



THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA IN HUNTSVILLE

FALL ISSUE 2018

SKY HIGH

Nursing students take
flight with critical care
transport elective

INSIDE:

ACADEMICS

Understanding
moonquakes



RESEARCH

Developing a
new field test



ALUMNI

Keeping the
magic alive



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THE SKY'S THE LIMIT

New elective gives students preview of the ups and downs of critical care transport nursing

If the idea of trying to save someone's life isn't panic-inducing enough, try doing it in mid-air with limited room to maneuver and the whirl of helicopter blades drowning out any chance of direct communication. For Ron Bolen (MSN, RN, CCRN, CEN, CFRN), however, it's all in a day's work. As a combat veteran, Navy reservist, and long-time critical care transport nurse, he knows what it takes to overcome those challenges and save lives. And now he's imparting that knowledge to a new generation of nursing students in his undergraduate-level Critical Care Transport Nursing course at The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH). "People look at the glory and the excitement, but there's an element of danger," he says. "We need to show nursing students the different things involved and expose them early on, so they can decide if it's right for them."

"For them to be able to take the concepts and apply them to something they'd never been exposed to before was phenomenal."

– Ron Bolen

Bolen, who joined the faculty of UAH's College of Nursing last year, initially proposed the course as a three-day review for students taking the critical care nursing board certifications. But at the urging of Dr. Marsha Howell Adams, dean of the College, it was expanded to a five-week summer elective designed to help students build on the concepts of health assessment, pathophysiology, and critical care nursing and apply them in the stabilization and care of patients in the air, land, and sea transport environment. "As a new faculty member, I didn't think I'd have the opportunity

to do it so soon, but the support from the dean and the administration has been phenomenal," he says. "We're now one of the few universities – if not the only one – to offer a critical care transport nursing course to undergraduate students."

After receiving "a good amount of interest" from the students, Bolen enrolled nine, all of whom had already completed the course prerequisite, medical surgical nursing. "The main focus was to improve their critical-thinking skills," he says. But he also wanted them to learn the tangible skills related to critical care transport nursing, including formulating a plan of care, demonstrating a patient assessment, and safely managing a patient by applying the principles of transport physiology to their pathophysiology. "The idea was for them to explore the implications of altitude and atmospheric changes on the pathophysiology of the critical care patient," says Bolen, "and learn how to mitigate those implications through didactic and patient-simulation labs."

Each day's class comprised a mix of

lectures and presentations followed by an opportunity for the students to apply and assess their hands-on skills. "We had a simulator set up in the College's Learning and Technology Resource Center where we introduced them to operating in a confined space with stressors," says Bolen. "I played an audio recording of the aircraft starting up and air traffic control speaking in the background." A few weeks later, they tested those skills in an actual H-60 Black Hawk courtesy of PEO Aviation and defense contractor Yulista Aviation Inc. "We ran through scenarios with the power on during which the students had to communicate through headsets," he says. "It was intense but also confidence building for them. They were like, 'Ok, this is how it is.' Now they'll have that muscle memory and exposure to specific clinical situations."

But while it would be easy for Bolen to take credit for the students' success as their instructor, he instead points to the strong educational foundation they've received as a result of the College's commitment to concept-based pedagogy. "I knew they'd do well, but the eagerness of these nursing students and their willingness to learn was incredible – they took it to the next level," he says. "For them to be able to take the concepts and apply them to something they'd never been exposed to before was phenomenal, and it wouldn't have been possible without that concept-based training. It affirmed for me that it's the right way to teach."

Ron Bolen (far right) is imparting his knowledge as a combat veteran, Navy reservist, and long-time transport nurse to students in his critical care transport nursing course.

Photo credit: Lori Lioce, College of Nursing



From Small-Town Stargazer TO CELESTIAL SEISMOLOGIST



Moon by studying moonquakes.”

For her doctoral research, Phillips is working closely with planetary scientist Dr. Renee Weber, who serves as manager of the Heliophysics and Planetary Science Division at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center. The pair are digging deep into the data collected by the Apollo Lunar Surface Experiments Packages (ALSEP), instruments that were deployed on the lunar surface by astronauts on Apollo 12, 14, 15, 16, and 17. Of particular importance are Apollo 17's Lunar Seismic Profiling Experiment (LSPE) and Lunar Surface Gravimeter (LSG).

“The data show that there are moonquakes, similar to earthquakes, and that there are several different types,” she says. The most common type, deep moonquakes, occur at about 800 km in depth and are mainly caused by the interaction between the Earth and the Moon. Thermal moonquakes, meanwhile, are caused by thermal fluctuations on or near the surface of the Moon and are due primarily to the day/night cycle. “My goal is to locate thermal moonquakes using LSPE data,” she says, “and to resolve deep moonquake location uncertainties

using LSG data.” By combining the two, she continues, “we can determine a more precise location and depth of moonquakes and a better structure model of the Moon can be made. That will allow scientists to better understand Moon formation.”

