Realignment announced; College of Arts & Sciences-formed

Three schools at UAB — Arts and Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences and Natural Sciences and Mathematics — will merge into one College of Arts and Sciences, President Carol Garrison announced Oct. 14. A fourth, the School of Education, will retain its school identity as a distinct unit, but within the new college.

The announcement comes after the presi- dent convened an Academic Realignment Commission to review and assess various options for the organization for six of its schools, engaging the university community in the process. The commission was charged with focusing on enhancing opportunities for innovative multidisciplinary educational/ research programs and productive part- nerships, increasing capacity for strategic investments and maximizing efficiencies.

Garrison pointed to more comprehensive and coherent advising and curricula as benefits of the change, as well as more opportunity for interdisciplinary learning and research as outcomes that will benefit students and faculty at all levels. “A hallmark of UAB is its interdiscipli- nary culture,” she said. “With this move, we have the opportunity to build on that tradi- tion of excellence in our teaching/learning programs, and to provide 21st century cur-ricula and learning for our students. And by strengthening multidisciplinary research and scholarship, we can continue as a lead- ing contributor in solving the complex problems of our day.”

Garrison noted that 19 of the nation’s top 25 research universities use the college orga- nization and nomenclature for the assem- bled disciplines in arts, humanities and sciences that form the core of a liberal arts education. While many universities have colleges of arts and sciences, so far as can be determined, UAB will be the first major research university to integrate a school of education within such a college.

The change will take effect Jan. 1, 2010. In the meantime, UAB will begin to search immediately for an interim dean. Provost Eli Capilouto asked faculty to nominate internal or external candidates by Oct. 21.

A job description is online at www.uab.edu/ future, and recommendations may be sent to provost@uab.edu. Capilouto outlined additional benefits of the realignment:

- Enhanced service to students leading to improved retention and graduation rates. Fifty percent of UAB undergraduates are enrolled in one of these four schools, but only a small percentage of graduates consistently declare one major throughout their college career. Students will be better served when responsibilities for advising and teaching are housed within one col- lege. Faculty who are on the front line of learning then can plan and work together under common organizational and reward structures to deliver coordinated curricula.
- Broader opportunities for forward-looking strategic investments. Concentrating and strengthening decision making and revenue capacity in a single college will make it possible to better determine and implement strategic investments. Further consolidating support services (e.g., advising, development, class scheduling, human resources, administrative, and fis- cal management) will create increasingly nimble, responsive and efficient admin- istrative structures to serve the needs of students and faculty. Other efficiencies can be gained by sharing responsibilities for developing facilities.
- A hold, innovative approach to 21st century learning and teaching challenges. UAB has always been a leader in entrepre- neurial creativity and spirit. This unique structure brings faculty with expertise in content and pedagogy together to advance learning and research in many sectors, including K-12 and higher education. It further advances UAB’s leadership position in teacher education and research with greater potential for commitments from numerous foundations and agencies who are investing in novel approaches to bridging gaps in student learning.

The provost noted that the realignment will not affect students’ majors or their progress toward a degree.

Garrison and Capilouto thanked deans, faculty, staff and students for the thought- ful and collegial way they have participated in discussions and feedback during and after the commission’s activities.

Art prof places No. 7 in ArtPrize competition

A work by UAB Assistant Professor of Sculpture John Douglas Powers, M.F.A., placed seventh among more than 1,200 entries at ArtPrize, a new, in- ternational competition in Grand Rapids, Mich., that culminated with an awards cer- edemer Oct. 8.

The top 10 works from all entries were named this past week. All 10 were awarded cash prizes at the ceremony. Powers was awarded a $7,000 prize for his work, “Field of Reeds,” a kinetic sculpture 4 1/2 feet in height by 14 feet by 10 feet. Composed of 1001 vertical “reeds” held in place and supported by an articulated wooden assemblage, an electric motor causes the reeds to sway.

Any artist, emerging or established, was invited to show work at various approved venues in the city. The winners were deter- mined by votes from the audience.

Redesigned graduate degree to lay strong foundation for K-12 instructional leadership

UAB’s revamped K-12 master’s degree curriculum has resulted in a new, stronger graduate program that faculty say will lead to the development of effective and dedicated leaders.

“Our goal is to put highly qualified, dedi- cated and motivated leaders in positions to have positive impact on students, fac- ulty and the staff in general,” says George Theodore, Ph.D., coordinator of the resi- dency program in the new Master’s Degree in Instructional Leadership Program.

“The paradigm has shifted from the school principal as a manager of buses, budgets and buildings,” says Linda Searby, Ph.D., Instructional Leadership Program coordina- tor. “The school principal’s main role now is leading and monitoring instruction, and focusing on instructional leadership. Our program gives students a hands-on, real-life look into the day-to-day operation of school leaders and teaches them how to lead in the future.”

