

2023
2024

Division of Student Affairs Annual Report



UAB STUDENT
AFFAIRS

The University of Alabama at Birmingham



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A Message from the Vice President for Student Affairs

Blazers,

As the 2023-2024 academic year closes and we embark upon 2024-2025, I would like to take time to share with you the Division of Student Affairs Annual Report. It was a year filled with supporting our students through their endeavors while traversing difficult times throughout our world. However, we completed the year stronger than we began because we worked in collaboration with our students, faculty, staff, and community partners. Thank you for all you do to support our student Blazer experience!

This past year, we began the year in celebration, welcoming our new Blazers and reuniting with our returning Blazers with an inaugural concert on the Campus Green, featuring T-Pain. In partnership with Academic Affairs, the Division of Student Affairs enhanced the Blazer Core with the inaugural Blazers at Birmingham initiative for over 50 of our new Blazers! To enhance the spirit at the first Blazer Football Game, the Division of Student Affairs, in collaboration with Athletics, organized the inaugural First Year Student Run-Out to lead our team onto the field!

Throughout the year, we supported our student Blazers through initiatives such as the First Blazer Peer Network and the Certified Peer Health Advocate Program. These services not only assisted individual student leaders, but also peers in need. As we continue our work together, our community grows stronger as we help one another succeed.

For the second consecutive year, the UAB Division of Student Affairs was recognized by Diverse Issues in Higher Education and the Association of College Student Educators International (ACPA) as a Most Promising Place to Work in 2024. Nationally, our Division was one of only 23 universities and colleges honored with this accolade. I am privileged to serve alongside the talented team of Student Affairs professionals that daily put students at the center of our work.

I look forward to the year ahead filled with innovation and collaboration as we strive for excellence. Our mutual success is greater through the shared journeys of service with and for all our students.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John R. Jones III". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Go Blazers,
John R. Jones III, Ph.D.
Vice President for Student Affairs

Mission, Vision, and Core Values



VISION

Creating transformational experiences for students.

MISSION

We create learning environments and experiences; build a culture of social justice, innovation, and wellbeing; foster a sense of belonging; remove barriers to enhance student success; and develop leaders who create change.

Core Values

WELLBEING

We champion a holistic culture of resiliency, mental and physical health that improves the long-term health of our communities.

EQUITY & INCLUSION

We uphold the principles of fairness, equity, and social justice by creating an environment where students feel welcome across and at the intersections of their social identities.

EXCELLENCE

We pursue the highest standard of quality in how we engage with others, manage resources, support our staff, develop ourselves and contribute to student success.

INTEGRITY

We commit to honesty, transparency and consistency by modeling and teaching ethical behavior.

COLLABORATION

We create intentional partnerships for the shared purpose of supporting student success and achieving university goals.

INNOVATION

We strive for and advance impactful services and programs which generate contributions of distinction.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We take responsibility for achieving personal and professional development; set high expectations and enact changes based on data.

Strategic Priorities

WELLBEING

We create supportive, sustainable campus environments in which students thrive and flourish. We promote holistic mental and physical health, addressing issues of resilience, access to nutritious food, health care, physical activity, personal development, social connection, and active citizenship.

INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

While recognizing and embracing UAB's distinctive history and location, we create and sustain an inclusive community that recognizes and celebrates our diversity. We create brave, safe spaces for success, meaningful connections, and welcoming environments intentionally designed to meet the needs of all its members.

ENGAGEMENT & LEARNING

We are committed to student success and create learning opportunities and pathways for student involvement beyond the classroom. Through organizational experiences we prepare students for the global workplace to begin a journey of self-discovery that leads to identifying their life's purpose. Students apply and practice classroom learning through active participation in co-curricular experiences that help them attain their personal, professional, and academic goals.

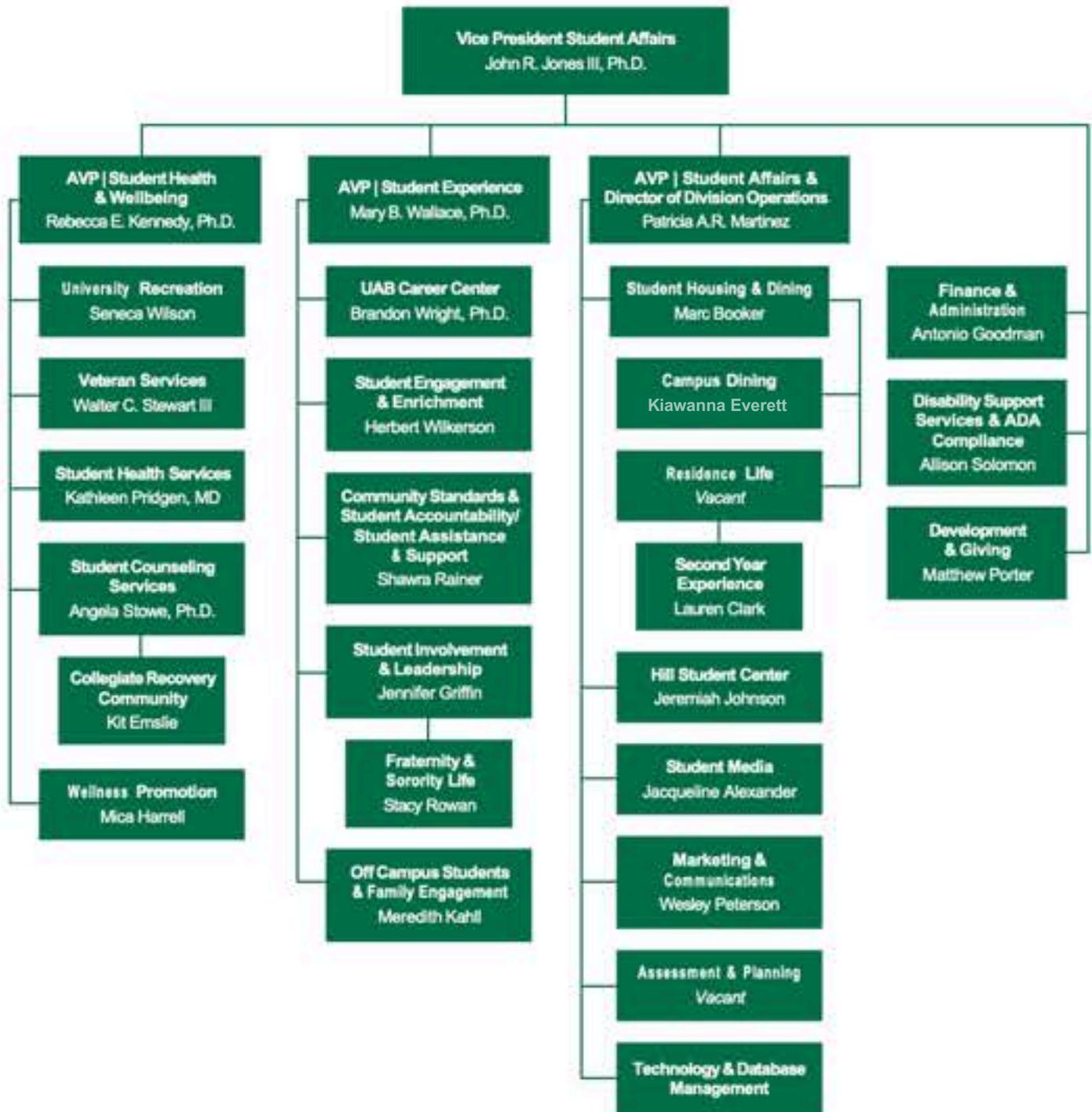
ORGANIZATIONAL ENHANCEMENT

We are committed to providing a robust, responsive organization that is representative of and meets the needs of our students. We optimize the human, financial, and operational resources in key functional and student support areas to fully develop the Division's capacity for positively shaping the student experience and professional experience of our staff.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We promote active commitment to our communities by contributing knowledge, relationships, partnerships and expertise for the enrichment of society.

Student Affairs Organizational Chart



Creating Transformational Learning Environments & Experiences

Student Affairs is dedicated to fostering an enriching campus atmosphere where students thrive both academically and personally. Central to our mission is the creation of transformational learning environments and experiences that prepare students for success beyond their college years. Through innovative programs, supportive services, and diverse opportunities for engagement, we aim to cultivate a holistic educational experience that empowers students to reach their fullest potential. Whether through leadership development, wellness initiatives, or community involvement, Student Affairs is committed to nurturing the growth and success of every Blazer.

