



THE TOP 20 OF 2024



THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA IN HUNTSVILLE

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

PART
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COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IN HUNTSVILLE

Top 20
of
2024

Abigail Ore Isloa

College of Business
The University of Alabama in Huntsville

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Top 20
of
2024

William Niles

College of Business
The University of Alabama in Huntsville

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IN HUNTSVILLE

Top 20
of
2024

Asa M...

College of Business
The University of Alabama in Huntsville

ABOUT THE TOP 20 PROGRAM

The Top 20 program recognizes extraordinary undergraduate and graduate students from The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) College of Business. These outstanding business students distinguish themselves in areas such as academic excellence, professional career development, exemplary leadership, community service, overcoming adversity, entrepreneurship, or making a substantial positive impact on others on, or off, campus.

Students were nominated by their peers, or were self-nominated, and were selected by a committee made up of UAH College of Business alumni and community partners. This year's committee included:

DONNA BERGER

Retired Partner at Carr, Riggs & Ingram

LARRY COUVILLON

President at Canvas, Inc.

ED FAULKNER

Retired Sr. Vice President and Operations Manager at SAIC

MADDIE GLOSMEYER

Commercial Strategy Manager at Deacero USA, Inc.

ERIC ST. JOHN

Vice President of Commercial Real Estate at Crunkleton
Commercial Real Estate Group

CLAIRE MCMICHAEL

Lead Financial Analyst at Vanguard

JERRY MERCER

President and Owner at Mercer & Associates

TIEN PHAM

Revenue Agent at Department of Treasury

BILL STEINER

IT Director at The City of Huntsville

FREDERIEK TONEY

Retired Vice President, Global Ford Customer Service
Division, and Corporate Officer at Ford Motor Company

MADISON TRAVIS

Digital Communications Strategist at Intuitive Research
and Technology Corporation

LYNN TROY

President at Troy7, Inc.

IRMA TUDER

Retired from Tudor Investments

STUDENT CONTENT WRITING TEAM

MACIE MORGAN

PARIS MORRIS

MAX REED

CURTIS VENETTA

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AMIAH
MURRY

Amiah Murry's Taxing Run to UAH

BY / MACIE MORGAN

Amiah Murry moved to a small town known as Albertville, Alabama, during the summer before her eighth grade year with her brother and mother.

"Coming from a single-parent household does cause financial hardships, so I did not get to do everything I wanted as a kid. ... These things made me want to achieve success in life," Murry said. Murry started her success story by joining the track and field team at her new middle school.

Murry involved herself in many extracurricular activities and sports teams in both middle school and high school.

During her senior year, Murry was her high school's class president while interning at a local accounting firm. The track and field team soon became her track to college.

"Coming from a single-parent household, the idea of paying for college seemed far-fetched. Yet, my academic and athletic abilities have placed me in a position for success," Murry said.

The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) offered her both an academic and athletic scholarship for track and field. Murry has also received the Linly Heflin Scholarship, which focuses heavily on academic success and is solely for women, and a local Rotary scholarship.

Currently, Murry is a freshman at UAH planning to major in accounting with a minor in finance. Not only is she a student-athlete at UAH, but she is also a part of the Accounting Connections and Conversations Club and in the Emerging Business Leaders group on campus.

In Murry's First-Year Experience (FYE) class at UAH, a speaker asked her to submit her resume. In turn, Murry became an intern at BMSS Advisors & CPAs (BMSS), but this quickly resulted in getting hired.

At BMSS, Murry works as an intern in their government contracting accounting group. "BMSS has a strong passion for service, and that is a value I want to include in my lifestyle," Murry said about working for BMSS.

Thanks to her FYE class in the College of Business (COB), she has learned so much about accounting. "I believe that UAH and the COB are supporting me with all of my stops and detours with their numerous resources," Murry said.

Murry says she credits her successes to God. "Without him, I would not be able to do anything and not have the courage to

involve myself in the things I do."



Coming from a single-parent household does cause financial hardships, so...

These things made me want to achieve success in life.

A man with a beard, wearing a maroon shirt, a plaid tie, and khaki pants, stands outdoors. He is holding a sword in his right hand and a white captain's hat with a gold emblem in his left hand. The background features a red metal fence and trees. The image is framed by blue and white geometric shapes on the left and right sides.

BRADLEY
ROBISON

Veteran, Father, Husband, Entrepreneur Turned Community Leader

BY / MACIE MORGAN

Bradley Robison, 33, dropped out of college at 18 years old before joining the Marine Corps. In 2014, Robison exited the Marine Corps to start a dream and return to college.

Robison returned to college as a non-traditional student at Pitt Community College in North Carolina before later transferring to The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH).

Robison was a student mentor to those first entering college. He helped incoming freshmen and other veterans on campus.

"He is a selfless leader who raises up those around him and is always honest with others," said Justin Mayo, a friend of Robison. Robison's leadership also extended to his own business ventures.

While at Pitt Community College,

Robison helped open Uptown Brewing Company and joined their production team.

After moving back to Huntsville, Robison joined the Rocket Republic Brewing team before becoming the head brewer at Below the Radar. Robison then attended Siebel Brewing Academy to become a brewmaster and went out on his own in the brewing industry.

In 2017, Robison decided to pursue his dream of opening a brewery and decided to start Fractal Brewing Project. He found investors and worked to get his plan and pitch right. "Fractal Brewing Project in Huntsville started breaking ground in 2018," said Robison.

In 2021, Robison was invited to teach two brewing courses at Calhoun Community College (CCC). At CCC, he led students with his own coursework, instructing students to be leaders in the brewery industry.

Unfortunately, in August 2023, Robison had to close the brewery because of the COVID-19 aftermath. "I experienced developing a business and brand, trying to grow and navigate logistical issues and pricing of raw materials, and attempting to pivot a large business model post-COVID to be successful."

Currently, Robison works at Yulista Integrated Solutions. He also serves on a board that raises money for backpacks and supplies for local schools and for remote Alaskan Native villages. He is also

working at Jasper Yeast Labs in Washington, D.C., and is a part-time account executive for Rocket 95.1, The Beat 98.1, and Star 99.1. "I've learned that we are capable of more than we realize, just by



performing leaps of faith, not underestimating ourselves," Robison said about his successes.