Applications are being accepted through Oct. 23 for the second program cohort, which will begin in January 2010. Visit www.ed.uab.edu/educationalleadership to apply or for more information.

What sets UAB apart?

All re-designed programs were required to gear their courses toward eight standards for instructional leadership. The standards are:
Garrison to speak
Oct. 22 at annual State of the University

President Carol Garrison will highlight the university’s progress during the past year and discuss prospects and challenges that lie ahead during the annual State of the University Address, hosted by the UAB Faculty Senate. The address is set for 3 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 22 in Margaret Cameron Spain Auditorium.

UAB Police Pedestrian Safety Campaign to start Oct. 19

The UAB Police Department will hold its annual Pedestrian Safety Campaign Oct. 19-30. The campaign is designed to remind pedestrians and drivers to be aware of increased traffic on campus and the dangers of jay-walking and to follow the rules of the road such as yielding the right of way to pedestrians.

During the campaign UAB Police officers will issue warning citations and information on pedestrian safety to the UAB community. For UAB Police locations during the campaign, go to www.uab.edu/police.

Libraries sponsor Open Access events

The Sterne and Lister Hill libraries will sponsor several activities during the first international Open Access Week, Oct. 19-23. Open access publications are those that are freely available on the Internet for users to read, download, print and distribute with the consent of the author and without licensing restrictions. The focus of the open access movement is broadening the reach of scientific and scholarly literature, especially research conducted with public funds.

The first is a workshop on the NIH Public Access Policy 10 a.m. to noon Tuesday, Oct. 20. More information about open access publishing and a list of events are online at blogs.mhsl.uab.edu/scholarly.

Figures to speak on STEM education in Alabama Oct. 20

The UAB Chapter of Scientists and Engineers for America will host a seminar given by Sen. Vivian McDonald, Ph.D., associate professor of Physiology and Biophysics and associate dean for Postdoctoral and Graduate Studies. The address is set for 3 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 22 in Volker Hall Lecture Room A. Tickets for the lecture are free for UAB students, faculty and staff with a UAB ID and $10 each for the general public. Visit UABPostSecret at postsecret.blogspot.com.

Free seminar to address nutrition needs of cancer patients, families

A free seminar for cancer patients and families will be held at 11 a.m. Tuesday, Oct. 27 in The Kirklin Clinic Learning Center on the first floor. UAB Registered Dietitian Laura Newton will discuss nutrition for the cancer patient with practical suggestions for diet choices. This is part two of an earlier presentation. Participants are asked to register; call 934-5772 or e-mail Lydia.Cheuny@sec.uab.edu. Patients, caregivers and others are welcome.

Seminars and other training opportunities at www.ccts.uab.edu/rdp.

Blogger Frank Warren to reveal “PostSecrets” Oct. 22

Everyone has a secret. Frank Warren will share the ones he has collected from people around the world during his PostSecret Project during a lecture at 7 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 22 in Volker Hall Lecture Room A. Tickets are free for UAB students, faculty and staff with a UAB ID and $10 each for the general public. Visit UABPostSecret at postsecret.blogspot.com.

Lunchtime program explores the impact of gambling on relationships

More than 15 million people display some sort of gambling addiction, and the public spends billions of dollars on gambling activities every year.

The problems that arise from a gambling addiction can wreak havoc not only on the person gambling, but can mean disaster for their interpersonal relationships. The increase in legal gambling also means that problems related to gambling continue to rise.

The UAB Resource Center/Employee Assistance Program will offer the class “The Impact of Gambling on Relationships” Wednesday, Oct. 21 from noon until 1 p.m. in the UAB Hospital West Pavilion Board Room. Linda Enders, program director for the Marriage and Family Therapy Program at the University of Alabama, will discuss key areas in which gambling influences personal relationships, factors in determining whether a person has a problem with gambling and options for individuals who have a problem with gambling.

The free class is offered to all UAB employees and their family members. Participants may bring their lunch to the presentation. Call 934-2281 to register. Space is limited.

Visit www.uab.edu/for more information on this program or the services offered by The Resource Center. This program also is part of the UAB Wellness Committee’s ongoing Wellness Wednesdays. Visit www.uab.edu/formore information about other UAB Wellness Wednesday programs.
She had plenty of energy and a desire to help people, but Cathy Carver wasn’t sure how she was going to combine those two things 15 years ago. At first she thought it might be by working with athletes. Carver was a student athletic trainer at Mississippi State for three years, but after her final year, she realized that wasn’t where she needed to be. “I decided I wanted to work with people who have regular problems and who want to live a regular life,” Carver says. “I wanted to find a way to help people make the most of their life situation given their disability. Since then it’s been a creative challenge. How do you help people make the most of what they have so they can live the life they have left to live?” “That drives me every day.”

