

The University of Alabama Graduate School

*A Newsletter Serving Current &
Prospective Graduate Students*

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2004

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Welcome from the President

Welcome to one of the South's leading student-centered, research universities and one of the top 40 public universities in the country. Since 1831, The University of Alabama has been committed to fostering the creative energy and individual dreams of its students. That commitment is continually reflected in an educational experience forged from the best of traditional scholarship and advanced knowledge and research.

If you are already a graduate student here, I encourage you to take advantage of all the resources available to you on campus. Please know that we are striving in every way to provide you with the best possible facilities for your scholarly work, and we look forward to celebrating your accomplishments.

If you are in the process of exploring which graduate school will best help you reach your goals, I encourage you to explore our Web site (www.ua.edu) to find out more about the academic, research and outreach programs that make The University of Alabama one of the country's most precious resources.

I also urge you to come to Tuscaloosa and experience firsthand the friendliness of our community and rich heritage of Alabama's flagship university. We think you'll quickly see why our campus is often cited as one of the country's most beautiful. Our friendly faculty, staff and students want to help you discover how the University may best serve you.



Sincerely,
Robert E. Witt
President

Welcome from Graduate School Dean



Dr. Ronald Rogers

On behalf of the UA graduate faculty and staff, I would like to extend a warm welcome to our new and returning graduate students. We are delighted that you have chosen UA for your professional development and advanced training. The Graduate School is ready and willing to assist you in any capacity during your tenure as a graduate student. We realize the demands that can be placed on a graduate student and want to ensure you that you have our support. At this University, we are committed to teaching and learning. We want you to receive the best education possible while simultaneously helping to advance the objectives of your program.

In addition to your education, please take advantage of the numerous opportunities that the Graduate School and other graduate organizations have to offer. Remember, the Graduate School is always available, so please do not hesitate to contact us. It is our honor to prepare you as a professional, researcher, and scholar for the 21st century. Welcome!

To our prospective students, thank you for your interest in the Graduate School of The University of Alabama. The past several years have brought very exciting developments to the University, including major advances in research and scholarship. We have been able to attract increasingly large numbers of top-caliber undergraduate and graduate students and have enjoyed major success in recruiting a nationally ranked faculty. We encourage you to become a part of our exciting environment. We urge you to view our website at <http://graduate.ua.edu> and explore your future at UA!

Contact Us:

Address: Office of the Graduate School
102 Rose Administration Building
Box 870118
Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35487-0118, USA
Phone: (205) 348-5921
Fax: (205) 348-0400
Email: deads@alan.ua.edu
Web: <http://graduate.ua.edu>

Meet the Graduate School Staff

Ronald Rogers, Ph.D., Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dean of Graduate School- Leads the Graduate School in the establishment and progression of goals and objectives of graduate education; creates, facilitates, and manages new and existing programs concerning all financial aid; serves as a liaison between the Graduate School and the University; encourages and promotes recruitment and retention of qualified graduate students and faculty members

John Schmitt, Ph.D., Associate Dean of Students & GTA Training, Assistant to the Provost, Vice President of Academic Affairs- Coordinates staff members that handle registration and graduation of currently enrolled students; responsible for all GTA training and development

Patti Harrison, Ph.D., Associate Dean of Graduate Admissions & Recruitment- Responsible for admissions, recruitment, and fellowships coordination; oversees the entire application process; works with admissions specialists to ensure applicants' needs are being met; coordinates the Graduate School's website

John Chambers, Director of Administration- Chief Financial Officer of the Graduate School; responsible for the daily financial needs of the Graduate School; oversees the administration of all fellowships, scholarships, and assistantships; produces data and statistics for the Graduate School; fulfills the role of human resources manager

Carl Williams, Ph.D., Director of Graduate Admissions- Responsible for the coordination of all recruitment events and planning for the Graduate School; works with the Associate Dean to ensure proper planning and increase graduate enrollment at UA

Kathleen Nodine, Executive Secretary- Coordinates meetings, awards, student travel and research; serves as the primary support system for the Dean of the Graduate School

Ineice Lee, Administrative Support Secretary- Serves as the primary support system for the Associate Deans of the Graduate School and admissions activities

