Public Relations
Students Win Again

Alumna Hired by Smithsonian Institution

New Faculty Highlights
What happened to our summer? Many of the school’s faculty posed this very question as they returned to the classroom earlier than ever before. Not only was the summer shortened by three weeks for 9-month faculty, those who taught summer barely had time to breathe before starting fall semester. For those of you who read our previous newsletter, you already know that semester conversion took place at UAB this year, with classes beginning August 22, 2001. Our students took this early starting date to heart and registered willingly, increasing the school’s enrollments by 8.6 percent and placing us firmly over the 1,000 mark.

The past year has been busy for many of the school’s faculty and staff as several departments instituted new curricula, hired new faculty, appointed new chairs, and added performance venues. For example, the Department of Theatre finished one of its best performance seasons in recent memory and started a professional theatre company, the 13th Street Ensemble. During the summer of 2001, faculty and students performed together under equity guidelines to stage two plays, the very students performed together under equity guidelines to stage two plays, the very students performed together under equity guidelines to stage two plays, the very students performed together under equity guidelines to stage two plays. Noises Off and a riveting performance of Oleanna featuring new faculty member Dennis McLernon and student Rachel Burttram. Both performances received solid critical acclaim and established a benchmark for next year’s season.

Summer in the dean’s office was decidedly busier than in previous years as we conducted 13 orientations to prepare our new freshmen and transfer students for life at UAB. Louise Cecil and Janice Ford-Freeman did an outstanding job advising an unusually large numbers of students. Our technology wizards, T. D. Todd and Kevin Worden, upgraded the school’s software, made numerous hardware improvements, and outfitted two new English writing labs. These state-of-the-art facilities provide the most effective learning environment for students taking writing intensive courses. After conducting a summer search for a new director of development, Jackie Wuska was appointed to this important position. Jackie brings to the job many years of development work at UA where she served as major gifts officer.

But, life was not all work and no play. While our business officer, Amy Evans, is this year’s prize-winner for having produced the most creative project, the birth of her second daughter, Megan, on May 16, 2001, some of us did manage to take time for personal travel and enrichment. Linda DeRocher, administrative associate, went on a two-week European journey with her youngest daughter, Leah, to England and France, and Louise spent some quality time with daughter, Grey, in Philadelphia and son, Richard, in Washington, D.C. Cynthia Webb, our office specialist, stayed home-bound to take care of her three energetic children, and Ward made two trips to Florida to install his youngest son, Evan, at New College of Florida.

Let me take this opportunity to thank all of you who have made contributions to the departments of the School of Arts and Humanities during the past several years. Since UAB is a relatively “young” institution our alumnae giving is still developing and thus your contributions are important to us. We have planned an ambitious fundraising agenda that includes new and renovated facilities for the Departments of Theatre and Music in the Alys Stephens/Hulsey Center complex, a Center for the Visual Arts to house the growing Department of Art and Art History, and the renovation of an aging Humanities Building to provide adequate housing for the Departments of English, Foreign Languages and Literatures, Philosophy and Communication Studies. With your continued assistance the future looks bright for Arts and Humanities.

With this second issue of A&H, the School of Arts and Humanities newsletter, let me welcome you back to the school and UAB and remind you that a newsletter is not complete without an accounting of our alumnae accomplishments. I want to encourage you to send us information about what you are currently doing. We want to stay in touch!

Bert Brouwer
Dean
Valerie Ficklin (M.A. Art History, 2000) has recently been appointed assistant registrar for exhibitions at the American Art Museum which is part of the Smithsonian Institution. Since the Museum at the Old Patent Office Building is closed for renovations until Fall 2004, she is currently handling traveling shows. Rather than remaining out of sight in storage, the Museum’s collection is being sent all over the country in a series of traveling shows entitled “Treasures to Go.” Valerie works with conservators, curators, and educators to coordinate the traveling shows, serving as a liaison with the exhibition venues and the shipping and conservation departments. She also handles practical details such as arranging couriers. Valerie is excited about her new job and enjoying life in the Washington, D.C. area.

