January brought a record breaking 1,761 students to the College of Business, up over 15% from last year’s spring semester enrollment.

As seen on the back cover of the February 20 issue of Bloomberg Businessweek

Join us for Biz Buzz, Friday March 17 at 11:30 a.m. at the Florence Lauderdale Public Library. John Cartwright from Rivertown Coffee will share his story.

COB WINS UEDA AWARD FOR INNOVATION AND TALENT

The University of North Alabama College of Business keeps racking up the accolades, with the most recent being a University Economic Development Association (UEDA) 2016 Award of Excellence for Innovation and Talent. The Chair of the Department of Economics and Finance at UNA, Dr. Doug Barrett, said the award speaks to the magnitude of the collaborative innovation and economic development efforts taking place in the Shoals.

UNA’s Shoals Shift, developed in the College of Business, beat out a record number of applicants for the top spot at the UEDA’s Annual Summit, which took place Oct. 16-19, in Roanoke, Virginia. Award recipients were selected by a panel of peers consisting of university and economic development professionals.

The UEDA awards are designed to help accelerate these programs by recognizing cutting edge initiatives, and to promote their adoption by other universities and communities. Program categories include: Innovation, Talent, and Place, as well as the intersections of these three categories.

The UNA College of Business hosted a group of 6 students and 2 professors on a study abroad trip from the International Business Academy in Kolding, Denmark. They visited for 10 days to study with College of Business professors and students, tour companies, attend Shoals Innovation Week events, and participate in Smart Start Weekend. This group comes from 6 different countries, and for most this is their first trip to the United States.
THE DANIEL FOUNDATION FELLOWSHIPS ANNOUNCED

The College of Business received grant funding from the Daniel Foundation of Alabama to support the creation of student fellowships for 2017. The $25,000 award will establish ten fellowships at $2,500 each that are available to UNA students who plan to become future business leaders in the state.

The Fellowship project is led by Doug Barrett, Ph.D, the Executive Director of UNA’s Institute for Innovation and Economic Development. He oversees all aspects of the project and directs the student selection process. Mitch Hamm, Director of Innovation and Entrepreneurship for UNA’s College of Business, leads an orientation for Fellowship applicants and provides counsel and encouragement to Fellows once selected.

“This is a great way to identify future business leaders and match them with appropriate organizations to create a win/win partnership for our area,” states Barrett. “By supporting the diversification and vitality of business activity in our area we are developing a new generation of entrepreneurial leaders. That is the overall goal of this project.”

The candidates for Daniel Fellowship will submit applications that will then be reviewed by the leadership of the College of Business in consultation with local business leaders who participate on the College’s Executive Advisory Board. All UNA students are eligible, with rising seniors and entrepreneurial students having priority. Many Fellowship projects are expected to occur during the senior year of each Fellow’s undergraduate experience.

To apply for a fellowship, or if you are an interested business contact Doug Barrett at jdbarrett@una.edu or call 256-765-4418.

UNA and NASA PARTNER ON COLLABORATIVE PROGRAM

UNA and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) have agreed to a partnership, with students reaping the benefits. As part of this endeavor, UNA hosted a NASA day on campus, Feb. 7. Information about the program was provided, and NASA officials were on hand to speak with various classes across campus. The day will culminated with the official signing of the agreement between the two entities.

The partnership with NASA will initially include the College of Business and the College of Arts and Sciences, and will focus on attracting high-quality undergraduate students majoring in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, management, marketing and entrepreneurship disciplines.

“The program is an innovative approach to engage students early on as undergraduates and employ nontraditional classroom methods to allow top students to engage in experiential learning,” said Dr. Santanu Borah, UNA professor of Management. “The purpose of the path is to provide high-achieving students with the business knowledge needed to successfully manage high-tech businesses,” he said.

Students had the opportunity to gain entrepreneurial experience focused on how to conduct market analysis and commercialization methods on NASA patents. Under the collaboration, NASA will make selected patents available for UNA students enrolled in this program to conduct market analysis and prepare both a classroom presentation and a written report. NASA, on the other hand, will benefit from the identification of new markets and commercial partners.
Shoals Innovation Week wrapped up on February 26 after hosting eight events at various locations throughout the metro-Shoals area. The week was sponsored by Shoals Shift under the auspices of the University of North Alabama College of Business, The Shoals Entrepreneurial Center, and the Shoals Chamber of Commerce, and the Florence Lauderdale Public Library.