Earlier this year, Phillips was selected for a 2018/2019 NASA Earth and Space Science Fellowship, which includes a \$45,000 award and can be renewed for a total of three years. That funding will allow her to wrap up her dissertation and help prepare her for the next frontier in planetary seismology – Mars. “Planetary seismology is often synonymous with lunar seismology because these are the only data we have,” she says. “But by understanding the Earth, we can understand the Moon, and by understanding both of those, we can understand Mars.”

No matter how far into the cosmos her research may take her, however, Phillips knows she still has an important role to play here on Earth, where girls in small towns like Peyton don't have a lot of exposure to the STEM fields. “When I went to my guidance counselor to say I wanted to do astrophysics, I was told I wouldn't be able to make it,” she says. “So to now have two degrees on the wall and this highly prestigious fellowship, it's incredible. I want to be an inspiration. I want to be able to say to other people, follow your dreams.”

Deanna Phillips' decision to earn a Ph.D. in planetary science may have been inspired by evenings spent stargazing in her Colorado hometown of Peyton (pop. 250). But these days her focus is on the Moon – and more specifically, on the Moon's seismology.

“Seismology studies the propagation of waves throughout a medium in order to detect the internal formation of a body,” says Phillips, who also earned both her bachelor's and master's degrees from UAH's Department of Physics and Astronomy. “From studying earthquakes, we understand the layers of the Earth and how it was formed. Now we can start to do that for the



Connell, Osuga, Ortlepp (left to right)

consistently praised for her thrilling coloratura and the “unrelenting authenticity” of her musical interpretations, she has enjoyed an active career as a performer of opera, oratorio, chamber music, and art song. She received her Doctor of Musical Arts degree in vocal performance from the University of Oregon School of Music and Dance.

KEN ORTLEPP is teaching horn, brass quintet, and Honors music appreciation. He recently relocated to Huntsville from the University of Southern Mississippi, where he served as assistant professor of horn. He previously spent four years as the principal horn of the U.S. Air Force Band of the West and is currently an assistant principal horn in the Mobile Symphony Orchestra; he also holds numerous section horn positions across the South. Ortlepp is pursuing his doctoral degree in horn performance from the University of Northern Colorado.

UAH'S DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC WELCOMED THREE NEW MEMBERS TO ITS FACULTY THIS FALL

BILL CONNELL is teaching instrumental music education and introduction to theory, as well as supervising music education internships. He recently retired as Director of Bands at Grissom High in Huntsville, AL, where he taught for 32 years. Before that, he taught at Spring Valley High School in Columbia, SC, and Holston High School in Knox-

ville, TN, both of which – in addition to Connell – have earned national reputations through performances at state and national conventions and conferences.

DR. AMALIA “MAYA” OSUGA is teaching applied voice and introduction to music literature. A soprano

NEW DEAN LEADS CAHS

DR. SEAN LANE was named the new dean of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences. Prior to joining UAH, he was the acting dean of the Graduate School at Louisiana State University, where he also served as the associate dean of the Graduate School, the associate chair of psychology, the program head of the Cognitive and Brain Sciences Doctoral Program, and the Department of Psychology's director of research. Dr. Lane's research examines the mechanisms underlying learning and memory, and how those mechanisms influence behavior in complex, real-world settings.



BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING



DR. WAFU ORMAN



DR. SOPHIA MARINOVA



DR. DIANHAN ZHENG

A flashpoint is on the horizon. According to a recent “New York Daily News” article, a generation of women is sitting just below the executive level on the corporate ladder, and the nation is not ready for them to take that next step. “Americans as a whole need to start thinking of women as capable and competent leaders,” says Dr. Sophia Marinova, associate professor of management in UAH’s College of Business. “The trend of women climbing the corporate ladder is a visible, positive sign.”

The article, “Corporate America Isn’t Ready for the Growing Women’s Movement,” also noted that women are outpacing men when it comes to academic advancement, earning more bachelor’s degrees (58 percent), master’s degrees (60 percent), and JDs

(47 percent). “It is possible that because an MBA requires work experience that some women who have already started a career and a family find it harder to go back,” says Dr. Marinova. “However, the trend is upward. It is possible that online methods of teaching are going to increase the ease of taking classes.”

Entwined with all of this, of course, is the #MeToo Movement, the impact of which has yet to be fully realized. Dr. Marinova calls it a vehicle that can help “shake things up” by providing visibility to a problem that is difficult to fight as an individual. “It has energized a certain amount of momentum among women to speak up and be open about their difficult experiences,” she says. “But to achieve a lasting change we need to truly change the way we think of women. #MeToo can help in this direction by revealing discriminatory problems as collective problems rather than just isolated incidents.”

