

# Academic Affairs Newsletter

by Office of the Provost  
and Vice President for Academic Affairs



University of North Alabama

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## A Tribute to Outreach by the Culinary Program at UNA —————>

The culinary program at UNA is a concentration within the HES degree. It was started in 2008 and Johnson Ogun was hired as the first faculty member to lead the program. At that point, no one could have anticipated the growth of the program and its success among students. Job placement rates have been high and the reputation of the program across the Shoals has increased each year. Due to the rapid growth of the program a chef, Lewis Yuille, was added in 2010 and a second faculty member, Prema Monteiro, was hired in 2012.

One of the most impressive attributes of the students, staff, and faculty of the culinary program is their commitment to community outreach. Over time numerous agencies across the Shoals have called on the culinary program to partner on fundraising events. The culinary faculty, staff, and students manage the dining and food preparation for large events. Once organizations realized this option was possible, the requests began to significantly increase. Now the culinary program is completely involved in the fundraising life of the Shoals. It is common for the culinary faculty, staff, and students to spend their entire weekend catering a Shoals event. Often, these events run very late so after most of us have called it a night, they still have hours to go before their work is done.

Having seen the culinary program in action, what is also impressive is the attitude they take. To a person they indicate how pleased they are to help in support of a worthy cause. They realize they are making a difference for the people served by the volunteer agency. Moreover, the students are not only getting great hands-on experience in every aspect of the culinary and catering field, they are gaining the satisfaction of being part of an effort that touches the lives of Shoals residents.

Jane Wilson, Chair of HES, and tireless worker behind the scenes for the culinary program, shared a sample of major events catered by the culinary program in 2012-2013.

- ◆ In the fall 2012 semester, the culinary program hosted the YMCA annual fundraiser at the East Campus. They served over 200 guests.
- ◆ Also in the fall, 75 people enjoyed a five-course meal prepared and served by the culinary students. Ten thousand dollars was raised through ticket sales and a silent auction that resulted in the opportunity for UNA culinary students to apply yearly to the James Beard Foundation for scholarships.
- ◆ Beginning in November, the culinary students partnered with First United Methodist Church in a weekly Sunday meal as an extension of the community soup kitchen program for the less fortunate people in the community. The chefs and students prepare food for 50 people each week. Another partner, Panera Bread, donates bread and desserts each week.
- ◆ In March, culinary students prepared and served the meal for the annual fundraiser for the Tennessee Valley Art Association. Two-hundred and twenty guests enjoyed a meal and concert. Part of the funds will go to support a fine arts academy after-school program for Shoals students.
- ◆ This past Saturday, culinary students catered an event themed, "Supper with the Symphony." The event was held at the East Campus with a three-course meal with wine pairings. Music was provided by members of the Shoals Symphony at UNA. The event raised over \$17,000 for the Shoals Symphony at UNA.
- ◆ For the second year, AIDS Action Coalition and the HES Department presented a fundraising event, "Dinner with Friends." The merchandising program featured a display of student-created fashion that accompanied the décor set by the interior design students. The culinary students prepared and served specialty hors d'oeuvres and desserts.

Many of these organizations couldn't sponsor a fundraising event without the culinary faculty, staff, and students as partners. Thanks to our colleagues and students in culinary for helping change lives for the better across the Shoals!

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