

The University of Alabama Graduate School

*A Newsletter Serving Current &
Prospective Graduate Students*

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Message from the UA Provost

I offer a warm hello to all current and prospective graduate students at The University of Alabama. The Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs is responsible for overseeing all academic and research programs and a variety of academic services at UA. Specific priorities for this office are described at <http://provost.ua.edu>.

The University annually awards over 135 doctoral degrees and over 1,000 master's degrees and receives over \$70 million for externally sponsored programs. We are proud of the overall excellence of our academic programs, many of which have achieved national recognition.

Each of us in the Office of the Provost and Division of Academic Affairs is ready to assist you in your professional and educational goals. I hope you will explore the Graduate School website at <http://graduate.ua.edu> and learn more about the world of opportunity that exists for you at UA. Moreover, I hope you future graduate students will visit our campus in Tuscaloosa and discover firsthand why Alabama's capstone university is a fine research university and a great place to get the education for a lifetime.



Sincerely,

Dr. Judy L. Bonner
Provost and Vice President
for Academic Affairs

UA Graduate Program Spotlight: Master of Social Work

- **Degree Offered:** Master of Social Work
- **Mission Statement:** The mission of the School of Social Work at The University of Alabama is to integrate teaching, research, and service to increase knowledge of social problems and their solutions, to improve social conditions, and to promote social justice and human dignity for all people. A diverse community of researchers, teachers, learners, and support persons with shared values and aspirations, the School endeavors to promote research, lifelong learning, and development among individuals, groups, and communities concerned with improving human conditions.
- **Areas of Study:** Health; Mental Health; Children, Youth, and Families; Older Persons; and Program and Agency Administration
- **Opportunities for Internship Experience:** Field placement agencies are located throughout Alabama and in Washington, D.C. Concentration-Year students have the option of completing a field placement in Washington, D.C. Placement options include National Institute of Health, Children's Bureau, St. Elizabeth's Hospital, Walter Reed Hospital, National Association of Social Work, and the United Way.
- **Accreditation:** Council on Social Work Education (until 2011)
- **Students Enrolled:** 230 M.S.W. Students
- **Faculty:** 25 Full-time Faculty Members
- **Program Locations:**
 - A. Main Campus (Tuscaloosa) - Weekday, Two-Year Program; Saturday First-Year Program; Advanced-Standing Program
 - B. Mobile or Montgomery, AL - Advanced Standing Program (beginning in May 2005); Saturday First-Year Program (beginning in 2006)
 - C. Gadsden - Two-Year MSW Program (beginning in May 2005); Advanced Standing MSW Program (beginning in 2006)
 - D. Hong Kong- First Year MSW Program in Hong Kong; Second year in Tuscaloosa
- **Specific Suggestions for Graduate Applicants:** (1) Applicants who apply by February 1 receive priority consideration for admission, stipends, and scholarships. (2) Applicants should follow the program's guidelines for writing the Statement of Purpose. The SOP is an important part of the application; check the program's website for more information.
- **Graduate Application Priority Deadline:** February 1
- **Contact Person for Questions:** Mary Sella (msella@sw.ua.edu)
- **Website:** <http://socialwork.ua.edu>
- **Program Location:** School of Social Work / 102 Little Hall / Box 870314 / Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0314 205-348-6791

Highlights of the Program:

- The School implemented a joint MSW/MPH degree in conjunction with the School of Public Health at the University of Alabama in Birmingham in 1999.

Resources for International Students

By: Hana'a D Ali Al-Ebous, PhD Student in Biology

Due to the notable reputation of universities in the United States, particularly during the last few decades; and the popularity that the English language has attained in the fields of science and technology, study at an American university has created numerous advantages for international students. The University of Alabama is no exception in that it also has received attention from those students wishing to study in the United States, especially at the graduate level. The University of Alabama has a variety of academic programs that fulfill the needs and meet the aspirations of ambitious international students planning to enhance their academic achievement and enter the demanding industries of research and education. Realizing the need to meet these demands necessitates that prospective international students be aware of—and how to meet—the requirements for study at UA. If a student follows these simple, yet significant guidelines, study at UA will become more than a dream.