Robison dedicates his free time to supporting local nonprofit veteran organizations. "Bradley is an outstanding example of a community leader. Since I have known him, he has been a part of or led several projects that have made a positive impact within the veteran community," said Carlo Esclamando, a friend of Robison's.



He is a selfless leader who raises up those around him and is always honest with others.



ASA
MAZOW

UAH Ambassador Asa Mazow Embraces Competition As He Finds His Purpose

BY / PARIS MORRIS

As an athlete and finance student at The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH), Asa Mazow has made incredible strides with finding his purpose.

Through cross country and track, Mazow was able to join the Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC). Here, he is alongside fellow student-athletes as they advocate for issues or discuss topics related to issues within the NCAA.

He recently became president of the Financial Management Association, and is also an Ambassador within the College of Business (COB). Mazow said, "My lifestyle as a student athlete ranges from manageable to extremely overwhelming from a time-management perspective. Sleeping in, often, is usually not a luxury that I have."

His days start with practice and weight-lifting, with two hours in between. Afterward, he must focus on school. His regime must be disciplined as "one meal missed or late night studying can mess me up for a week," he said.

Mazow has been described as "one of the few student-athletes that manage practices, high campus involvement, and quality work in the classroom," by a friend, Victoria Howell. This can be seen clearly through his additional work in the summer of 2023. Asa completed a research assistant position within the COB and a finance internship with the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, where he said he "applied the lessons he was taught during his first year at UAH."

As a Business Student Ambassador, Mazow is a leader who dedicates time to serving others while representing the university. According to the UAH website, the overall goal of the program is for these student leaders to share the UAH COB experience with prospective students, alumni, and community members.

This responsibility came easy for Asa as the COB has aided him tremendously. He said, "The UAH College of Business has been huge for me. When I got here just a couple of years ago, I lacked direction and purpose. Since then, I feel I have been encouraged by my professors, advisors, and coaches to embrace leadership roles and attack every day in my academic, athletic,

and professional pursuits with the utmost level of enthusiasm, curiosity and grit."



One of the few student athletes that manage practices, high campus involvement, and quality work in the classroom.



NAVARRO

U.S. ARMY

DANIEL
NAVARRO

Daniel Navarro Serves His Country and Family

BY / MAX REED

Daniel Navarro was in for a lot of change when he moved to Huntsville, Alabama, in 2014. Growing up in Caracas, Venezuela, he experienced a big culture shock when his family moved to the United States. "I talked with everyone back home, but then suddenly my social life dropped off because I spoke zero English and had a pretty bad speech impediment."

But this didn't slow Navarro down at all when he began classes at middle school. "I just learned English on the fly, making new friends, talking between classes, listening to music and watching TV."

Navarro's impediment came from his cleft palate, requiring numerous surgeries throughout his life which he just shrugs off. "I don't see it as an impediment; I see it as one more obstacle to overcome."

Navarro's overcoming spirit led him all the way to The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH)

and the College of Business (COB), where he has been serving as an Ambassador.

"Being a COB Ambassador changed my life; it has made me into truly a social butterfly," he said. "I have made a lot of great connections with the staff and made invaluable friendships because of it."

Navarro is also a member of the Sigma Nu Fraternity. He says this experience "has made me realize what real friendship is, and how a group of what might seem like random guys can turn into a family." Doing community service and raising money for charity has "really expanded my college experience," Navarro said. "I love all my brothers and LTH (love, truth, honor)."

One of the many obstacles Navarro has overcome is joining the Army Reserve Officer Training Corps, which required another surgery on his cleft palate in August of 2022. Navarro was so used to these procedures that he was up and around after only one month of recovery. "I want to be an Army aviator," Navarro says, "and 'be all you can be' as the Army slogan says."

Navarro's duties related to the Alabama National Guard split his time between classes in Huntsville and his unit in Birmingham. If that wasn't enough in his schedule, he also takes care of his grandparents. His grandfather was Navarro's inspiration to join the Army. Most recently he helped them complete their taxes. When asked if his economics

studies helped doing so, Navarro said, "no, this is the easy stuff. I'm academically motivated in economics, to see how money makes the world go 'round.'"



“

I just learned English on the fly, making new friends, talking between classes, listening to music and watching TV.



DANIELLE
BORDEN

Danielle Borden is “Embracing the Journey” of Becoming an Emerging Leader in Huntsville

BY / CURTIS VENETTA

Danielle Borden is taking advantage of her college experience to become a better servant leader in her community. In all of the roles she's held at The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH), apart from being a full-time student, Borden has proven her dedication to quality and being a positive influence.

Borden has received several accolades, including the Marie Alexander Bone Memorial Scholarship, awarded to an undergraduate student in the UAH College of Business (COB) based on their academic merit, citizenship and leadership qualities.

She has also been awarded the UAH Academic Scholarship for her superior academic achievement and has been consistently placed on the UAH Dean's list, composed of students who have maintained a GPA of 3.5 or above for a minimum of 12 undergraduate hours.

To attain her Bachelor of Science

in Business Administration (BSBA), Borden is determined to better understand the business world in everything she does.

Since April 2023, Borden has served as president of the Women in Business and Leadership (WBL) club at UAH, which provides students with numerous networking, skill development and personal growth opportunities with a mission to promote inclusivity in the business world.

She is also involved in Greek life on campus, serving as treasurer for Order of Omega as well as house manager and the vice president of finance for Delta Zeta. These positions have allowed her to focus on her leadership skills and connect with several students.

Borden has helped raise money for the Delta Zeta philanthropy Heart for Hearing and Speech, which focuses on raising awareness of Deaf culture and American Sign Language (ASL) by providing services like speech therapy and hearing aids.

“My undergraduate journey has been significantly shaped by philanthropy,” Borden says. “Through these initiatives, I have been able to apply my academic understanding to real-world problems and have developed a strong dedication to positively impacting the welfare of others.”

Borden also volunteers with Free 2 Teach, which provides free resources to teachers in Madison County, an opportunity that she says has reinforced the importance of community and compassion.

