ANNUAL REPORT

Sanders College of Business and Technology
University of NORTH ALABAMA

2022 - 2023
Dear Students, Friends, Faculty, Staff, and Alumni,

As we start another remarkable academic year, I am delighted to share with you the outstanding accomplishments and milestones that the Sanders College of Business and Technology achieved last year. It is with great pride and gratitude that I extend my appreciation to each and every one of you for your unwavering support and commitment to our college’s growth and success.

2023 has been a milestone year for the College because of a historic gift that elevates our reputation and accelerates our momentum. The Sanders College of Business and Technology naming gift was an honor bestowed upon us by the Horace and Mary Jane Sander’s Family, whose extraordinary $3.5 million donation enables us to continue our pursuit of excellence and transform the lives of our students through education opportunities. Moreover, our commitment to global engagement remains steadfast, as evidenced by the numerous study abroad trips our students have taken this year. Our students visited 17 countries, with more exciting trips on the horizon. This would not have been possible without the generous support of our donors who have made scholarships available for these enriching experiences.

I am thrilled to announce that for the seventh consecutive year, our MBA program has achieved a remarkable feat by remaining the largest in the state of Alabama. This achievement is a testament to the dedication and hard work of our students, faculty, and staff, who have all contributed to the program’s exceptional reputation. The Master of Health Administration had a successful soft launch in March 2023 and will have over 40 students by Fall 2023. This program addresses the critical need for skilled healthcare administrators and is sure to make a significant impact on the healthcare industry.

Our Online BBA Flex degree program has been recognized as one of the top 100 Online Bachelors’ Programs in the United States by U.S. News and World Report. It is fulfilling to see the program’s rapid growth and its ability to adapt to the changing learning needs of our students in this digital age. Our EDBA program has also made significant strides, welcoming its third cohort in January 2023. This program continues to excel in preparing exceptional leaders for the business world.

The Joel R. Anderson family’s recent contribution will leave a lasting legacy, with the BBA in Innovation and Entrepreneurship and the Joel R. Anderson Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurial Studies bearing Joel’s name. I want to thank Charles Anderson and his sons for their tremendous generosity. The Generator, which opened its new space in Fall 2022, has already made substantial strides due to this funding. With over $300,000 of new technology and equipment, it is one of the most exceptional makerspaces in Alabama. We are eagerly anticipating the Fall of 2024 when the Computer Science and Mathematics Building will open its doors. This state-of-the-art facility will provide our students with cutting-edge resources and an environment conducive to learning and collaboration.

The success of our college is a collective effort, and I extend my deepest gratitude to all the students, faculty, staff, and alumni whose dedication and passion have contributed to these remarkable achievements. Together, we have made the Sanders College of Business and Technology a center of excellence, innovation, and inclusivity. I have no doubt that the coming years will be even more remarkable, as we strive to create opportunities and make a positive impact on the lives of our students and the communities we serve.

Thank you once again for your continued support and commitment.

Dr. Greg Carnes
Dean, Sanders College of Business and Technology
Raburn Eminent Scholar of Accounting
Prepared for SUCCESS

Sanders College of Business and Technology Career Development Manager, Erin Froman, spent the last year improving our processes and support to help business students find professional success. Our mission is to ensure graduates have full-time job placement, current students have an internship placement, and all students develop the skills needed to achieve their full career potential.

KELLER CONNECTIONS

Keller Connections began in August of 2022, providing employers with an opportunity to visit campus and be our featured Employer of the Day. Recruiters spend time in the College speaking to classes and hosting recruiting events for a day, allowing them to target specific students in their field.

28 employers visited the College and had their own recruiting event

462 students attended Keller Connections

CAREER FAIRS

The Sanders COBT Career Development Center works with each department within the College to host multiple career fairs throughout the year.