In addition to researching organizational culture and leadership in the corporate arena, Dr. Marinova is also

interested in the workforce composition in university settings. Together with assistant psychology professor Dr. Dianhan Zheng and associate economics professor Dr. Wafa Orman, she has collected objective data on more than 100 top research universities in the U.S. across different disciplines.

Some of the more interesting findings that hit close to home show that these universities display a visible preponderance of men in higher-level academic positions across many disciplines. “While such patterns are not altogether surprising given the time-lagged entry of women in academic positions,” says Dr. Marinova, “they are a warning sign that we have to be especially proactive in demonstrating our commitment to retaining, supporting, and developing women in these more male-dominated environments.”

But no matter what the venue, Dr. Marinova believes that recognizing the problem exists is a positive first step toward finding a solution. “If workplaces want to build a real competitive advantage through their diverse and often highly educated workforce of both women and men, they should embrace the ‘flashpoint’ and have an open and honest dialogue to move in the right direction,” she says. “Ultimately, women and men should help each other be the best professionals in increasingly competitive global environments.”



MORE THAN JUST A NUMBER

THERE IS **MORE THAN ONE WAY** TO MEASURE STUDENT PERFORMANCE, AND THERE ARE **MANY WAYS** TO IMPROVE IT

The closest thing to a nationwide comparison of student performance is the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), but is it the best way to determine whether students are at grade level? Not necessarily, says Dr. Beth N. Quick, dean of UAH's College of Education.

The assessment, which is given to fourth and eighth grade students in each state every two years, is only administered to a "representative" sample of students. Moreover, the results reported are for groups of students with similar characteristics, rather than individual ones. Some states even preclude students with disabilities from taking the test, resulting in falsely inflated scores.

But given that there are no plans at present to replace the NEAP with a more accurate assessment tool, Dr. Quick says there are several things Alabama can do to improve its students' scores. "We need a well-articulated alignment between assessment systems and educational outcomes, with less focus on standardized testing and

more focus on implementing research-based pedagogical strategies and creating meaningful learning-integrated instruction in the elementary grades," she says.

Other improvements might include the development of a career pathway for teacher mentors, coaches, and leaders; resources for meaningful professional development; the induction and coaching of novice teachers; and an "infusion" of more mental- and emotional-health counselors. "I would also like to see more funds specifically directed to pre-K and early childhood education, and a continued investment in successful federal programs, social support services, and services for children with disabilities and developmental delays."

As for the latter, the College of Education is already on the forefront of efforts to meet the needs of this particular student population and the educators who teach them. "Our dual licensure programs in general education and collaborative education equip our initial licensure teacher education

candidates to meet the needs of all learners," says Dr. Quick, "while our Master of Education degree in Autism Spectrum Disorders equips teachers to more effectively serve children with autism spectrum disorders."

Then there's the UAH Early Learning Center (ELC), an outreach and service unit of the College that provides inclusive early childhood education in developmentally appropriate classrooms, such as those of the UAH Rise School (uah.edu/rise-school).

"I am extremely proud of the ELC and the inclusive education we offer for young learners with blended/braided funding streams," says Dr. Quick. "We focus on adaptations and accommodations to meet students where learning is challenging, but achievable, for each learner."

Of course it's difficult to say whether or not these improvements will impact the state's NEAP ranking in the long term. But they will undoubtedly impact students' lives for the better, which is something that can't be measured with a standardized test.

CRACKING THE CODE



PILOT PROGRAM SUBSTANTIATES EFFORTS TO INTRODUCE STUDENTS IN RURAL ALABAMA TO CYBERSECURITY

Though initially established to introduce high school students in rural Alabama to the field of cybersecurity, the Expanding Cybersecurity Innovative Incubator to Extended Demographics (ExCIITED) program managed to do much more over the course of its first year. Indeed, not only did 16 participants successfully complete the program's requirements, but two of them were able to pass the Security+ certification exam, and three are now attending UAH as undergraduates. "I am very pleased with the success of the program and students," says program coordinator Sharon Johnson, a principal research engineer with UAH's Center for Cybersecurity Research and Education (CCRE) and a UAH engineering alumna.

Funded through 2019 by a grant from the National Security Agency and administered by CCRE staff members, ExCIITED requires participants to complete an "Engineering 101" (ENG 101) class to familiarize them with the fundamental principles of programming. They are also expected to complete a summer internship with the CCRE's Cyber Force Incubator (CFI) and, if possible, begin certification training and the security clearance process. "Ultimately," says Johnson, "we would like to match these students with employers."

Participants for this year's pilot program were recruited by Johnson last fall, and by the summer, 16 hand-selected students had arrived on the UAH campus to take ENG 101 with instructor SueAnne Griffith, a research associate with the CCRE and a Ph.D. candidate in UAH's electrical engineering program. "Ten of those students were then chosen to work in the CFI for the summer, getting hands-on experience applying cybersecurity principles to real-world systems," says Johnson. Among them were Sparkman High School senior Abi Kunkle, West Morgan High School senior Christian Martin, and Clements High School senior Tristan Wildharber, all of whom expressed appreciation for the opportunity to participate in the program.

