

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA

College of BUSINESS



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ANNUAL
REPORT
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College of BUSINESS

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

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A LETTER FROM THE DEAN

2020. This year brings to mind thoughts of clarity, a vision, the future of things to come. It has brought new challenges as we adjust to the COVID-19 crisis. During the last three months, our faculty, staff, and students have shown that they are well-prepared to successfully adapt to change. We see opportunities where others may see barriers, and we will continue to serve our students exceptionally well.

For me and others in the College of Business on the University of North Alabama campus, it's also the start of our second strategic plan during the time period we have been accredited by AACSB, the top accreditor of business schools worldwide. It's among the reasons you hold this publication in your hand. As part of our commitment to our faculty, staff, students, alumni, and friends, we continue to hold ourselves accountable for the work we've done to grow the College as well as the strategy we have planned for the five years to come.

Within these pages, you'll learn about the innovative programs and events that we've created and continue to curate. We're proud to sponsor Shoals Shift and its events, including Shoals Spark and the Smart Start, Idea Audition, and Lift-off Shoals. Each presents an opportunity for students and local entrepreneurs to find a pathway forward





for their big idea to take hold and grow. We have also started a new Agile Strategy Lab that will spur economic development in our region.

Speaking of growth, enrollment in all of our programs is growing, particularly in our Masters of Business Administration, which is now the largest MBA program in Alabama. Total enrollment in the COB is approximately 2,500 students, more than 31 percent of UNA's headcount. We have also launched a new B.S. in Information Technology to complement our other technology degrees. Such programmatic success is paving the way for our big news, the launch of our Executive Doctor of Business Administration. Once SACSCOC (our regional accreditor) provides our final approval in June, we'll welcome our first cohort in the spring of 2021.

To accommodate this growth, we have added new outstanding faculty members in every discipline and now have more than 50 full-time faculty in the COB. Each brings subject matter expertise as well as the innovative spirit that's a critical component to our ongoing success. Ensuring a strong faculty allows us to maintain the quality that's come to be synonymous with the College of Business at UNA.

At the heart of our work is our students. We are

creating many experiential learning opportunities for our students to prepare them to add value to their employers from day one on the job. Many of them are able to attend UNA on scholarships, and we depend on our donors to help us continue to fund this worthy cause. We're committed to making sure the degree they graduate with is one that has value now and well into the future. It's why

we're proud to be AACSB accredited, and it's why we are focused on being innovative and thoughtful in all that we do.

I hope you can visit campus soon and see our renovated classrooms in Keller Hall and the Raburn Wing. And see our new Cybersecurity, User Experience, and Linux Labs.

I encourage you to read through these pages and learn how the College of Business is preparing for the next five years to come and that you celebrate, along with us, all of the successes we've had thus far. If we can assist you or your business during the COVID-19 crisis, please reach out to me.

Roar Lions!

Dr. Gregory Carnes
Dean, College of Business
Raburn Eminent Scholar of Accounting



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A SPARK of MAGIC

WHEN THE COMMUNITY COLLABORATES, EVERYONE WINS

By Michelle Rupe Eubanks '96
For the College of Business



Dr. Doug Barrett remembers the moment exactly.

He remembers thinking that this Idea Audition that he was witnessing just a few years ago was the start of something very big for the College of Business as well as the greater Shoals community.

"I'm standing there and watching these events unfold and thinking that this is the single most electric

event I've been part of here," he said. "I know, that, as a state-funded, public institution, we're going to have to find new ways to survive, and this Idea Audition was going to be part of that survival and, maybe more important, our growth."

Since the launch of the Idea Audition, Barrett, who is the Director of the Institute for Innovation and Economic

Development at UNA, as well as Department Chair of Economics and Finance, said several other, similar events have been introduced.

"Shoals Spark, the Smart Start weekend, so many things we're doing call attention to the entrepreneurial spirit in this community and how it's fostered on this campus," he said. "As a regional university, we had nothing

previously that really set us apart, and now we do."