Borden has had to practice her learned resilience in tough times.

“My mother's hospitalization during my first semester of college presented one big obstacle,” Borden says. “Maintaining a healthy balance between family obligations and academic obligations was necessary to get through that difficult time.”

In addition to her many academic accomplishments and humanitarian efforts, Borden noted her past work as a service advisor at Townsend Honda and her current work as a COB Ambassador as heavily influential in her professional development.

UAH student Shayla Phillippo nominated Borden for The Top 20 Award. Phillippo says, “Danielle has always been an amazing friend of mine. From academic to social engagement, I believe that she shows the exemplary character of what a Charger should be.”

Borden attributes the progression of her career aspirations to UAH's reputation for excellence and staff members' investment in her success.

“The faculty members at UAH, from professors to the dean, have played integral roles as mentors and supporters,” Borden says. “Their guidance has enriched my learning experience and provided invaluable insights into navigating the professional world.”

Now, Borden is working toward completing her BSBA in management with a minor in finance at UAH. Afterward, she intends to get her master's degree from UAH. She is excited to pursue managerial roles in human resources and finance in the vibrant city of Huntsville.



EMI
SWINFORD

IS Student Emi Swinford Is Making A Positive Cultural Impact On UAH's Campus

BY / CURTIS VENETTA

Emi Swinford entered college with simple expectations: to get good grades, make friends and earn her degree in four years. Since her first year, however, she has embarked on a journey that has made an impressive impact on campus.

Early in her college career, Swinford founded the Asian Cultural Association (ACA) on The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) campus. She had a mission to bring cultural awareness and education to UAH's campus, and the ACA does just that, as well as serve as an outreach for other Asian students on campus.

"Because of my adopted background, I felt as if college was my chance to find others who looked like me," Swinford says.

Swinford and three of her roommates formed the ACA after discovering a network of students

who were just as excited to connect with others who looked like them. Swinford is also involved with Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) like the Entrepreneurship Club and the Society of Asian Scientists and Engineers (SASE).

She is also the Lead Admissions Ambassador, a position in which she guides prospective students, providing program information to them and their families. Simultaneously, she is a Lancer for the Office of the President and a College of Business Ambassador.

Swinford's on-campus jobs have been central in helping her further develop leadership and professional skills. As a Lancer and College of Business Ambassador, she provides a range of educational and social events for her fellow leaders and students from diverse industries.

Last semester, she started working as a Research Assistant II at UAH's Center for Cybersecurity Research and Education (CCRE), contributing to her technical and analytical skill set. In this position, Swinford has gained hands-on experience designing data extraction solutions and working in project management.

"I have yet to reach my full potential; there is so much more for me to learn," Swinford says. "I have gained valuable experience through my involvement on campus. I cannot thank everyone I have encountered throughout my academic career and professional development enough for all they have taught me."

Across her many accomplishments,

Swinford has managed to adapt to various work environments and better her communication, leadership and technical expertise.

Finding a community on campus



through her founding of the ACA and involvement with other RSOs has significantly impacted her career goals, confidence and ambition.

UAH Senior Administrative Assistant Vangie Harris nominated Swinford for The Top 20 award.

Harris says, "Emi is one of the most hardworking and involved students that I know. She loves UAH and it shows in all that she is involved with. I could not think of someone more deserving to be included in the Top 20."

Swinford attributes her growing sense of identity and belonging to her life experiences both in and out of the classroom. She says, "These experiences have taught me resilience, empathy and the importance of diversity and inclusion — qualities that I carry with me in all aspects of my life."

Now, she is working toward completing her Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) in Information Systems and Cybersecurity at UAH.



HALEY
MASSANELLI

Haley Massanelli Leads the Way for Future Students After Overcoming Hardships

BY / MACIE MORGAN

Haley Massanelli began her leadership career at The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH), but not without hardships.

Massanelli lost her father during her senior year of high school in 2021. "Starting school at UAH soon after was difficult, but I have grown in so many ways during my time here," she said despite her challenges. She decided to work hard, and her hard work paid off.

Massanelli is now majoring in accounting and has made the President's List every semester, maintaining a 4.0 GPA.

"Haley is one of the greatest students to go through UAH that I've seen honestly," says Connor Francis, friend of Massanelli. Connor added that not only does she succeed in her classes, but also in on- and off-campus leadership and in her budding career.

While Massanelli proves to be an academic powerhouse, she is also excelling in launching her professional career. Massanelli serves on the Leadership Team as the communications director at UAH's Baptist Campus Ministries (BCM). "Besides all [Massanelli's on-campus achievements], Haley also puts in the time to meet with younger students by helping them study or by meeting up with them weekly," says Francis. "I have seen Haley help so many people personally and give up her own time too. ... Haley will immediately reach out to new students who might feel lost or uncomfortable because they don't know anyone."

Since her sophomore year at UAH, Massanelli has also been the corporate accounting intern at the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). Other than her assigned duties, Massanelli says she devotes her time to ensuring her team prospers in "any other capacity necessary."

While not on UAH's campus or at work, you can find Massanelli at her local church, where she serves as the leader of the Discipleship Ministry. Massanelli also volunteers with Awana, a worldwide nonprofit ministry, and children's church where she mentors younger children.

Massanelli says she loves what she is studying in the College of Business (COB) at UAH. "The COB has been an amazing place for my college experience, and I feel very prepared to begin my career upon graduating," Massanelli said.

Massanelli has succeeded in her classes while helping other students and serving as a leader and mentor

to many. Her advice for other students is to find the positive in every situation, be kind, and always be eager to ask questions.



“

Haley is one of the greatest students to go through UAH that I've seen honestly.



HALEY
NICHOLS

UAH Athlete Haley Nichols Goes From Adversity to Achievement, Helping Others Along the Way

BY / PARIS MORRIS

Multiple surgeries, a devastating tornado, and launching a new business—even through adversity Haley Nichols proves she can't be stopped from pursuing her passions on and off the court.

Nichols, a senior studying management at The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) College of Business, is a star basketball player for the UAH women's basketball team. Her journey began at eight years old when she started playing competitive basketball. From there she never stopped—earning numerous awards in high school for her athletic performance. Nichols was an eight-time varsity letter winner, placed second in the nation at the junior Olympic games, and placed in the top five at the state meet back-to-back.