UAB's Student Counseling attains IACS accreditation

ACCREDITED BY



Inspiring excellence in student mental health care

The University of Alabama at Birmingham's (UAB) Student Counseling Services has achieved accreditation from the International Accreditation of Counseling Services (IACS), solidifying its position as a leader in providing high-quality mental health services to students. ACS is the premier organization for setting and evaluating standards in professional counseling services on college campuses worldwide. Its rigorous accreditation process involves extensive documentation, an on-site evaluation, and peer reviews across five key areas: relationships within the university community, counseling and clinical services, ethical standards, personnel, and resources. This certification makes UAB one of three accredited university counseling centers in the state of Alabama.

"The accreditation reflects our dedication to supporting student well-being with services that meet the highest professional standards," said Angela Stowe, Ph.D., UAB's Student Counseling Services director. "It is a testament to our team's commitment to helping students thrive academically and personally."

To earn this distinction, counseling centers must demonstrate excellence in service delivery, ongoing professional development, and adherence to ethical practices. IACS accreditation also recognizes centers that continually advance the quality of their offerings. UAB's Student Counseling Services provides a range of services, including individual counseling, group therapy, crisis intervention, and wellness programs, all aimed at supporting the mental health needs of the university's student population.

Blazers@Birmingham: Building a Foundation of Connection



students enter the university until they graduate. By fostering community connections, promoting personal growth, and integrating career development, UAB's Student Affairs and affiliated programs demonstrate an unwavering commitment to enriching the student experience through programming.

Launched just before the start of the 2023-24 academic year, Blazers@Birmingham - First Days as A Blazer aimed to immerse first-year students in UAB's values and traditions while fostering a sense of belonging within the Birmingham community. Over three days, students engaged in activities like the Rise Against Hunger Day of Service and tours of the 16th Street Baptist Church and Birmingham Civil Rights Institute.

"I was interested in Blazers@Birmingham because of the new connections, meeting new people and trying new things," said Cytlati Chaidez, a 2023 cohort member.

Through these activities, students were immersed in UAB traditions and campus culture while being encouraged to become active participants in campus life and establish an organic connection to UAB. The inaugural cohort of over 50 students left inspired, equipped to embrace UAB's culture and their broader community.

"Blazers@Birmingham was an incredible opportunity for me as I entered UAB as a freshman," said Mikayla Dail, a member of the inaugural cohort. "The best part of my experience was meeting my classmates, who came from all over the country and the world."



Members of the inaugural Blazers@Birmingham cohort packed over 20,000 meals for families in need during UAB's Rise Against Hunger Day of Service event held in late August. The packaged meals totaled 95 large boxes shipped to Convoy of Hope,

a faith-based nonprofit humanitarian organization in the Philippines.

Rise Against Hunger is an international hunger relief organization that distributes food and life-changing aid to the world's most vulnerable.

The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), the Division of Student Affairs aspires to create dynamic and impactful learning environments that extend beyond the classroom from the time



UAB's 'Into the Streets' Sees Record - Breaking Volunteer Participation

The University of Alabama at Birmingham's (UAB) bi-annual "Into the Streets" program, sponsored by the Leadership and Service Council (LSC), continues to demonstrate its commitment to community service and student engagement. The program, designed to connect UAB students with the Birmingham community through dedicated service days, saw unprecedented participation and impact during its latest events.

On September 9, 2023, UAB hosted its fall "Into the Streets" event in collaboration with Student Housing & Residence Life and Live HealthSmart Alabama. The event engaged 344 volunteers, marking a 137% increase compared to the previous academic year. Volunteers contributed a total of 688 service hours to various projects across Greater Birmingham.

The spring edition of "Into the Streets," held on March 23, 2024, continued this upward trend, with 289 volunteers participating - a 130% increase from Spring 2023 - and collectively providing 578 hours of service. In total, 633 UAB students dedicated 1,266 hours to support and uplift the Birmingham community through these two events.

Wajiha Mekki, executive director of the Student Leadership Council, emphasized the program's significance, stating, "Into the Streets is an opportunity for students from all walks of life and sides of campus to get together and work towards a common goal: serving our community. As a tenet of the Blazer Way, service is valuable to community, personal, and professional development. This event is unique to UAB and helps us not only honor this tenet and tradition but to do so in a way that will have an impact beyond our campus".

For over twenty years, "Into the Streets" has successfully fostered community involvement and strengthened bonds among students. Many first-time volunteers have gone on to become frequent participants and even interns with community partners. This year's fall event alone made a financial impact of \$19,635, showcasing the tangible benefits of student-led community service.



"Into the Streets is an opportunity for students from all walks of life and sides of campus to get together and work towards a common goal: serving our community."

Wajiha Mekki
Executive Director, Student Leadership Council

Blazer Welcome: A Smooth Transition to College Life

Blazer Welcome, UAB's four-week initiative led by Student Involvement & Leadership, designed to assist first-year students in their transition to UAB by offering programs and opportunities that cover a multitude of topics from getting involved and learning about UAB to staying safe and navigating the campus. Students are offered an immersive introduction to academic engagement, wellness, and community life. Over 3,600 unique attendees participated in fall 2023. With 60 events hosted by 23 departments saw 7,522 participants. 83% of first-time freshmen participated in at least one activity, reflecting a 14% increase in multi-event attendance compared to 2022.

Participants reported increased awareness of academic resources, volunteer opportunities, and health-promoting habits, underscoring the program's transformative impact on UAB students.





UAB's Inaugural Veterans Day 5K Supports Student Veterans

On November 11, UAB Student Affairs and Veterans Services hosted the inaugural Veterans Day 5K at the UAB Mini Park. Despite light rain, over 400 participants, including students, faculty, staff, and community members, gathered to honor veterans and raise funds for the Veteran Emergency Relief Fund and dependent emergency needs.

Racers navigated a course down 13th St. S, with UAB student and Army National Guard member Nadia Gwinn among them, emphasizing the event's significance in honoring veterans. Proceeds from the 5K directly supported the UAB Veteran Relief Fund, providing support for veteran and active-duty students in areas such as housing, healthcare, and textbooks



Empowering Healthy Choices and Building Community at UAB

The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) is transforming campus culture by integrating wellness, education, and community engagement into a unified strategy that empowers students to lead healthier lives while fostering meaningful connections. Through innovative programs like Wellness Promotion and collaborations with Student Housing and Residence Life, UAB emphasizes holistic well-being as a cornerstone of personal and academic success.

UAB's Wellness Promotion program provides students with tools to make informed, healthy choices through initiatives like Community Health and Human Services (CHHS) classes and Peer Education programs. These offerings create supportive, non-judgmental environments for addressing sensitive topics, empowering students to lead by example.

The expansion of the Peer Outreach and Wellness (POW) program and the launch of the Certified Peer Health Advocate (CPHA) training series have elevated opportunities for leadership and service learning. Peer educators gain vital skills while positively influencing their peers, promoting harm reduction, and encouraging pro-social behavior. Programs such as CHOICES workshops for students addressing alcohol or cannabis issues, Orientation Leader and Resident Assistant training, and specialized workshops for international students are instrumental in fostering a culture of health and resilience on campus.

Bridging Wellness and Community

In collaboration with Student Housing and Residence Life, Wellness Promotion has introduced the Peer Wellness Ambassador program, integrating wellness education into students' living environments. This partnership leverages a dynamic Wellness Curriculum to address physical, mental, and emotional well-being throughout the academic year.

Signature events like "Cookies and Conversations" create opportunities for residents to build relationships and discuss wellness in a relaxed, inclusive setting. These programs not only encourage healthy habits but also strengthen community bonds, fostering a sense of belonging critical to student success.

A Holistic Approach to Student Success

By combining health education with leadership development and community engagement, wellness initiatives empower students to thrive. Peer educators and ambassadors play a pivotal role in shaping a campus culture that values holistic well-being, while targeted workshops and events correct misinformation and promote healthy choices. Together, these efforts ensure that UAB students leave not only with academic knowledge but also with the skills, habits, and connections needed to lead fulfilling lives and make a positive impact on their communities. Through collaboration and innovation, UAB continues to champion a transformational approach to student wellness and success.

UAB Career Center: Integrating Career Development into Academics

The UAB Career Center integrates career readiness into academics, exemplified by the Career Center Canvas Course embedded in 16 academic programs. In addition, two career-related objectives were added to the Blazer Core Curriculum, aligning academic pursuits with career goals. With 134 workshops and over 1,000 career appointments, the Career Center's outreach prepared students for future success while enhancing retention

Building a Culture of Innovation and Wellbeing

Student Affairs is committed to creating a vibrant and inclusive campus community. Our focus is on building a culture that prioritizes social justice, fosters innovation, and promotes wellbeing. By offering a wide range of programs, resources, and support systems, we strive to ensure that every student feels valued, empowered, and equipped to succeed. From initiatives that advocate for equity and inclusion to cutting-edge projects that drive academic and personal growth, UAB Student Affairs is dedicated to enhancing the student experience and making a positive impact on our campus and beyond.