Shoals Spark, and Smart Start, along with other events, are sponsored by Shoals Shift, a volunteer effort initiated by the UNA College of Business, the Shoals Business Incubator, and the Shoals Chamber of Commerce.

Each of these events Barrett mentions are a critical part of the work taking place in the Institute, as they benefit the University and the College of Business. Further, they provide pathways for business professionals in the community to be involved.

"It's part of tapping into our untapped potential," Barrett said. "We realized there were mid-career folks who might have started their degrees but had not finished them. We also began being more intentional about our online education offerings. We really began to think about these programs and how to reach these audiences and

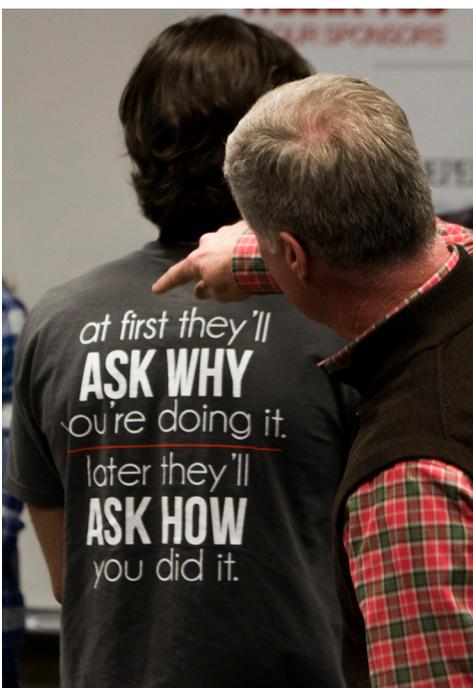


being consistent and thoughtful about what they were telling us they needed."

Other key features of the College of Business's role in regional economic development has come through things like the new coursework in data analytics, the planned launch of the Executive Doctor of Business Administration in January of 2021 (subject to SASCOC final approval by our

regional accreditor), the opening of the UNA Agile Strategy Lab in fall 2019, and the strong faculty hires throughout the College.

"If we're going to talk about innovation and entrepreneurship as a College, we have to mirror that in the community," Barrett said. "So we're doing just as much for our K-12 schools as we are for workforce development. The reality is that these things become equalizers. Lots





Walt Ehmer, President and CEO of Waffle House, spoke to UNA students about innovation and business ethics.

of folks have ideas for new business start-ups, but it often stops there. We want to help those ideas take root and bloom. When they're given the framework to develop their thoughts and ideas, it's amazing what can happen."

In addition to the work that's going on to foster entrepreneurship in the community, Barrett said there has been growth in the Institute. The first full-time employee has been hired to join Barrett and other faculty who have started the Institute while continuing their other duties. Steven Puckett is the Business and Community Outreach Director and a lecturer in management. Puckett has been named to the inaugural class of the Appalachian Leadership Institute, a distinguished appointment for Puckett and the Shoals region.

"The ARC Leadership Institute is a great opportunity to showcase UNA's expertise in innovation, entrepreneurship, and the

transformation underway in the Shoals region to a digital economy," Puckett said. "I'm learning what others are doing to create new economic opportunities and stability for their regions so that I can bring those ideas back to the College of Business, the Shoals, and Alabama."

The Agile Strategy Lab, once housed on the Purdue University campus in West Lafayette, Ind., has moved to UNA and is now part of the Institute. The Lab is being led by its creator, Dr. Ed Morrison, and its associate director, Liz Nilsen. It will continue to work in partnership with the Agile Strategy Lab at Purdue. Morrison will also be serving as a fellow at the Strategic Doing Institute, where he co-authored its most recent book, *Strategic Doing*:



Ten Skills for Agile Leadership, co-authored by UNA employees Janyce Fadden and Liz Nilsen.

Morrison said he is excited to have joined UNA and the College of Business for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the innovation and experimentation available to him on campus and in the community.

"The College of Business is nationally recognized for its executive online MBA program," he said. "The future of our work will be to extend online training in Strategic Doing into different management sectors. Working with the College

Institute for INNOVATION and ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

of Business puts us on the frontier of the rapidly emerging field of open innovation."