"With ExCIITED I've been able to learn stuff that I don't get to learn at my high school because we don't have these types of classes," says Kunkle. "I got really into understanding cybersecurity, and it became something that I was extremely interested in." The same is true for Martin, who adds that "just having the opportunity to be exposed to what I had never seen before is really great for me." Wildharber, meanwhile, appreciates the long-term advantages offered by the program. "It sets us up for life because we are able to get our security clearances, and we're able to take college classes before we actually get to college," he says. "And being able to network is useful because we meet a lot of people in the cybersecurity field – people who could potentially be employers."

With this inaugural cohort successfully out the door, Johnson is now looking ahead to next year's program, with an eye toward doubling the number of rural students who will enjoy a competitive edge in both their academic and professional careers as a result of participating. "I've always been interested in teaching skills to students at an earlier age and getting them interested in the field of cybersecurity," she says.



PERSONALIZING MEDICINE

If personalized medicine is on the cutting edge of disease diagnosis and treatment, Dr. Surangi Jayawardena's research is on the cutting edge of personalized medicine. In fact, it's hard to get much more pioneering than designing theranostic systems that incorporate both in-vitro diagnostic and therapeutic elements to nanosystems, the former through the inherent properties of nanomaterial fluorescence magnetic or surface plasmon resonance and the latter through the surface and core modification of nanomaterials for the purpose of transporting biorecognition molecules, small molecule drugs for targeted therapy.

"There is only a small scientific community working on nanomaterials and interfacing with microorganisms, like bacteria/viruses," says Dr. Jayawardena, an assistant professor of chemistry in UAH's College of Science. "I synthesize my own nanomaterials and make the surface modifications to do biological conjugation to target microorganisms. So I'm really glad to be here at UAH, because I bring a different angle to

research, one that is geared toward medical application."

Assisting Dr. Jayawardena in her two labs in UAH's Materials Science Building – a synthetic one and a bio-safety level 2 one that can safely handle pathogenic microorganisms – are a team of undergraduate and graduate students. These include two Ph.D. candidates from UAH's biotechnology science and engineering program, Kavini Rathnayake and Unnati Patel, and three students from UAH's Research or Creative Experience for Undergraduates program, biology majors James Johnson and Melinda Mustain, and biology and chemistry double-major Veer Manohar Deverasetty, in addition to undergraduate chemistry major Andrew Sentell.

With their help, she has already developed a low-cost diagnostic method to detect *Mycobacteria* sp. in sputum and obtained a provisional patent for the test. Thanks to an external magnet that draws the *Mycobacteria* from the patient's sample, it requires no instrumentation and can confirm detec-

tion within a couple of minutes. Now she is doing the same for *Chlamydia trachomatis*, this time partnering with Dr. Leonard Petnga, an assistant professor in UAH's Department of Industrial & Systems Engineering and Engineering Management, to develop a mathematical model that will help eliminate the time-consuming lab work required to determine the stability of a vaccine antigen in different formulations.

But while most of her funding until now has come primarily from internal awards and grants, Dr. Jayawardena has her sights set on a prestigious external source going forward. "When you need to fund applications related to infectious diseases, you look to the National Institutes of Health," she says. "But before that, I have to strengthen my core research to be able to compete against other top-tier researchers." Fortunately, there's plenty of work to go around. "The field of nanomaterials is still in its stage of infancy, application-wise," she says, "and there's a whole world to explore."

A SAFE CHOICE

UAH was chosen by the Defense Security Service (DSS) to receive the 2018 James S. Cogswell Outstanding Industrial Security Achievement Award, the only institution of higher learning in the nation to be selected for the honor. In fact, only 39 organizations nationwide were selected for this year's award from nearly 13,300 cleared facilities that are subject to recurring assessment.

"This recognition from one of the nation's leading agencies providing oversight for America's security operations is quite an accomplishment for UAH and our team of security professionals," says UAH President Robert Altenkirch. "This award is indicative of the investment and dedication of a lot of individuals on our campus, and we're pleased their efforts are being recognized."

The Cogswell Award is given for outstanding achievement in matters related exclusively to a facility's security program, with an emphasis on principles of industrial security excellence. Factors include establishing and maintaining a security program that far exceeds the basic National Industrial

Security Program (NISP) requirements, and providing leadership to other cleared facilities in establishing best practices while maintaining the highest standards for security.

"The Cogswell Award represents the best of the best, and the winning security programs stand as models for others to emulate," says UAH Security Administrator Denise Spiller. "The award is presented to organizations that have significantly contributed to industrial security, as well as national security."

