

Communications News

At the state conference of the *Public Relations Council of Alabama*, held April 1-3 in Montgomery, Assistant Professor of Public Relations Dr. Beth Garfrerick was named the PRCA Educator of the Year. She was nominated for the award by the North Alabama Chapter of PRCA. Earning her undergraduate, master's, and doctoral degrees from the University of Alabama, Dr. Garfrerick had 20 years of industry experience in print journalism and public relations before entering the academic field.

Senior Savannah McKinney, the president of UNA's PR student association in 2014, was named PRCA's Student of the Year. She received a framed certificate and a \$1,000 cash award for this top honor. UNA's PRCA Student Medallion Awards competition winners included: Lauren Butler, KeKoria Greer, Kristen Goode, Savannah McKinney, Jessica Fowler, Undrea Randolph, Kim Grissom, Alex Hughes, Michael Bramlett, Marcey Anne Sykes and Krista Butler. Congratulations to everyone!

The Mass Communication Program in the Department of Communications has completed initial steps towards its six-year goal of gaining program accreditation. A site team reviewed the department's program last October and recommended initial accreditation. The Accreditation Committee of the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication approved the site team recommendation. The full Accrediting Council meets on May 1 and is expected to complete the accreditation approval. We are looking forward to more good news in May!

Professional Achievements

Dr. Lee Raney, Assistant Professor of Mathematics, gave the invitational address at the Mathematics Colloquium at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, Florida on March 20, 2015. His talk, titled "Groups, loops, and the Baer trick", first summarized some generally unfamiliar results in the theory of non-associative algebraic structures and then described his recent joint work with Dr. Mark Greer, another Assistant Professor of Mathematics at UNA. Dr. Raney gave a shorter version of this address at the Mathematical Association of America Southeastern Sectional Meeting in Wilmington, North Carolina on March 13, 2015. Good Job!

Dr. Whitney O'Neal, Adjunct Instructor of Music, served as co-program chair of the Mid-South Flute Festival, March 27-28 at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. She collaborated with UA's Dr. Diane Schultz to organize this year's festival which was a big success, bringing in flutists and musicians from all ages and ability levels. Dr. O'Neal performed on the Festival Masters Recital and was also appointed Treasurer-elect of the Mid-South Flute Society. Three UNA music students attended the festival: Paige Watkins, Hannah Jacobs, and Emily Monson. The students performed in the Festival Flute Choir and were wonderful ambassadors for our school and the UNA flute studio. Well done!

Dr. Mark Puckett, Professor of Geology in the Department of Physics and Earth Science, led the 51st Annual Field Trip of the Alabama Geological Society on December 12-13, 2014, in northwest Alabama. More than 60 geologists from around the state attended the trip, which was at maximum capacity. Professional geologists received continuing education credits for the trip. Articles in the guidebook included chapters describing the field trip stops, an introduction to the Mississippian strata of northwest Alabama, small carbonate buildups in the Bangor Limestone, common and index macrofossils of the Mississippian System of northwest Alabama, hydrology of northwest Alabama, and a review of the oil sands of the region. Two other faculty members of the Department of Physics and Earth Science were involved in the field trip: Dr. Richard Statom contributed to the guidebook and assisted in the field, and Dr. Brenda Webb helped with the logistics. Keep up the good work!

Department of Physics and Earth Science faculty member and Assistant Director of the Honors Program Dr. Melissa M. Driskell was recently awarded a National Science Foundation Research Opportunity Award of \$58,000 for three years for a project entitled "Basin-to-slab seismic imaging of the Alaska subduction zone." She and co-Principal Investigators Dr. Doug Christensen and Dr. Carl Tape of the University of Alaska - Fairbanks will deploy 30 seismic stations on the Kenai peninsula and the Cook Inlet of Alaska to target the thick crust of the Cook Inlet basin, the 400 km long transect of the subduction zone across the basin, and Reboubt volcano. This study will use the seismic signals to image deep structure and processes within the lower crust, upper mantle, and subducting Pacific slab. Congratulations Dr. Driskell!

Dr. Andrew Luna, Director of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment, was recently presented the Joseph T. Sutton Award during the annual meeting of the Alabama Association of Institutional Research. The award is given to those who have demonstrated leadership and outstanding accomplishment in the field of institutional research throughout the state and beyond. In presenting the award, the president of the association stated that Dr. Luna had significantly contributed to the field in his almost 20 years of service through his numerous publications, presentations, and mentoring to new and junior IR professionals. The award is the highest given within the state association. Prior to this award, Dr. Luna received the Distinguished Service Award from the Southern Association of Institutional Research in 2013.

Dr. John G. Thornell,
Vice President for
Academic Affairs & Provost
tcalhoun@una.edu

Ms. Renee' P. Vandiver,
Assistant to the Vice President
rpvandiver@una.edu

Ms. Phyllis Underwood
Administrative Assistant
Phone: 256.765.4258
punderwood@una.edu