A vital part of the success of the Institute, its past and its future, is the result of strong partners in the community. From projects to grant writing, there are opportunities that can be explored and expanded to meet the needs of the community now and in the years to come, Barrett said.

"In addition to what we're doing on campus, we found really key partners in the community," Barrett said. "We've worked very closely with the Shoals Chamber of Commerce, and, more recently, with the Shoals Economic Development Authority. This indicates we're heading in the right direction as a College as is the Shoals."

The Institute has also been at the forefront of other initiatives, including Greater Shoals, with the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama, and the Tennessee RiverLine Project, with the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area.

"Transformations take time," Barrett said. "But they're evident in things taking place intentionally and organically. As we look ahead, we don't know the effect some of the programs and events will have, but the point is that they're happening organically now. We have a developing core of young people, and we're looking for ways to engage them."



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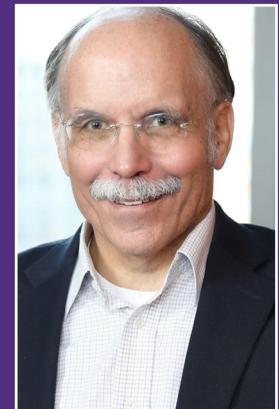
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Ed Morrison

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ON TREND

EDBA OFFERS COMPREHENSIVE, INDUSTRY-FOCUSED CURRICULUM

By Guy McClure
For the College of Business

Many College of Business graduates and colleagues have expressed an interest in advancing their careers by taking additional steps to further their education. While UNA's popular Master of Business Administration program continues to garner accolades both nationally and internationally, the College of Business will soon have an option for business leaders to reach an even higher level.

Pending the upcoming approval by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, UNA should be authorized to offer its first doctoral degree program. The College of Business plans to offer the Executive Doctor of Business Administration (EDBA) degree beginning with the spring semester of 2021.

The EDBA is a doctoral degree for business leaders who want a value

added program of study while still maintaining full-time employment on the path to completing their degree. EDBA candidates, in general, seek this degree to advance in their current careers, to enhance the skills and knowledge they have already obtained, and to reach their own learning goals.

Corporations are looking for ways to grow their administrative capabilities from within. The skills

taught in an EDDBA program will place the graduates of the program at a distinct advantage by offering them a workplace-ready scope of knowledge that is more industry applicable and globally directed. Advantages seen by program graduates will include an improved earning potential and the training needed to move into executive positions.

Russ Sanders, a prospective student from the Atlanta area, found out about UNA's EDDBA program after an extensive online search and then weighing the pros and cons of each school. Wanting to expand upon his MBA degree, he found that the EDDBA program at UNA will encompass the non-traditional format he was looking for.

Sanders currently serves as President of Factorymation, a national supplier of industrial control products. He is seeking the flexibility that the low-residency format of UNA's program offers.

"After years of building a business of my own, I can now see myself transitioning toward retirement," said Sanders. "With an EDDBA degree, I could continue to serve my industry at an in-house consultant level, plus as a doctoral program it will also give me an option to explore opportunities to teach at the collegiate level."

From a curriculum standpoint, the EDDBA program will focus on both theoretical and real-world. The overall program at UNA has been designed to offer current

business leaders the education to address real-world problems using theory and evidence-based methods.

"The evolution of UNA as a doctoral-granting institution is noteworthy and significant. It places us in a higher class of peers across the state and region," said Dr. Ross Alexander, Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost. "The EDDBA is another example of the curricular and instructional innovation emanating from the College of Business. I commend Dean Carnes and the College of Business faculty for their foresight in crafting and implementing this exciting new degree program."

The EDDBA program at UNA is designed to prepare students to address organizational challenges and disruptive trends by developing applied executive-level research skills. Further, the program will enable graduates to solve complex business and industry problems with

creative and innovative solutions.

"As the first doctoral program the EDDBA program will offer a post-MBA research pathway for those seeking to advance their positions," said Dr. Wes Davenport, Director of Graduate Business Programs. "We are well-prepared to welcome the first cohort and have put together a comprehensive curriculum and experienced faculty to ensure a seamless matriculation."