6 Sanders COBT Career Fairs

100 employers attended

321 students attended a Business Career Fair
Internship Placements with over 45 Companies

ACCOUNTING
Abroms & Associates, P.C.
LBMC
BMSS
Ernst & Young
Alabama Department of Revenue
Anglin Reichmann Armstrong, P.C.
Mauldin & Jenkins
Patterson, Prince & Associates, P.C.
Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury
Warren Averett

MARKETING & SALES
AFLAC
Fastenal
Qualtrics
Sherwin-Williams
Adobe
Amazon
AT&T
Disney
United Benefits
ALKU
Greenway Automotive
Paycom
State Farm Insurance
Silverbeet Creative Company
IBM
Coca-Cola Consolidated

FINANCE & DATA ANALYTICS
Bank Independent
First Metro Bank
First Southern Bank
Listerhill Credit Union
Merrill Lynch
TVA Community Credit Union

COMPUTING
Hexagon
International Fertilizer Development Center
Southern Company
Tennessee Valley Authority
HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology

MANAGEMENT
Southwire
TNT Fireworks
American Wholesale Book Company
Billy Reid
Constellium
Long Lewis Ford
North American Lighting
Pilgrim’s Pride
Lyons HR

Erin Froman
Career Development Manager
ecfroman@una.edu
256.765.4903
319 Raburn Wing

Attention employers and recruiters!
Are you looking to connect with top talent?
Let’s join forces and unlock the maximum potential for your business and for our students. We would love to have you on campus to attend career fairs or Keller Connections! We also offer a free job posting website for employers. I look forward to hearing from you soon!

una.edu/business/career-development
TRANSFORMATIVE Journeys from Abroad

At the Sanders College of Business and Technology, we pride ourselves on offering exceptional experiential learning opportunities through study abroad trips. Each year, our students embark on journeys to various countries, enabling them to explore the globe, expand their knowledge, and garner invaluable experiences. These study abroad trips serve as an integral part of our curriculum, fostering a learning experience that extends beyond the confines of the classroom. Through these international experiences, business students engage with diverse cultures, navigate global business environments, and gain a profound understanding of the business landscape of the world.

THIS YEAR’S HIGHLIGHTS

- **5** trips taken
- **17** countries visited
- **73** students traveled
- **$100K** in scholarships

![Belgium](image1)
![Czech Republic](image2)
![France](image3)
![Switzerland](image4)
![Austria](image5)
Before I went on my first UNA study abroad trip, I had never even been out of the country. The experience has been life changing and I would highly recommend it to any students who have the slightest bit of interest.

Get out of your comfort zone and see the world, try new things, new foods, and take advantage of the opportunities provided to you by the Sanders College of Business and Technology.

Joseph Augustus
Marketing & Finance Student

SPONSOR A STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE

$1,600 funds 1 student
$800 funds 1/2 student
$400 funds 1/4 student
$100 every dollar counts

una.edu/business/give
Select the Study Abroad Program Fund
In a remarkable display of generosity and commitment to their community, the Sanders Family made a transformative $3.5 million donation to the University of North Alabama in early Spring. The significant gift resulted in the naming of the Sanders College of Business and Technology, a lasting tribute to their lifelong dedication to serving others.

The Sanders Family’s philanthropic journey began decades ago, rooted in their unwavering belief in the power of giving back. Horace Sanders and his wife Mary Jane have been prominent figures in their community, having owned and operated Russellville Hospital from the late 1960s until 1973. Although they sold the facility to Humana Hospital, their commitment to serving others persisted. Bill Sanders, the youngest son of Horace and Mary Jane, serves as the executor of his father’s estate. He reveals that the idea of making such a substantial contribution to the Shoals area had been nurtured within the family for over four decades, but they were unsure where they wanted to make an impact until they heard about the accomplishments of the College of Business and Technology.

Horace Sanders possessed a profound passion for business and accounting throughout his career, making it a natural fit to support an institution aligned with his vocation in the same geographic area where his business ventures first began. The selection of UNA’s College of Business and Technology as the recipient of the Sanders Family’s generous gift made the most sense. The College’s commitment to excellence resonated deeply with the Sanders’ values and aspirations.

“This gift is an opportunity to give back to the community from where it all came from,” Bill Sanders said. “Dad believed in generosity and giving to good causes. The majority of the gifting my parents have made has been with Christian missions, but this was meeting a need in the Northwest Alabama area that has been very special to them.”
The creation of the Sanders College of Business and Technology will have a transformative effect on UNA and its students. The endowed funds will enable the College to enhance its programs, attract exceptional faculty, provide scholarships, and offer cutting-edge resources to prepare students for success in the ever-evolving world of business and technology. The Sanders Family's gift will leave an indelible mark, empowering generations of future leaders to pursue their academic and professional ambitions.

The Sanders Family's extraordinary $3.5 million gift to establish the Sanders College of Business and Technology at the University of North Alabama stands as a testament to their unwavering commitment to philanthropy and their community. Horace and Mary Jane Sanders' legacy of generosity will forever be etched in the institution's history. As UNA continues to foster excellence in business education, their gift will pave the way for countless students to achieve their dreams and make a lasting impact in the world of business and technology.