Promoting Mental Health and Wellness at UAB

The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) has implemented a robust array of initiatives to support mental health and holistic well-being across its diverse student body. From fostering awareness and advocacy to empowering underserved communities, these efforts underscore UAB's commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive environment where all students can thrive.

Raising Awareness: Collegiate Recovery and Suicide Prevention

On April 15, UAB's Collegiate Recovery Community celebrated National Collegiate Recovery Day by engaging 125 students with resources designed to support recovery and wellness. Collaborating with ten campus and community partners, the event provided attendees with educational materials, giveaways, and camaraderie, symbolized by participants wearing purple in a show of solidarity.

Similarly, UAB's **Suicide Prevention Fair** on World Mental Health Day, hosted at the Hill Student Center, brought together 291 students to promote mental health awareness. These events demonstrate UAB's commitment to fostering dialogue, reducing stigma, and empowering students to seek help when needed.

Supporting Mental Health in the Workplace

The Hill Student Center (HSC) introduced "**Wellness Days**" for student employees, granting them excused absences twice per semester to focus on their mental health. This initiative, alongside Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) training and workshops, emphasizes UAB's holistic approach to wellness, intertwining mental health support with professional development and cultural awareness.



Empowering Student Veterans

UAB's Veteran Services has introduced transformative initiatives addressing social justice and wellness within the student veteran population. By organizing food drives and shoe donation campaigns, the Student Veteran Association has not only tackled pressing community issues like homelessness and hunger but also deepened understanding of systemic inequities. These efforts have positively impacted over 75 students, highlighting the importance of collective action and empathy in fostering both individual and community well-being.

Through innovative programming, community engagement, and an unwavering commitment to student support, UAB continues to champion mental health and holistic wellness. These initiatives ensure that students not only have access to essential resources but also thrive in an environment that prioritizes their well-being, leadership, and sense of belonging.

UABwell+

*"I really like how the app serves as a portal to a variety of tools **and resources for mental health**, whether it is working on emotional wellbeing, communicating with others, planning/facilitating **self-care**, and **reaching out for help**."*

- Student Testimonial

SCS & CRC expand population level support

Student Counseling Services launched a new mental health promotion model by creating a strategy to increase awareness of mental health services, decrease the stigma surrounding help-seeking, increase access to services, and increase knowledge about self-care and positive mental health behaviors. SCS and CRC AmeriCorps members helped lead the effort by serving at on-site locations.



Student Counseling Services and Student Housing and Residence Life - Promoting Wellbeing through Partnership



In a landmark year of collaboration and innovation, the Student Counseling Services and Student Housing and Residence Life significantly bolstered its role in fostering a thriving, health-conscious residential community. By deepening partnerships, the departments have enhanced its ability to support the well-being of over 3,100 Blazers, integrating health promotion into the very fabric of campus life.

One of the cornerstones of this success has been the Counselor in Residence (CIR) Program. By embedding mental health professionals- als directly within the residential community, the CIR program has brought vital support and resources closer to students. This year, the program expanded to include two dedicated counselors, allowing for more personalized engagement with both residents and staff. This expansion has led to a significant increase in meaningful referrals and a growing demand for workshops focused on mental health and well-being. The program's impact has not gone unnoticed—it was honored as the "Program of the Year" during Student Affairs' annual End of Year Awards Celebration, a testament to its effectiveness in addressing the mental health needs of the student body.

But the commitment to student wellbeing doesn't stop there. In partnership with Wellness Promotion, Student Housing and Residence Life has rolled out a series of impactful initiatives aimed at promoting a substance-free, health-promoting environment. Notable among these initiatives are the Naloxone training sessions, which equip students with life-saving knowledge in the face of the opioid crisis, and the STI Walk-In Clinics, which offer accessible sexual health services to all students. These initiatives are part of a broader effort to make health resources readily available and approachable.

Another highlight of the year was the annual "Don't Stay Silent Disco," an event that combines fun with purpose, providing a substance-free space for students to socialize and connect while also raising aware- ness about the importance of mental and physical health. This event, along with the other health-promoting activities, reflects a commitment to creating a vibrant, supportive residential environment where students can thrive academically, socially, and personally.

These strategic partnerships and initiatives are more than just programs—they are integral to UAB's mission as a Health Promoting University. By embedding health and wellness into the residential experience, UAB is not only responding to the immediate needs of its students but also setting the stage for a lifelong commitment to health and well-being. The success of these efforts underscores the importance of a holistic approach to student life, one that recognizes the vital connection between living environments and overall health.

As UAB continues to build on these successes, the university reaffirms its commitment to nurturing a culture of wellness that empowers every student to succeed. Through ongoing collaborations, innovative programs, and a steadfast dedication to student support, UAB is leading the way in creating a healthier, more connected campus community.

Student Health Services (SHS) Continues to Enhance Student Support and Accessibility



This year, Student Health Services strengthened its support for international students in collaboration with International Student Services. Through initiatives like a wellbeing forum, a customized Global Awareness workshop with Dr. Melissa Hawkins, and feedback from the SHS Student Advisory Board, SHS prioritized the mental and physical health of international students. Improvements resulting from the advisory board's input include specialized resources and a Dependent Insurance task force.

SHS also reinstated mobile influenza vaccine clinics, offering vaccines directly to students across campus, especially those in professional and health programs. This approach increased access and convenience, administering 420 influenza vaccines (24% of total) and freeing up clinic appointments for other vaccines. Additionally, SHS introduced in-house gonorrhea and chlamydia PCR testing, significantly reducing turnaround time and optimizing resource utilization with ACA-compliant health insurance plans covering costs. These initiatives reflect SHS's commitment to enhancing support, accessibility- ity, and health outcomes for all students.

"The CRC is one of the biggest contributors to me finally managing to achieve and maintain sobriety. I wouldn't be where I am now without it, and without the community I've found there. The first event I went to resonated with something I hadn't been able to truly accept, and everything about the CRC paired with the guidance and resources I've received from staff has contributed immensely to altering the course of my life for the better."

Fostering A Sense of Belonging

Student Affairs is dedicated to creating an inclusive and welcoming environment where every student feels a strong sense of belonging. We believe that a supportive community is essential for students' personal and academic success. Through programs, events, and services, we aim to connect students with each other and the university, encouraging everyone to find their place at UAB. Our commitment to fostering a sense of belonging helps to cultivate a vibrant campus culture where diversity is celebrated, and every student can thrive.



DSS partners with Lakeshore Foundation for Wheelchair Flag Football

Disability Support Services (DSS) hosted a Blazer Homecoming tradition like no other, the annual wheelchair flag football game. The Lakeshore Foundation faced off against UAB's Pi Kappa Phi fraternity. The Lakeshore Foundation provided coaches for both teams, showing UAB representatives how to play the game and mobilize their wheelchairs.

The celebration also coincided with National Disability Awareness Month. Participants and attendees had the opportunity to experience this well-loved sport from another perspective, while also highlighting inclusivity on our campus," stated Allison Solomon, Director of Disability Support Services.

UAB's Head Football Coach Trent Dilfer also participated, encouraging fans to attend the homecoming game and spoke about how important it is to support and be inclusive of all athletes. Pi Kappa Phi lost the competition 38-12 to the Lakeshore Foundation team



Coach Dilfer poses for a selfie with a Lakeshore Foundation athlete

Survey shows Blazers find community In Student Media

Student Media plays a pivotal role in fostering community and engagement at UAB. According to the Student Media and You Survey, 87% of respondents agreed that being part of Student Media helped them find a home at UAB. This reflects the organization's success in providing a supportive environment where students can connect and thrive.

Campus Dining Extends Hours for Ramadan at The Commons on the Green

In support of diversity and inclusivity, Campus Dining at UAB extended hours at The Commons on the Green to provide dinner meals (Iftar) for the Muslim community during Ramadan. This initiative ensures that all students, faculty, and staff have access to nutritious and culturally appropriate dining options, fostering a welcoming environment where everyone can observe and celebrate important traditions. UAB remains committed to embracing and accommodating the diverse needs of its campus community through thoughtful and inclusive initiatives.



Grammy Award-winning rapper T-Pain headlines UAB's Welcome Back Concert

Grammy Award-winning artist T-Pain headlined the 2023 Welcome Back Concert for students, faculty, and staff on the UAB Campus Green on Saturday, Aug. 26. The event was part of Blazer Welcome, a four-week celebration kicking off the fall 2023 semester. T-Pain's appearance marks the first time a national recording artist has performed on the UAB campus since rock band Weezer helped celebrate the university's 50th anniversary in 2019.

UAB student acts and up-and-coming rapper Nando STL opened the evening's performances, setting the stage for the six-time GRAMMY® Award winner. T-Pain, who has been a transformative figure in pop, hip-hop, and R&B



since 2004, electrified the crowd, performing all of his hits.