This non-resident, cohort-based doctorate program will be offered primarily online, with monthly on-campus sessions that cover a three-year period of study. The EDDBA requires 54 post-master's credit hours, and students are expected to complete the majority of the 21 courses in the first two years with a dissertation to take place in their third year.

For more information visit, una.edu/business/executive-dba or contact Rachel Russell at rachel.russell34@gmail.com.





Central Bank of Ireland

ON *the* ROAD AGAIN

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROVIDES NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND STAFF

By Michelle Rupe Eubanks '96
For the College of Business

Sometimes, it takes getting out of the classroom to really understand how a degree program can be used after graduation. For a number of students, faculty, and staff in the College of Business at the University of North Alabama, experiential learning can mean traveling to Europe for a few weeks, or it can mean taking on innovative and entrepreneurial projects for regional business and industry.

"It's really all about the experience," said Julie Heinrich, Experiential Learning and Projects Coordinator for the College. "When we take students off campus to have

these experiences in real-world settings and to see how business works, they either fall in love with it, or they don't. It really opens their eyes to what their degree means and where, quite literally, it can take them."

Throughout the course of a year, Heinrich will arrange travel to at least four countries. Between 10 and 20 students participate in each of the trips, and, as part of their time abroad, there are opportunities for cultural excursions to museums and theaters.

"And there's a strong business component, too," she said. "When

we go to Aberdeen, Scotland, for instance, we spend time at the Bank of Scotland; we visit two universities there – St. Andrew's and Edinburgh – and we go to the bronze foundry. In Sweden, we have a partnership with the International Business Academy. There, students focus on innovation and entrepreneurship. That's a reciprocal relationship for UNA, too, and their students will spend time with us on our campus."

Other travel abroad opportunities include Italy and Central Europe, with time spent in Germany, France, Switzerland, and Austria. Students learn that many of the business and



industry names with which they're familiar have their headquarters in Europe, Heinrich said.

"This gives them a sense of how global business is, and, just as important, it allows them to see that the skills they're learning at UNA as part of their degree programs can translate to business and industry outside of Alabama and the southeast, whether those skills are in human resources, sales, or management," she said.

Students who participate in these study-abroad programs receive three hours of course credit for the weeks spent abroad, and, upon their return to campus, they write about what they learned as part of their trip.

Mitch Hamm, Director of Innovation and Entrepreneurship for the College, said that, for many students, it's their first time to have an experience like this.

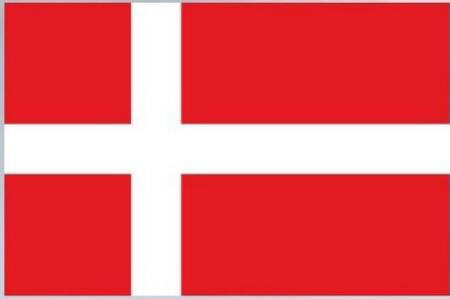
"Many have never been on an airplane before," he said. "As I read what they write, it's very reflective about how they learned a great deal, but their cultural observations are the most notable. They're often surprised by some of the differences



Trinity College Dublin



Mercedes Benz in Sindelfinger, Germany



UNA College of Business students visiting the LEGO headquarters in Billund, Denmark



they find, from political differences to the lack of hierarchies in social settings. In Denmark, for instance, there's very little stigma about jobs because most jobs pay the same, and it's not unusual to see the University president sitting down for lunch with a member of the custodial staff."

Further, students are exposed to train schedules and foreign currencies, lots of new mental stimuli that "has a major effect on them, but they begin to see themselves in these broader cultural contexts so that

they're more prepared to come back, finish this degree, maybe consider an MBA, and enter the workforce."