To secure admission to the Graduate School at UA, an international applicant needs to take both the TOEFL and the GRE. While there are some standards relative to the International Graduate Admissions Office, each department has its own standards that students must meet. While these scores do not solely determine admission status, students should prepare carefully before taking the necessary examinations. It is also a good idea to remain in contact with the Graduate School and also maintain communication with professors and other staff members in the department to which you are applying. Additionally, the student should obtain recommendation letters to inform UA about his/her previous academic performance and also provide a statement of purpose to explain research goals. Other useful application information can be found on the Graduate School's website at <http://graduate.ua.edu>.

UA adopts a semester-based system-- fall, spring, and summer semesters. The number of credit hours a full-time graduate student can study per semester is determined by a minimum and a maximum that generally range between 9 and 15. Every semester, students should ensure that they are taking the necessary courses to keep up with their program's requirements. Once enrolled in UA, it is important that a student realize that planning and anticipation are vital assets to a graduate education. In order to reach the future, one must prepare for the future and there are resources available to ensure that all students, international and U.S., are able to accomplish this goal during their study at UA.

UA enjoys a richly diverse social atmosphere whereby students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds interact in a safe environment that encourages the exploration of territories unknown or unfamiliar. Thus, ethnic, religious, racial, or gender differences are celebrated as characteristics of a healthy and well-rounded student and faculty population that promises to offer success to everyone.

Graduate study at UA is a valuable resource for the total person. This includes, but is not limited to, increasing personal responsibility within and outside of the academic realm. International students are faced with the challenge of leading rigorous academic lives while being away from close relatives and friends. Mirrored in the details of the academic life, the philosophy behind graduate study at UA stresses that each graduate student be able to demonstrate serious intention and clear ability to work independently. The teaching practices provide students with outlines to follow without dictating very narrow, specific details. Instead, critical thinking and continual investigation are taught and encouraged. This instructional approach is aided by the availability of well-equipped labs and constantly updated libraries that provide students with easy online-access to most recently published reputable research journals. Such unique attention to the student's mind is well-balanced with attention to the student's physical well-being. Therefore, students enjoy the facilities of UA's recreation center in which they can practice various types of sports or increase their physical abilities by exercising. UA has an abundance of resources available to all of its students and these can be explored by visiting the UA website, <http://ua.edu>, or by taking a trip to Tuscaloosa to experience the essence of UA firsthand.

My two-year study at UA has been an interesting, fruitful experience that warrants me to urge other international students to study at UA and enjoy the tranquility of Tuscaloosa's finest attraction-- The University of Alabama.

Financing Your Education

After applying and being accepted into graduate school, the number one priority becomes finding a way to pay for it. Fortunately, there are numerous programs and opportunities available for students wishing to pursue graduate study. The Graduate School, along with UA departments, works to identify scholarships, fellowships, and assistantships for graduate study. Below is a list of assistantships and fellowships that UA presently offers. This list is not meant to be exhaustive, and more information can be obtained on our website <http://graduate.ua.edu/financial/> or by contacting a representative from your intended department.

Graduate Assistantships:

Most academic departments of the Graduate School have teaching and research assistantships available. Students should contact departments directly to obtain information and application forms for assistantships.

Graduate Council Fellowships: The Graduate School awards a number of nonrenewable Graduate Council Fellowships each year with stipends of \$14,000 per academic year. Preference will be given to students beginning their graduate programs. No service to the University is required, but recipients must carry a normal course load of 12 graduate hours during each semester. Recipients for the coming academic year are selected at three times: the first week in February, the first week in March, and mid-April. Nominations are made by academic departments. Interested students should ask their intended graduate departments for information about the departmental nomination process. Students who are awarded Graduate Council Fellowships also receive scholarship grants equal to their full in-state and out-of-state tuition charges.