The selection process is rigorous, according to Spiller. A DSS industrial security representative may only nominate facilities that have a minimum of two consecutive superior industrial security review ratings and that show a sustained degree of excellence and innovation in their overall security program management, implementation, and oversight. The nomination is based on the overall facility security program, senior management support, security vulnerability assessments, security education and awareness, and the experience level of facility security officers and staff. Once nominated, the

DSS field chief's approval is required. It is then sent to DSS headquarters where 56 agencies review the nominations and make the final selections.

The award was established in 1966 in honor of the late Air Force Col. James S. Cogswell, the first chief of industrial security within the Department of Defense (DOD). Cogswell was responsible for developing the basic principles of the Industrial Security Program, which include an emphasis on the partnership between industry and government to protect classified information.

The DSS strengthens national security at home and abroad through security oversight and education operations. It oversees the protection of U.S. and foreign classified information and technologies in the hands of cleared industry under the NISP by providing professional risk-management services. As the functional manager for the DOD, DSS provides security education, training, certification, and professional development for U.S. government personnel, contractors, and representatives of foreign governments.

AN INCLUSIVE APPROACH

Mentorship, funding, and research opportunities help increase minority participation in STEM



Rosemary Robinson, UAH's coordinator for diversity initiatives, and Dr. Emanuel Waddell, UAH ALSAMP coordinator, are joined by program participants Javia Warner, Caleb Hammock, DeAdra Kelly, and Bryson Smith.

The Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP) program, funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and named for late former congressman and civil rights attorney Louis Stokes, strives to increase both the quality and the quantity of underrepresented students pursuing degrees in the STEM fields. UAH joined the Alabama LSAMP in 1992, under the leadership of the late Dr. Adriel D. Johnson Sr., former associate professor of biological sciences.

LSAMP scholars – high-performing students recruited at the recommendation of previous scholars – receive financial support ranging from \$250 to \$2,000 toward tuition costs. Through another NSF-funded program, Bridge to the Doctorate, eligible LSAMP scholars can receive two years of funding to pursue a master's degree in STEM,

to include a tuition waiver, health insurance, and an annual stipend of up to \$32,000.

"The most important part is the mentoring component, in terms of encouraging LSAMP students to do undergraduate research, encouraging them to participate in intern opportunities and research opportunities off campus in the summer, encouraging them to pursue graduate study, and encouraging them – ideally – to become members of the professoriate," says Dr. Emanuel Waddell, associate dean of the College of Science. Since 2010, he has served as the principal investigator of UAH's LSAMP program, receiving valuable assistance from Rosemary Robinson, coordinator for diversity initiatives in UAH's Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Many of the program's mentors,

known as Adriel D. Johnson Sr. Fellows, are students from the Minority Graduate Student Association. In conjunction with a dedicated budget line, Dr. Waddell has implemented a cost-sharing approach that enables these graduate students to receive financial support from their respective departments as graduate teaching or research assistants.

Research is an equally important component of the program. For example, Dr. Waddell requires that all LSAMP students apply for UAH's Research or Creative Experience for Undergraduates summer program and pays for any accepted LSAMP students to participate. "It's a win-win for everybody, because the literature states that, once students start doing research, they're more likely to remain on your campus," he says, adding that "quite a few end up working in Research Park after graduation."

As for the future of LSAMP, Dr. Waddell says he is focused on two things: growth, in terms of both numbers and diversity reflecting national demographic trends, and institutionalization. "People of color, women, people with disabilities, people who identify with that group – everyone has a vested interest in seeing someone who doesn't look like them become successful."

NEW WORLD ORDER

Former CIA chief and former
DNI agree that disruption marks
a shift in global U.S. role



Donald Trump's Jacksonian-style presidency and a year of disruption of the nation's traditional global roles prompt questions domestically and internationally about the future role of the U.S. in world affairs, said retired Gen. Michael Hayden to Redstone Arsenal officials, defense industry executives, and local economic and political leaders during the inaugural event of the UAH Distinguished Lecture Series this past May.

A retired Air Force four-star general with 40 years of service who is a cable TV news national security analyst and author, Hayden is the former director of the CIA under President George W. Bush. During his speech, he categorized the U.S. as a post-industrial society and called it "the most disruptive force in the world today." He also cited its current turn from a welcoming nation to a restrictive one in immigration and increased levels of political drama as further evidence of a major shift.

"We are disrupting the fundamentals of the American approach to foreign affairs," he said. Yet because of its major heft in the world, U.S. allies are hoping the questions about America's new role are answered. "That structure we have used to sustain world order since World War II is dying because the structure we used to establish it – the industrial society – is going away," said Hayden. "They are constantly asking now, 'Where are you now? What will be your role?'"

The UAH Distinguished Lecture Series brings nationally recognized guest speakers to Huntsville to enhance community collaboration and assist the development of Redstone Arsenal. It fosters better understanding of current events and future trends, how they impact the federal organizations at Redstone, and how they could influence U.S. reaction to world events and the nation's future exploration, discovery, and technological development.