Beverly York, Registrar- Monitors the progression of current students throughout their tenure at UA; responsible for helping students complete their graduate programs; handles various scholarship rules and information; coordinates the Graduate Council Fellowship process

Dianne Teague, Records Officer & Publications Coordinator- Responsible for graduate student record management, development, and supervision of key Graduate School publications; identification and oversight of application process for the Rhodes, Marshall, Fulbright, and Truman Scholarships

Libby Williams, International Admissions Officer- Coordinates the processing of international applications; works with UA international students throughout their degree program; recruits international and U.S. students around the Southeast; serves as a liaison between UA and sponsoring agencies

Louise Labosier, Graduate Admissions Officer- Coordinates the processing of U.S. applicants; serves as a recruiter for U.S. students in the Southeast; works closely with other admissions specialists and department faculty for the admitting of U.S. students

Sheryl Tubbs, Admissions Assistant- Works closely with students in regards to admissions and graduation; directs student contact with the Graduate School office; coordinates applications for non-degree students

Deborah Eads, Admissions Assistant- Assists prospective and current students with inquiries about graduate programs; serves as liaison between departments and Graduate School; assists in the daily routine of the Graduate School

Gayla Harwell, International Graduate Office Assistant- Assists faculty and staff members with international application inquiries; assists with application process for international applicants

“Now I’m In Graduate School, What’s Next ?”

By: April S. Davenport, UA Future Faculty Fellow, UA PhD Student in English

For some of us, we would like to think that the most difficult part is over— we have successfully entered graduate school. Although entrance into graduate school is an exciting accomplishment, it is imperative that a graduate student understands what will be required of him or her in order to continue to move up the ladder in the realm of academia.

If you are a first-year student, then the first item on your agenda is probably course work, and rightfully so. Most first year graduate students have a substantial amount of course work to master, and therefore focus on classes is the first priority. During this time, however, students must also remember to begin to think of what their larger work entails. While it is good to gain an overall knowledge of the field, the majority of classes that you take should help you further your research, scholarship, and professional skills. Additionally, as a first year graduate student, it is important you begin to make contact with others in your field of study so that you can build relationships that will prove to be beneficial to you in the future. Although taking classes and even assistantship activities weigh heavily upon graduate students during the first year, it is also a good idea for students to become involved in at least one organization so that they can interact with other graduate students and have an occasional outlet. Remember, UA is a place to get the total graduate school experience.

After you have completed your course requirements, some would say that you have reached the beginning of the end. In order to ensure this successful outcome, remember to stay mindful of the deadlines enforced by your department. Begin scheduling qualifying or comprehensive exams and/or meetings to discuss your research for your thesis or dissertation. Graduate school does create a wonderful atmosphere for the academic, but it is not meant to be a permanent situation. Ensure that you are gaining the most out of your experience, but do not procrastinate your research after you have worked so diligently to get to this level in your studies. Make sure that you have a solid relationship with your adviser and/or committee and create a schedule that is efficient, but that works best for you. Although you are not a student in the classroom anymore, you can still depend on your department for assistance. If you are having trouble getting started or remaining on task, there are always faculty and staff members ready and willing to get that BAMA brain going.

Once you have mastered your course work and begun the final stages, it is a good idea to help someone else do the same. Part of being a graduate student is helping to support your fellow graduate students. There are always first year students who are in need of sound advice and a helping hand from someone else who has just traveled the same journey. The various organizations around campus will be able to assist you in helping someone else. It takes everyone on campus to keep the TIDE rolling.

Now that you know what is at stake, it is time to do what you came here to do...LEARN AND DEVELOP EXPERTISE! Unfortunately, the easy part is over, you are here. Fortunately, though, the Graduate School is here to ensure that you remain here! Good luck this first year!

“Teaching To Teach”

By: Jane Sandor, UA Master’s Student in Creative Writing, Recipient of the Award for the UA Outstanding Teaching by a Master’s Student

It’s a trial by fire. One week you’re an unsuspecting graduate teaching assistant-to-be spending the last days of summer lolling in a hammock, and the next week you’re a bona fide instructor of English Composition explaining the varied uses of the semicolon to twenty-two UA freshmen. I can still remember my first taste of real pedagogical authority. It was the second day of class and I was beginning my first mini-lecture on the concept of *logos* in essay creation — the need for good facts and examples in supporting a written argument — when suddenly twenty-two pens were pulled out of twenty-two backpacks and put to twenty-two notebooks. A hand shot up in the first row.