National Alumni Association (NAA) Graduate Fellowship Program: This program awards a \$14,000 stipend plus a full-tuition scholarship. The source of the fellowship is the National Alumni Association's Collegiate License Tag Endowed Graduate Education Fund. The award is based on students' academic and professional records and potential to make outstanding contributions during their careers to the lives of the people of the state of Alabama. Nominations for these fellowships are made by the academic departments in the spring of each year. Interested students should contact their intended department for more information regarding the nomination process.

Future Faculty Fellows Program: African-American graduate students who are seeking the terminal degree in their field and plan to become a college or university professor may apply for fellowships from The University of Alabama Future Faculty Fellows Program. To increase the numbers of college faculty members from minority groups, this program provides funds for African-American students working toward doctoral or other terminal degrees. Consideration for the program is based upon departmental nomination of graduate students. Interested students should contact the chair of their intended departments for information about the departmental nomination process.

Joint Faculty Development Fellowships: The University of Alabama Graduate School has joint programs with Alabama A&M University, Alabama State University, Oakwood College, and Stillman College for practicing minority faculty members at these institutions who do not have terminal degrees in their fields of instruction. Faculty members must be nominated for the fellowship by their home institutions. Faculty members participating in this program receive support from both their home institutions (to be negotiated with each institution's vice president for academic affairs) and The University of Alabama Graduate School. Interested students should contact the Graduate School for information.

National Alumni Association Graduate Scholarship Program:

To be eligible for these awards, an applicant must hold regular admission to the Graduate School, must possess entrance examination scores well above the national norm, and must have a grade point average indicative of a high probability of success in graduate school. Preference is given to new students. Nominations for these awards are made by the dean of each division at the request of the Graduate School. Each college and school that awards a post-baccalaureate degree will receive one \$1,000 annual scholarship from the National Alumni Association. Nominations from each college are made in early March. Students should contact the chairs of their graduate departments for more information about the departmental nomination process.

Alumni Heritage Graduate Scholarship:

The scholarship rewards the children and grandchildren of University of Alabama alumni for choosing the University for higher education. The scholarship is a 1-year, nonrenewable award for 10% of in-state tuition. In order to qualify, students must be enrolled full-time (9 hours of graduate classes) and have a parent or grandparent who both 1) holds a degree (undergraduate, graduate, or law) from the University and 2) has been an active member of the Alumni Association for 3 of the past 5 years. For more information, contact Kathleen Nodine at the Graduate School, P.O. Box 870118, Tuscaloosa, AL, 35487-0118; telephone (205) 348-8280.

Alabama Commission on Higher Education(ACHE)/Southern Regional Education Board (SREB)

Fellowships: The ACHE/SREB Minority Doctoral Scholars Program encourages ethnic minority students to pursue doctoral degrees and become college professors. ACHE/SREB scholars receive \$15,000 annual stipends, book allowances, and tuition scholarships for up to 5 years of graduate study through a combination of SREB, Graduate School, and departmental funding. ACHE/SREB fellowships are awarded typically to new doctoral students. Interested students should contact the Graduate School for more information about the application process.

Graduate Student Research and Travel Support Fund:

During the first two weeks of each fall and spring term, UA graduate department chairs are invited to submit nominations for graduate students to receive research and travel support funds from the Graduate School. Faculty members and graduate students should contact their department chairs for more information about the departmental nomination process.

For additional information about the large number of specific scholarships available from departments, colleges, campus organizations, and external organizations, please visit <http://www.graduate.ua.edu/financial/>.

The **Office of Financial Aid** is also available to assist students in finding other means of financing their education. For more information, visit <http://financialaid.ua.edu> or call (205) 348-6756.