Former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper was invited to speak as part of the series in August, using the occasion to address the threats posed to the U.S. by Russia, China, North Korea, and Iran. While Moscow is a formidable near-term threat, he said, China is the longer-term existential threat to the U.S. and is uniquely so because the Chinese and U.S. economies are inextricably intertwined. That said, he continued, "the fact that our economies are so well bound together moderates that threat to some degree."

In his speech, Clapper also underscored Hayden's concerns about the U.S.'s yet-to-be-determined role in this emerging new world order. "There is great uncertainty among our allies about our long-term leadership role," he said. "When people are in trouble and they call for help, they don't call for Russia or China or some other country. They call for us."

For more about the UAH Distinguished Lecture Series, which is hosted by the Office of the President, please visit uah.edu/president/uah-distinguished-lecture-series.

A JOB WELL DONE

Junior communication arts major Patricia Brown was named the Alabama Association of Colleges and Employers (AACE) Intern of the Year. The Montgomery Village, MD, native was recognized at the AACE Summer Conference held in Huntsville.

"I was quite excited and a bit surprised," says Brown, who has already completed an internship with the Better Business Bureau (BBB) and is currently participating in a co-op with ADTRAN.

Each year, AACE solicits nominations for the award from the 27 four- and two-year colleges and universities that are members of the organization. Brown was nominated by UAH's Office of Career Services for her internship with the BBB, her strong GPA, and her involvement at UAH and in the community.

Dr. Sean Lane, dean of the UAH College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, says the Intern of the Year Award is a "very impressive and well-deserved honor" for Brown, and that "the College is extremely proud of her accomplishments."

Brown says she learned two important things while working as an intern. "I have learned that teamwork is invaluable to results, and that to stay relevant in today's world, a company's service or product must always keep up with the needs of the user."



"I have learned that teamwork is invaluable to results, and that to stay relevant in today's world, a company's service or product must always keep up with the needs of the user."

– Patricia Brown

She also realized that having a user-friendly software interface that provides streamlined services is one of the most important marketing elements. "A hassle-free or even fun experience with the product or service is key to not just the user experience, but also the brand experience," she says. "This can increase the retention rate as well as the referral value."

It's a field in which she'd like to work after graduation, as either a user-experience designer or a researcher. "I'm very excited about the increasing emphasis on user-experience design and that I can be a part of that, and I hope that UAH and other schools will continue to expand it as an academic discipline and as a practical function of the business world," Brown says.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

THE COLLEGE OF NURSING IS NAMED A 2018 CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

The College of Nursing was named a National League for Nursing (NLN) 2018 Center of Excellence in recognition of its efforts to promote the pedagogical expertise of faculty. In her congratulations to the 2018 class of NLN Centers of Excellence, NLN President G. Rumay Alexander offered the organization's "deepest gratitude for creating and sustaining educational excellence" in nursing.

The honor underscores the College's emphasis on creating an environment that fosters pedagogical expertise and faculty development to ensure student success. "Our students have been the most important focus in the transformation of our programs," says Dr. Marsha Howell Adams, dean of the College. "From advising doctoral students to improving support for freshmen to transforming our curriculum, the College has never lost sight of its goal: caring for our students, supporting our students, and producing strong, competent, innovative nurse leaders."

As for being named a 2018 Center of Excellence, Dr. Adams calls it "a tremendous honor" for the College. "I would like to thank Dr. Rita Ferguson, chair of the Strategic Management Committee, for leading this effort," she says. "I would also like to thank the College's faculty, who submitted content, and the writing team, who was responsible for addressing each criterion in the 100-page application."

The College was formally recognized on Friday, Sept. 14, during the Honors Convocation at the 2018 NLN Education Summit, an annual event that draws a capacity crowd of nursing faculty, deans, and administrators, and professionals from allied health organizations.

Each year since 2004, the NLN has invited nursing schools to apply to become a Center of Excellence in Nursing Education institution, based on their ability to demonstrate in measurable terms sustained excellence in faculty development, nursing education research, or student learning and professional development. As Dr. Beverly Malone, NLN CEO, explains, "Centers of Excellence help raise the bar for all nursing programs by role modeling visionary leadership and environments of inclusive excellence that nurture the next generation of a strong and diverse nursing workforce to advance the health of the nation and the global community."

The NLN is the premier organization for nurse faculty and leaders in nursing education. It offers faculty development, networking opportunities, testing services, nursing research grants, and public policy initiatives to its more than 40,000 individual and more than 1,200 institutional members, comprising nursing education programs across the spectrum of higher education and health care organizations.

THE BUSINESS OF HELPING OTHERS

CAMPUS



SBA Birmingham District Director Tom Todt, Mary Jane Fleming, Heather Wright, Magdaline Braxton, Foster Perry, and Dr. Jason Greene, Dean of UAH's College of Business.

