

## Department Chair Orientation

The Office of the VPAA and Provost sponsored an Orientation for Department Chairs on October 29, 2015. Attended by department chairs from across the four academic colleges, the Orientation covered a range of topics such as tenure and promotion, curriculum planning, working with the Registrar's Office, and budgeting. While deans offered their perspectives on hiring, mentoring, and evaluation of faculty and staff, Provost Dr. John Thornell spoke on the changing role of the department chair in advancing the academic quality and mission of UNA. The Orientation also provided department chairs the opportunity to interact and network with their colleagues.

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## Sustainability Conference

The Department of Physics and Earth Science hosted the 2nd UNA Sustainability Conference on October 15, 2015. The conference highlighted presentations and panel discussions on a variety of topics including sustainable farming, protecting small farmers, the coffee industry in Jamaica, passive solar housing, and revitalizing poor communities in the US and globally. Featured speakers included, among others, UNA faculty, Dr. Mario Mighty, Assistant Professor of Geography; and Mr. Dhruvil Patel, Assistant Professor of Interior Design; Ms. Shavaun Evans of the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, Washington D.C.; Ms. Pam Dorr, Hale Empowerment & Revitalization Effort, Greensboro, Alabama; and Dr. Deborah Hellums, Acting Director of the International Fertilizer Development Center, Muscle Shoals, Alabama. Congratulations to the department for highlighting diverse perspectives in promoting sustainability practices on campus and beyond.

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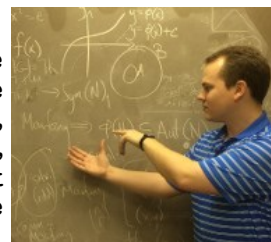


## Faculty and Student Achievements

Ms. Leigh Thompson, Associate Professor, Librarian, and Dr. Lisa Ann Blankinship, Associate Professor of Biology, recently published an article entitled "Teaching Information Literacy Skills to Sophomore Level Biology Majors" in the [Journal of Microbiology and Biology Education](#). The article focused on training biology students to utilize library resources such as an embedded librarian, conducting library database and web searches, determining source credibility, and distinguishing between primary and secondary sources. The article is the product of an ongoing teaching collaboration for BI 200W, Biological Literature.

Mr. Matthew Little, Director, First-Year Experience, and Dr. Amy Crews, Associate Professor of Biology and Director of University Advising, presented a paper on "Rebuilding from the Ground Up" at the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual National Symposium on Student Retention in Orlando, Florida, held on November 2 - 4, 2015. All papers presented at the symposium undergo an eight month multiple stage review process and will be published in the conference proceedings.

Dr. Lee Raney, Assistant Professor of Mathematics, was invited to speak at the Special Session on "Recent Advances in Finite Groups and Their Representations" at the AMS Western Sectional Meeting at California State University, Fullerton, October 24 - 25, 2015. Dr. Raney's 20-minute invited talk, *Semidirect Products of Groups with Loops*, included his recent, original results (in partnership with Dr. Mark Greer, also Assistant Professor of Mathematics at UNA) on the loop structure of the generalized notion of the semidirect product of a Moufang loop with a cyclic group.



On October 2-3, 2015, students in the College of Nursing (CON) attended the Alabama State Nurses Association (ASNA) convention at Perdido Beach Resort in Orange Beach, Alabama. In attendance were Project OPEN nursing students Candace Sanders and Tamilyua Whorton, President ASNA, graduate student Brian Buchman, and ASNA President Elect Rebecca Huie. At the convention, Ms. Sanders was elected State Secretary of the Alabama State Student Nurses Organization.

## New Faculty



Mrs. Madonna Choat, Clinical Instructor in the Department of Elementary Education, lives in Muscle Shoals, Alabama and began her teaching career at Threadgill Primary School in Sheffield and for the past 19 years, has taught at Webster Elementary School in Muscle Shoals. She received her bachelor's degree in early childhood education (1996) and her master's degree in elementary education (2002) from the University of North Alabama. She received her Ed.S. in elementary education from Samford University in 2009. A National Board Certified (NCTM) teacher, she promotes National Board Certification across North Alabama by serving as co-presenter of a mentoring program through UNA's In-service Center. Mrs. Choat has presented and co-presented at many local, state, and national conferences including three NCTM events.

**We invite your articles to be included in this newsletter. It's your time to ROAR!**