Diversity at the Graduate Level- An End to Living In A Vacuum

By: Leola Harden-Lester, UA Joint Faculty Development Fellow, EdD Student in Secondary Education-English

Diversity seems to be the buzz word on the campuses of most colleges and universities. Today, educational institutions such as The University of Alabama make great strides to ensure equity and an appraisal of the multiplicity of differences that come with the demographics of the campus population. Programs are developed to create a community that fosters tolerance and respect for individual differences and to engender cooperative learning experiences from which broad-minded intellectuals can exchange ideas and impact the lives of others.

As a Joint Faculty Development Fellow to The University of Alabama from Alabama State University, I view diversity as a means of merging two institutions whose populations were historically homogeneous in nature. A merging of the two provides a catalyst for the type of experiential learning that enables both faculty and students to move beyond their present position and to connect with others. Similarly, the experiences I encounter here at the graduate level broaden my knowledge of varying cultures beyond my own and further sensitize me to the needs of others within my domain. As a reciprocal, my interactions with others in the graduate program afford them an opportunity to benefit from the varied experiences I bring to the program.

What develops from these encounters is dialogue that has the potential to promote change. In contrast, the absence of diverse populations in graduate programs deprives both faculty and students of the benefit of interacting with ethnic groups other than their majority population and, therefore, fails to provide either of them with meaningful experiences beyond their own culture of power. This understanding is crucial in a graduate program because the graduates are the ones who will be filling leadership positions wherein they will be called upon to make decisions that affect the lives of various individuals of differing background. The absence of diversity allows students to isolate themselves from what is different and to attach little value to existence or needs of others.

Customarily, the term "diversity" is applied to the practice of recruiting minority students to academic settings that consistently represent the majority culture, Caucasians. Hence, the term "diversity" replaces the term "Affirmative Action," which gives the unfavorable connotation of quota-filling without regard to qualification. In the past, the rationale for this focused recruitment has been to satisfy the mandates of court decisions such as *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), wherein the desired outcome was to right a particular wrong, or to grant opportunities wherein they had been previously denied. This particular posture encouraged a negative climate as some institutions perceived the mandates forced and intrusive. Some fifty years after *Brown*, however, higher education has taken a forward leap toward expanding its definition of diversity to include not only African Americans but also other ethnic groups, genders, sexualities, social economic levels, and disabilities that are underrepresented in various educational settings. Realizing that diversity is germane to more than ethnicity helps create a climate of acceptance because no one ethnic group can view itself as superior or inferior to the other. Despite this advancement, diversity is still needed in graduate programs as it helps to improve race relations, promote tolerance, broaden the educational experiences of students from diverse backgrounds, and expand curricular offerings.

Tolerance is a benefit that comes with diversity. Exposure to a diversified program helps students recognize a fundamental truth: human beings are more alike than they are different. An awareness of this accepted truth keeps individuals from developing a resistance to others who do not look, speak, believe, or ambulate in the same manner. This realization is a starting point in developing a respect for differences. Failure to cultivate such awareness produces invisible barriers that prevent individuals from getting a clear view of others. In fact, barrier-based interactions only serve to propagate stereotypes and create an air of superiority that transcends the educational forum of the university and spill over into the greater society. Hence, the lens by which the general populous witnesses the learning experience is limited, and the result of this tunnel-like vision is a social deficiency that counteracts the global efforts of the university as evidenced in the development of distance learning and multicultural programs used to attract students.

All in all, the mere presence of diversity in a graduate program helps to ground students in pedagogy that enables them to identify with the issues they will encounter in their profession, whether their profession is education, law, health care, or the like. A culturally conscious student is more likely to adapt than one who has not engaged in a culturally diverse learning environment. Is diversity still needed in a graduate program? The answer is —now more than ever.