UNA Generator

In addition to the time spent immersed in the learning process abroad, students also have an opportunity to participate in experiential learning at UNA through The Generator, an off-campus co-working space that connects them with mentors and provides ongoing guidance to help them overcome the challenges

that face startup businesses. The Generator enhances learning in that it sets apart traditional classroom teaching methods and adds a critical total student immersion in entrepreneurship. Students are also encouraged to collaborate and help each other's business ventures succeed.

Hamm spends a good part of his time working with students in The Generator, and, during the last five years, he's seen interest in it grow substantially, achieving some major goals along the way.



"In just this short amount of time, there have been five provisional patents issued for ideas created at The Generator," he said. "We have key fob access for students to come and go from the building 24/7, because that's how new businesses grow. We want students to be able to work when they're ready, and we believe The Generator provides that space for them."

And there is much more to come, Hamm said.

"We're doing what I like to call 'creating collisions,'" he said. "We're putting students with others in

business and industry, folks who lead start-ups, and others who think and work collaboratively so they can learn by having these sort of professional collisions. We need the students to gain confidence so, when faced with those 30 seconds to give their elevator pitch, they're ready."

It's about preparing students for their next steps, and, Hamm said, the goal is to keep in touch with them after graduation. He likes to hear back from his students to know how they're applying what they learned as part of the programs at the College of Business.



Julie Heinrich

*Projects Coordinator for
Experiential Learning*

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These post-graduation success stories are awakenings for undergraduate and graduate students.

"When they hear what our graduate are doing, when they learn that they're working all over the world, you can see a change," Heinrich said. "Students begin to see themselves in these settings, applying their knowledge, and it makes a big difference."

It boils down to skills that translate across the workforce and at all levels, from critical thinking to lean.

"At the end of the day, the students benefit from the experiential learning and the University and College of Business do as well," Heinrich said. "The students take what they learn and apply it in these real-world settings, and then we benefit from the success of our graduates."



GROWTH TRACK

DAVENPORT EXPLAINS GRADUATE ENROLLMENT GROWTH TRENDS IN THE COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

By Michelle Rupe Eubanks '96
For the College of Business

If there's one commonality among the programs in the College of Business at the University of North Alabama, it's growth. Enrollment trends have pointed up for the last five years, and those within the College say the trajectory will continue to be positive as the next five-year strategic plan is launched.

Dr. Wes Davenport, the Director of Graduate Programs and an Associate Professor of Management in the College of Business, shared his ideas on what the College may attribute this growth and how it can, and will, be sustained in the years to come.



Dr. Wes Davenport
*Director of
Graduate Business Programs*

Q

Tell me where you're seeing the most enrollment growth among the programs in the College of Business?

Q

What's on the horizon for the College of Business and its enrollment efforts?

A

Within the graduate space, the MBA program at UNA is the largest MBA program in the state of Alabama. The program has grown more than 100 percent since the spring of 2015 and offers 10 concentration options for students. The Project Management concentration is one of the largest and fastest-growing concentrations because of its applicability to professionals across industries. Additionally, the Master of Accountancy Program, which began in the fall of 2018, has seen tremendous growth with an enrollment of approximately 70 students.



A

The College of Business is continually examining the demand for our current programs and developing programs and curriculum that we believe will meet the needs of future professionals. One such program is the Executive Doctor of Business Administration, or EDBA. EDBA programs have been on the rise in the U.S. in recent years, and, with no existing programs in Alabama and very few in the southeast, this program will meet a significant need. The program is scheduled to begin in 2021, pending approval by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, and will target executives and senior leaders in business, military, and education who have a master's degree but are looking to differentiate themselves and/or lead their organization to another level.

Q Conventional wisdom dictates that the undergraduate business degree is enough for college graduates; why is an MBA now becoming not only recommended for upper mobility in the job market, but necessary for advancement?

A The skill and knowledge necessary to add value to organizations is changing rapidly. An MBA provides what business professionals need in a rapidly evolving and competitive business world.

Q How does UNA make earning an MBA doable for busy professionals?