“Could you explain that once more, Ms. Jane?”

“Uh,” I said. It was my first raised hand. I couldn’t believe it. I looked around the room at the students, their pens still poised, their faces expectant. *Amazing*, I thought, stunned that what I had to say might be considered noteworthy. Of course somewhere inside I knew that it was, but until that moment my “teacherliness” had just been a theory. Suddenly my students’ belief in my role reconfirmed my own belief, made it real. *I was a teacher, wasn’t I?* “Of course,” I said, straightening my shoulders. “Why don’t I just go over that again.”

Until I heard actual lectures coming out of my mouth I didn’t know I could lecture. (Me? I know things? Teachable things?!) Until I heard myself explaining the differing strengths of narrative summary and dramatized scene in an upper-level fiction workshop, I didn’t know I knew how to articulate the decisions I made when writing a short story. But over these last three years as a graduate teaching assistant, teaching has taught me what I know. It has also taught me how to become a better teacher.

Working in the classroom has been the best and, in many ways, is the only real preparation for teaching. As new English graduate teachers, we were, thankfully, given initial help in the shaping of lesson plans, syllabi and establishing grading and course policies for English 101 and 102 in a required course called “Teaching Freshman English.” Here we were given suggestions on class content and structure. Here we brought our questions as they arose.

And there really is no substitute for experience. For example, I could have spent my whole Saturday planning class, but once I was in front the chalkboard gauging my students’ responses, things I couldn’t have foreseen from my desk at home began to occur to me: 1. Having students comment upon each other’s essays will serve more fruitful if I give them a list of specific questions to answer. 2. Having them write group poems made up of similes will be a more memorable way of teaching metaphor than listing examples on the board. I noted my students’ level of interest, got their feedback and then made the appropriate changes in my approach. The learning curve was incredible. Take the semester I taught two English 102 classes back-to-back, for instance. What didn’t work in the 2:00 class I corrected by the time my 3:30 began. Sometimes the correction wasn’t even conscious. In the second class the same lecture would just come out more naturally worded and to the point.

Through this experience, I learned how to manage my time better, improve assignments, communicate more clearly and challenge students in ways that were fair and enjoyable, but still demanding. I also honed my personal style. I experimented with asking frank questions about controversial essay topics. I facilitated longer discussions and learned how to deal with those deadly silences when no one has done the assigned reading. I made mistakes and felt embarrassed. I told jokes (always educational). Then, before I knew it, I was standing up there in front of those twenty-two freshmen and enjoying it. I still remember the first day I walked out of class giddy with that “teacher’s high.” *They’re learning*, I thought. *They’re really learning*. And it felt revelatory. Working in the classroom had taught me the best lesson yet: I could be a teacher and still be myself.

It’s exciting to think that the longer I teach, the better I’ll become. There’s still so much to learn. But for now it’s reassuring to walk into class knowing that my previous teaching experience has left me well equipped. I can even anticipate that first raised hand. My new twenty-two freshmen don’t need to ask me to repeat what I’ve just said because this time I’ve already gone over it twice, written it on the board and given them additional examples. I can’t wait to see what I do next year.

“Applying to UA: How to Make It Easier”

By: April S. Davenport, UA Future Faculty Fellow, UA PhD Student in English

The Graduate School understands that applying to a graduate program can be quite overwhelming. For this reason, we want you to know that applying to the University of Alabama does not have to be a stressful task. Our application is simple, yet precise, and for your convenience, can be completed online. You will find pertinent information on the UA Graduate School's Application Center website at <http://graduate.ua.edu/application>. Additionally, it is important that you contact the department to which you are applying in order to ensure that all of the requirements are being met. Here is a checklist that will help guide you through the process of applying:

OCTOBER/ NOVEMBER

- Gather detailed information about your program
- Contact faculty members and ask about their comparable interests/skills
- Schedule required admission exams (GRE, GMAT, MAT, LSAT) and obtain study materials
- Inquire about fellowship/assistantship deadlines and other forms of financial aid available to graduate students
- Find out if your department is hosting an Open House; plan a visit to UA and try to schedule an appointment with someone in your department