Prior to joining UAH, she was enrolled as a student-athlete at The University of Tennessee at Martin (UT Martin) where she was faced with many life challenges. She experienced a challenging inquiry, requiring surgery and hours of physical therapy. She also experienced the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the loss of a beloved family member, and a tornado that devastated the Martin community. However, even through each challenge, Nichols found ways to bounce back.

After the tornado hit, Nichols didn't waste any time. The tragedy in the community moved her to volunteer for many weeks cleaning up the city and helping those affected by the tragedy. She said, "Being able to help those in need mentally and physically was heartwarming for me. Seeing people lose everything due to the tornado was very sad. I enjoyed being able to help prepare meals and help clean up the town."

Nichols makes it very clear that basketball is truly her passion, but volunteer work is also incredibly important to her. She currently helps prepare meals for those in need through SERVE, a volunteer organization that helps provide hope for those in need. She also volunteers at Sleep in Heavenly Peace, an organization that provides bunk beds to children and families in need. Additionally, she volunteered at the Salvation Army for over five years, while also assisting with various children's camps. "I have always tried my best to be an example of patience, determination, and excellence," she said.

Another characteristic that makes Nichols stand out is her entrepreneurial spirit. While she was in high school, she launched a lawn care business in her community. Now looking back,



she said, "Starting a lawn care and landscaping business taught me responsibility, respect, and hard work. Being able to provide a service that helps others was great to have. Having this business gave me the chance to meet and talk with others in the community frequently which was an amazing opportunity." She was even able to buy her own car.

Nichols notes how grateful she is to those who have supported her throughout her life. She says that her life experiences, combined with her father's unconditional love, have shaped who she is today.



*I have always tried
my best to be an
example of patience,
determination, and
excellence.*



HOLLI
GRISSOM

Holli Grissom is Overcoming Life's Obstacles and Achieving Her Career Goals

BY / CURTIS VENETTA

Holli Grissom grew up in an underprivileged environment, where most of her immediate family did not finish high school. As she entered college and began to grow a family of her own, she was worried that the cycle of poverty would continue with her. Despite the obstacles that have come her way, Grissom has managed to assert herself on the path to success.

Grissom says she always knew she didn't want to continue living the life of poverty she was born into. "I had lofty dreams to become a rocket scientist, thinking that it would bring me the money, respect and prestige my family was never able to get," Grissom says.

Her journey to becoming the student she is now started in 2010 when she graduated as salutatorian from high school. She then entered The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) as an aerospace

engineer.

After sitting in a computer-aided design (CAD) lab at UAH for two semesters, she realized she was burning out. "Engineering was not in the cards for me, so I left the CAD lab to drop my class and change majors," Grissom says. "I had experienced my first failure, and it was devastating."

One semester after changing her major to finance, she found out she was pregnant with her first daughter.

At the time, Grissom was 19 years old and faced many overwhelming decisions. She thought, how could one person balance the pressure of being a new student and parent all at once? Grissom soon proved her ability to do just that.

She paused her academic pursuit and continued working as a veterinary assistant while her future husband finished his chemical engineering degree.

As time progressed, Grissom felt a new kind of pressure to find the "right time" to finish her degree in finance. Her husband then graduated in 2015, and even more major life decisions came their way — among them were choosing jobs, buying a house and deciding to have their second daughter.

In 2020, Grissom decided to become a gestational surrogate. "I wanted to use something that had caused me such adversity to bless someone else."

When their youngest daughter entered kindergarten, Grissom

returned to UAH to finish her Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) in finance. Although she initially felt shame for not finishing her degree "when she was supposed to," she wears her past

with a badge of honor, knowing she worked hard and learned valuable life lessons.

Grissom has found a great support system at UAH, noting that Mona Foroughi, the College of Business (COB) career and internship supervisor, has helped provide career tips and opportunities.

"The teachers are great and always supportive," Grissom says. "They care about their students' learning of the material. I felt like I have been able to bond with them, especially as I get further into degree-specific classes."

Grissom will start her first job in finance this summer as a financial planning intern with Twickenham Advisors, a financial consultant located in downtown Huntsville.



The teachers are great and always supportive.



ISABELLA
SHACKELFORD

Isabella Shackelford is Focusing on Her Bright Future in Marketing

BY / CURTIS VENETTA

Isabella Shackelford is the first of her five siblings to attend a university. Motivated by her little brother and her opportunity to inspire him through her accomplishments, Shackelford is forging ahead, ready to prove the skeptics in her life wrong.

Shackelford grew up in an underprivileged family, a circumstance that presented its own complications alongside her working multiple jobs throughout high school while simultaneously being a dual athlete.

Her leadership experience began early on in her life. Not only was Shackelford named captain of the basketball and softball teams all four years of high school, but she also took on many leadership roles in clubs and at church.

Shackelford also co-founded a nonprofit organization in high school called Another Direction Designs, from which all its proceeds were donated to To Write Love on Her Arms, a Florida-based nonprofit that provides treatment and recovery to people struggling with addiction, depression and suicidal thoughts.

As she began to choose her ideal

career path, Shackelford found her interests lay in marketing. "Planning events is so fun for me and to see an empty space become a beautiful place with people laughing and making memories is something I will never get tired of being a part of," she says.

In 2021, Shackelford attended Shelton State Community College (SSCC) in Tuscaloosa, where she received an award for "Excellence in Economics" and graduated with an associate degree in business, management, marketing and related supported services.

Shackelford transferred to The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) in 2023. In a relatively short time, she has embraced several roles in leadership. She is currently the vice president of events and programming for Kappa Delta, a Student Government Association (SGA) senator and the marketing chair for Alpha Kappa Psi.

Shackelford is also a member of the Women in Business and Leadership (WBL) club at UAH, which provides students with numerous networking, skill development and personal growth opportunities with a mission to promote inclusivity in the business world.

Outside school, she has volunteered with the animal shelter and the local food distribution program Manna House.