Carver has put her energy and contagious drive to use as a physical therapist in the Spain Rehabilitation Center for more than 11 years. She recently received the Innovations in Physical Therapy Award from the Alabama Physical Therapy Association. Assistant Professor of Physical Therapy Scott Bickel, Ph.D., nominated Carver for futuristic thinking and innovative programming. Specifically, Bickel pointed to Carver’s lead role in developing a loco-motor training program at the Spain Rehab Center (SRC) and collaborating with faculty in the Department of Physical Therapy to create a system to collect standardized outcome measures on patients treated at the SRC. The loco-motor program utilizes a body-weight support system and treadmill known as the TherAStride along with manual assistance from physical therapists in an effort to enhance the ability of patients with mobility deficits.

Carver and a team of SRC physical therapists raised almost $100,000 to purchase the TherAStride and implement the loco-motor program — the only such program in Alabama. The equipment enables physical therapists to help patients achieve proper motor function and control, improve balance and walking and increase weight-bearing abilities for standing. Carver says it is an integral component of the therapy patients need to learn how to walk again following neurologic injury or damage. “We’re targeting different populations, but the four groups of people we treat the most are those who have suffered strokes, have incomplete spinal cord injuries, brain injuries or Parkinson’s disease.” Carver says. “We’ve established a solid criteria for who we can help with the equipment, how to progress them through treatment and how to educate them on what to do at home. We’ve seen some encouraging results.”

Among those contributing or giving a grant to the SRC were the Women’s Committee of Spain Rehabilitation Center, the Department of Physical Therapy, the Alabama Power Foundation and private donors. Bickel says raising the funds through grants and other private donations to acquire the equipment and creating the loco-motor therapy program benefits UAB patients, doctors, therapists and students. “Cathy and her team deserve a tremendous amount of credit for raising the funds to purchase all the equipment,” Bickel says. “They now have a state-of-the-art, evidence-based loco-motor training program at SRC, and it’s our opinion that if it were not for the enthusiasm and innovative thinking from Cathy, this program would not have been implemented.”

Improved clinical practice through research

Carver also has demonstrated a commitment to innovative clinical practice by collaborating with faculty from physical therapy in research. They have worked together to create a system where standardized outcome measures are collected and entered into a database. “This innovative infrastructure will enable us to track outcomes over time and facilitate future clinical research studies,” Bickel says. “These efforts undoubtedly will lead to improved clinical practice and contribute to the growing body of evidence in rehabilitation.”

UAB physical therapy students also benefit from the collaboration. They are working with therapists to collect data and learn the latest techniques instead of reading about it. “Very few rehab centers have the luxury of being located right across the street from the physical therapy school,” Carver says. “We can bridge the gap and bring the academics and clinical together to produce very meaningful research. We hope to get some of our research published in the next year or so.”

Team effort

Carver is quick to give credit to her co-workers and applaud their efforts to help secure the funds necessary to purchase the equipment and create the loco-motor program. “This has been a team effort,” she says. “We have some very dedicated therapists at Spain Rehab who have been crucial to getting this program going. We had a number of people help us review the literature and another group that helped pursue the grants. It’s been a community effort to get this program running, so even though my name is on the award, it really represents the work of a lot of people.”

The combination of providing care and conducting research is going to empower the work of Carver and her fellow physical therapists to continue to do what she says every good physical therapist strives to do — help their patients find a way to overcome their obstacles. “It excites me and inspires me to see someone who doesn’t quit when they’ve been dealt a card in their life that’s pretty catastrophic,” she says. “I feel off of them. If they’re trying to make the most of an unfortunate situation, I’m going to get behind them with all I’ve got. “People deserve the best and deserve the opportunity to continue to do what they enjoy doing in life.”

New grant helps special education students meet achievement goals

The UA Center for Urban Education has won a new grant of nearly $760,000 from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs that will help children with disabilities in poor school districts meet achievement goals. The grant will fund a new program called Cultivating Leaders for Inclusive, Diverse Environments (CLIDE). The grant supports the need for skills in culturally responsive instruction and the ability to address the disproportionate representation of minority groups in special education.

UAB program will prepare special education administrators for high-needs school districts and teach them best practices in educating ethnically diverse students who have disabilities. Program participants also will learn ways to recruit and retain highly qualified, culturally responsive instruction teachers and to better meet the mandates of No Child Left Behind and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004. Nationwide, a shortage of qualified special-education administrators has reached 10 percent, according to one study, says UAB Associate Professor Deborah Voltz, Ed.D., who directs the center. She also is the co-principal investigator on the grant with Associate Professor Lourecia Collins, Ed.D., in the UAB School of Education Department of Leadership, Special Education and Foundations.