UAH's Small Business Development Center received the prestigious 2018 Excellence and Innovation Center Award for Small Business Administration Region IV in recognition of its outstanding contributions to the development and support of small businesses in North Alabama.

"On behalf of my colleagues, our sincerest thanks go to the Small Business Administration for this special recognition," says Foster Perry, director and senior advisor of the Center. "It is because of the support we receive from the UAH College of Business and resource partners such as the

Huntsville-Madison County Chamber of Commerce that this award is equally shared. We are so fortunate to be a part of the vibrant entrepreneurial and innovative ecosystem that is evolving in Huntsville and Northeast Alabama."

The SBDC and Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) at UAH provide a critical service in helping small businesses in North Alabama grow. The SBDC offers business counseling to seven counties in North Alabama and expertise to assist small businesses at any stage. In addition to Perry, the SBDC/PTAC team comprises Procurement Advisor Mary Jane Fleming, Staff Assistant and Training Coordinator Magdaline Braxton, and SBDC Small Business Advisor/Finance Specialist Heather Wright.



ARE YOU INTERESTED IN MENTORING A CURRENT UAH STUDENT?

UAH's Mentor-A-Charger (MAC) program will give you that opportunity! MAC mentors have the unique opportunity to interact with a current student through one-on-one meetings to discuss job interests, provide professional advice, teach life skills, and more! Even if you live outside of the Huntsville area, you can still participate remotely through electronic communication.

To learn more about the MAC Program, contact the Office of Alumni Relations at alumni@uah.edu.



ALUMNI

KEEPING THE **MAGIC** ALIVE

Magic happened in 1996 when Taso Sofikitis was a member of the UAH hockey team. Now, through a continuing involvement with the university, he's spread that magic all the way to the present day.

Sofikitis (B.S., Business Administration, '96) was a defenseman for UAH when the team took the Division II national championship by storm after a 24-0-3 season record, while igniting a rocket of support from the surrounding Huntsville community and turning more than one area die-hard college football fan into a hockey fan, as well. "It was an exciting time to be a part of the UAH hockey program and winning a national championship," he says. "The thing I remember the most is that it was truly a team effort – everyone had a part of it and everyone contributed. Everyone put their personal goals to the side and sacrificed themselves for the betterment of the team and winning as a team."

Originally from Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, Sofikitis attended UAH on a hockey scholarship, and he says today's student athletes should always put their team first. By

making the necessary sacrifices for the whole, he says, personal goals will also be achieved. "This is a life lesson, and if you apply it in athletics and apply it after college and in the real world, you will significantly increase the likelihood of being successful after college."

"My advice to striving collegiate athletic scholarship students is to control what you can control. You can control your work ethic, you can control your compete level, you can control the type of team player you are," he says. "If you possess those qualities and characteristics, you can achieve success and overcome any lack of talents or skills that may be missing. You can overcome any athletic obstacles by giving 100 percent in your work ethic and compete level."

True to his words, Sofikitis credits his team first for helping him during his time at the university. "My teammates were a big part of helping me along the way, in particular Sheldon Wolitski, Mario Mazzuca, Brad Dame, and Wade Tulk," he says. "From the faculty and staff, Dr. Brent Wren and Dr. Jim Simpson had an extremely positive influence in helping me achieve my goals."

After graduation, Sofikitis worked for a staffing company in Huntsville for a year until he became engaged to his wife, 1997 UAH graduate Carrie Sofikitis (née Hopper). The couple has three children – Nicholas, 14, Evan, 11, and Sophia, 7 – and



the family resides in Birmingham, MI. "After our engagement, I started my career with Maynards Industries, a business that I acquired, and became the majority shareholder in 2012," he says. "I am currently the CEO/president of the company and we are a global company with offices in the U.S., Canada, Europe, China, and Japan."

Under Sofikitis' leadership the company has expanded to include a financial services division and ownership of several large manufacturing companies in the oil and gas and the paper sectors. "The thing I love about my job is that I control my own destiny. I have surrounded myself with excellent people and I have a strong team in place, and we have accomplished and continue to accomplish a lot of great things," he says. "The thing I find interesting about my business is, I get to see a lot of different sectors and a lot of different deals. One day I may be making a \$20 million acquisition, and the next day I may be looking at a \$500,000 acquisition. Every day is different, and I learn something new every day."

What he learned at UAH has played a major role in his career. "Your personal goals can be achieved if you surround yourself with quality people and give those around you the opportunity to succeed. I also learned how to manage my time and make sure I prioritize the various tasks involved in running a multinational company," Sofikitis says. "Finally, from an athletic environment I learned that the business world is no different. You have to work hard and compete hard to achieve success. No one is going to hand anything to you, and you have to compete and fight for everything, similar to when you are playing sports."