Shackelford took note of UAH's assistance in achieving a corporate marketing internship with Davidson Homes in Madison during her fall 2023 semester.

"UAH has helped me gain great interview skills through the many class projects I have done," Shackelford says. "Through mock interviews, class presentations and learning about resumes, I was able to gain good questions to ask, feedback on what I could do better and get comfortable with the

interview process."

Shackelford is motivated by her little brother to continue pushing forward. Now that she is the first of her siblings to attend a university, she has taken on a unique responsibility to show her little brother that success is attainable even when it seems impossible.

"More so than we all realize, what we achieve is in our own hands, we just have to have the courage to go for it," Shackelford says. "I want (my little brother) to have the courage to go for everything he desires in life even if he could fail. I want to succeed in college so that he can."

Shackelford stays optimistic in the face of those in her life who do not believe in her dreams. With every accomplishment she makes, she can prove those people wrong.

Shackelford no longer sees her goals as out-of-reach; instead, she embraces her worries and says to "be afraid and do it anyway."

"My family was on food stamps at one point in time, and now I am in college achieving something none of my siblings have," Shackelford says. "I have also chosen to partake in many opportunities on campus with only being here a short time, and I am looking forward to the greater impact I can make in my continued time here."

Now, Shackelford is working toward obtaining her Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) in marketing with a concentration in supply chain marketing. She also says she'd like to pursue a Master of Business Administration.



Be afraid and do it anyway.



JENNIFER
KRAMER

Power Skating, International Military Mom Finds Silver Lining in Lockdown

BY / MAX REED

Global lockdown could not slow down Jennifer Kramer. When circumstances prevented her family from living overseas, she made new opportunities for herself, honing her mind and body as a Charger at The University of Alabama Huntsville (UAH).

"I'm a proud military spouse of 31 years," Jennifer said, "and during that time, home has always been wherever the Army sends us." After helping her husband move to his new station in South Korea, the plan was for Jennifer and her son to join him.

But then COVID struck and plans changed. "For the first time in my adult life, the Army wasn't providing a place for us to call home." For more than three years, the Kramer family was separated by the Pacific Ocean. "[As] the shutdowns continued, my husband decided to come

through on a promise he made when he proposed to me in 1991," Jennifer said.

"I was not a college graduate, but he gave his word that if I would support his military career, sacrifice my own career goals for him, and raise our family in unconventional and likely very lonely conditions, he would ensure I finished my education as soon as we had an empty nest. Although we never envisioned it would happen under these conditions, 'my turn' had arrived!"

Jennifer began her collegiate journey at Calhoun Community College, before transferring to UAH in January 2023, with an unexpected speed bump early on. "As a management major, I had to take Business Transitions. One of our first assignments was to submit our resume," Jennifer said, "and I came close to dropping the class over it!" With their family on deployment around the world, all of Jennifer's job experiences were as a volunteer, and all were with references in other countries. As a stay-at-home wife and mother, Jennifer said she "had no idea how my skills translated into anything useful or valuable in the business world." Then, after just one semester, Jennifer "not only managed to build a resume, but was grateful to accept a position working as a UAH College of Business Ambassador."

But a lifelong dream of school wasn't the only silver lining Jennifer found. "I used that time of [COVID] solitude to tackle anything in my life I could control. I started with my fitness level."

Jennifer had been a power skating coach, but "after a decade-plus of overseas living, indulging in wonderful German food and beer, I did not look like one!" She made a promise to herself, a new

pair of skates, if she could get back to her competition weight by her 50th birthday. "I succeeded and still maintain a healthy body."

Looking forward, Jennifer says, "family will always come first." In addition to her husband and child, she helps care for her four grandchildren and her father. "Life may still hold many more challenge, but one thing I know for certain is that I love UAH. Go Chargers!"



I'm a proud military spouse of 31 years.



JOSEPH
QUAN

Alpha Kappa Psi Chapter Founder Connects Community With Businesses

BY / MAX REED

When Joseph Quan sees a need, he fills it. When asked what an exemplary UAH College of Business student is, he said it is someone who not only, "gets good grades, but is able to apply what they have learned in extracurricular activities, impacting not just their school, but the community as a whole."

And Quan walks the walk. Quan saw a need for a "hub for students to connect with other students, the school, and businesses in a formal and fun way." Enter Alpha Kappa Psi. Joseph founded the UAH chapter of the business fraternity, which he now serves as chapter president. His term has included creating an internship program, which has already placed two students, one in biotech and the other in agriculture tech startups. He has also facilitated 10 different guest speakers, who range from

various departments at UAH, as well as executives from the biotech, finance, and engineering industries.

One of the ways he is applying what he has learned in his studies is as a research assistant. He and his professor collaborated on a supply chain handbook on product deletion.

Another contribution of Quan's has been coordinating several large community and business events. One was a tour of the UAH College of Business for 30 students from underprivileged communities. "This taught my club members how to be their best professional selves."

He also coordinated a mentorship program with members of the business community and secured a venue at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center. Guests included the mayor of Dothan, Alabama, and several members of the venture capital firm where Quan worked, and members of the Alabama Department of Commerce.

Quan says, "While I have always identified needs in my community and done my best to meet those needs, none of these would have been possible without the College of Business."



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This taught my club members how to be their best professional selves.



ABIGAIL "ORE"
ISOLA

8,000 Miles Away From Home – Abigail “Ore” Isola’s Success Story

BY / MACIE MORGAN

International student Abigail “Ore” Isola perseveres through the trials of obtaining a student visa, coming to America 8,000 miles away from home, and achieving her goals.

Isola learned what she wanted to do in life at just nine years old. “My mom usually bought two loaves of bread, but one day she only bought one. My mom said to me, ‘Have you seen the news? The economy is bad.’ I wanted to know more,” Isola said.

This is where Isola yearned to understand the economy, and in the future study economics. However, her path to The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) was rocky.

Isola attended university in her home country of Nigeria. After a year, she decided she wanted to transfer to a college in America. “I took matters into my own hands and applied to 12 schools in America,” Isola said. She succeeded, and decided UAH was her best option.

