



Academic Affairs Newsletter

by Office of the Provost
and Vice President for Academic Affairs



University of North Alabama

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Faculty Recognition

A proposal has been submitted and approved to name two academic affairs awards after UNA faculty members. The teaching award would be named after Dr. Larry Nelson, and the research award would be named after Dr. Jim Couch. Dr. Nelson was a Professor of History and died January 14, 2014. Dr. Jim Couch was a Professor of Economics and died June 26, 2013. The proposal has been reviewed and endorsed by the Executive Council, the Council of Academic Deans, and the academic departments involved. This is a fitting tribute to these two outstanding faculty members. The awards will be presented at the Academic Awards Gala on April 28.

Dr. John G. Thornell,
Vice President for
Academic Affairs & Provost
Phone: 256.765.4258
jthornell@una.edu

Ms. Renee' P. Vandiver,
Assistant to the Vice President
Phone: 256.765.4258
rvandiver@una.edu

Ms. Phyllis Underwood
Administrative Assistant
Phone: 256.765.5950
punderwood@una.edu



Math Competition at UNA Saturday

On Saturday, February 22, 2014, over 1,000 students from 41 middle and high schools from around the state of Alabama took the first round written portion of the 33rd Annual Alabama Statewide High School Mathematics Contest sponsored by the Alabama Council of Teachers of Mathematics. The top teams from the first round were invited to the second round ciphering portion of the contest, which will take place on March 15 on campus in the new Commons Building. The one-day tournament consists of four rounds, each with 10 questions, in which students race against each other to be the first to provide a correct answer. The winners will be crowned in an award ceremony immediately following the competition. This is UNA's first year to host this state-wide tournament. It was most recently run by faculty at the University of Alabama. The contest directors are Dr. Ashley Johnson and Dr. Miranda Bowie. ~ Dr. Ashley Johnson

Faculty Promotions

Congratulations to faculty members who were recently promoted. It is a special honor to be recognized by peers for outstanding achievements. To those who were not successful I encourage you to be diligent in continuing your good work in hopes for future success.

The University Tenure and Promotion Committee will meet soon to review the process and make recommendations for possible revisions. If you have suggestions, please share them with Dr. Martha Rock, Committee Chair, or me.

Curriculum Committee Actions

At its most recent meeting, the Curriculum Committee approved a new major in Earth Systems Sustainability submitted by the Department of Physics and Earth Science. Several extended reviews will now occur prior to final approval. Commendations to the department for taking this initiative. As an academic community we need to be attentive to possible new programs that meet changing student needs.

Review: *The Last Days of His Father's Kingdom*

Large doors often swing on small hinges. Chloe Canterbury (pen name of UNA's Vice President for Advancement Dr. Dan Hendricks) opens a very large door into the history of Islam and Christianity on the small hinge of the fictionalization of the last days of the last sultan in Granada, Spain, in 1491/1492. The tragic story is one of idyllic peace and opulence fragmented and torn by intrigue and treachery at national, regional, and familial levels. It is a story of ordinary human beings in a life and death struggle in which mundane things take on the aura of magic and extraordinary power. It is a story of young love, the love of a father for his son, and the love of a people for their country and way of life.

The story opens with the desperate sultan summoning a renowned magician/sorcerer from Baghdad. The Spanish have laid siege to Granada in an effort to drive the last remaining Moors from southern Spain. The sultan can see he is overwhelmed by a superior force, and there are only the massive fortifications of the city standing between the Moors and utter defeat leading to certain exile, if they should live to be exiled. The magician's task is to help in any way he can by giving counsel to the sultan, as he is famed for his prescience and magical powers. A number of events do in fact expand his reputation, but only the magician knows he has no more understanding of how the results were achieved than does anyone else. After many adventures, and misadventures, and over a year of siege, the defense ultimately fails and the Moors are expelled from Spain.

Despite occasional anachronisms, this novel is written in style that evokes the formal lifestyle of the Moorish court in the late 1400s. It is full of suspense and sibling rivalry. The treachery and betrayals only add to the intrigue. The narration carries the story forward in an unfolding tableau that leads to the ultimate conclusion in a spellbinding way. *The Last Days of His Father's Kingdom* is a must read.

Hooked

The current issue of *NOALA* magazine has an article on the UNA Bass Fishing Team. Click [here](#) to read.