Another study found that only 37 percent of classroom teachers reported feeling equipped to instruct students with disabilities according to state standards. In addition, the increasing ethnic and language diversity found in many poor school districts adds to the challenges faced by many special education teachers today, Voltz says. “This underscores the need for skills in culturally responsive instruction and the ability to address the disproportionate representa- tion of minority groups in special educa- tion,” Voltz says.

To address the issues, the Birmingham and Bessemer city schools and the Alabama Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Services will work through UAB CLIDE to prepare special-education administrators who can address these challenges. Through CLIDE, 30 special-education administrators will take courses offered through the UAB Department of Leadership, Special Education and Foundations toward a specialist degree in educational leadership.

Classes will begin in spring 2010. For more information, contact Kathy Lowe at klowe@uab.edu or call 996-9852.
Endowment established for McKnight Brain Institute

UAB and the McKnight Brain Research Foundation, of Orlando, Fla., are establishing a $10 million endowment for the Evelyn F. McKnight Brain Institute at UAB to support the institute and the Evelyn F. McKnight Endowed Chair for Learning and Memory in Aging. The endowment is made possible by a $5 million gift from the McKnight Brain Research Foundation and a $5 million matching contribution from UAB and other donors.

“This generous gift from the McKnight Foundation will enable the institute and the endowed chair to exist in perpetuity at UAB,” said Robert Rich, M.D., senior vice president and dean of the School of Medicine. “We are incredibly indebted to the trustees of the foundation for their investment in UAB’s research to better understand age-related memory loss.”

The institute was established at UAB with an initial $5 million gift from the McKnight Brain Research Foundation in 2004, followed by an additional $1 million in November 2005. The total amount of the new gift is $6 million, including $5 million for the endowment and an additional $1 million for operational funding, also to be matched by UAB.

David Sweatt, Ph.D., chair of the Department of Neurobiology, is the director of the institute and holder of the Evelyn F. McKnight Endowed Chair. The institute occupies 75,000 square feet of research space on three floors of the Richard C. and Annette N. Shelby Interdisciplinary Biomedical Research Building.

Sweatt’s research focuses on molecular mechanisms underlying learning and memory. His laboratory uses genetically engineered animal models for human learning and memory disorders to investigate the molecular and cellular basis of human memory dysfunction. His laboratory has discovered a number of new roles and mechanisms of gene regulation in memory formation, focusing on studies of transcription factors, regulators of chromatin structure and other epigenetic mechanisms such as chemical modification of DNA.

Sweatt and colleagues are using what they have learned about the molecular basis of memory formation to generate new treatments for humans with learning disabilities and age-related memory dysfunction.

Established in 1999 by Evelyn Franks McKnight, the McKnight Brain Research Foundation supports research toward the understanding of memory and the specific influences of aging on memory. Evelyn and William L. McKnight, who was employed by the Minnesota Mining & Manufacturing (3M) Corporation for 59 years and served as either president or chairman of the board for 37 years prior to his retirement in 1986, were particularly interested in the effects of aging on memory.

McKnight, who was a nurse, shared her husband’s belief that research is the key to tomorrow. The gifts provide for faculty salaries, purchase of laboratory instrumentation, pilot research funding and other scholarly activities.

Clinical trials test therapies for elusive pancreatic cancer

Pancreatic cancer is certainly one of the truly rare cancers — a person has only about a one in 76 chance of developing it in his or her lifetime. But while its incidence is relatively uncommon — ranking around ninth among cancers — pancreatic cancer is one of the most deadly forms of the disease. With a 95 percent mortality rate, it rates as the fourth leading cause of cancer death in the United States.

Survival rates for pancreatic cancer are so poor often because it is not diagnosed until its later stages, and the few symptoms it exhibits usually do not appear early. In addition, doctors are not 100 percent certain of the risk factors that lead to the disease.

“We know of some risk factors, such as smoking, excessive alcohol use and obesity, but these don’t allow us to identify high-risk groups,” says James Posey, M.D., a UAB gastroenterologist and UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center scientist. “Our ability to diagnose pancreatic cancer in its early stages depends on a better understanding of the disease process so we can identify high-risk groups and screen them for the disease.”

The Cancer Center is conducting a variety of clinical trials, many of which are connected with the center’s pancreatic cancer SPORE (Specialized Program of Research Excellence) grant. The prestigious grant one of only three in the country — enables researchers and clinicians to speed the development of scientific breakthroughs into innovative treatments.

Several of these trials combine gemcitabine, a chemotherapy drug that is essentially the standard of care for treating pancreatic cancer, with other therapeutic agents. The goal is to find new agents that will make pancreatic cancer cells more sensitive to treatment and to examine the way in which the disease responds to each agent.