Valerie graduated from UAB with a master’s degree in art history in August 2000. She moved to Kansas City with her husband and began working as dean’s assistant in the School of Biological Sciences at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. In January 2001 she became registrar/assistant to the curator of the Sprint Fine Art Collection in Overland Park, Kansas, where she managed a contemporary art collection of about 600 objects and served as curator for the office art program.

At UAB, Valerie was selected as Outstanding Graduate Student in Art History in the Department of Art and Art History and for the School of Arts and Humanities for the 1999-2000 academic year. During her two years at UAB, she also served as a graduate assistant in the Department of Art and Art History, where she created, organized, and catalogued slides and assisted in the classroom.

Valerie’s master’s thesis, “Mannerist Staircases: A Twist in the Tale,” examined the significance of the spiral staircase in Mannerist painting as an aesthetic and an expressive device. She received second prize for her presentation on her thesis research at the Graduate Research Day in 2000. Before enrolling in the M.A. program in art history at UAB, Valerie graduated from the College of William and Mary magna cum laude and spent two years teaching English in Osaka, Japan.

Although there is sometimes a tendency to question the value of degrees in the Arts and Humanities, Valerie’s employment record since she completed her M.A. degree in art history attests to the professional value of her art history training at UAB which she is employing in her new position at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, D.C.

A Time of Remembrance

The UAB Concert Choir under the direction of Dr. Jeff Reynolds performs as a part of “A Time of Remembrance,” a benefit concert that raised $2,500 for those affected by the terrorist attacks on September 11.
Philosophy and Brain Science: One Student Does Both

Suppose there was something wrong with the way your brain processes visual data, so that instead of seeing the world as a continuous moving picture, you saw only a series of discrete “still” pictures? You might try to pour a cup of coffee, but see only a snapshot of a motionless cup and pitcher before feeling the coffee in your lap.

This is the situation of people with “motion blindness,” a mysterious condition that might one day be better understood thanks to work done this past summer by UAB senior philosophy and mathematics major Jason Lott. Jason was one of 10 students from around the world selected to work with J. Anthony Movshon, a researcher at the Center for Neuroscience at New York University.

A native of Anniston, Jason came to UAB in the fall of 1998 as part of EM SAP — the “Early Medical School Admissions Program” — which assures outstanding students admission to medical school and frees them to pursue undergraduate studies of their choice. In addition to majoring in philosophy and math, he has also been part of the Honors Program, where he is currently chair of the Steering Committee.

The serious work, however, involved creating computer models to help understand how the brain processes visual information. What patterns of neuron-firing occur when you see something? The team working with Dr. Movshon was taking the first theoretical steps that might one day lead to the development of ways to rectify breakdowns in human visual processing, such as occur in individuals with motion blindness.

The EM SAP program is directed by Dr. Gregory E. Pence, who is a member of both the philosophy department and medical school faculties.

But studying how the brain works is nothing new to Jason Lott. The UAB Cognitive Science Program is one of many that have sprung up around the country in recent years, pooling the efforts of researchers from philosophy, psychology, linguistics, and neuroscience. At UAB, Jason works with Dr. Michael Sloane on a research project concerning how people reason about probabilities. They are testing the hypothesis that people reason differently depending on the sort of information being processed.

A specialist in medical ethics, Dr. Pence has taken groups of EM SAP students to student medical ethics conferences at Princeton and the University of Virginia. Some of the UAB students, including Jason Lott, have written papers for the conferences that were subsequently published. Rather than having to focus exclusively on science, EM SAP students have won awards for outstanding work in such diverse areas as Spanish, art history, and philosophy.

Jason’s paper, published in the conference proceedings, was called “Guarding Ethics From Itself.” He argued that bioethics suffers from an excess of caution — we tend to find medical developments morally acceptable only if they are free of risk. On the contrary, he says, “a good dose of curiosity, of courage, and risk-engaging behavior may be necessary to keep bioethics from destroying itself.”