NOVEMBER/ DECEMBER

- Take required admission exams and have scores sent to the Graduate School
- Request recommendations from professors who know you well and can speak highly of your talents and growths
- Begin working on your Statement of Purpose and other essays required by your department (it is important to work through several drafts of these essays so that you will submit your best work)
- Request transcripts to be sent to the Graduate School
- Find out from your intended program how you can make your application more competitive
- Find out when your department's application deadline is because some programs have deadlines in late December/early January (You do not want to send in a late application)

DECEMBER/ JANUARY/ FEBRUARY

- Submit your online application and mail supplemental materials to your department before deadlines
- Obtain recommendations and/or make sure they have been sent to your department
- Find out if a separate application is needed for an assistantship or fellowship and submit your application
- Ensure that you are aware of all required parts of the application for your department and try to send in the entire application at one time
- Check with the office of your intended UA department to make sure your application materials have been received and ask for the date when you will be notified of the department's admission recommendation

As with any process, there will be pauses along the way. However, if you cannot find the information on the website of the Graduate School, never hesitate to contact a member of the Graduate School Staff at usgradapply@aalan.ua.edu. The application process does not have to be the most complicated process if done in a timely fashion. As with anything, do not wait until the last minute to make a huge life decision!

Materials to Submit to Graduate School (<http://graduate.ua.edu/application>):

Application Form, Statement of Purpose, & Application Fee

Materials to Send to Your Intended UA Department:

Recommendation Letters & Supplemental Department Requirements

Materials that You Request to be Sent to the Graduate School:

All Transcripts & Admission Test Scores

Resources & Events for Prospective & Current Graduate Students

- Consultation with Admissions Staff: Call (205) 348-5921
- Consultation with Financial Aid Staff: Call (205) 348-6756
- Electronic Viewbook for UA Graduate Applicants:
<http://graduate.ua.edu/viewbook/>
- Assistance with Thesis or Dissertation:
http://graduate.ua.edu/thesis_man/index.html
- Grad. Assistant Guide: http://graduate.ua.edu/ga_guide/index.html
- Online Forms for Current Students:
<http://graduate.ua.edu/academics/forms/index.html>
- Online Checklist for Current Students:
<http://graduate.ua.edu/students.html>

If you would like to obtain more information regarding the application process, please attend our Graduate School Seminar "How To Apply" to be held November 3, 2004 from 2:00pm until 3:00pm in Graves Hall, Room 122. (Future dates of the seminar are Feb. 2, March 2, April 6, June 1, July 6, and Aug. 3, 2005)

If you would like to learn more information about writing a thesis or dissertation, please attend the Graduate Student Association's Seminar "Completing a Thesis or Dissertation" presented by Dr. John Schmitt to be held Feb. 9 from 3:00pm until 3:50pm or Feb. 10 from 12:30-1:20pm. Both to be held in Bidgood Hall, Room 34.

Useful Links

The University of Alabama

<http://ua.edu>

Links to Graduate Programs

<http://graduate.ua.edu/academics/departments.html>

Campus Tours

<http://tours.ua.edu/visit.html>

Admissions Tests <http://www.ets.org>

Graduate School

<http://graduate.ua.edu>

Explore Tuscaloosa

<http://www.tcvb.org>

Graduate Student Organizations

Graduate Student Association by Denny Bubrig, President

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) is the collective association for the graduate students of The University of Alabama. As a body this group works primarily in two areas. First, the GSA wishes to enable interconnectivity amongst the various graduate students and the graduate programs. In graduate school, it is very easy to become compartmentalized and remain within the proverbial “box” with regard to friends, support network, and meeting new people. The GSA offers several opportunities for graduate students across the spectrum to gather together in a social setting in order to “mix and mingle” and connect across departmental lines. This also serves as a communications aid when issues of mutual concern arise.

The second aspect is to improve the quality of life for graduate students across the UA campus. Dependent on need, or issue, this may take on a variety of forms. This has involved discussions ranging from health insurance to application fees and options for financial aid.