Isola went to the United States Embassy in Lagos, Nigeria, to acquire a student visa during final exam week. Her visa interview was on Jan. 4, 2023, and UAH began its spring semester on Jan. 12, 2023. Isola almost did not get her visa because the consulate believed she would not make it to America in time for the beginning of the semester.

However, Isola persevered again.

She began contacting anyone in the College of Business (COB) at UAH and in the International Affairs office. The first person to respond was COB Academic Advisor Lola Teague.

Teague ensured that Isola was prepared for the spring semester. From helping her with international affairs to creating her class schedule, Teague wanted to guarantee Isola was ready. “It felt like UAH and the COB were ready to embrace me, and it was such a boost to my confidence,” Isola said about Teague’s help.

Once coming to UAH in 2023, Isola started a side hustle as a hair braider, became the administrative assistant for UAH’s Housing Office, paid off some of her parents’ debt, secured an internship with an investment company in Washington, D.C., and joined the Student Government Association (SGA) at UAH. Isola accomplished all this while maintaining a 4.0 GPA. Currently, Isola works as the administrative and events coordinator for the I2C at UAH, which she says she is very passionate about. She not only succeeds in school, but also in reaching others going through the same experience as she is.

Many international students struggle during the holidays, being so far away from home, Isola said. On Thanksgiving in 2023, Isola hosted a lunch for other international students to



ensure they felt welcomed and included. She reached out to not only international students at UAH, but also to those at Oakwood and Alabama A&M universities. “The best thing I did in 2023 was create a temporary home for people whose real homes were 8,000 miles away,” Isola said.

Isola accomplished these goals because her parents raised her to believe she could do anything she sets her mind to. She found her purpose at a young age, and works hard to continue to show excellence in everything she does. “I do not think that anyone is ‘born to be a doctor.’ Your experiences will change what your purpose is and how you view the world,” Isola said.



*I took matters into
my own hands and
applied to 12 schools
in America.*



TYLER
STORM

UAH Police Officer Tyler Storm Defies Expectations Through Sacrifice and Service

BY / PARIS MORRIS

T Tyler Storm is no stranger to putting others first. During childhood, he decided to join Boy Scout Troop 757. This is when he realized he had a strong desire to give back to others, inspiring him to join the Marines, and consequently The University of Alabama in Huntsville's (UAH) police force.

As a full-time student, husband, father, and police officer, Storm has a rigid and busy schedule. He said the UAH College of Business has shown excellent dedication to their students, motivating them to achieve the success they envision for themselves. "Their support has extended beyond traditional academic guidance; it's been a combination of encouragement, flexibility, and understanding, accommodating my unique responsibilities as a

police officer and family man. This environment has not only enabled me to pursue my Master's in Cybersecurity Management but has also emboldened me with the confidence to balance these demanding aspects of my life," said Storm.

The safety and welfare of others is not only a priority for Storm, but second nature. During his tenure as a UAH police officer, he had an encounter with a student in distress that represented just that. He said, "It's these personal connections that truly define my contributions." Compassion and empathy through human interaction serve as a constant reminder to Storm why he purposefully continues acts of service as often as possible.

From 2013 to 2019, Storm practiced selflessness daily in the Marine Corps. By placing the needs of his country and fellow Marines above his personal comfort, his understanding of sacrifice truly emerged. Nonetheless, it was Boy Scout Troop 757 that "internalized the importance of commitment and integrity," displaying how these values came naturally.

He continues to use these testaments in his family life as well. School dropoff is at 7:45 a.m. for his son, which is a joy he gets to experience daily. He extends his gratitude to his wife, Emily, as well. He said, "She is a big inspiration and driving supportive force." Although he must tackle assignments and work, the two enjoy family time together nightly, ensuring his two sons are loved and cared for. After dinner and

bedtime, he focuses his attention on his academics. This shows commitment to not only his family but personal development and academic success as well.



Yet, he could not do it all alone. He says his devotion to God has guided him and provided the strength to face these challenges. Storm said, "This gratitude to God is woven into the fabric of my daily life, reminding me of the larger purpose and support behind my endeavors. These experiences have not only changed me but have also reaffirmed my dedication to living a life of service, sacrifice, and growth."

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It's these personal connections that truly define my contributions.



VICTORIA
KENNEDY

Cybersecurity Student Leader Gains New Opportunities at UAH

BY / MAX REED

Before transferring to The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH), Victoria Kennedy was a communications major at San Diego State University, earning both her associate and university studies degrees.

"Since transferring and switching majors, I have earned phenomenal internships, a guaranteed career following graduation, multiple scholarships and opportunities, and the skills needed to succeed in today's workforce," said Kennedy.

Kennedy's academic acumen will see her graduate from UAH with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in information systems in May 2024, with a concentration in cybersecurity, as well as a minor in communication arts. From there, she plans to receive a Master of Science in cybersecurity management in May 2025 alongside a graduate certificate in

cybersecurity studies.

When not studying, she is still hard at work for her student community. Kennedy was selected to become a UAH Lancer, the highest student position at the university. "As a Lancer, I work directly with Dr. Karr, the UAH president. In this position, I was nominated and voted by my fellow Lancers to be the programs chair on the Executive Board," said Kennedy.

She also served as the vice president her first year being a College of Business Ambassador. "Holding two of the highest student leadership positions at my university, I represent my school across multiple volunteer community outreach events and in professional public settings for local and national events," said Kennedy.

In her spare time, Kennedy can be found on the volleyball court. In fact, she is one of the founding officers of the Charger Volleyball Club. "This is the UAH [club] travel team that plays other schools in the Tennessee Valley and hosts a weekly open gym where we teach and instruct other students how to play the sport," said Kennedy.

Kennedy recently concluded her internship with Congressman Dale Strong of Alabama's 5th Congressional District. As a congressional intern, Kennedy assisted constituents, office administration, and attended several community events. She was also selected as a recipient of both the Department of Defense Cybersecurity Scholarship Program and The University of Alabama System Capitol Scholars Program.

She says this experience will guide her this summer when she will intern in the Washington, D.C., area for her third consecutive year.

"I am truly honored to have been



awarded The Top 20 of 2024," said Kennedy "And I am forever grateful for everything this university has done for me, especially the College of Business.