T-Pain has over 50 million singles, billions of streams, six GRAMMY® Awards, and sold-out shows across multiple continents. His influence on the music industry is undeniable. Highlights of his career include the iconic "All I Do Is Win" soundtracking President Barack Obama's entry at the White House Correspondents' Dinner, the most popular NPR Tiny Desk concert in history, and his victory as the first-ever winner of FOX's "The Masked Singer."

The concert was free for all students, faculty, and staff who reserved their tickets with a valid One Card, making it a memorable start to the academic year.

UAB's 2nd Annual Crawfish Boil Satisfied Everyone's Palate

The 2nd Annual Crawfish Boil at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, held on April 17, was a resounding success. Celebrating National Crawfish Day, the event took place on the UAB Campus Green from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., offering students, faculty, and staff a delightful day filled with entertainment, games, food trucks, and, of course, free crawfish for all students with a valid ONE Card.

The highlight of the event was the delicious crawfish, complemented by other food options to cater to diverse tastes. Blazers had the

opportunity to pre-order crawfish by the pound, ensuring everyone could partake in the feast. The atmosphere was vibrant with live music, featuring performances by Grammy award-winning Terrance Simien and the Zydeco Experience, adding a lively Creole Zydeco vibe to the festivities.

Overall, the event was a fantastic celebration, bringing the UAB community together for a day of fun, food, and music, making the Crawfish Boil another successful event in the university's traditions.



Creating Community for First-Generation Students at UAB

The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) is leading the charge in fostering a welcoming, inclusive, and empowering environment for first-generation college students. Through innovative programs, events, and collaborations, UAB provides first-generation Blazers with the tools, resources, and community support needed to succeed academically and personally.

Celebrating First-Generation Success



On November 8, UAB observed National First-Generation College Celebration Day honoring the transformative impact of the Higher Education Act of 1965. A luncheon hosted by Student Affairs

brought together 145 students, faculty, and staff in the Hill Student Center Ballrooms. The event featured a panel discussion moderated by Jeh Jeh Pruitt of WBRC Fox 6, where first-generation leaders—including Dr. Phillip Musa, Jasmin Hernandez-Alamillo, Dr. Kecia Thomas, Provost Pat Benoit, and Joanna Hobson—shared stories of overcoming challenges and achieving success. This celebration highlighted the resilience and determination of first-generation students while strengthening their connection to the UAB community.

Building Connections Through Engagement

UAB's commitment to first-generation students is further demonstrated by the First Blazer Peer Network, launched in Fall 2024. This program matched first-year, first-generation students with five dedicated peer mentors who provided guidance through one-on-one monthly meetings. Covering topics such as financial resources, academic strategies, and involvement opportunities, the program supported mentees with 408 hours of mentoring. Students who attended five or more sessions achieved an impressive 3.58 average GPA and a 100% retention rate from spring to fall. Additionally, Student Housing and Residence Life (SHRL) created community-focused events like the Blazer Bash, which brought together 440 primarily first-year students for games, painting, and socializing. Collaborative efforts with UAB Athletics, such as Hall

Night at the Basketball Game, added to the vibrant campus experience, helping students feel a sense of belonging through shared traditions.

Preparing First-Generation Students for Career Success

The UAB Career Center prioritizes first-generation students through targeted programming like the Peer Career Advisor Program and close collaboration with the Vulcan Materials Academic Success Center. In 2023, 238 first-generation students received one-on-one career advising, while 907 participated in workshops, and 185 attended career fairs. These initiatives equip students with career readiness skills while fostering confidence and belonging.

A Comprehensive Approach to First-Year Success

The Office of Student Involvement and Leadership (SIL) plays a pivotal role in ensuring first-year and first-generation students thrive at UAB. By supporting programs like Blazers@BHM, which immerses students in service and city experiences, SIL helps build connections to both UAB and the Birmingham community. Survey data revealed that 74% of participants felt more connected to campus after these events.

Through strategic programs and events, UAB is creating a transformative experience for first-generation students, empowering them to navigate college life, build meaningful connections, and achieve academic and personal success. These efforts not only celebrate the unique journey of first-generation students but also affirm UAB's commitment to equity and inclusion for all Blazers.

Wellness Promotion Helps Interpersonal Violence Survivors
Take Back the Night Wellness Promotion creates transformational learning environments and mentoring relationships, fostering a sense of belonging among students. Initiatives like Take Back the Night and The Voice of Strength support survivors of interpersonal violence by providing healing spaces for sharing their stories. According to event surveys, 100% of respondents felt more connected to the campus community, reinforcing a supportive environment for all students. Wellness Promotion partnered with the College of the Arts and Sciences and the Meagan Montgomery Foundation.



Over 200 first-year UAB students participated in the inaugural "First-Year Run Out", as they led the Blazer football team onto the field in the season opener against North Carolina A&T on August 31 at Protective Stadium. UAB beat NCA&T 35-6. Student Housing and Residence Life, in collaboration with Student Affairs Marketing and UAB Athletics, provided the participants with transportation, t-shirts, and the exhilarating experience of leading the football team and cheerleaders onto the field.

DSS provides College Packing List for Blazers with ADHD

Leading up to UAB "Move-In" days, the UAB Disability Support Services office provided Blazers with a packing list for students with ADHD. The list included information on the types of items to bring when coming to campus, like: large bags to make hauling things easier, a clear desk organizer, and a locking pill bottle, which helps keep medication safe.

Hill Student Center Helps Boost Campus Engagement and Student Staff Morale

The Hill Student Center (HSC) has made significant strides in enhancing its student employee recognition program, resulting in invested staff morale, a nurturing work environment, and increased staff retention. The remodeled HSC Game Room has become a vibrant hub for the gaming community, experiencing heightened engagement. Following the dissolution of GGUAB, HSC facilitated the formation of a new student organization, The Gamers Guild, which now considers the HSC Game Room its home base. HSC continues to support The Gamers Guild by providing space for events and fostering a supportive community

environment. Due to these enhancements, the Game Room had 5,600 participants this year. These efforts underscore HSC's commitment to enhancing student experiences and promoting community engagement on campus.

Office of Off-Campus Student & Family Engagement Partner to Celebrate International Students' Cultures

In academic year 2023-24, the Office of Off-Campus Student & Family Engagement created multiple programs and services to support the unique identities of students. In fall 2023, the Off-Campus Student Council partnered with SMDP and various student groups to host Celebremos, a groundbreaking program for students of Hispanic/Latine heritage, attracting over 100 participants.

Family Engagement initiatives included developing communication streams for Spanish-speaking families, such as email communications in Spanish and translation services during campus visits. The office is also building relationships with HICA and other Hispanic organizations in Birmingham to enhance

families' understanding of the importance of being engaged in their students' academic experience.

Additionally, the Off-Campus Council hosted an International Tea Party and Eid al-Fitr celebration, with over 190 students participating, further promoting inclusivity and community. Eid is one of the biggest Islamic holidays.

University Recreation, Enhancing Student Engagement and Community

University Recreation (URec) offers clean, safe facilities and exceptional programs, contributing to increased student engagement and retention. Employing over 200 students annually, URec provides financial support, professional development, and relationship-building opportunities. A recent employee survey revealed that over 96% of URec employees feel a stronger sense of community and belonging at UAB.

BSAC hosts 31st Annual Camille Armstrong Memorial Scholarship Step Show

The University of Alabama at Birmingham's Black Student Awareness Committee (BSAC) hosted the 31st Annual Camille Armstrong Memorial Scholarship Step Show on February 24, bringing together a sold-out crowd at the Alys Stephens Center Jemison Concert Hall. This event, which hadn't been held since 2019, celebrated the memory of Camille Armstrong and supported future leaders through scholarship opportunities.

The diverse crowd included UAB students, members of National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) organizations, and families and friends of participants. Comedian Jermaine "Funny Maine" Johnson emceed the event, enhancing the evening with laughter and high energy as fraternities and sororities showcased their creative step routines and skits. Event highlights included the Iota Lambda Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. (UAB), which won first place in the sorority category with a Spider-Man-themed showcase and the Eta Chi Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. (University of Alabama) took first place in the fraternity category, with a "Cops" themed routine.

The event also awarded three scholarships totaling \$4,500 to high-achieving African American undergraduate students majoring in political science at UAB:

- \$2,000 to Tatyana Martin, junior
- \$1,500 to Angel Walls, senior
- \$1,000 to Andrew Clark, senior

Edward Armstrong, Camille's brother, expressed gratitude to UAB for honoring his sister and continuing the step show tradition. The Camille Armstrong Memorial Scholarship Step Show, a cherished UAB tradition, embodies Camille's legacy and UAB Student Affairs' core values, emphasizing community support, collaboration, and excellence. The event showcased the power of unity, inspiration, and scholarship in shaping future leaders, reinforcing a deep sense of belonging among participants and attendees.