All of this is dependent though on involvement and communication. In order for these programs, these efforts, OR this organization to be successful, students must be involved. If you want to be a part of an organization working for the improvement of the graduate student body, then come find out more from us. You may visit us on the web at <http://bama.ua.edu/~gsa>.

African American Graduate Student Association by Katara Smith, President

The purpose of the African American Graduate Student Association (AAGSA) is to serve as a source of social and emotional support for African American students and to actively promote the interests of African American graduate students. In addition, the AAGSA promotes the retention of African Americans and seeks to increase minority representation on the campus of The University of Alabama. The mission of the AAGSA is to advance the scholarly activities of African American students and to be a vehicle for positive social change. The AAGSA seeks to fulfill this purpose through social, academic, service, and cultural exchanges.

The AAGSA has numerous objectives including: serving as a support system and networking organization for African American students, assisting current and prospective students by providing information and resources vital to success at UA, to encourage attitudes of professionalism and academic excellence, to provide a structured organization through which graduate students can offer support and service to UA and surrounding communities, and to work with other UA organizations to assure the creation of an institutional environment that fosters students' full personal, academic, and professional development.

The AAGSA welcomes your participation and holds monthly meetings in order to discuss community service organizations and other activities at UA. Please feel free to visit us on the web at <http://bama.ua.edu/~aagsa> or contact one of our officers.

Capstone International

Capstone International is made up of several organizations that seek to fulfill the needs of international graduate students here at UA. These organizations are comprised of students of various nationalities and seek to promote diversity on UA's campus. Additionally, Capstone International and other organizations desire to make graduate students more comfortable in Alabama as well as stimulate relationships between international and domestic students.

These organizations also strive to give students a voice here at UA in order to create a well-rounded graduate school on the social and academic levels. The students in these organizations work diligently to help students make the adjustment to the United States an easier process and foster interaction and participation in the various activities on campus and in the surrounding communities.

If you would like to learn more about UA's international organizations, please feel free to contact our International Admissions officers. You may also find out about the many international organizations on the Graduate School's website or at <http://international.ua.edu>.

Graduate School Calendar & Deadlines

NOVEMBER 2004

01 Online and Telephone Registration begins for Spring 2005 courses (check <http://tideguide.ua.edu/> for more information)

03 Last day to drop a course

03 Graduate School Seminar "How To Apply" held in 122 Graves Hall at 2:00 p.m.

05 Last day to submit theses and dissertations to the Graduate School Office (Applicable only to December graduates.) **NO EXCEPTIONS!**

DECEMBER 2004

03 Last day to report results of comprehensive exams for graduating students NOT writing theses and dissertations (Applicable only to December graduates.)

18 Commencement- 9:00 am at Coleman Coliseum

JANUARY 2005

04-12 Application for degree and admission to candidacy must be completed and on file for students expecting to graduate in May 2005

12 Last day to register or add a course for Spring 2005

21 Announcement of awards for Graduate Council Research/ Creative Activity Fellowships

Recent UA Graduate Community News

UA's MBA Program in U.S. Top 5 for Professors, Facilities and Program Administration--

The University of Alabama's Manderson M.B.A. program is among the nation's elite, according to The Princeton Review. In the national rankings just released, Alabama ranked fourth for Best Campus Facilities, fourth for Best Administered Program, and fifth for Best Professors.

UA Community Journalism Program will Blend Newsroom with Classroom--

A master's degree in community journalism will be taught inside a working newspaper through the collaborative efforts of the Ayers Family Institute for Community Journalism and The Anniston Star newspaper, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, and The University of Alabama's College of Communication and Information Sciences.

UA Graduate Student Receives National Psychology Award--

Susan Fisher of Cartersville, Ga., a clinical psychology doctoral student at The University of Alabama, has received the Psychologists in Long Term Care (PLTC) Student Research Award.

UA Libraries Grant will Combat Shortage Through Education--

University of Alabama Libraries, in partnership with the School of Library and Information Studies, has received a \$449,201 grant from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services to recruit and educate librarians for the 21st Century and offset a looming national shortage.

UA Graduate Student Receives Scholarship from Zonta International--

Shenavia Wilkerson Howell, a doctoral student at The University of Alabama in metallurgical and materials engineering, recently received a scholarship from the Zonta Club of Tuscaloosa.