"I would not be where I am today without their support and encouragement."

Kennedy would also like to thank her family and friends for their continuous guidance, support, and encouragement, saying she looks forward to what the future holds.



As a Lancer, I work directly with Dr. Karr, the UAH president. ... I was nominated and voted by my fellow Lancers to be the programs chair on the Executive Board.



YANJIE
HORTON

Yanjie Horton Embraces Success Through Dedication and Determination

BY / PARIS MORRIS

Finance student Yanjie Horton is in a constant pursuit of achieving her goals through The University of Alabama in Huntsville's (UAH) College of Business (COB).

Yanjie currently serves as the public relations chair for the UAH Lancers, and was nominated to represent the Lancers on the UAH 2023 Homecoming Court. The UAH Lancers are competitively selected and serve as the university's student representatives at events hosted by the Office of the President. As a Lancer, she promotes donor, alumni, and university relations through various events and interfaces with community leaders. Her Lancer experience "helped her better develop communication, interpersonal, and leadership skills."

As an Ambassador for the College of Business, she gets to continue this mission of representing UAH.

"The COB has provided numerous opportunities to learn and grow." When asked about her favorite part of the program, she responded that, "It is getting to form relationships with numerous faculty, staff, and students."

Yanjie continues her leadership roles through the Library Student Advisory Group and the Office of Pre-Health Professions Advising. "The Library Student Advisory Group allows me to be a voice for the student body communicating student feedback to the library to help them better meet student needs." In the Office of Pre-Health Professions, Yanjie assists students with their medical or dental school applications. When asked about her experience, she said, "This fulfilling role allows me to help students prepare for their postgraduate journey."

Experiencing different learning opportunities and gaining knowledge are two essential elements Yanjie values. Her involvement extends beyond UAH. She is involved in Leadership Greater Huntsville, a nonprofit organization with the mission of connecting leaders to build a better community. Additionally, she is a scholar with the Women's Economic Development Council Foundation, which has connected her with a network of supportive women. "Through these programs I have been able to learn even more about Huntsville, despite being a Huntsville native, as well as gaining invaluable mentorship. Both programs have provided me with numerous resources and support, and I am grateful to be a part of such wonderful organizations," she said.

Not only is she involved with the Huntsville community, but she interned with Congressman Robert Aderholt in Washington, D.C. As an intern she attended hearings, press conferences, briefings, and



proceedings. Yanjie's enthusiasm was evident as she said, "I immensely enjoyed every moment and took advantage of each opportunity."

Yanjie will continue to embrace new experiences this summer, even after graduation. She was selected as one of 14 students participating in the inaugural University of Alabama System Capitol Scholars Program, a six-week internship providing experiential learning in Washington, D.C. She will be working in the office of Senator Katie Britt.

She has gained a strong foundation during her time in college, and her ultimate goal is to utilize her varied experiences to assist her as she begins her career. When asked to reflect on her time at UAH, Yanjie said, "I am so grateful for every opportunity that UAH and the College of Business has afforded me. I have felt very supported and encouraged by UAH and the College of Business. I have had a truly wonderful college experience."

A professional portrait of a man with short, reddish-blond hair and a friendly smile. He is wearing a dark gray suit jacket over a light-colored, patterned dress shirt and a blue striped tie. The background is an office interior with large windows and glass partitions. The image is framed by geometric shapes: a dark blue hexagon on the left, a white hexagon below it, and a blue hexagon at the bottom left. The name 'ZACH NILES' is written in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters in the lower-left area, with a thin white horizontal line underneath.

ZACH
NILES

From Computer Science to Business: Zach Niles Finding What He Loves

BY / MACIE MORGAN

Zach Niles's switch to the College of Business (COB) at The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) was unconventional compared to many students. At UAH, Niles decided to start in computer science, but that quickly changed after a job opportunity.

Niles worked at Vector Marketing for some time as a sales representative. In this position, Niles was able to sell over \$70,000 worth of product in a short time. Niles was quickly promoted to the assistant managerial position at just 19 years old.

In the assistant managerial position, Niles was responsible for recruiting and training new sales representatives. He and his team were able to sell over \$750,000 worth of product in 2022.

Niles was then promoted to the district office managerial role. This is when he decided to switch to UAH's COB. "After working for

Vector Marketing for a number of years, I decided to switch to the business school, as sales and managerial work showed me just how proficient I was in regard to networking, marketing, and interpersonal capabilities," Niles said.

Niles also serves in many on-campus organizations. At UAH, he serves as a Lancer where he helps host presidential events. Niles also served as the fraternity president of Sigma Nu, vice president of the Interfraternal Council, vice president of The Order of Omega, and the team captain of the Rugby Club.

While serving in these positions and working, Niles has maintained a 3.52 GPA. "I am driven by my conviction that ongoing knowledge expansion is key for personal development as a prospective business leader," Niles said. His leadership skills do not only pertain to campus and work.

Niles said he places much importance on giving back to the community. He donates his time to the Huntsville Margarita Society, where he and a team have raised over \$250,000 of toys for underprivileged kids in the past two years. Niles also has volunteered at Camp Winnataska as a camp counselor for over 600 hours in the past four years.

Niles extends his volunteerism to students on campus through teaching non-business students about UAH's COB. "[As an engineering major] I am very appreciative of Zach and the selflessness he shows by offering

to be a resource to my endeavors of becoming a successful employee," said Steven Cornelius, a friend of Niles.

“

I am driven by my conviction that ongoing knowledge expansion is key for personal development as a prospective business leader.



NG
NORTHROP GRUMMAN

PHILLIP
RAY

UAH Grad Student Phillip Ray is Forging His Path as a Leader in Huntsville's Tech Industry

BY / CURTIS VENETTA

Phillip Ray is making a name for himself in Huntsville's ever-growing technology industry. Despite the recent loss of his father, Ray has continued to develop his professional expertise while supporting his family and shining a light on the local community.

Ray started his leadership journey as an undergraduate student at The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) when he worked as a resident assistant and a career ambassador.

As a member of Alpha Tau Omega, Ray participated in multiple community service projects on and off campus. He served as operations chairman for two years before stepping into the director role for the fraternity's Battle of the Buffalo festival, an annual fundraiser for cancer research.