A As the workforce becomes more educated, higher levels of education are necessary to differentiate graduates in a crowded marketplace. The MBA faculty and staff at UNA are always searching for ways to make the program more accessible and flexible for the working professional. It begins with the application process, which has been streamlined to allow applicants to quickly enter the program at one of six entry points throughout the year, including one "wintermester" for students who would like to start the program during the Christmas break, which starts in mid-December. In many cases, students can be admitted based on work experience to avoid the time and expense of taking the GMAT or GRE. The program can be completed entirely online. Courses are offered over eight-week sessions, making it easier to schedule around busy lives. UNA undergraduates can get a head start on the

MBA through the Accelerated Master's Degree program, which allows students to take up to nine MBA credits while still an undergraduate.



Q How does UNAs College of Business maintain the quality graduates and employers have come to expect while also being innovative in its approach to its programs, particularly the MBA?

A The College of Business is accredited by the AACSB. (Only five percent of colleges of businesses worldwide have this designation.) While this accreditation certainly raises the profile of our programs, it also provides a mechanism for quality assurance and continuous improvement. We meet regularly with community business leaders to survey the business landscape, determine the most essential knowledge and skills for graduates, and stay abreast of current industry trends. For every innovative course or program we develop, we continue to assess student learning and make changes as suggested by the data to ensure that our students are developing the appropriate knowledge and skills.

Q

What are students telling you about the program and why they've chosen to enroll?

A

Students tell us that they chose UNA for three reasons: quality, flexibility, and affordability. The College of Business is accredited by AACSB. This is the highest level of accreditation that a business school can receive and conveys an assurance of quality, not only to the student, but to the marketplace when our MBA graduates list UNA on their resume. Additionally, the graduate programs in the College of Business are built around a culture that is innovative and student-centered. All programs are subject to continuous improvement to be certain that we maximize flexibility for the busy professional student. Lastly, we believe that education should be affordable. Although some graduate students receive tuition assistance from employers, many do not. In order to provide access to as many students as possible, we strive to keep our graduate programs affordable.

Among the benefits of many of the programs in the College of Business is that they're offered 100 percent online. The Bachelor of Business Administration, the MBA, and the MAcc are all online, and the EDBA, for which the first cohort is expected in the spring of 2021, is a hybrid option. Working professionals will be able to take some of the courses online while being a part of a low-residency environment.

The MBA program is a point of pride at UNA, and it's often touted for its innovative programming, top-notch faculty, and online availability. For more information on our programs, go to una.edu/business.



"UNA is a public comprehensive regional university that is very proud of its mission and trajectory. To have a highly-ranked, AACSB-accredited MBA program of its size is a point-of-pride for the entire university and me personally. The program has proven a pathway to career advancement for hundreds of professionals who need a flexible and affordable online degree program from an institution that cares deeply about their educational experience and career success. The success of our MBA has provided a reliable template for other programs throughout the College of Business and across the university, resulting in impressive enrollment growth and brand expansion."

— Dr. Ross Alexander
Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost





Executive Business Council

THE MISSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BUSINESS COUNCIL

1. To provide guidance in developing College of Business strategic direction and leadership.
2. To assist the College of Business to further mutual goals through executive-in-residence programs, internship programs, continuous degreed and non-degreed program improvement, strategic planning, capital development initiatives, and other activities of the college.
3. To provide a forum for partnership and dialogue between the College of Business and the business community.
4. To participate with and provide counsel to the College of Business regarding objectives, strategies, goals, problems, and opportunities.

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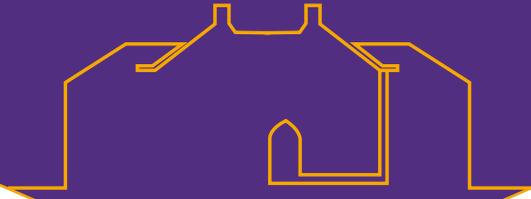
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TruMarketing, LLC
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College of BUSINESS
NEW FACULTY SPOTLIGHTS
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Assistant Professor of Accounting



Dr. John E. Cicala
Associate Professor of Marketing



Ms. Shinika Byrd
Lecturer in Management



Dr. John Alan Parnell
*Professor of Management and
Eminent Scholar of Business*



Dr. Daniel A. Ray
Associate Professor of Computer Science



Dr. Justin W. Carter
Assistant Professor of Management



Dr. Teresa K. Preston
Associate Professor of Marketing



Dr. Lindsey Sherrill
Assistant Professor of Business Communication



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University of NORTH ALABAMA

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Bachelor of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

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Master of ACCOUNTANCY

A flexible online program for aspiring CPAs.