Lending a Helping Hand

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

As graduate students, it seems as if there is never enough time in the day to complete all of the items on our to-do lists. In addition to learning, teaching, and/or researching, there is also studying, writing, reading, exams, theses, and dissertations to consider. Keeping all of that in mind, it seems as though to add an item to the list would be torture. However, after the day is over and we have realized all of the stuff yet to do, the soothing thought of knowing that we have helped someone comforts our minds and helps us to remember that tomorrow is simply a day away. That is correct; I am talking about helping other people as we work to obtain our degrees. Yes, time grows shorter every day, but the need for assistance does not. If we take a look around our community or the world, we realize that there is always aid to be given. I am not referring to giving of our finances, but more so of our time and ourselves.

Community service continues to be a top priority on the undergraduate level, but it is equally pertinent for graduate students. No one is asking for a weekly or even monthly commitment to any one program, but perhaps a few times during the semester, you can forget about your degree program and help someone else dream about being in your shoes. There are several organizations and programs that allow you to experience first-hand the joys of helping others. Maybe during the winter, you want to give a usable coat to a homeless shelter or perhaps you would like to serve a holiday dinner to those without families. If you don't want to get out of the academic grind, there are several tutoring or mentoring opportunities on campus and in Tuscaloosa. For example, the AAGSA goes to Central High School once a month to tutor high school students. Also, there are various tutoring opportunities on campus that can participate in. Major volunteer organizations such as Habitat for Humanity and Feed the Homeless have local venues and area always looking for additional persons.

The bottom line is there is always work to be done, and I mean outside of the classroom and the library. Just think back to all of those people who have helped you in the past and remember, you owe it someone to lend a helping hand.

Check out these other great sources for volunteer opportunities:

Volunteer Services: <http://www.volunteer.ua.edu/>

335 Ferguson Center, Program Coordinator- Shana Foster, 348-2865

Graduate Student Association: <http://www.bama.ua.edu/~gsa/>

African American Graduate Student Association: <http://www.bama.ua.edu/~aagsaua/>

Capstone International: <http://international.ua.edu>

Resources & Events for Prospective & Current Graduate Students

- **Consultation with UA Graduate Admissions Staff:**
Call (205) 348-5921
- **Consultation with UA 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
- **Graduate Assistant Guide:** http://graduate.ua.edu/ga_guide/index.html
- **Online Forms for Current Graduate Students:**
<http://graduate.ua.edu/academics/forms/index.html>
- **Online Checklist for Current Graduate 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 April 6, 2005 from 2:00pm until 3:00pm in Graves Hall, Room 122. (Future dates of the seminar are June 1, July 6, and Aug. 3, 2005)

GSA Upcoming Events:

With spring semester starting there are several things being sponsored by the Graduate Student Association. First and foremost, the Graduate Student Association Research (and Thesis) Conference will take place March 15-17. This will be a low-key opportunity for you to make a presentation of your original research/thesis, receive critique, and prepare to present it at professional conferences. Secondly, GSA is supporting the Graduate Student Appreciation Week the week of April 4-8. There will be a number of events that week and we encourage all graduate students to take part. Third, GSA elections will take place March 20-26. If you are interested in taking a leadership role for the GSA, stay tuned! More information will follow in early March. If you have any questions or would like more information about the GSA, visit our website at <http://www.gsa.ua.edu> or email bubri002@bama.ua.edu.

Graduate School Calendar & Deadlines

APRIL 2005

- 01-30 All degree candidates should pay a \$40 diploma fee to the Office of Student Receivables for May Commencement
- 05 Registration for Fall 2005 begins
- 06 Graduate School Seminar "How To Apply" from 2pm-3pm in 122 Graves Hall
- 15 Deadline for all international applications for Fall 2005 (unless department has earlier deadline)
- 22 Last day to report results of comprehensive exams for graduating students NOT writing theses and dissertations
- 29 Deadline to receive official transcripts for those students graduating in May who are transferring credit (**NO EXCEPTIONS!**)
- 29 Spring Semester 2005 Classes end

MAY 2005

- 06 Graduate Commencement 6:00pm
- 07 Undergraduate Commencement 8:30am and 6:00pm

In Focus

Practical Advice from An Insider: A Look at UA Library Services

By: Brett Spencer, Reference Librarian, Gorgas Library, dbspence@bama.ua.edu

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

Have you ever wished that you could go back in time knowing what you know now?