Blue Shirt

The Blue Shirt Project, a student-run art gallery, recently made its debut in the Birmingham community with an inaugural exhibition of conceptual art by two artists, one based in Chicago and the other in St. Louis. The brainchild of professors Anne Howard and Derek Cracco of the UAB Department of Art and Art History and Rick Batton, a Birmingham artist, the Blue Shirt Project is not solely a gallery for exhibiting student work; rather it is a gallery exhibiting work by artists from around the nation. At Blue Shirt, students function more as gallery directors by participating in all facets of gallery operations including serving on the selection committees that choose art for the exhibition season, preparing the gallery, installing the art works, promoting exhibitions, generating publicity, and hosting receptions. As such, the Blue Shirt Project adds a vital component to the department’s educational mission by providing students with hands-on experience in running a gallery.

The student-run gallery was developed during a series of meetings with Professors Howard and Cracco and members of the Art Guild, a student organization. Perhaps the Guild’s most ambitious undertaking to date, the group charted a mission for what was to become the Blue Shirt Project and then renovated space loaned by Rick Batton. Batton owns a large four-story building in downtown Birmingham, and he was willing to share in the students’ vision.

The gallery opened in June 2001 with an exhibition of art by John Matthews and Kurt Perschke. Matthews praised UAB’s students and faculty coordinators for having “added to the traditional educational process by providing opportunities for students to work in a gallery setting.” According to Matthews, “(this) is typically the only way a young artist becomes associated with the practical, day-to-day aspects of the art business — from show organization to gallery preparation to art sale.”

Plans include advertising nationally for exhibitions that will bring to UAB and Birmingham a diversity of art-making approaches to stimulate dialog and challenge students in their own art investigations. They’re off to an excellent start.
Generous gifts from colleagues, friends and students have brought the John Schnorrenberg Endowed Scholarship Fund to surpass its $25,000 first phase goal. Gifts and pledges totaling $27,126 mark the halfway point toward a $50,000 Endowed Presidential Scholarship for Art and Art History students. Dr. Schnorrenberg has been a member of UAB’s Art and Art History faculty since 1976, serving as the chair of the department for 14 years.

The good will that has flowed in monetary contributions to the John Schnorrenberg Scholarship is a testament and honor to Professor Schnorrenberg’s hard work and commitment to the Department of Art and Art History and to the community. The contributions have come from all over the Southeast and the country from colleagues in his profession, students, former students, friends, relatives and colleagues at UAB who have worked with John. It has been quite overwhelming, and we have changed our goal now to raise funds for a $50,000 Presidential Scholarship.

Janice Kluge
Interim Chair of the Department of Art and Art History

I am delighted that the generosity of our friends of UAB’s School of Arts and Humanities has endowed the Schnorrenberg Scholarship in Art. I hope it will continue to grow and I plan to give something more to it myself. The Department of Art and Art History gets good students. The best of these students deserve scholarship assistance. I am delighted another scholarship has been endowed so that we may continue to attract talented students to our program.

John Schnorrenberg
Professor

Dr. Samuel B. Barker has made a $142,000 gift to endow the Samuel B. Barker Outdoor Sculpture Competition. In 1996, UAB dedicated the Outdoor Sculpture Display Competition to Barker, dean emeritus of UAB’s Graduate School. During the past 25 years, Barker has commissioned many works of sculpture that have been placed on the UAB campus. He sponsored and chaired the first and second Outdoor Sculpture Display competitions that resulted in nine permanent installations at UAB. He continues to participate in the selections and location of works of art around the campus.

Since my start in collecting, some 65 years ago, I have acquired many things, some beautiful, some ugly, almost all challenging in one way or another. I know I have brought joy to some and puzzlement to others, along with unbounded riches for myself. Art cannot be produced without money, but things of the spirit cannot be judged by that measure. I learned long ago to be moved by my own personal response to a work of art or a stage performance, and not necessarily by the price in gold. Admire something on the basis of its appeal and buy it if possible, but only when the spiritual criterion is met. After the first few qualms about my tastes not being in full accord with established authority, I stopped worrying. Somewhere, somebody will agree. It is also well to realize that the arts and humanities comprise a genuine part of life, just as does science. One without the other is incomplete.