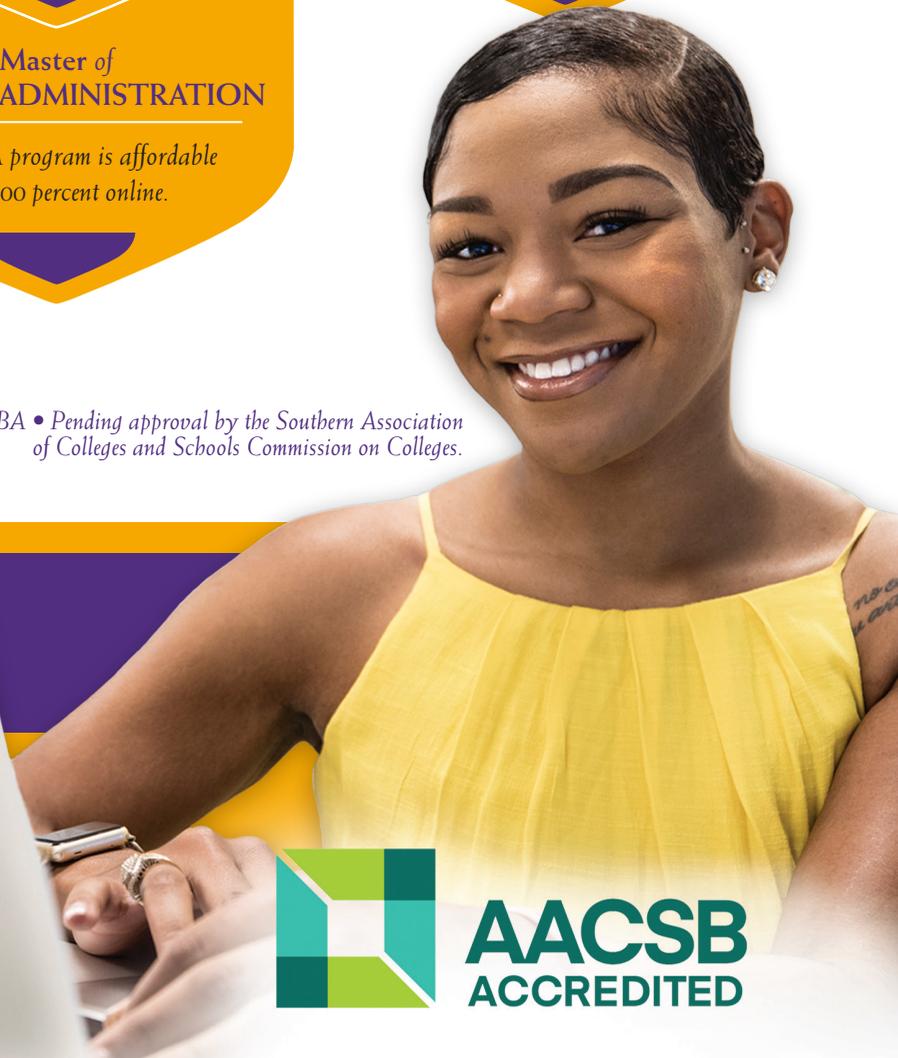
Master of BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Our MBA program is affordable and 100 percent online.

Executive Doctor of BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Take your degree to the next level, with this hybrid, low-residency program.

EDBA • Pending approval by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.



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College of BUSINESS

Please consider supporting the College of Business with a financial gift to support our programs and students. Your gift gives us the resources that provide the margin of excellence for all that we do. To discuss specific giving opportunities for the College of Business, please contact Erin Letson (eletson@una.edu; 256.765.5081).

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