Removing Barriers to Enhance Student Success

Student Affairs is dedicated to removing barriers that hinder student success. We understand that achieving academic and personal goals requires more than just hard work; it also involves having access to the right resources and support systems. Our comprehensive programs and services are designed to address and overcome challenges, ensuring that all students can thrive. From physical and mental health services to housing and food insecurity support to career development, UAB Student Affairs is committed to creating an environment where every student can excel. By eliminating obstacles and providing essential tools, we empower students to reach their full potential and succeed in all aspects of their university experience.

Blazers Elevate Professional Attire at Career Center's Suit Up Event

Over 90 Blazers participated in the UAB Career Center's Suit Up event in collaboration with JCPenney on January 28. The event offered significant discounts on professional attire, including suits, ties, and shoes, to assist students and alumni in enhancing their professional wardrobes.

Recognizing the importance of a polished image in the professional world, the event allowed UAB students and alumni the opportunity to purchase quality attire at affordable prices, aligning with industry standards for career fairs, interviews, and other engagements.

The enthusiastic participation showcased the value of initiatives supporting career development among the UAB community. Attendees seized the opportunity to network while upgrading their attire, highlighting the success of partnerships between educational institutions and industry leaders in preparing students for the workforce."



In 2023-04, the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) had 1,662 international students from 90 different countries.

Student Health Services Provides Enhanced Health Insurance and Support for UAB Students

Student Health Services (SHS) at UAB successfully negotiated a favorable premium rate for the student health insurance plan with United Healthcare Student Resources (UHCSR), significantly reducing out-of-pocket expenses for students. This agreement ensures continued access to comprehensive healthcare services, supporting the well-being of the student community. Additionally, SHS has established Medical Assistance Grants to help students manage unexpected healthcare expenses. This initiative aims to alleviate financial burdens, allowing students to remain focused on their academic goals.



of Hill Student Center student employees are international students; a 27% increase from academic year 2023-24.

Student Media – Supporting International Students and Providing Paid Internships

Student Media is a significant employer of international students, employing 8 international students (60% of paid staff) during academic year 2023-24. With grant support, Student Media launched a summer internship program in partnership with Sidewalk Cinema and AL.com, providing a fully paid internship. In addition, Student Media secured a \$12,000 family foundation grant that helps directly support its student staff.

Hill Student Center helps remove financial barriers for student staff

The Hill Student Center (HSC) enacted a student salary increase in May 2023, the first since 2015, providing over \$250,000 in financial support to student employees. The HSC also launched its first retention incentive program for student staff with three complete semesters of employment. 100% of students who received the incentive remain employed by HSC.



Blazer Kitchen at HSC – A Cornerstone of Belonging and Support

The Blazer Kitchen at the Hill Student Center stands as a cornerstone of belonging at UAB, offering inclusive items and a welcoming environment. By empowering students during times of distress it ensures they feel supported throughout their journey, reinforcing a sense of community and care. In addition, Blazer Kitchen has implemented new processes to better serve our student community. Each shopper now completes a needs assessment at the start of the semester, and appointments must be scheduled before visiting. In the 2023-2024 year, there was a 42% increase in visits, a 51% increase in unique shoppers, and a 138% increase in meals distributed. Notably, graduate international students comprise the highest population of Blazer Kitchen shoppers.

Fighting Food Insecurity Through Swipe Twice Program

During academic year 2023-24, Campus Dining and Student Assistance & Support partnered for UAB's Swipe Twice meal program and successfully collected 300 meal swipes to combat food insecurity on campus. This initiative reflects UAB's commitment to supporting students by ensuring access to nutritious meals, fostering a community where every member can focus on their academic and personal success. By participating in Swipe Twice, students, faculty, and staff contributed directly to helping students in need, reinforcing a culture of wellbeing at UAB.

Peer Wellness Ambassadors Collect Items for Blazer Kitchen

In spring 2024, Peer Wellness Ambassadors (PWAs) organized the Semester Send Off, a

donation drive benefiting Blazer Kitchen. In April, PWAs collected items in residence halls and encouraged early room cleanouts for Move Out. For each donation, residents could request a FinalsWeek Survival Kit for themselves or a friend. The drive gathered nearly 30 pounds of nonperishable food items and hygiene products for Blazer Kitchen, supporting UAB students facing food insecurity.

Student Counseling Services supports students with help from faculty & staff

Student Counseling Services (SCS) offers extensive training and consulting to faculty and staff to support student mental health throughout the academic year. SCS conducted 19 workshops, training 517 faculty members, and developed 7 Canvas Commons assignments for mental health promotion. Additionally, SCS created 5 customized Therapy Assistance Online courses, such as "First Year Toolkit" and "De-Stress Success," enrolling 128 students through academic assignments. Twenty-one percent of students reported first learning about counseling services from faculty or staff.

Enhancing Student Accountability and Community Standards at UAB

Community Standards and Student Accountability (CSSA) "Know the Code" initiative increased student engagement with the student conduct code through informative tabling events. All members of the UAB community—students, faculty, and staff—must be informed about the significant updates to the Student Conduct Code. The code sets clear standards of behavior for students and student organizations, outlines student rights, and establishes a fair process for addressing alleged violations.

In addition to these updates, CSSA has introduced Alternative Resolution Options, including mediation and conflict coaching. These measures aim to proactively reduce and resolve student conflicts by promoting understanding and empathy among all parties involved. By implementing these initiatives, CSSA continues to uphold UAB's commitment to maintaining a respectful and supportive campus environment.

Enhancing STI Testing Accessibility with Let's Get Sexuwell

Wellness Promotion's Let's Get Sexuwell program at UAB offered recurring, free, walk-in sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing on campus using a self-administered collection method. In the fall and spring,



15 testing events were held, serving 221 students. This program helped eliminate the need for appointments and travel, which can be barriers to testing, and provided a comfortable alternative to traditional medical provider collection methods. By making STI testing more accessible and less intimidating, Let's Get Sexuwell promotes the health and well-being of the UAB student community.

Student Housing and Residence Life continues to make residence halls accessible

Every year, Student Housing and Residence works closely with Disability Support Services to accommodate students in residence halls, serving 115 students with various needs. As the demand for unique accommodations grows, we provide students with options to prioritize their needs.

UAB Family Fund Sponsors Blazers on Break Trip to Puerto Rico



Off-Campus Student & Family Engagement, through the UAB Family Fund, sponsored six students for the Blazers on Break trip to Puerto Rico in May 2024. Blazers on Break is UAB's alternative spring break program, offering students the opportunity to explore social issues through hands-on service and reflection.

This sponsorship allowed these students to participate in this transformative experience, deepening their understanding of important social issues while contributing to meaningful community service. The UAB Family Fund supports all aspects of student life on campus, closing the gap between what tuition covers and the other resources needed to give students the chance to succeed.

Developing Leaders Who Create Change

Student Affairs is dedicated to developing leaders who are prepared to make a meaningful impact in their communities and beyond. We offer a wide range of leadership programs and opportunities that empower students to cultivate their skills, embrace their potential, and drive positive change. Through hands-on experiences, mentorship, and a supportive environment, we nurture the growth of innovative and socially responsible leaders. UAB Student Affairs is dedicated to inspiring and equipping students to be the change-makers of tomorrow, ready to lead with confidence and purpose.



Blazers commemorate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day with acts of service

On January 15, University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) students honored Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy by actively participating in the MLK Beloved Community. The event, held on Dr. King's birthday, was an annual day of service fostering inclusiveness and civic engagement among Blazers and the Birmingham community.

This year's national theme was 'Shifting the Cultural Climate through the Study and Practice of Kingian Nonviolence'. Braving the cold weather, 311 volunteers dedicated their time to serve at 15 different sites throughout the day. Blazers contributed 622 service hours, making a significant economic impact on the city of \$17,751.88.

The initiative reflects King's vision of a beloved community where individuals come together to work towards shared goals and values. The diverse range of volunteer service projects showcased a commitment to building a stronger and more united community.

Reflecting on their experiences, volunteers shared poignant quotes that captured the spirit of unity and service that defined the day. "I was able to connect with UAB students and get closer to people who volunteer in organizations around campus," said one UAB student. "I loved working with the Lovelady Thrift Store because it allowed me to physically see my impact on the community as I was helping hang up clothes and sort through the inventory. I believe that the kickoff was a success and that I am beginning to feel more included into the atmosphere around Birmingham."

"It was great to serve at Bundles of Hope," said another Blazer. "I had a good time filling boxes with the bundles of diapers and then loading pallets. We packed enough to serve 1,000 families in the community. Thanks for coordinating this opportunity, Leadership & Service Council."

"Bham Jumpstart was an awesome community partner to work with. Kelly Ingram Park is an essential part of Birmingham's history."

UAB's service activities commemorated Dr. King's contributions to civil rights and demonstrated the enduring power of collective action in creating positive change.