Samuel B. Barker
Dean Emeritus of the Graduate School

Dr. Barker has been an inspiration to me — to see his generosity to the arts and his energy and commitment to the Sculpture Competition has been incredible and magnanimous. He looks after and cares for the sculptures and their location on our campus.

Janice Kluge
Interim Chair, Department of Art and Art History

Last spring, in conjunction with the Alabama Symphony, the Alabama Ballet and the Birmingham International Festival, Lehár’s operetta The Merry Widow was presented with many chorus and principal roles played by UAB students.

In early November, UAB Opera presented its first full production in the Sirote Theatre. This event involved Dr. Rachel Mathes, Dr. Ron Hubbard, dramatic director, Kelly Allison, production director and Dr. Jeff Reynolds, conductor. Accompanied by a professional orchestra, 24 UAB students brought the story of Puccini’s La Bohème to life.

UAB students, Merissa Braden and Josef McClellan singing in the operetta “The Merry Widow”

UAB students, (L to R) Daniel Brown, Josef McClellan, Merissa Braden, Fernando Richardson, LaBron Smith, Jonathon McNeil, perform in “La Bohème.”
or the 20th year in a row, the UAB Public Relations Student Society of America was recognized as the Alabama Chapter of the Year by the Public Relations Council of Alabama. More than 80 individual awards also went to UAB students, as did the PRCA State Scholarship.

“A good portion of our success stems from the goal of each group of graduates to outperform those who preceded them,” says Dr. John Wittig, who directs the public relations program in the Department of Communication Studies. “We compete with ourselves to become ever more professional.”

Tommy Palladino, president of the UAB PRCA/PRSSA chapter this year, agrees. “I think UAB’s continued success in PRCA state competition comes from superior instruction paired with a professional work ethic.”

Andrea Doughty, a 1996 UAB graduate, thinks the reason for the success of the UAB PR program is more personal. “We win because we’ve learned the most important lesson John Wittig teaches,” Doughty says. “We are not afraid to succeed.”

Six PRSSA students from UAB attended the Southern Public Relations Federation annual conference and seven students attended the national PRSSA annual conference in Chicago last year. “Students want to be challenged and they want to be part of something that demands their best,” says Wittig, who represented the Alabama Chapter of PRSA at the National Public Relations National Assembly in 2000.

High standards have been an objective of the UAB PR program from the beginning. “As a founding board member of the UAB PRSSA in the early 1980s, the ground rules were set by Dr. Wittig: if you are going to do this, you’re going to do it right, take it seriously, and do your best at all times,” says UAB graduate Donna Mattick, vice president of marketing for the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce. “For me, those rules became principles to live by throughout my entire career.”

Teri Twarkins Roeder, a 1996 UAB graduate, says the curriculum of UAB’s PR program demands creativity and dedication. “Dr. Wittig’s method of teaching students about the ‘real world’ of business, as well as the program’s contacts within the community, force students to be serious about their work,” says Roeder, an assistant vice president for Wells Fargo in Phoenix, Ariz. “Although I’ve chosen a business and marketing career path, I owe my entry into the work world to Dr. Wittig and UAB’s PR program.”

Claudia Owens, a manager at BellSouth Telecommunications and a 1993 UAB graduate, agrees. “I believe the reason UAB’s PR program continues to be a winner, year after year, is because the curriculum prepares students for real life situations in the public relations industry,” Owens says. “The skills I learned at UAB help me at work everyday. I’m proud to be a part of the public relations department’s legacy of professionalism.”

Students in the UAB PR program also develop lifelong friendships. “Expectations are high and the field of public relations is taken seriously,” says Todd Johnson, a 2001 UAB graduate. “There is a bond the students have because of the amount of time we spend together.”