He hasn't forgotten his magic days at UAH, athletically or academically, and he says it's important to be involved with the university

and UAH athletics, both of which boosted him toward success. "I stay in consistent contact with the hockey program, including Mike Corbett and Gavin Morgan, and have built friendships with them," Sofikitis says. "I believe over the years I have been a significant financial donor to the hockey program, and I'm hoping to be able to continue to give back so other inspiring athletes have the same opportunity that I had."

Remaining a part of the UAH team has helped him see his own goals realized. "My life would have been significantly different if I didn't get an opportunity to go to UAH," Sofikitis says. "I met my wife Carrie at school, which is the best thing that ever happened to me, and we have three children. At UAH I learned what it would take to be successful in the business world. Therefore, I feel it's important to be involved, be a good person, and always try to give back."



Sofikitis was a member of the team that won the Division II hockey national championship in 1996.

CONGRATULATIONS

2018 ALUMNI OF ACHIEVEMENT AWARD WINNERS

The Alumni of Achievement Award was created in 2001 as part of the university's 50 years of class celebration and is the highest honor bestowed by the UAH Alumni Association. The award recognizes graduates who have distinguished themselves professionally and personally and who exemplify the high standards of UAH. Winners are selected by a committee from nominations made by alumni, faculty, and friends.

The winners of the
2018 Alumni of Achievement Award are:

- ▶ **John Braun**
'91, BA, Political Science
President and Founder
Dynamis Inc.
- ▶ **Ashley Keeble**
'03, BS, Finance
Pacific Architects and Engineering
Deputy Project Manager
AFRICAP and Africa Programs
- ▶ **Cassandra Warner Frieson**
'11, DNP, Nursing
President and Founder
Fall Injury Prevention and
Rehabilitation Center
- ▶ **Braj K. Singh**
'71, MS, Mechanical Engineering
Deputy Director (Retired)
U.S. Department of Energy



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Foundation donations are especially helpful because they allow us to support activities that would otherwise be unsupported, which enhance the overall experience for the students.

– Dr. Matthew Turner

UAH Alumnus
STEM Projects Advancing Relevance and
Confidence in the Classroom (SPARCC) Lab
Systems Management and Production
(SMAP) Center

Investing in education is key for developing programs that help build our future workforce. Toyota’s partnership with UAH is a great example of industry and educators working together to create opportunities for students and help close the gap on workforce challenges we face.

– Kim Ogle

Corporate Communications, Analyst
Toyota Motor North America

We both strongly believe education opens many doors that would otherwise remain closed. Others provided us that opportunity. We want to do our part to do the same for others. Education is not a right...it’s a gift to be cherished.”

– Major General (Retired) James Myles
and Mrs. Alice Myles



THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA IN HUNTSVILLE

PRESIDENT’S COUNCIL AND THE PRESIDENT’S CORPORATE AND FOUNDATION PARTNERS

UAH’s core mission is to explore, discover, create, and communicate knowledge, while educating individuals in leadership, innovation, critical thinking, and civic responsibility and inspiring a passion for learning. Essential to our ability to execute this mission is the support of our President’s Council members and the members of our President’s Corporate and Foundation Partners.

President’s Council members are those who give \$1,000 or more to UAH each year, while President’s Corporate and Foundation Partners are businesses and foundations that give \$2,500 or more each year. These members are not only investing in our future community leaders, future technologies, and future breakthroughs, but as a result of these partnerships, they are directly benefiting from the workforce development, research expertise, and collaborative opportunities that UAH has to offer.

We want to be a university of choice where technology and human understanding converge. The support of the President’s Council and the President’s Corporate and Foundation Partners is enabling us to be that university.

Thank you.

For more information, visit
uah.edu/giving/donor-and-partners.

SOCIAL MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Check out our most popular social media posts from the last few months.

UAH alumna is helping NASA get its Space Launch System off the ground.

on.uah.edu/2PTpjmo

Looks like the secret is getting out! College Raptor has named UAH one of 2019's Hidden Gems in the Southeast.

on.uah.edu/2wl4kdR

Beekeeping Club perseveres after learning experience.

on.uah.edu/2C0JhZE

Thanks to growing industry, great job numbers and a low cost of living, Huntsville is making it onto a lot of best places to live lists!

on.uah.edu/2wyXYxg

UAH was not only included on the list of the 2018 Best Online Schools for Women in STEM, but it was also ranked the 6th most affordable!

on.uah.edu/2NDPLiq



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ATHLETICS

SEASON TICKETS NOW AVAILABLE

The UAH hockey program embarks on its sixth season in the Western Collegiate Hockey Association in the 2018-19 campaign, which includes a total of 14 home games for the Chargers at the Von Braun Center. Season tickets to see all the action comes at a cost of \$199, while UAH also offers its FlexTix package that comes with 10 tickets to use at any home UAH hockey game for just \$99. Call 256-UAH-PUCK to purchase your tickets today!

* Want to benefit the program by joining the Blue Line Club? Learn more at uahchargers.com or call 256-UAH-PUCK.

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