We are happy to say that Shoals Innovation Week was successful in its mission to highlight some of the innovative practices going on with a growing number of entrepreneurs based in the local area. It also allowed start-up businesses the chance to network and ask questions of successful leaders in their fields.

I was very pleased to see how many student projects were presented and how well our students and alumni performed. The events were very well-thought-out and offered our students the opportunity to collaborate with local business leaders and entrepreneurs. Those local business had the chance to see what others were doing to push their businesses forward using innovative practices.

The week, partially sponsored by the Appalachian Regional Commission, was kicked off with a Chamber of Commerce breakfast at the Shoals Entrepreneurial Center on Tuesday, followed by the Shoals Alabama Launchpad Finale at Gas Studios in Tuscumbia later that day. An Innovation Panel Discussion on Wednesday allowed local leaders a chance to discuss innovative practices with representatives from the Appalachian Regional Commission, and later that evening the NextGen group from the Chamber held their Shoals Shift Future Awards at FloBama in downtown Florence. This awards event recognized and rewarded start-up companies in the Shoals area.

Thursday afternoon a group from the UNA Video Gaming Association offered free gaming demonstration at the Florence Lauderdale Public Library followed by a Chamber Business Afterhours function. Friday offered a Biz Buzz meetup at the Library where founders of Single Lock Records explained the intricacies of starting a successful record label from the beginning.

Smart Start Weekend was the culmination of the week offering UNA students a chance to participate in a three-day event to exchange business start-up ideas. This year’s weekend used a new format based on the very successful Innovation Engineering toolset. Students left with a clear path toward building a company and were able to present their ideas to a panel of local investors.

This was a great week for the College of Business and I was very proud that we were a part of such a successful series of events. I look forward to supporting these types of ventures in the future and doing our part to encourage the next generation of entrepreneurs.
BUSINESS STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: NATHAN MARTIN ‘17

Nathan Martin ’17 is fishing for business; literally. The Business Management major spends the majority of his free time on rivers and lakes as the President of the UNA Bass Fishing Team. “About the only thing I do is fish for our university in my spare time,” states Martin. “We have tournaments nearly every weekend, but I wouldn't have it any other way.”

As an Innovation Engineering minor, Martin stays busy crafting his future. He has developed Python Mounts, a fishing mount that is in production and simultaneously manages a lawn care business. He remarks, “It is very difficult to juggle these, but it has taught me a lot about how to manage people and handling a busy schedule.”

Martin attributes the success of his businesses to what he has learned while an undergraduate. His management and innovation coursework has prepared him to think like an entrepreneur early on in his career. “What I have learned has taught me how to make a system for everything and it has helped me be more successful at everything in life and not just in school.”

Upon graduation Martin hopes to take his fishing skills, gain some sponsorships, and tap into the professional fishing industry. In the meantime he will continue to promote his fishing mount business.

Martin continues, “The professor that has had the biggest impact on my college career has been Mitch Hamm. He has spent countless hours with me and my business venture and I cannot thank him enough.”

SO WHAT’S THE BIG IDEA? 2017 WINNERS ANNOUNCED

What’s the Big Idea? Well, it was a chance for 9 participants to present new ideas in technology to a panel of experts and win a portion of prize money up to $3,000. The event identified those in our area who are on the path to leadership in technology.

Listerhill Credit Union, The University of North Alabama, Shoals Chamber of Commerce, the City of Florence, and PartyPros USA hosted the Shoals Big Idea event on March 9 in the Performance Center of the Guillot University Center. The event was partially sponsored by the Appalachian Regional Commission.

Over 40 participants from three categories – community, collegiate, and K-12 - submitted their ideas of which nine presented on the evening of the event. Each category was awarded a first, second, and third place with monetary awards of up to $3,000 provided by Listerhill Credit Union. In addition, three UNA scholarships were up for grabs for graduating high school seniors who participate.

“This was a wonderful evening that celebrated the innovative thinkers we have in the Shoals,” said Anne Ryan Cavin who organized the event. “From middle school students to retirees, we have heard some great ideas. I am glad to be a part of a way for them to bring them to the surface and hopefully have them become reality.”

Dr. Deborah Barnhart, CEO of the US Space and Rocket Center, was the keynote speaker. Prior to the event, Barnhart spent the day visiting local schools, the Chamber of Commerce, and met with UNA administration.