In one study, patients receive the drug Tarceva® for 10 days prior to surgery. Then, following their operation, they are given Tarceva in conjunction with gemcitabine. “We hope this will allow us to understand more about the pathway in pancreatic cancer that Tarceva disrupts and the factors in patients for which this therapy is most likely to provide benefit,” Posey says, adding that this applies to patients with more advanced disease.

In another study, gemcitabine is paired with a ras vaccine, which is designed to jump-start the body’s immune system to attack cells containing a mutated gene found to facilitate cancer. Another clinical trial teams gemcitabine with the chemotherapy agent Abraxane® for patients with metastatic disease. “We’ve seen a number of positive responses from the phase II trial and are encouraged that this might be an effective therapy for patients with less advanced disease, which is not the majority of our pancreatic cancer patients at UAB,” Posey says.

Imaging techniques also are offering physicians a new advantage, even though pancreatic cancer continues to be diagnosed most frequently in its later stages.

Improved imaging techniques also are offering physicians a new advantage, even though pancreatic cancer continues to be diagnosed most frequently in its later stages. Procedures such as CT scans and endoscop ic ultrasounds allow doctors to better evaluate questionable or suspicious areas within the pancreas when symptoms do arise. With the slow increase in the incidence of pancreatic cancer over the past decade, clinicians and researchers hope to develop a screening method that could make a major impact on diagnosis. The key, Posey says, will be to define the patients who are at high risk for the disease.

“We can’t understand the pathways of pancreatic cancer and can begin to intervene at early steps in patients likely to develop the disease; it is going to be difficult to develop screening tools that would allow us to detect pancreatic cancer at an earlier stage,” Posey explains. “It’s a challenging arena, and we are slowly making progress. Hopefully that results in better benefits for the patient.”

Read more about other cancer research at UAB in the latest Crossroads magazine at www.ccc.uab.edu.
When UAB Facilities began assessing new ways the university could save money this past year, it looked to the trash.

UAB spent more than $500,000 on solid waste disposal in 2008-09—not including the waste generated by the UAB Health Systems properties—and the staff in Facilities estimated that 60 percent of the materials in campus dumpsters were recyclable.

So UAB opened the new Recycling Center located at 620 11th Street South in March to support the university’s commitment to green practices and reduce the number of times per month dumpsters were being emptied.

“They knew if we were able to capture all of those recyclable materials in the dumpsters we would be able to dramatically reduce our waste costs,” says Scott Moran, business manager in Facilities.

Facilities has placed paper recycling containers in UAB buildings since March to reduce waste, and it soon will expand its recycling program to include aluminum cans and types 1 and 2 plastics in its pick-up schedule. Those plastics include soda and cooking oil bottles, peanut butter jars, detergent bottles and milk jugs.

“Employees who are interested in recycling products from their buildings need to contact their building administrator,” Moran says. “We’re offering to pick up plastic and aluminum in campus buildings, and we hope to capture even more paper.”

Building administrators can contact Moran at smoran@uab.edu or at 934-9443 to learn more. The alternate contact is Jon Paulone at recycle@uab.edu or 996-9043.

Building administrators who choose to participate in the program will have plastic and aluminum can recycling containers placed in their buildings, with a minimum of one set of containers per floor. A regular pick-up schedule also will be set up. The expanded recycling program also will provide desk-side paper recycling containers to all private spaces in participating buildings.

Moran already has spoken to the administrators of 30 campus buildings to ascertain their interest and calculate the number of recycling containers needed.

“We’ve ordered the plastic and aluminum containers, and we hope those containers will be in place by the end of October or early November,” Moran says. “We already have paper totes in 50 to 60 buildings on campus. We’re trying to get paper, aluminum and plastic recycling available in all buildings.”

Faculty, staff and students will be encouraged to bring their aluminum cans or plastics to one of the centrally located containers in their building. Because of its weight, paper will be picked up directly from private spaces.

Drop-off center hours

Building Services is paying for the recycling program through the money saved by fewer dumpster pick-ups and from a modest amount of revenue generated from the sale of the recyclable materials.

Moran says the drop-off center has afforded UAB the opportunity to expand the program since it has the ability to process the material.

“Many people were anxious to recycle more materials and were excited when we opened the drop-off center,” Moran says. “The traffic we get at the center is very loyal and very pleased to have the opportunity to recycle.”

The center offers the drop-off collection service every Monday from 6:30 a.m. until 8:30 a.m. and from 4 p.m. until 6 p.m.

Visit www.fabs.ua.edu/energy for more information on recycling and the greening of UAB.

UAB spent more than $500,000 on solid waste disposal in 2008-09. In an effort to save this money, the new Recycling Center was opened by Facilities in March. Arnold Stell, left, and Don Champion work with the center and building administrators who choose to participate in the program.