Alongside his involvement on campus, Ray worked as an intern for both Maximum Technology

Corporation and Northrop Grumman (NG) while pursuing a Bachelor of Science in information systems.

"During my internship with NG, I rotated several times amongst different teams, learning new skills that I applied both in and out of school," Ray says.

Ray began working full-time as a pathway systems engineer after graduation.

He attributes his full-time transition within NG to UAH Career Services' constant motivation, explaining, "UAH taught me the value of networking, challenging myself to look beyond a failure and rising above it and making connections with diverse people."

Ray helped start the Ambassadors, Interns & Mentors (AIM) program at NG, which provides networking opportunities and support for interns. He served as the professional development co-lead for the Pathways Council for one year before becoming the site co-lead, allowing him to help organize networking events for early career professionals.

He has also made several technical accomplishments during his time with NG.

"One of the plans that I authored and own is the Systems Engineering Management Plan, which has received recognition from both NG leadership and Missile Defense Agency (MDA) leadership," Ray says.

While continuing to carry out his responsibilities as pathway systems engineer, Ray also works as the lead scrum master on his product team to lead planning events, oversee teams and assist where needed. This March, he transitioned into a new role, where he has adopted

even more responsibilities, ensuring his team meets the program's milestones.

Ray has received various awards in his two years working full time with NG.



He is also on the planning committee for two programs created by Leadership Greater Huntsville, both designed for emerging leaders in high schools and universities across the state.

Amid his ongoing achievements, Ray recently faced a tragic loss in his family.

"This past year was one of the hardest years of my life as my father passed away in July," Ray says. "This impacted my family and me deeply and has required me to spend more time back in Tennessee supporting the family."

Despite his recent loss, Ray has found time to remain dedicated to his work and stay optimistic in the face of life's challenges. Ray says his experiences have shaped him into someone who always smiles, practices resilience and holds firm in his beliefs while remaining open-minded.

Ray describes UAH as his "home away from home," sharing that the university has provided him with numerous opportunities to grow in and out of the classroom. Now, he is working toward completing his Master of Science (MS) in cybersecurity on the management track at UAH.



ALEXI
FLORIAN

UAH Student Brings Taste of Alaska to Madison, AL

BY / MAX REED

Alexi Florian lived in Alaska until she was 17 years old. "I never realized how different our lifestyle was until I moved to 'The Lower 48,'" she said. "We didn't live in igloos or ride polar bears to school, but what we valued and emphasized was different."

Her time up north gave Florian and her family a "healthy fear of nature... and a sense of solidarity with humankind." Additionally, they got used to quality coffee on every corner.

In 2021, Florian's family moved three times with her father's work, first to Hawaii, back to Alaska, then settling in Madison, Alabama. "My plan was never to go to college. Somehow [though], I was convinced to apply to a few schools in my area." Florian is happy to say she does not regret the decision. "UAH has provided me with some of the best learning experiences and community that I have been around in my life."

As a junior, Florian was selected

to be a 2023 Ambassador of the College of Business. "I am proud to work alongside my fellow ambassadors," she says, "providing a welcoming environment to business students, and it has been an honor to rub shoulders with Dean Greene, Ms. Pettitt, Mona Foroughi, Drew, Lacy, and the guests they bring in."

Florian is also the president of the Women in Business and Leadership Club. "I hope to facilitate opportunities for our members," she says, "with each other and with contacts inside and outside of UAH."

But, Florian says, "my proudest achievement is known as Crème Brew Lait." This is her family's drive-through coffee shop in Madison. "It all goes back to my Alaskan roots. I have been working in coffee since I was 16."

"When we moved to Alabama, we were struck by the utter and complete lack of quality coffee shops." So, Florian and her family decided to open their own. "We got the idea over dinner one night," she said. "We got someone to draw up the plans, contacted a friend who roasts coffee, and found a plot of land that was much too good to give up."

Florian now serves as Crème Brew Lait's manager. "My job these days focuses mostly on operations, supply, hiring and training, and recipe development. My next goal is to develop a foolproof training program that can be replicated on baristas in ours and other coffee shops."

She says starting a business as a full-time student is not easy, and Florian has needed her Alaska-born resilience to get up every morning and face inevitable obstacles.



“

UAH has provided me with some of the best learning experiences and community that I have been around in my life.



ALEXANDER
HAMILTON

UAH's 2023 Student Leader of the Year, Alexander Hamilton, Helps Family Seek Refuge From War

BY / PARIS MORRIS

Alexander Hamilton is president of both the U.S. Congressional Simulation and the Economics Association, which has provided him a strong political and economic community here at The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH). However, this is not where his story ends.

Hamilton's mother is originally from Ukraine. Within the past two years, he has helped his family seek refuge from war by aiding them in finding housing, work, and friends to become more adjusted to live in the United States. Hamilton said, "I'm very proud to have assisted in the ways that I have and hope to continue in the future."

His humility does not stop here,

as he advocated for the rights of children and parents who have become victims of International Parent Child Abduction (IPCA). Committed to the cause, Hamilton partnered with iStand Parent Network to present research on IPCA and advocate for this issue on Capitol Hill.

As an economics student, Hamilton was able to use his abilities learned in the classroom through an internship with a local real estate firm. Here, he assisted the company in making the best investment choices for the company. Hamilton also worked with ArtemisGen, a Huntsville-based consulting firm, where he advocated and consulted on policy about the future of the city.

"I have improved both the quality and quantity of events held by these clubs and have effectively fostered a strong political and economics community at UAH," Hamilton said. Through his dedication and persistence, he was awarded Distinguished Student Leader of the Year in a Political or Governmental Organization in 2023 at UAH. His work outside of an academic setting played a substantial role in this nomination as well.

Starting his academic career in the height of COVID-19, Hamilton has become a leader in every aspect of his life. "I think the guiding force for my time at UAH has been dedication, and I faced significant challenges in starting my academic career here. However, very quickly I dedicated myself to getting involved and making an impact at UAH," he said.

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I'm very proud to have assisted in the ways that I have and hope to continue in the future.



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