The Complete Dracula Read at Vamp and

UAB Theatre faculty (left to right) Ron Hubbard, Mark Powers, and Ward Haarbauer reading Bram Stoker’s original “Dracula” at the Birmingham book store, Vamp and Tramp Booksellers. The readings, which serialized Stoker’s novel and included students as well as faculty, took place every week night during the first three weeks of October and lead to the UAB Theatre production of “The Passion of Dracula” performed at the Sirote Theatre in UAB’s Alys Robinson Stephens Center.
English Graduate Student

Graduate student Heather Klusendorf is a familiar face in the UAB English Department. In addition to taking classes, writing a thesis, teaching an English composition course, and tutoring UAB students part-time as an Internet tutor in the English Resource Center, Klusendorf is active in numerous student organizations across campus.

Since coming to UAB in Fall 2000 to pursue a master’s in English, Klusendorf has immersed herself in activities that will benefit UAB graduate students and the university at large. Currently, she serves as president of Sigma Tau Delta (the English Honor Society) and as Graduate Student Association Senator for the English Department. Speaking of the importance of getting graduate students involved in the university and recognizing their efforts and accomplishments, Klusendorf says “Graduate students can be great motivators in a university environment, since they are often the ones who are so open to new ideas... they are seeking to insert themselves in the conversations going on in their given fields.” Thus, Klusendorf argues, “[their] voices need to be heard.”

Additionally, Klusendorf has worked as poetry copyeditor for Aura, UAB’s literary magazine, and has been a staff member of PMS: poemmemoirstory, a new journal committed to women’s writing published by the English Department. She is a member of the Colloquium Committee, which hosts on-campus speakers, and Vade Mecum, the English Club.

Teaching her first composition course this fall, Klusendorf shares her enthusiasm for introducing students to new ideas and experimenting with diverse approaches to learning. Students in Klusendorf’s class are encouraged to motivate one another by listening to and responding to each other’s viewpoints. A successful class, for this instructor, is one in which students feel free to offer their perspectives on an issue and contribute to the direction of the discussions that take place.

Klusendorf is working on a thesis that explores the power of language in Shakespeare’s Much Ado About Nothing. After receiving the M.A., she plans to earn a Ph.D. in English, specializing in rhetoric and composition, and continue to concentrate on ideas that most excite her and that can be carried into the classroom.

Away from UAB, Klusendorf also keeps involved. She is at work on a newsletter for residents in her apartment complex and is an avid museum goer and tennis player. When asked what she most enjoys doing, Klusendorf says, “really anything that has to do with people... I like to get them together and make things happen.” No doubt, Klusendorf will continue to do just that.

Focus on Fundraising for Arts and Facilities

Jackie Wuska was recently named Director of Development for the School of Arts and Humanities where she is responsible for identification, cultivation and solicitation of prospects to support the educational and research objectives of the school. Jackie joins the school from the University of Alabama where she served as Major Gifts Officer in the Office of Advancement and Director of the Capstone Engineering Society. She earned a B.A. in Communication and an M.A. in Public Administration from UA.

Based on her extensive fundraising experience, the school is fortunate to have Jackie join the Arts and Humanities team to further the ambitious fundraising objectives for the school that include scholarships, a visiting scholars and artists lecture series, support for faculty and student research, and new and renovated facilities. During the remaining two years of the UAB Capital Campaign, we are optimistic about achieving many of these objectives that will enhance the learning and teaching environments for our students and faculty. According to Jackie, “our challenge is to promote the school’s performances, concerts, lectures and exhibitions in a manner that allows prospective students and the community to recognize that UAB’s School of Arts and Humanities is a vital outlet for our state’s expression of culture, talent and creativity. Raising funds and support for our school simply hinges upon how well we can expose the community to our outstanding programs.” As Director of Development Jackie will play an integral part in achieving this mission. Inquiries may be directed to her in the Dean’s Office at 975-2221 or via e-mail, jwuska@uab.edu.