UA Graduate Student Does Research 'Down Under'--

University of Alabama graduate student Will Adams of St. Stephens recently traveled to The University of Western Australia in Perth to participate in the East Asia and Pacific Summer Institute program (EASPI). At UA, Adams has worked under the direction of Dr. Martin Bakker, associate professor of chemistry.

UA Graduate Student First to Receive ASTM International Award--

Cherqueta R. Claiborn, a graduate student at The University of Alabama in metallurgical and materials engineering, recently received the 2004 Mary R. Norton Memorial Scholarship for Women Award from ASTM International. Claiborn is the first UA student and the first woman in the state of Alabama to receive this international honor.

UA Ranked as Top National Public University in State of Alabama in U.S. News, America's Best Colleges 2005--

The University of Alabama is the highest-ranked national public university in the state of Alabama, according to U.S. News and World Report's annual rankings for 2005. UA is ranked 39th among public universities nationally, making U.S. News' "Top 50 Public National Universities" list for the fourth consecutive year. The ranking is the highest ever for UA, which ranked 48th last year. UA is ranked 86th among all national universities, up from 99th last year. Some 248 universities were listed in the national rankings, including 162 public institutions.

UA IGERT Program Graduate Students Receive Prestigious Awards--

University of Alabama graduate students Dan McGarvey and Lori Tolley-Jordan, both of Tuscaloosa, were recently presented awards at the 2004 annual meeting of the North American Benthological Society (NABS) in Vancouver, British Columbia.

UA Awarded Grant for Graduate Teaching Fellows in Middle and High School Education--

The University of Alabama has been awarded a \$1.6 million grant from the National Science Foundation Division of Graduate Education to establish a new three-year program to enhance the education of students from 6th grade through graduate school.

For more graduate community news, visit <http://www.graduate.ua.edu/news/>

In Focus

Each issue the newsletter will focus on a department or unit that serves as one of the many resources here at UA.

"Graduate Student Services: Working For You"

By: Melissa Medlin, Manager, UA Graduate Student Services

Graduate Student Services (GSS) is located within the Office of the Dean of Students to act as a centralized resource for your student services needs as a graduate student at The University of Alabama. In cooperation with various University offices and organizations, GSS offers support and informational resources to address the unique needs of graduate and professional students. GSS plays a significant role in securing the well-being of graduate students here at UA. While academics are important, GSS handles the non-academic needs of graduate students including healthcare, emergency resources, and other quality of life issues. In addition to helping graduate students, the office of GSS provides several opportunities for graduate students to become more involved here at UA. GSS hosts New Graduate Student Orientation, advises the Graduate Student Association and Alpha Epsilon Lambda, co-hosts the annual Research Conference each Spring with GSA, sponsors Graduate Appreciation Week in the spring, and offers a variety of specialty programs and workshops providing valuable information to UA graduate students. If you are interested in becoming a more active graduate student or would like to obtain more information about Graduate Student Services, please contact Melissa Medlin, Manager of GSS at (205) 348-6796 or at mmedlin@sa.ua.edu. The office of Graduate Student Services is located in 231-C Ferguson Center.

First Friday @ 5- January 7, 2004 (Future Dates- Feb. 4, March 4, and April 4)

Hosted by Graduate Student Services, this "Happy Hour" for all UA Graduate Students is held the first Friday of each month. Complimentary appetizers and beverages will be provided. Join us for a time of relaxation and socializing after a hard week! This event is held in the Ferguson Center Plaza from 5pm until 6:30pm. Please stop by!

Graduate Student Services: <http://gradservices.sa.ua.edu>

Alpha Epsilon Lambda: <http://gradschools.org/>

Departmental Organizations: <http://ccso.ua.edu/directory/directory.html>

THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Editor:

April S. Davenport, Ph.D. Student in English

Guest Writer:

Jane Sandor, Master's Student in Creative Writing

This newsletter serves current and prospective graduate students at The University of Alabama. It is published throughout the year and contains information pertinent to graduate life here at UA.

If you are interested in writing a featured article in future newsletters, please contact April Davenport at adavenpo@aaln.ua.edu.