I feel that way about my graduate studies. A few years ago, I went to graduate school at another large university. I survived many late nights of flipping through books and clicking away on papers. Although pretty grueling at the time, I am now glad that I somehow trudged my way through these “trial by fire” research battles.

After finishing my degree, I came to work as a reference librarian at the UA Libraries. Reflecting back, I realize that my life would have been much easier as a student if I had known a few things about college libraries that I know now as an “insider” working within a library. Well, I can’t go back in time to my own graduate years, but at least I can share some little-known tips that will help you take full advantage of the UA Libraries:

1. Learn a Few Tricks and Tips in the Libraries’ Catalog

The Libraries’ Catalog has several built-in tricks to help you fine tune your searches:

- Tack a question mark onto a word stem to find forms with different endings. For example, typing in *swim?* will find *swim*, *swimmer*, *swimmers*, and *swimming* all in one search (The same trick works in most databases by using an asterisk).
- Search for the *type* of information that you want as well as the *topic*. For example, if you’re doing historical research on Watergate, type in *Watergate and sources* to focus your search on primary sources. Or, instead of *sources*, you can also try substituting words like *diaries*, *memoirs*, *speeches*, *accounts*, *narratives*, etc. On the other hand, if you’re looking for illustrations of life in Italy, type in *Italy and ill?*, and you’ll find books with pictures, photographs, and other types of illustrations. Try specifying the different types of information in your own discipline when you search.
- You already know the old trick of finding one book that you want and then browsing around it on the shelves for other books. You can now do this without even leaving the Catalog. Once you find a book that hits the nail on the head, click on its hyperlinked call number, and the Catalog will show you an online “shelf” with the other books around your book. Remember, graduate students are strictly limited in the number of books they can check out—you can check out only 250 per semester! You can also check out videos to show classes or journals more than five years old. Please don’t forget that you can renew books from home by clicking “My Account” in the Catalog.

2. Master the In’s and Out’s of the Databases

- OK, I know you’ve searched databases many times. However, the Libraries have now re-designed their database listing to better guide you to the best resources for your subject. Just go to <http://www.lib.ua.edu/databases/> and select your major from the drop-down “subject” list on the left side of the page to see librarians’ “top picks” for each discipline. Be sure to check out the enhanced “Search Tips” next to each database title. Also try using the “Discover” link on the right side of the databases page.

When searching in databases, the right keywords are always helpful tools. When you have several synonyms for a topic, and don’t want to search for each one separately, string them together with *or*’s in parentheses: *Alabama and (dogs or puppies or canines)*

- All articles that you find will have the keyword *Alabama* and at least one of the synonyms in the parentheses. Pretty cool, isn’t it? You can find even more resources at <http://www.lib.ua.edu/subguides/subguidesalpha.htm>.

3. Take Advantage of Services for Distance Students, International Students, and Students with Disabilities

If you fall into any of these three groups, check out all we have to offer you:

- Distance Education <http://www.lib.ua.edu/distanceed/>
- Disability Services <http://www.lib.ua.edu/disabilities/>
- International Students <http://www.lib.ua.edu/international/>

4. Keep These Tools in Mind

- *Digital Dissertations*—allows you to search for abstracts of dissertations and some theses published at other universities throughout the United States.
- *OED Online*—finds all possible meanings for a word as well as its history of use.
- *Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe*—offers a one-stop shopping source for news. Well, with Lexis-Nexis, you can access these TV and radio news transcripts—as well as current newspaper articles, polls and surveys, court cases, Alabama newswires, and foreign news sources.
- *World Cat*—searches the catalogs of almost every major library in the United States.
- *ISI Web of Science*—even though it has “science” in its title, this database covers the humanities, social sciences, and sciences. You plug an article into ISI Web of Science, and it will find other articles that *cited your article*. This feature means that you’ll often find sources in ISI Web of Science that you’d never find in other databases that use only keyword searching!

