

A Word From Our Dean

Insights and Observations by Dr. Carmen Burkhalter, Dean



Dear readers,

As you know, one of the cornerstones of the College of Arts and Sciences is experiential learning. We believe students need hands-on experience. We also believe they need to travel. Positive academic travel can take students to international places such as Tanzania, Costa Rica, Italy, Germany, or England. However, the domestic trips are just as important. For example, the education students receive at professional conferences are essential to future success. Consider also the value of the education Geography students receive in Wyoming, or theater students in New York, or Entertainment Industry students in Nashville. All of these experiences are priceless. If we believe, which we do, that our students are recognized and valued because they learn that collaboration as a required competency for the 21st century, then these travel experiences are necessary.

Earlier this year, when I first discussed encouraging students to travel and get out of their comfort zone, I had an alumnus send me a wonderful response. With his permission, I am adding it to this month's newsletter because his enthusiasm is infectious and we need to continue to talk about the experiential needs of our students.

“When I left the Shoals in 1976, right after graduation, I took a job in Houston that led me to travel to all 50 states and overseas. Therefore, I can relate to being apprehensive about new places, since Houston is so huge. But so are Los Angeles, New York City and Chicago and everything in between when you drive it. Then there was Buenos Aires, Santiago, Lagos (soon to be the biggest city in the world); plus, Seattle, Honolulu, Montevideo, Paris, Frankfurt, Amsterdam, Madrid, Rio de Janeiro . . . and many others. I could go on for a long time about Great Falls, Montana, but that is another story. There are many other stories. You would like Ketchikan, Alaska.

I've met many people along the way who had never been but a few miles from their birthplace in all their lives. One old guy in NYC sticks in my mind as he told me he had lived in Manhattan all his life and had been to New Jersey but once. I consider myself very fortunate to have been able to see all these places and more are on the way. So, I would encourage people to get out of their comfort zone and go see the world. “

John S. Halbert, Katy TX (Website: johnshalbert.com)

UNA 1976

If any other alumni or students have passions they want to share with me, please send them to cburkhalter@una.edu. I love hearing how UNA changes lives.

Thank you, all, for the support over the past year and I hope you have a wonderful Holiday Season.

Student Spotlight



Madeleine Frankford

By Savannah Johnson

Madeleine Frankford is from Athens, Alabama, and graduated from The University of North Alabama in May 2014 with a Bachelor's degree in Sociology with a concentration in Gerontology, a minor in Family Studies and Certified Family Life Educator certificate.

She worked for the Shoals community in several different capacities—as the Assistant to the Executive Director at the non-profit organization Shoals Scholar Dollars, Children's Director at the Broadway campus of Highland Baptist Church, and HR Assistant in the Office of Human Resources and Affirmative Action at UNA. During her time as an HR Assistant, she applied to the Master of Science in Family Studies program and began taking classes.

Frankford said, "I knew the first semester of my freshman year that I had found my academic home in the Department of Sociology and Family Studies at UNA. From my very first course in the department and throughout my academic journey, I have felt challenged and inspired to learn about our world and my place in it."

As an undergraduate pursuing her CFLE, Frankford completed an internship with the Community Action Agency of Northwest Alabama where she taught parent education courses to court-ordered mothers. Now she is pursuing her Master of Science in Family Studies and as the Title IX Graduate

Assistant Coordinator, she has the opportunity to facilitate Title IX and Bystander Intervention trainings in First Year Experience (FYE) courses and other venues on campus.

Frankford is a singer/songwriter, so in her spare time she enjoys honing her guitar and piano skills. She loves being active with friends and fuels her love of learning about other cultures by traveling abroad.

After she completes her degree, she hopes to travel to Gaborone, Botswana to facilitate music leadership workshops in churches, orphanages, and the surrounding villages. She would also like to continue to utilize her passion for education by teaching others.

Faculty Spotlight



Dr. Cameron Gren

By Kayla Braidfoot

Dr. Cameron Gren, from Franklin, Tennessee, is a professor in the Chemistry department. He received his Bachelor's degree in Chemistry from Middle Tennessee State University and his Doctorate of the same from Vanderbilt University.

Dr. Gren came to UNA after meeting some UNA faculty at an event while he was still in graduate school. He was invited to see the campus, and offered a six-month position in the Chemistry department. He applied and was granted a tenure-track position the next year. "I have loved my

time at UNA. It has gone from a school I had never heard of (even though I grew up only about 120 miles away) into a place I couldn't imagine being away from. **UNA has a small school atmosphere** with big school amenities, and the people associated with the university truly support each other, from students to faculty and staff, to administration, to alumni, even to the greater community as a whole. It is a wonderful place to make a career."

He is currently the faculty sponsor for the Student Chapter of the American Chemical Society, SCACS, an RSO made up of primarily chemistry students. When asked what piece of advice he would want to leave with those students, he said, "Enjoy your time in college. For many students, it is truly their first taste of independence. At the same time, however, this is your training for the rest of your life, not just your scholastic education but also how you interact with the people and the world around you. Don't waste it!"

Alumni Spotlight



Becca Stackhouse

Becca Stackhouse graduated in 2014 with a Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies and in Spring 2016, she graduated with her Master of Science in Family Studies.

She worked as the Day Camp Director at YMCA Camp Chandler in Wetumpka, Alabama, and received a position with the University of Georgia as a Family and Consumer Science (FACS) Extension Agent.

Stackhouse said, "I became a third generation Rotarian, writing a biweekly column in the local newspaper, appearing on the noonday show on the local television, and meeting key leaders in the community. The County Commissioners have signed two proclamations for FACS in Crisp County: March as Living Well Month, and May as Older Americans Month."

UNA helped prepare her in being orderly and meeting deadlines with completed projects. Through her internships UNA, she learned how to be creative in the programming that is created to be delivered to the public.

She said, "UNA helped prepare me with my Certification to Family Life Education (CFLE) that I am going to be able to use by teaching Parenting Classes in the community. The CLFE encompasses my whole job. I never dreamed that the five years spent at UNA would prepare me in so many ways — both personally to professionally. I also developed skills of becoming friends with perfect strangers who soon would become lifelong friends."

Five years from now she would love to be in Extension still working as an Agent in the field.

Becca said, "Students who are within the Interdisciplinary Studies Department are fortunate with a great Director, Dr. Craig Robertson. He cares about students, their course of study and influences the ability to be your best."



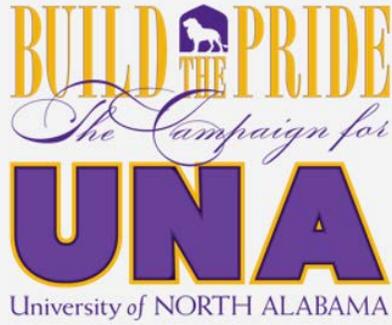
Alumni Updates

What have you been up to? Let us know. Click the link above and fill in the form with your up-to-date information.

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