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

CONTINUED from page 1

• Planning for continuous improvement
• Teaching and learning
• Human resource management
• Diversity
• Community, stakeholder relationships
• Technology
• Management of learning organization
• Ethics

The Alabama State Department of Education mandated other changes in addition to the LEA partnerships to help meet the standards. Schools had to design a 60-consecutive-day residency, and university faculty had to train mentors for field experiences.

What is it that sets UAB’s program apart from other state universities? Searby says it’s the partnerships and the strong field experiences.

“We have partnered with some excellent school districts—Birmingham City, Hoover City, Cullman County, Cullman City and Jasper City—and they are providing our students with hands-on, real-world, real-time leadership experiences,” Searby says.

“Our partners co-teach courses with us, and every course has a one-hour field experience credit that goes with it, so every class has activities and leadership experiences. They’re not waiting until the residency at the end to do it all.”

For example, students in the Data Driven Decision Making course had assignments that required them to research the data on their school and complete a gap analysis to determine areas in which their students were not achieving academic success.

They researched what areas need to improve to close that achievement gap and made a presentation to the faculty at their school on the things they could do to close the gap.” Searby says. “That was a real leadership experience in front of faculty. They had to do the same research and presentation a principal would have done. And we have two or three of those every course.”

Searby says the students also have mentors and clinical field coordinators with them in the field to help guide them through their developmental exercises. LEAs and UAB faculty choose mentors for the students. The clinical field coordinators, who include area academicians Marilyn Gibson, Jan Dennis and Pat Robertson, are trained by UAB faculty.

“These are well-respected people who have had extensive administrative experience, and they are very conscientious and keep contact with our candidates in the field, which is really a plus for our program,” Searby says. “They come to our classes to see what their assignments are so they fully understand them. And we meet with them regularly and get them to tell us about our candidates, how they’re performing and where they may need some help.”

Learning together

Another strong component of UAB’s program is the cohort system. There are 28 students split into three cohorts currently enrolled in the inaugural class of the new master’s program.

The students in each cohort go through the program with each other and take their courses together as a group. They take two courses each in the spring, summer and fall before completing their residency the next spring term.

“The idea is that the students go through this together and become supportive of one another,” Searby says. “It builds collaboration skills—they can network and they can provide us valuable feedback as a group on things we can do to continually improve our program.”

Tougher to get in, out

The admission and exit process for the program also has changed. A good grade-point average and a high test score no longer are enough for admission. Prospective students are screened and interviewed by UAB faculty and LEA practitioners.

“They have to show us their portfolios and the things they already have accomplished in their school as a teacher-leader,” Searby says. “We also have candidates complete a writing sample to see if they can write proficiently, an element that is unique to our program. We are really expected to ensure we get top-notch candidates.”

If accepted, candidates’ portfolios at the end of the four semesters will be filled with examples of rich leadership experiences that show they are ready to accept administrative responsibilities.

“When the students are doing their residency they’re expected to keep the same hours as a principal,’’ Searby says. “They attend meetings, lead activities, create handbooks whatever the principal is doing. And they design some activities around the eight standards so they will have many more leadership opportunities.”

The final hurdle is the exit exam, which includes a mock interview with a school superintendent and a school principal as though the program participants are applying for a job as an assistant principal. They will use their portfolio as evidence of their abilities, their competencies and their readiness to enter school leadership.

“That’s their final exam,” Searby says. “We want them to dress up, come to a formal set-up and participate in an interview that will feel as real as it can be. It will be as if they are interviewing for their first leadership position, and it should be a valuable experience for them.”

“It’s really an authentic program for our candidates,” says Lorenzio Collino, Ed.D., associate professor in the program. “It brings together the theory and reality of the things that work for 21st century principals and leaders. We had a good program before, but we have a better program now.”
Collins is considered the magician of UAB’s class schedule

H ave you ever been lost on your way to class? If so, put Angela Collins’ phone number on your speed dial. She knows exactly when and where you are supposed to be — whether you’re a faculty member or a student.

Collins, the academic scheduling coordina- tor in Academic Programs and Policies, is responsible for scheduling every class held at UAB. That covers more than 4,500 classes each fall and spring semester and more than 3,000 each summer.

The work is meticulous and requires a great deal of research, including examining current enrollment, previous enrollment and other historical data. But Collins embraces the responsibility. She works effectively with the faculty, students and administration. She routinely updates and prepares special utilization reports for classrooms, instructional laboratories and other campus spaces for senior administration. Collins also schedules faculty meetings, student organization events and other on-campus events.

She also assists with the review and development of plans to achieve a more balanced use of the campus’ physical plant.

“It’s like a big puzzle,” Collins says. “It seems like it should be simple, but it’s not. It’s limited space, and many faculty members require rooms with technology. That adds to the complexity of it all, too.”

It’s not uncommon for someone to call Collins with unforeseen problems right before or after the semester begins. Alan Whitehead, an instructional lab supervisor in biology, remembers one instance when his department had faculty staffing issues and they were forced to split a course and offer a second section of lecture.