The University celebrated the gift with a naming ceremony on April 27, 2023 with the Sanders Family, university officials, and faculty, staff, and students from the Sanders College of Business and Technology.

Horace Sanders, pictured on the right with his wife Mary Jane, passed away in 2022 at the age of 92 years old. Mary Jane resides in Birmingham, Alabama.
Faculty & Staff Spotlights
ACHIEVEMENTS & RESEARCH

Congratulations to these superb faculty and staff members for their excellent achievements at the college and university awards banquets!

UNIVERSITY AWARDS

Lillian Akin
Advisor of the Year

Dr. Doug Barrett
Lawrence J. Nelson
Outstanding Teaching Award

SANDERS COBT EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Dr. Doug Barrett
Faculty Teaching Award

Dr. Mark Terwilliger
Faculty Advising Award

Dr. Michael Floren
Faculty Research Award

Dr. Lindsey Sherrill
Faculty Service Award

Ning Wang
Staff Excellence Award

We study stochastic optimization problems with an objective function given by the expectation of the maximum of two linear functions defined on the component random variables of a multivariate Gaussian distribution. We consider random variables that are arbitrarily correlated, and we show that the problem is NP-hard even if the space of feasible solutions is unconstrained. We exploit a closed-form expression for the objective function from the literature to construct a cutting-plane algorithm for a highly nonlinear function. The results of our computational evaluation suggest that our discretization and upper bounding techniques lead to significant computational improvements and that the proposed algorithm outperforms suboptimal solutions approaches.


In this study, we build a value function that can be used to quantify the relative value of a test case, which can play a significant role in prioritizing test cases, addressing the resource constraint issues in software testing and serving as a foundation of AI for software testing. We also conducted a Monte Carlo simulation to exhibit the application of the value function.


In this study, we examine the use of social media as a cross-promotional tool for small businesses, specifically how SME community members leverage their horizontal and vertical ties with community partners on social media to generate publicity, improve brand perceptions and drive traffic to themselves or community events. We identify five distinct patterns of cross-promotion — quality signaling, traffic driving, community amplifying, hybrid cross-promotion, and infrequent engagement. The results of this study may act as a framework for small businesses as they utilize social media to promote partner organizations and their community as a whole.


This study analyzed strategic flexibility with a two-dimensional approach (structural and decisional flexibility) and investigated strategic flexibility’s relationship with competitive strategy and financial and nonfinancial performance. The findings suggest that strategic flexibility impacts financial and nonfinancial performance in different ways. While financial performance is influenced by both the structural and decisional dimensions of strategic flexibility, nonfinancial performance is impacted only by structural flexibility. In addition, the research indicates a negative relationship between cost leadership and structural flexibility and positions structural flexibility as a mediator between cost leadership and nonfinancial performance.


This study, funded by the Mass Communication and Society Research Grant, explored how telling science stories using virtual reality affected learning outcomes for users. Based on results from a controlled, in-person laboratory experiment comparing an immersive VR news story to 360-video and text-with-images versions, the study found no main effects on the learning outcomes. However, it did find indirect effects on cognitive elaboration, which are conditional on preexisting knowledge about climate change. This study has implications for how we tell science stories and users’ learning and retention from those stories based on the medium employed.
Empowering Tomorrow’s Leaders Today:
Ambassadors’ Mission of Service, Networking, and Leadership

The Sanders COBT Ambassadors play a vital role in showcasing the excellence of the Sanders College of Business and Technology at UNA. With a mission to represent their college, these ambassadors participate in numerous events both on and off-campus. Their primary objective is to foster lasting friendships within the UNA community. As ambassadors, students have the unique opportunity to develop their leadership skills, expand their professional network by connecting with local and regional business partners, and share their own inspiring UNA stories with prospective students. Moreover, they also create meaningful connections with international students, contributing to a diverse and inclusive campus community.