Blazers on Break Provides Service Opportunities for UAB Students

Student Involvement & Leadership's Blazers on Break provides immersive, multiday service experiences, focusing on leadership for social change and community collaboration. This year, students visited Memphis, Tennessee (10 students, two staff on a seven-day experience); Arden, North Carolina (10 students, two staff on a six-day experience); and Isabella, Puerto Rico (12 students, two staff on a 10 day experience), contributing 986 hours of service, making a \$28,140 economic impact. Participants reflected on their experiences, expressing a deeper understanding of their roles in community success and a desire to advocate for social change.

Student Assistance & Support (SAS)

Student Assistance & Support (SAS) empowers students with essential skills for leadership through tailored action plans, guiding them from distress to success and equipping them for lifelong self-advocacy and positive change the SAS Student

Resource Advisory Committee is instrumental in this mission. Members leverage their unique perspectives to extend their impact beyond official meetings by providing ongoing feedback to the Office of Student Assistance & Support. This continuous dialogue ensures that the specific needs of UAB students are met, allowing SAS to adapt and enhance its approach effectively. The committee emphasizes holistic development, equipping its members with skills such as data analysis, critical thinking, and community service with Blazer Kitchen at the Hill Student Center. These initiatives enable members to make significant contributions to the community.

The SAS Student Resource Advisory Committee envisions its members as key players in enhancing both the campus and community environment. Through peer support, educational development, and empowerment, each committee member actively contributes to creating a positive and thriving community at UAB, ensuring that SAS not only supports students in their current challenges but also prepares them to be proactive leaders who create lasting change.

Student Housing and Residence Life Provides Service Opportunities for Blazers

To increase community service awareness and participation among residential students, Student Housing and Residence Life (SHRL) partnered with Student Involvement and Leadership (SIL) and the Leadership Service Council in two significant initiatives this year. First, SHRL became a title sponsor of the signature service tradition, Into the Streets, providing funding and relocating the event launch to the McMahon/Gold Hall courtyard to enhance visibility and participation. These efforts, combined with residence hall tabling and a coordinated advertising campaign, led to a 137% increase in volunteers from Fall 2022, with 344 students contributing over 680 service hours, resulting in an estimated economic impact of over \$19,500.

The second initiative was the Housing-led Blazers on Break trip to work with Habitat for Humanity in Asheville, North Carolina. This experience paired SHRL staff with ten

residential students for a week of service, focusing on housing insecurity. Participants engaged in various construction tasks, conversed with Habitat homeowners, and reflected on their learning. Many participants, including staff chaperones, plan to participate again next Spring Break.

FSL Hosts Hazing Prevention Week

Hazing Prevention Week took place from September 25–28, 2023, with events aimed at educating and uniting the UAB community against hazing. Hazing Prevention Week successfully raised awareness and promoted a culture of safety and support within the UAB community.

» Monday | Keynote Speaker Dr. Jason Meriwether

Dr. Meriwether shared his journey as a fraternity member who experienced and perpetrated hazing, and his current perspective as a parent. 186 fraternity and sorority members attended.

» Tuesday | Pledge Signing and Instagram Feature

197 students signed a pledge against hazing and shared their views on healthy brotherhood and sisterhood.

» Wednesday | Anti-Hazing Trivia

FSL hosted an anti-hazing trivia event with 39 questions to test students' knowledge about hazing. Questions included topics such as the legal status of hazing and its effectiveness. 93 members attended, and prize packs were awarded to the top three scorers.

» Thursday | Documentary Screening and Discussion

The week concluded with a screening of "45 Mill Street: The Collin Wiant Story," followed by a discussion. The documentary covered the tragic hazing-related death of Collin Wiant at Ohio University. 75 students participated in the discussion, addressing critical questions about Fraternity Practices and the consequences of hazing.



UAB students rise to fight food insecurity

To help combat global hunger, UAB students participated in the Leadership and Service Council's Rise Against Hunger meal-packing events during academic year 2023-24. So far, this academic year, Blazers have successfully packaged more than 40,600 meals, contributing to the ongoing mission of Rise Against Hunger, an international organization dedicated to alleviating hunger worldwide.

These events play a crucial role in addressing the pressing issue of global hunger and provide Blazers with valuable hands-on experience in leadership development, team-guiding, relationship-building, creative problem solving, goal setting, and achievement. Rise Against Hunger aims to distribute food and life-changing aid to the world's most vulnerable populations, aiming to eradicate hunger by 2030.

The UAB community's active involvement underscores the commitment to creating a positive impact on a global scale.

Shaping the Field of Student Affairs

Student Affairs is at the forefront of advancing the field of student affairs. Our commitment to student success drives us to continually explore new practices, research, and initiatives that enhance the student experience. By fostering a culture of professional development, collaboration, and continuous improvement, we aim to set new standards and lead by example in higher education. Student Affairs is dedicated to shaping the future of our profession, ensuring that we provide the highest quality of support and resources to our diverse student body.

UAB Student Affairs hosts key stakeholders to address violence against women



In a concerted effort to tackle the pressing issue of violence against women, the University of Alabama at Birmingham's (UAB) Division of Student Affairs hosted stakeholders from all over Alabama on February 22. The event was coordinated by the Alabama State Attorney's Office (SAO). Among the distinguished participants were representatives from the Alabama State Attorney's Office (SAO) and Director Rosie Hidalgo from the Office of Violence Against Women.

The conference, held at the UAB campus in the Hill Student Center Ballroom and virtually via video stream, served as a platform for collaborative discussions to address the multifaceted challenges surrounding violence against women. In addition, the SAO invited representatives from campuses and organizations across the state

to join this meeting to learn more about campus grant opportunities from the Office of Violence Against Women.

Director Hidalgo opened the meeting by highlighting the importance of interagency cooperation and community engagement in confronting gender-based violence. Drawing on her extensive experience in advocating for victims' rights, Hidalgo underscored the significance of proactive measures to prevent and respond to instances of violence and encouraged participants to work together and seek federal funding for new initiatives.

Attendees shared insights into ongoing initiatives aimed at enhancing support systems for survivors of gender-based violence. Their contributions shed light on the critical role of law enforcement agencies, legislative bodies, and campus partners in ensuring justice and protection for individuals affected by such acts.

Rebecca Kennedy, Ph.D., assistant vice president of Student Health and Wellbeing, emphasized the university's commitment to promoting positive societal change. "As the first Health Promoting University in the United States and an institution dedicated to education, research, and community engagement, UAB recognizes the urgency of addressing issues like violence against women," stated Kennedy. "By convening key stakeholders and facilitating meaningful dialogue, we aim to drive actionable solutions that promote safety, equity, and dignity for all."

Throughout the morning, participants engaged in discussions and networking opportunities designed to exchange knowledge, share best practices, and forge partnerships. Topics ranged from the intersectionality of gender-based violence to strategies for enhancing victim support services and improving legal responses.

As the discussions concluded, participants departed with a renewed sense of purpose and a commitment to advancing the cause of gender equality and justice. With continued collaboration and dedication, the fight against violence against women remains an achievable goal - one that resonates deeply within the halls of academia, the corridors of power, and the hearts of communities across Alabama and beyond.

UAB Student Affairs ranked among most promising places to work in 2023

Diverse
ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION
MOST PROMISING PLACES
TO WORK IN STUDENT AFFAIRS



The University of Alabama at Birmingham Division of Student Affairs has been named one of the "Most Promising Places to Work in Student Affairs" for 2023 by the American College Personnel Association – College Student Educators International (ACPA) and Diverse: Issues In Higher Education.

This honor was given to 27 schools nationwide. UAB Student Affairs earned this recognition because of its commitment to accountability, collaboration, equity, innovation, integrity, and wellbeing.

"In our division, we always strive for excellence, whether that is removing a barrier to success for a student, increasing access to services, or collaborating with partners across campus to

be innovative and hold one another accountable, Student Affairs is a place where all Blazers can thrive," said Student Affairs Vice President John R. Jones, III, Ph.D.

The award focuses on workplace diversity, staffing practices, and work environment, and uses a web-based survey to examine family friendliness, salary and benefits professional development opportunities.

"It is an incredible honor for our staff to be recognized in this way. The work doesn't stop here, we will continue to build on our successes for the next generation of Student Affairs professionals."

Mary Wallace Recognized as a NASPA Pillar of the Profession



In recognition of her exemplary contributions to the field of student affairs and higher education, Mary Wallace, Ph.D., Assistant Vice President for Student Experience in Student Affairs at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, was honored with the prestigious NASPA Pillars of the Profession Award. The accolade, bestowed by the NASPA Foundation, is among the highest honors in the student affairs community.