“Angela was more than helpful,” Whitehead says. “She was able to maneuver other courses to satisfy both lecture enrollments, saving my department approximately $63,000. In the current situation of prora- tion on our budgets, this could have been a disaster to our funding.”

Wonderful at her job

Collins spent more than 10 years in the banking industry as a real estate paralegal before joining UAB more than four years ago. She says she didn’t know what to expect coming into an institution of higher education or the difficulty of her new job. But Collins says she’s a stickler for details and believes in early planning. In fact, she began the semester developing more than 4,000 graduate and undergraduate classes for the spring semester the first week in October.

“It takes me about two months to get it all together,” she says.

Dan Osborn, Ph.D., director of Academic Programs and Policy, says Collins works closely with faculty students and the admin- istration, and the results she produces are noticed.

“She’s professionalism, ability to meet dead- lines and knowledge of the curricula make her a valuable asset to UAB,” Osborn says. Faculty members recognize the difficulty Collins faces. Many colleagues tell her they are happy they don’t have her responsibili- ties, and many say they couldn’t be happier to have her as the person they depend on to try and accommodate their needs.

“I would consider her job to be highly stressful and difficult,” says Billie Shelden, an administration associate in the Department of Theatre. “In the years I’ve worked with Angela she never has failed to solve a room-scheduling problem for us, and she always helps you in such a pleasant manner. It takes a special person to handle this type of work, and she is wonderful at her job.”

Putting the puzzle together

Collins says she has to display a sens- itivity and acumen for dealing with com- plex space requirements and institutional needs associated with the UAB graduate and undergraduate curricula. She routinely updates and prepares special utilization reports for classrooms, instructional laboratories and other campus spaces for senior administration. Collins also schedules faculty meetings, student organization events and other on-campus events.

It would certainly seem Angela Collins possesses a certain amount of magic to be able to schedule more than 7,000 classes every year. Her ability to meet deadlines and knowledge of the curricula makes her a worthy selection as October’s Employee of the Month. If you know someone who should share the honor with Angela, send letters of nomination to Jason Turner at jturn@uab.edu.

Book Roundup:

Collins publishes book

A book about the 1920s and 1930s Negro League is the latest project by Communication Studies Professor Larry Powell, Ph.D. He has published a new book, Black Barons of Birmingham, that tells the story of the professional Negro League baseball team whose legendary members included Leroy “Satchel” Paige and Willie Mays.

The Birmingham Black Barons were established in 1923 by a group of local African-American businesses and baseball teams. The team played its home games at Rickwood Field in Birmingham. Powell said the book takes a unique look into the lives of the individual players.

The Black Barons had major league tal- ent, Powell said, but they played at a time when black and white sports teams in Alabama were forbidden to play each other. “The laws that kept black and white base- ball teams in Alabama from playing each other were created partly out of fear that the Barons could beat the white teams,” Powell said. “The Barons did, however, play white teams outside Alabama and usually they beat them.”

The Birmingham Black Barons were among the many Negro League teams in the South and Midwest that played pro- fessional baseball during the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. But the Black Barons’ superior skills on the field led many to dub them as “the South’s greatest Negro League team,” Powell said. In fact, the team captured the Negro American League Pennant in 1943, 1944 and in 1948.

Black Barons players included pitcher Sam Hairston, pitcher and outfielder and later country singer Charlie Pride, first baseman Lynman Brostock and outfielder Mays, who later signed with the New York Giants and became one of the first African-Americans to integrate the Major League teams after Jackie Robinson.

Five Black Barons are in the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Paige, Mays and pitcher Bill Foster, shortstop Willie Wells and home-run slugger George “Mule” Suttles, who is considered by some experts to be the all-time home run holder of the Negro Leagues with 127 verified home runs in the league games, Powell said.
NIH expands rare diseases research network, which includes UAB

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) today announced the second phase of the Rare Diseases Clinical Research Network including funds for 19 research institutions, among them UAB. The network and a data-management coordinating center will be awarded in excess of $117 million during the next five years. The research conducted with the new funding will explore the natural history, epidemiology, diagnosis and treatment of more than 95 rare diseases.

UAB’s focus in the network is to study Rett syndrome, Angelman syndrome and Prader-Willi syndrome. Alan Percy, M.D., medical director of the UAB Civilian International Research Center, is the lead investigator. Percy also chairs the RDRCRN steering committee for the next two years.

“The progress made by researchers through the network during the past six years is important and impressive,” says NIH Director Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D. “We have shown that this approach can be a catalyst for progress in meeting the challenge of rare diseases, and we are eager to launch this next phase of the program.”