During the 2022-2023 academic year, the Ambassadors organized a diverse array of events that brought the UNA community together. One of the highlights was the Habitat for Humanity Service Day where Ambassadors partnered together with other student groups in the College and worked on a new home in the Shoals community for families in need. Another memorable event was the Pumpkin Bash, where students were invited to gather on the Raburn Wing lawn for pumpkin carving. This event provided a platform for students to showcase their creativity, bond with their peers, and embrace the Halloween spirit. International Game Night was an engaging event with facilitated connections between business students and international students, fostered cultural exchange, networking opportunities, and a sense of community. Additionally, the ambassadors actively participated in the First Day of School’s Lucky Dip, distributing pencils to new students and welcoming them on their first day at UNA. Through their dedication and commitment, the Sanders COBT Ambassadors contribute significantly to the success and reputation of both the College and the University as a whole.

2022-2023 AMBASSADORS

Lead Ambassador: Lauren Quigley
Vice-Lead Ambassador: Rachel Pierce

Hunter Bays
Marvin De La Cruz Serrano
Haley Donaldson
Debbie Gomez-Mayen
Josephine Lolli
Jonathan Perry
Madison Prince
Ben Starkey
Taylor Troutt
Thin Yati Su
Hai Tran
Omonegho Ugheoke
Taylor Walker
Pictured are students attending various events from the 2022-2023 year hosted by the Sanders COBT Ambassadors including: First Day of School Welcome, Habitat for Humanity Service Day, The Pumpkin Bash, and International Game Night.
By Raysha Rhea ’10, ’21
For the Sanders COBT Annual Report

In the ever-evolving world of business, the trailblazers are the ones who stand out – those who not only spot opportunities in the market but also have the audacity to turn their dreams into reality. The legacy of Joel R. Anderson, a visionary businessman and mentor, continues to thrive through the Joel R. Anderson Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurial Studies at the University of North Alabama (UNA).

In a significant step toward nurturing the entrepreneurial spirit among students, the Anderson family’s generous donation in 2022 has brought to life the Joel R. Anderson Center, along with a groundbreaking Bachelor of Business Administration in Innovation and Entrepreneurship that launched this fall.

“This gift from the Anderson Family will make a significant impact for generations of students and faculty to come,” said Dr. Greg Carnes, Dean of the Sanders College. It allows us to provide a unique, innovative, and high-quality academic program for future entrepreneurs and innovators. Excellent education transforms lives, and we are so grateful for the Anderson family and all they have done for our students, faculty, staff, and alumni.”

Joel R. Anderson’s impact on the Shoals area was profound and lasting. His entrepreneurial journey was characterized by the establishment of hundreds of successful companies, including TNT Fireworks, Books-A-Million, Anderson Press, and Whitman Publishing Corporation. He didn’t merely build businesses; he forged a path for others to follow. For many years, Joel dedicated himself to creating a new generation of business leaders in the Shoals by providing mentoring and capital for young entrepreneurs starting businesses. Sadly, Joel R. Anderson passed away in October 2020, but he leaves behind a legacy of innovation and a dedication to nurturing the entrepreneurial spirit in others.

The Joel R. Anderson Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurial Studies, housed within the Sanders College of Business and Technology, stands as a testament to Joel’s commitment to the community and his enduring belief in the power of entrepreneurship. The center’s location, a mere five minutes from the UNA campus, makes it an accessible hub for aspiring entrepreneurs to gather, collaborate, and innovate.
The Center includes "The Generator," a sprawling 6,000 square-foot makerspace and student incubator. The newly-renovated facility is equipped with state-of-the-art tools and technologies, including a diverse array of equipment such as 3D printers, laser cutters, circuit printers, and sewing machines. This innovative space empowers students to take their ideas from concept to creation, fostering a culture of experimentation and creativity.

The primary objective of The Generator is to provide aspiring student entrepreneurs with the resources, mentorship, and guidance necessary to turn their innovative concepts into thriving businesses. Through a range of services, including mentorship from faculty and business leaders, access to co-working spaces, and skill-building workshops, The Generator creates an environment that bridges the gap between theoretical learning and practical application, while offering students a unique platform to develop their entrepreneurial acumen outside the classroom.

The Joel R. Anderson BBA in Innovation and Entrepreneurship program caters to the rising demand for individuals skilled in driving innovation and entrepreneurship in today's dynamic business landscape. The program offers two concentrations: Entrepreneurship and Agile Management and Leadership. These concentrations provide students with tailored knowledge and skills to excel in their chosen path. With the majority of classes held at The Generator, students will benefit from immersive, hands-on learning experiences that prepare them for the real-world challenges of launching and managing business ventures.