Upon receiving the award, Dr. Wallace expressed her gratitude, stating, "I felt a deep sense of gratitude and humility as I acknowledged this recognition from my colleagues in NASPA and proudly joined the esteemed 2024 Pillars of the Profession cohort. NASPA remains

steadfast in its commitment to realizing the potential of higher education, guided by the principles of Integrity, Innovation, Inclusion, and Inquiry, and I was proud to be a member of this organization."

The NASPA Pillars of the Profession Award, presented annually at the NASPA Annual Conference, acknowledged distinguished individuals who had served as leaders, teachers, and scholars in student affairs and higher education. Dr. Wallace joined the Pillars Class of 2024, a group of outstanding professionals recognized for their significant service to NASPA, impactful contributions to their institutions, and sustained excellence in the field. She received the award at NASPA 2024, hosted in Seattle, Washington, in March.

"This prestigious honor is a testament to Mary Wallace's impressive body of work during her career in higher education," said John Jones, III, Ph.D., Vice President for Student Affairs. "NASPA officially recognized what we have long understood – Mary's outstanding contributions have a broad and impactful reach."

The award, based on nominations and support from colleagues, students, and friends, honored professionals who had left a lasting legacy in higher education. Recipients were celebrated for their regional and national leadership roles within NASPA, enduring impact on institutions, and lifetime professional distinction in student affairs.

As part of the recognition, a gift of \$3,500 to support research and scholarship in student affairs was made to the foundation in Dr. Wallace's name.

With a network of 15,000 professionals and 2,100 campuses across the globe, NASPA is the premier professional association for student affairs administrators, faculty, graduate, and undergraduate students.

Student Affairs One-Day Conference highlights sustainability

UAB's Division of Student Affairs recently hosted its annual One-Day Conference, drawing over 130 Blazers. The free event, themed "Fostering a Sense of Belonging through Sustainability," aimed to strengthen staff through professional development.

Sessions led by Student Affairs staff and campus partners delved into topics like student engagement, burnout prevention, and sustaining free speech. Lunch panelists included Angela Stowe, Ph.D., Director of Student Counseling Services, and Bambi Ingram, ISSP SA, UAB's Sustainability Manager, with moderation by Mi'Kasa Mitchell, Ed.D., Assistant Director of Student Activities.

Brandon Wright, Ph.D., Chair of the Professional Development Committee, hailed the conference's success in providing a platform for learning and collaboration. The next One-Day Conference is slated for May 2025, continuing UAB's dedication to staff development and community-building.



UAB Career Center Sets New Standards in Career Services and Student Success



The UAB Career Center is making significant strides with innovative programs and impactful initiatives. This year, the launch of the Employer Engagement Program has connected students with top employers through strategic partnerships, securing \$8,500 in funding and enhancing employer visibility on campus. Sponsorships from NaphCare, The Princeton Review, and Sodexo have created a replicable model for career center funding and employer collaboration.

The Career Center Canvas Course expansion has extended our career readiness curriculum to universities nationwide, including the University of Virginia, UNLV, and Texas A&M Commerce, showcasing the scalability and effectiveness of our approach. This national reach positions UAB as a leader in career education, contributing to higher retention and graduation rates among Career Center users.

By integrating career education into the Blazer Core Curriculum and First-Year Experience courses and providing resources like the Career Closet and targeted support for first-generation students, we are

reinforcing our Peer Career Advisor Program further prepares students to become leaders, supporting their career development and contributing to broader community impact.

Overall, the UAB Career Center is setting new standards for career services, fostering inclusivity, and driving student success through innovative, data-driven approaches that align with the university's mission.

Student Assistance and Support Achievements Highlight Commitment to Student Success

Student Assistance and Support has made notable strides in advancing student well-being and basic needs. Key accomplishments include serving as a webinar panelist on Emergency Funds, developing a rubric for Association Awards, and creating a guide for hosting Drive-In workshops. The team also participated in the Council for the Advancement of Standards for Higher Education's Basic Needs Review.

Additionally, Case Managers are active members of the Alabama Coalition for Basic Needs (ACCBN), which unifies colleges and universities across Alabama to ensure that students' basic needs are met. This initiative aims to empower students to succeed academically, earn degrees, and access new opportunities.

Jackie Alexander Secures \$27,000 in Grants and Expands Collegiate Media Impact

As president of the College Media Association, UAB's Director of Student Media, Jackie Alexander, secured over \$27,000 in grants in the past 18 months, including \$22,500 in the current reporting year. These grants support need-based travel opportunities for advisers and students from underserved universities. Alexander's leadership is further highlighted

by her interviews with various media outlets, she showcases her expertise in collegiate media.

Alexander has provided over 36 individual adviser consultations and forged key partnerships with major media organizations, including the Society of Professional Journalists, Student Press Law Center, and Associated Press. Her efforts underscore a significant expansion in professional development and collaboration within the field of collegiate media.

Hill Student Center to Host ACUI Region III Conference; Key Staff Recognized and Contribute to National Dialogue



The Hill Student Center has been selected as the host site for the Association of College Unions International (ACUI) Region III Regional Conference in Fall 2024, following a successful bid completed by Darien Garrison. At the ACUI Annual Conference in Denver, CO, Jeremiah Johnson was honored as a "Champion of the Profession" for his contributions to the field.

Both Jeremiah Johnson and Darien Garrison presented during an ACUI webinar titled "Inclusivity Practices," where the Hill Student Center's International Display was prominently featured. Additionally, they attended the ACUI Regional Leadership Team retreat at Georgia State University. In ACUI leadership roles, Jeremiah Johnson is serving as the Site Coordinator for the Region III Conference Planning Team.



UREC hosts ERSL Conference

University Recreation hosted the 2024 Emerging Recreational Sports Leaders (ERSL) Conference in February on the University of Alabama at Birmingham's campus. This marked a significant milestone as the fifth non-HBCU institution to host the event, showcasing UAB's commitment to diversity and professional development.

The ERSL Conference, established in 1992 by the Office of Intramural Sports at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, aims to cultivate a robust future leadership pipeline for minority students in collegiate recreation.

The 2024 conference featured programming designed to cater to the needs of emerging

leaders in the field. Presentations explored the evolving landscape of recreational sports careers in today's economy, with educational session topics ranging from Networking 101, Self-Awareness: Finding the Coaching in Criticism, to Are Your Programs Programming? HBCU Edition. This comprehensive program provided attendees with a wealth of knowledge and resources to equip them for success. The conference opened with an HBCU Summit and a Birmingham Civil Rights Institute tour, further enriching the experience.

One key objective of the ERSL Conference is to provide minority students with the tools and network connections necessary to thrive in the field of collegiate recreation.

Student Affairs Awards & Recognition

Student Affairs honors colleagues during end-of-year awards celebration

The UAB Division of Student Affairs Professional Development Awards Committee hosted its annual awards event to celebrate the remarkable work of its colleagues.

And the winners were:

Outstanding Star
(Support Professional)
Carli Colburn
Student Health Services

Outstanding Star
(Professional)
Shelbi Gillis
Student Housing & Residence Life

New Professional of the Year
Alyssa Howard
Wellness Promotion

Outstanding Contributor to Higher Education
Jackie Alexander
Student Media

Outstanding Student Affairs Partners
Yenni Cedillo
Nutrition Science

Andy Marsch Legacy Award
Annie Sellers
Veteran Services

Program of the Year
Counselor in Residence
Student Counseling Services and Student Housing & Residence Life

Event of the Year
Veterans 5K Run
Veteran Services

Department of the Year
Student Counseling Services



Carli Colburn



Shelbi Gillis



Alyssa Howard



Jackie Alexander



Yenni Cedillo



Annie Sellers



Student Counseling Services
Counselor in Residence



Veteran Services
Veterans 5K Run



Student Counseling Services

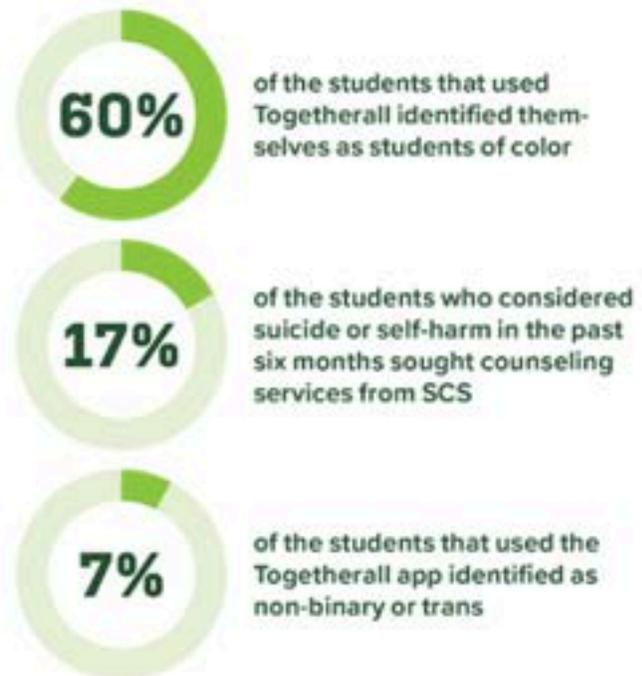
UAB Student Counseling Services honored as Student Affairs Department of the Year



In recognition of its outstanding contributions to the University of Alabama at Birmingham's student mental health and well-being, UAB's Student Counseling Services (SCS) was named the Division of Student Affairs Department of the Year during the 2024 Student Affairs Awards Celebration on May 7.