A rare disease is defined as a disease or condition affecting fewer than 200,000 persons in the United States. Approximately 6,500 such disorders have been identified, affecting an estimated 25 million Americans.

Distracted driving is both dangerous, epidemic

Distracted driving is epidemic, according to researchers at the University of Alabama at Birmingham University Transportation Center (UAB UTC). An estimated 800,000 vehicles were driven by someone using a cell phone in 2006, according to the United States Department of Transportation; 6,000 people died in distracted-driving-related vehicle crashes, and 500,000 were injured.

“It’s clear that driving while distracted by cell phones, text messaging or other technologies increases the risk of vehicle crashes,” says Despina Stavrinos, Ph.D., a post-doctoral fellow at the UAB UTC, part of the Injury Control Research Center. Stavrinos’ research projects include studying distracted driving in teens with ADHD and the effects of cell phone displays in adolescent and college-aged pedestrians.

Stavrinos and during a recent summit on distracted driving called by U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood it was suggested that legislation banning cell phone use while driving would be a strong initial step toward dealing with distracted driving issues. Two hundred distracted-driving bills have been introduced this year in 46 states. Twenty-one states and the District of Columbia ban cell phone for novice drivers and six states have such a ban for all drivers. Alabama is not among those states, Stavrinos said.

“Unfortunately, legislation alone will not solve the problem,” she said. “We need to reach a point where distracted driving is perceived as wrong, in the same light as not wearing a seat belt or driving under the influence. Legislation and widespread education efforts may be the best strategy for combating the distracted driving epidemic.”

The UAB University Transportation Center is planning an Alabama Distracted Driving Summit later this year.

Three receive Barkley awards to research health disparities

Three UAB faculty each received a $30,000 Charles Barkley Health Disparities Research Award at the fifth UAB Minority Health and Health Disparities Research Center (MHRC) Gala on Sept. 25. The awards were presented by NBA Hall of Fame basketball player and Alabama native Charles Barkley.

Funds for the awards were provided to encourage research in health disparities and encourage young investigators and junior faculty to pursue careers in minority health research.

Award recipients are:

• Keisha Elder, O.D., assistant professor, UAB School of Optometry, for her project, “Ocular inflammation in African-American and European-American patients with SLE.”

• Derek Dubay, M.D., assistant professor of surgery, UAB School of Medicine, for his project, “Development of an African-American Salton-Based Intervention to Increase Organ Donation.”

• Laura Kelly Vaughan, Ph.D., assistant professor, UAB School of Public Health, for her project, “Bad genes or genes behaving badly? Are Hispanic-American children predisposed to ‘thriftiness’ resulting in increased fat accumulation at the expense of bone mass?”

German Consul to deliver lecture

Lutz Hermann Görgens, the Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany, will deliver the Belton Y. Cooper Lecture at 7 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 22 in the UAB Mary Culp Hulsey Recital Hall. Görgens lecture, titled “Germany After the Wall: 1989-2009” will cover the political and cultural transformation of Germany since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. The event is free and open to the public.

CCTS intramural grant program apps due Oct. 27

The Center for Clinical and Translational Science and the Council of University-Wide Interdisciplinary Research Centers (UWIRCs) is seeking applications for its collaborative Translational Research Intramural Grant Program. It is anticipated that this program will fund at least six one-year grants of up to $60,000 each.

The RFP and pre-application materials are available at www.ctct.uab.edu/pages/pilot_rfp.aspx. All pre-proposal applications are due by 5 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 27. Details to Melissa McBrayer at mcbrayer@uab.edu.

AIM research proposals due by Nov. 25

The UAB Center for Palliative Care Advanced Illness and Multimorbidity (AIM) research program is seeking research proposals on advanced illness and multimorbidity research from post-doctoral trainees and full-time UAB faculty. It is anticipated that this program will fund at least two awards for up to $20,000 each.

More information and applications are online www.palliative.uab.edu/aim. The deadline for applications is 5 p.m., Wednesday, Nov. 25. Direct questions to Joyce Crump at jcrump@uab.edu.

MHIRT program calls for apps

The Minority Health International Research and Training program provides students with public health/biomedical research experiences and promotes professional development at renowned international institutions under the mentorship of UAB and foreign scientists. For information on training sites, types of research, eligibility and benefits, go to www.soph.uab.edu/mhirt. Deadline for applications is Jan. 10, 2010.

For more details, call 205-975-9644 or e-mail rwanvandri@uab.edu. Free parking will be available in the lot directly across from the Alys Stephens Center, which is located at 1200 10th Ave. South.

Görgens, a native of Düsseldorf, Germany, and the official representative of the German government to the Southeast United States, lives in Atlanta.

Reynolds lecture topic is history of disease in America Oct. 29


These lectures are free and open to the public. Box lunches are served. See upcoming lectures at www.uab.edu/reynoldslecture.
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