The Center, along with the BBA in Innovation and Entrepreneurship, serve as a testament to Anderson's enduring legacy. By providing students with the tools, resources, and mentorship needed to foster their entrepreneurial aspirations, the Center ensures that Joel's vision of empowering the next generation of business leaders continues to flourish.
The Steele Center for Professional Selling has once again proven its commitment to nurturing top-tier sales talent. With a dynamic lineup of competitions, both at the national and internal levels, its students have soared to new heights of success. Undoubtedly, the Center’s students demonstrated their prowess by participating in an impressive total of 12 competitions throughout the year. An extraordinary feat, with eight of these competitions held at the national level, hosted by renowned universities such as Baylor University, Florida State University, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, Illinois State University, Kennesaw State University, and the University of Toledo.

Recognizing the importance of sharpening skills in a supportive environment, the Steele Center organized two internal career summits and speed sell competitions. These events allowed students to fine-tune their sales techniques, receive valuable feedback, and showcase their talent to potential employers. In addition, the Center hosted a corporate-sponsored competition with Greenway Automotive Group. This unique opportunity allowed students to engage directly with professionals, gain insight into real-world sales scenarios, and foster a spirit of healthy competition among their peers. The Center’s ability to provide opportunities that bridge the gap between academia and industry further reinforces its dedication to preparing students for the sales force.

Over 130 UNA students competed in sales competitions this year, with many of them representing UNA at the national level. These students consistently outshone competitors from other top-ranked sales programs across the country, leaving a mark of excellence wherever they went. Their impressive performances serve as a testament to the Center’s dedication to sales education.
The Steele Center's impact extends beyond the competition arena, as it successfully provided opportunities that allowed seniors to be placed in full-time positions prior to graduation and provided internships for students that are on the path to graduating. Renowned companies such as NASCAR, Cintas, United Benefits, ALKU, Boeing, Hewlett Packard Enterprise, State Farm Insurance, Paycom, and Disney recognized the caliber of talent nurtured by the center and eagerly welcomed our students into their ranks.

The Steele Center for Professional Selling has undoubtedly left an indelible mark on the world of sales. Through a variety of competitions, the Center has consistently provided students with opportunities to showcase their skills and network with industry leaders. With a multitude of awards and job placements, the center’s dedication to fostering excellence and empowering its students shines through. None of these competitions or opportunities would be available to sales students without the help of Corporate Partners. The invaluable support provided by these partners has enabled students to travel to competitions and events at all levels. Thank you, corporate partners, for your belief in our mission and investment in our students' success.

Karly Harper
Program Coordinator
unasalescenter@una.edu
256.765.5269

Attention employers and recruiters! Are you looking to connect with top sales talent? We would love to have you on campus to attend our Sales Summit!

I look forward to hearing from you soon!

Pictured Above (from left to right): Dean Moore, Clayton Moore, Taylor Troutt, and Brian Morgan (Manager of Partnerships and Experiential Learning) at the University of Toledo Invitational Sales Competition. Clayton Moore placed 5th in the Gold Junior Division and Taylor Troutt placed 4th in the Bronze Freshman/Sophomore Division.

Pictured Left (from left to right): Brian Morgan, Nicolas Walker, Talon Pritchard, Colby Johnson, Joseph Augustus, Maria Saltos Estrada, and Dr. Erin Gillespie (Director) at Kennesaw State University for the National Collegiate Sales Competition. Talon Pritchard placed first in the Speed Sell Competition and Nicolas Walker placed as a Sales Role-Play Quarterfinalist.
GIVING: By the Numbers

We sincerely thank each person for the gifts donated during the 2022-2023 year. Your contribution established meaningful educational opportunities for students, including funding for scholarships, hands-on experiential learning, study abroad trips, new technology, and academic program improvements.

I am immensely grateful, touched, and honored by the generosity of UNA’s donors and impact they have on my life. In them, I see a bright future for myself and for other students like me, and I am inspired to always pay their kindness forward. They are the reason I can pursue my career aspirations and gain valuable experiences I’ve only ever dreamed of.

Abby Richardson
MBA Scholarship Recipient

una.edu/business/give
EXECUTIVE BUSINESS COUNCIL

The Executive Business Council (EBC) consists of business professionals and industry leaders who help shape the College's strategic direction by facilitating new opportunities that benefit the Sanders COBT students. The faculty, staff, and students thank each council member for their time and dedication to UNA.

Pictured (right): The Executive Business Council Meeting from April 2023 with guest speaker Bill Sanders.