Heather Klusendorf, right, tutoring student Eva Holt (freshman, Art Studio) in the English Resource Center.
National Exhibition Venues for Art Professor

Derek Cracco, assistant professor of Art (printmaking), exhibited his print "Laughing Stock" at the Brooklyn Museum of Art in the exhibition "Digital: Revolutions in Printmaking," June 22-September 2, 2001. The exhibit was comprised of 84 works by established artists including John Baldessari, Chuck Close, Jim Dine, Ann Hamilton, Nam June Paik, Robert Rauschenberg, Richard Serra, Kiki Smith and James Turrell. The prints ranged from traditionally printed and computer mediated, to those created entirely on the computer.

Cracco is currently participating in "Southern Digital By W ays" sponsored by Space One Eleven and funded by the NEA. His proposal using the web as an art form was selected for the gallery's "Visual

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Derek Cracco speaking at a recent Sunday Salon (behind him and to his left) on Camp Street in New Orleans. During Spring semester 2002, the UAB Department of Art and Art History will feature his work in a solo exhibition in the Visual Arts Gallery.

Assistant Professor of Art Derek Cracco speaking about his work (behind him and to his left) at a recent Sunday Salon on Camp Street in New Orleans. During Spring semester 2002, the UAB Department of Art and Art History will feature his work in a solo exhibition in the Visual Arts Gallery.

In the fall of 2002, Cracco will present a solo exhibition of his work at Docs Gallery Dialogue Project. The project involves five artists who will create a web page to demonstrate how the Internet can be used as a vehicle for exchange of visual information and to illustrate the non-linear development of the World Wide Web. The project will culminate in a portfolio of 15 images curated by Cracco and a map of the web site that documents the evolution and exchange of ideas between the artists.

Derek Cracco and colleague Professor Anne Howard (drawing and painting) serve as co-sponsors of the UAB Student Art Guild where they recently helped facilitate the Blue Shirt Project, a student-run gallery on 2nd Avenue North.

"You have to admit, it's getting better. It's getting better all the time..." as the song goes. Since the last visit to the "Den," we have made significant improvements to the UAB School of Arts and Humanities technology infrastructure. These improvements facilitate the learning environment of each student who passes through our classes. By far the most significant improvements have been in the English Department.

In the "old days," the English Department had one relatively modern computer classroom, HB231. This classroom was for the most part "undernourished." The carpet was the original when the building was built 30 something years ago; the furniture, while functional, wasn't exactly the most stable; anyone using the room had to "squeeze in" as the actual square footage was barely enough to house 15 computers much less the 24 that were installed. Needless to say, it was long overdue for a significant facelift.

Over eight months—from first drawings to last computer connections—emerged two fantastic new computer classrooms for students of English composition. These classrooms are not only nice looking, but fully functional and Internet ready. Instructors sit at the instructor's computer and use a program called Timbuktu to "dial-up" any of the other 25 workstations in the classroom through the network to view a student's work. The instructor can then turn on the projector and present the work(s) for class critique or example. Both classrooms are booked solid...from 8a.m. to 10p.m., Monday through Friday.
In Richard Wright's Travel Writings: New Reflections (University Press of Mississippi, 2001), Associate Professor of English Virginia Whatley Smith explores an often neglected genre of writing by the well-known author. The edited collection includes scholarly essays that focus primarily on four of Wright's non-fiction books, including *Black Power: A Record of Reactions in a Land of Pathos*, *The Color Curtain: A Report of the Bandung Conference*, *Pagan Spain*, and *White Man, Listen!* as well as notes, an outline, and a draft for a fifth unpublished book, *French West Africa*. All were written in the 1950s while Wright lived abroad and traveled extensively.

Smith explains that “Richard Wright fled the U.S. for France in 1946 in response to racial oppression in America.... He went on to write from the dual perspective of Westerner and onlooker/explorer of other cultures, particularly African cultures.” From his expatriate stance, Wright presented himself as a “global speaker for oppressed people of color,” and his honest portrayal of anti-colonial struggles for human rights provides a unique glance at people from many parts of the world at this point in history as well as an unfamiliar aspect of Wright’s identity as an activist and author.

