan@ua.edu

EDWARD MULLINS, PHD

Director of Research and Communication
emullins@ua.edu

NICOLE PREWITT, PHD

Director of Programs and Partnerships for Community Engagement
nbprewitt@ua.edu

CHRISTOPHER SPENCER, MSCE

Director of Resource Development
chspencer01@ua.edu

CREDITS

EDITORS

Diane Kennedy-Jackson
Dr. Edward Mullins

DESIGNER

Karyn Bowen

WRITERS

Taylor Armer
Kirsten Barnes
Krystal Dozier
Diane Kennedy-Jackson
Joon Yea Lee
Yiben Liu
Lane McLelland
Dr. Edward Mullins

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Karyn Bowen
Yiben Liu
Andrea Mabry
Jianlong Yang
Fuyan Zhang

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.



Like and follow us on Facebook at

UACommunityAffairs

UA.CCBP

uacrossroads

UAPTLA

SavingLivesPhysicallyAndSpiritually

THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA[®] | *Division of*
Community Affairs