Throughout the 2023-24 academic year, SCS demonstrated a commitment to improving the mental health of UAB's diverse student population, with an impressive 8.5% of students benefiting from counseling services. The department spearheaded a range of initiatives, each designed to dismantle stigmas surrounding mental healthcare, enhance access to care, and foster a deeper understanding of mental health issues, all of which have significantly contributed to the well-being of UAB students. As the first Health Promoting University in the United States, UAB promotes a culture that facilitates students being more open and proactive about addressing health issues as they arise.

Through its digital platforms, SCS reached at-risk and underserved populations at UAB



Notable achievements

Student Improvement and Satisfaction

UAB students expressed high satisfaction with counseling services, reporting acquiring essential mental health skills and feeling respected for their identities and beliefs.

SCS's professional leadership further underscored our commitment to excellence. SCS took the lead in the field, delivering 18 presentations at national and local levels. This effort enhanced outreach and engagement and served as a source of inspiration for peers.

Event highlights from academic year 2023-34

Suicide Prevention Events

The Suicide Prevention Resource Fair and Out of the Darkness Walk drew significant participation, emphasizing support and providing valuable resources.

Counselor in Residence Partnership with Student Housing and Residence Life

SCS, in partnership with Student Housing and Residence Life, increased its on-campus presence through the Counselor in Residence program, resulting in a substantial rise in appointments and client numbers, supported by initiatives like drop-in appointments and resident hall activities.

New Mental Health Promotion Model

This comprehensive strategy, led by AmeriCorps members, helped boost mental health awareness, reduce stigma, and promote self-care.

SCS's digital platform growth has been a significant achievement, fostering increased engagement across platforms such as Togetherall, TAO, Kognito, and UABwell. This expansion model connected SCS more closely with the UAB community. It ensured that services and resources were readily accessible to all.

UAB's Student Counseling Services continues to support students in achieving their personal, academic, and lifelong goals by providing individual and group mental health services, prevention and outreach programming, crisis and emergency support, and consultation services. SCS advocates for safe and inclusive learning environments in the university community. Through resilience, excellence-driven determination, and growth, SCS will continue to lead the way in addressing student mental health needs, paving the way for continued support and innovation in a post-COVID landscape.



Leadership Roles

Jackie Alexander

College Media Association | President

Lauren Cotant

NASPA-Alabama | Coordinator of Professional Development

Valerie DuBose

Alabama AHEAD | Membership Chair

Kaitlyn Freeman

Emerging Recreational Leadership Conference - NIRSA Committee |

Host Committee Chair

NIRSA | NIRSA Expo Committee

Darien Garrison

ACUI Region III | Recognition Coordinator; 2025 Conference

Coordinator

Jennifer Griffin

NASPA-Alabama | State Director

Jeremiah Johnson

Association of College Unions International | Regional Leadership

Team- Business Manager

Rebecca Kennedy

International Health Promoting Campuses Network | Co-Chair, US

Health Promoting Campuses Network | Past Chair, University Health

and Wellness Leaders Annual Conference | Conference Planning

Committee

NASPA Strategies | Conference Planning Committee

International Health Promoting Campuses Network | 2025 IHPCN Local

Organizing Conference Planning Committee

Patricia A.R. Martinez

Association of College and University Housing Officers-

International | Foundation President; Guiding Documents Steering

Committee; Chair, Future of the Profession: Communicating Value;

Funded Research Grant Review

Southern Association for College Student Affairs | Chair, Senior Student

Affairs Officer Committee

Allison Martin

Emerging Recreational Leadership Conference - NIRSA Committee |

Marketing Co-Chair

Debbie Morgette

CAS | Basic Needs Expert Review

Higher Education Case Manager Association | HECMA Conference

Committee-Awards; HECMA Non-Clinical Committee-Webinars

Sherri Moultrie

State Rehabilitation Council - Alabama | Council Member

Carmen Novoa

AHEPPP | EBI Council

Stacy Rowan

Association of Fraternity and Sorority Advisors | Perspectives

Editorial Board

National Panhellenic Conference | Area Advisor

Oliver Smith

Alabama Suicide Prevention and Resource Coalition | Secretary

Walter C. Stewart III

NAVPA | NAVPA Board Member Region IV

Kiera Walker

American College Health Association (ACHA) | NBCC CE Advisor

Mary Wallace

Journal for First-Generation Student Success | Editorial Board

Member

Center Advocacy Board | Center Advocacy Board Member

NASPA | AVP Steering Committee; Seattle 2024 Conference

Subcommittee - Engagement and Volunteers

Seneca Wilson

NIRSA | President - NIRSA Foundation Board; NIRSA Foundation

Board; ERSL Conference Advisory Committee

Brandon Wright

SOACE | Member, Professional Development & Educational Training

Programs Task Force

Award Winners

Madison Demkowski

Division of Student Affairs Excellence in Action Award

Nathan Godwin

Division of Student Affairs Excellence in Action Award

Jeremiah Johnson

ACUI Champion of the Profession

Aydrian Miles & Dr. Meghan Whitfield

CFAR Community Grant - "Ending HIV in Alabama: College Student

Focus"

Debbie Morgette

HECMA Outstanding Mid-Level Professional

Michael Norris

Division of Student Affairs Excellence in Action Award

Saraelizabeth Parker

Division of Student Affairs Excellence in Action Award

Deborah Powe

Division of Student Affairs Excellence in Action Award

Julia Sanford

Division of Student Affairs Excellence in Action Award

Seth Shierling

Division of Student Affairs Excellence in Action Award

Abby Taylor

NASPA-AL Rising Star Award

University Recreation

NIRSA - ERSL Conference Host

Kiera Walker

Division of Student Affairs Excellence in Action Award

Mary Wallace

Pillar of the Profession - NASPA 2024 Cohort

Wellness Promotion

Exemplary Service Award (Community Health and Human Services

Program, Education)

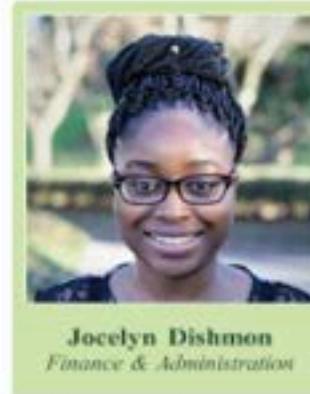
Skyler Yasenchak

ALCA 2024 Outstanding College Counselor Award

Student Affairs Milestones: Years of Service

During the end-of-year celebration, Student Affairs recognized those who reached service milestones in their career at UAB, epitomizing Student Affairs as one of the most promising places to work in the profession.

FIVE YEARS OF SERVICE



TEN YEARS OF SERVICE



FIFTEEN YEARS OF SERVICE

Assessment



The Division of Student Affairs conducts systematic assessment following the Five-Year Assessment Cycle. Departments developed data-informed strategic goals and implemented these goals throughout the academic year. These goals align with divisional strategic priorities, address Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion strategic areas of the university, and incorporate student learning outcomes, key performance indicators, and assessment strategies.

Ongoing assessments are conducted at Division, department, and program levels. The division collects data regularly to assess student participation, engagement, satisfaction, program outcomes, and learning outcomes. We use multiple data collection methods to assess program attendance, service utilization, office visits, and to understand student perception, experience, and learning. We examine how student engagement in Student Affairs programs and services contribute to student success, such as GPA, retention, and sense of belonging.

The Office of Assessment and Planning aims to:

- Create Assessment Strategic Plans for Student Affairs.
- Design, develop, and implement research and assessment programs that align with the missions and strategic goals of UAB and Student Affairs.
- Use student development theories to guide assessment efforts.
- Assess and evaluate programs and services based on external standards for benchmarking and accreditation.
- Help student affairs departments utilize assessment data for strategic planning and to develop policies, programs, and services.
- Develop policy-oriented recommendations to implement strategies to improve programs and to enhance services.
- Provide consultation and training to enhance staff competency in conducting assessments and in utilizing data to improve programs and services.
- Collaborate with academic affairs and other departments on university-wide assessment activities, surveys, and accreditation.
- Conduct student affairs program review, using national standards.









UAB STUDENT
AFFAIRS

The University of Alabama at Birmingham