5. Know How to Work Interlibrary Loan

- Speed up your Interlibrary Loan requests by tapping some of the specialized ILL services that UA provides. Go to <http://library.ua.edu/> and look down on the bottom right at “Other Libraries” and “Kudzu.” “Other Libraries” links you to the Universal Borrowing system, a new service that searches the catalogs of several Alabama academic libraries. If you find a book you want in another library, press the “Holds/Recalls/Requests” button to have the book sent to UA. *This means you have access to all the books in the libraries at five college campuses.* “Kudzu” is pretty similar except that it allows you to quickly locate and order books from twelve major research libraries *across the Southeast*. Just search for your topic, click on the title of the book you want, and then hit the “Interlibrary Loan” button. Both Universal Borrowing and Kudzu work a little faster than ordering books through the ILL request form. See the full list of partner libraries at <http://www.lib.ua.edu/distanceed/dlreciprocal.htm>.

6. Go High-Tech at the Libraries

The Gorgas Library’s new Sanford Research and Design Center (R&D) gives you the power to:

- Design web pages, Create your own animations or movies, Compose music using an electronic keyboard, Author CDs or DVDs
- Check out digital and video cameras for off-campus use.

With the R&D’s resources, you can become the author of multimedia content. Check out their website at <http://www.lib.ua.edu/randd/> and start imagining the possibilities for your research and teaching....

7. Camp Out in the Libraries

- The Libraries often feel like a home away from home for graduate students with so much research to do. Fortunately, the Libraries offer a number of perks to make you more comfortable. On the first floor of Gorgas, Java City Coffee Shop now sells salads and sandwiches in addition to breakfast and snacks. During the semester, Rodgers Science Library and Bruno Business Library remain open until 2am Sunday-Thursday for those who do their best work at night. You can also reserve a carrel in Gorgas Library if you are a doctoral student in the writing stage of your dissertation.

8. Sign Your Classes Up for Library Teaching

- You may find yourself teaching a class for the first time as a graduate student and hope to expose your class to the Libraries through a research assignment. Take it from me, making assignments that force students to use libraries is easy, but making one that actually is “successful” is not! Please know that librarians will gladly check over your assignment before you give it out to your students. One of the best ways to ease your students into research is by asking a librarian to give your class an orientation to the Libraries. Librarians offer instruction in state-of-the-art classrooms that permit students to have hands-on practice searching databases. For more tips, visit <http://www.lib.ua.edu/libraries/gorgas/gorgasta.htm> or <http://www.lib.ua.edu/staffdir/>.

9. “Make Friends” with a Librarian While Working on Your Thesis or Dissertation

- Theses and dissertations can be a very valuable avenue for learning—or a quagmire that can delay graduation if you can’t find enough sources! You can get walk-in help from the reference desk or make an appointment to meet with a librarian one-on-one. To schedule a consultation, please contact the appropriate librarian at <http://www.lib.ua.edu/staffdir/>.

10. Ask a Librarian- In Person or Online

- Just go to www.lib.ua.edu and click the “Ask-A-Librarian” link at the top right of the page.

Conclusion:

Completing your research is perhaps the biggest battle that you’ll fight as a graduate student. If that’s true, then the Libraries will play a huge role in your academic career. Hopefully, some of the pointers in this article will come in handy during your labors in the Libraries. Above all else, please contact us if you need help with anything or have suggestions about library services. Take it from a veteran who recently came out of the trenches of graduate study—the librarians can be your best friends on campus!

THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA

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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@alan.ua.edu.

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