According to Smith, Wright was ahead of his time in many ways, thus projecting what was to follow in intellectual circles and creative work. His travel writing stems not only from the sociopolitical events of the period (e.g., a series of conferences in the 1940s and 1950s during which several African and Asian nations declared a move toward independence), but also from his interests in French existentialism, naturalism, and social determinism. Smith suggests in her introduction to the collection that “(It) was Richard Wright the foreign traveler who had the prescience of vision as a global humanist and eyewitness to history to pioneer postcolonial studies, and to forecast in *The Color Curtain* (1956) its preeminence in the academy today owing to the post-World War II backlash to colonial rule by black, brown, and yellow peoples.”

Smith’s commitment to broadening views of other cultures and other perspectives is evident in the classroom as well. A specialist in African American literature and African literature, Smith strives to introduce UAB students to “new information and new ways of looking at what they already know.” Currently, Smith is teaching a course in English composition centering on the issue of cultural diversity in the United States. She says that she loves to watch her students “become more conscious of their own environment and begin to understand how their values, beliefs, and experiences compare to those of other groups living in this country.”

In addition to writing and teaching, Smith is a familiar face at professional conferences around the globe that focus on African-American literature. This past summer, she attended both the meeting of the American Literature Association in Mexico, where she presented a paper on naturalistic writing in Richard Wright’s fiction, and the Colloquium of African-American Research in Italy, where she spoke on “Race, Difference, and Germany’s Solution to the Negro Problem in Film and Literature.” Smith is currently at work on a biography of Richard Wright titled Richard Wright and the Re/Construction of Blackness.
Chemist Invades Philosophy

The Department of Philosophy gained a new member last spring. Her name is Sara Vollmer. She has a Ph.D. in chemistry from the University of Nebraska and after that, 12 years research experience determining the three-dimensional structure of proteins. Her appointment previous to coming to UAB was at the Max Planck Institute in Berlin. Dr. Vollmer’s position is unique in another way: she carries both the title of research assistant professor and of training instructor and her position originates from UAB’s Human Resources division. What is she doing in the Department of Philosophy?

The puzzle has an interesting solution. Part of the answer is that Vollmer has a second Ph.D. from the University of Maryland in philosophy where she concentrated on issues in the philosophy of science. Her appointment at the Max Planck Institute was as a postdoctoral fellow in the history and philosophy of science. Since obtaining her philosophy degree in 1998, she has published several articles on the role of observation in scientific knowledge, a classic issue in philosophy and philosophy of science. The “invading chemist” is also a philosopher.

Vollmer’s multiple titles and connection to human resources have a historical explanation: In the 1980s a series of well publicized cases of scientific fraud led the National Institutes of Health to require training in research ethics for all graduate students on NIH training grants. Fraud cases, however, continue to make the news as they break down in the system that protects subjects in experimental protocols. That has led to increased Federal scrutiny of research and in particular to increased emphasis on training in the responsible conduct of research. Vollmer’s position is a proactive response by UAB to these developments.

Working in the Department of Philosophy’s Center for Ethics and Values in Sciences, Vollmer’s primary responsibility is to provide training in the responsible conduct of research for the UAB research community. She is doing that in several ways. Her appointment has allowed the university to offer GRD 717: Principles of Scientific Integrity on a more frequent basis. GRD 717 discusses such topics as fraud, bias, authorship standards, mentoring, data management and access, and human and animal subjects. Currently Vollmer is teaching more than 60 graduate students, postdocs, and M.D. Fellows in that course.

To bring training in research ethics to a wider group of researchers at UAB Vollmer is developing web-based material. She is creating modules on the core topics in scientific integrity using a case-based, interactive approach.

English Department Publishes PMS: poemmemoirstory

In Spring 2001, the first issue of PMS: poemmemoirstory was published by UAB’s Department of English. The annual journal will feature writing by women from diverse segments of society, providing unique perspectives on everything from daily tasks of laundry and cooking, to relationships to involvement in local and national events.

According to editor Linda Frost, “The first issue provides a good snapshot of what PMS is all about. . . . we want to present women living in different environments, working in any kind of profession, and engaging in a multitude of issues and experiences.” The journal offers in a single issue many views on the joys and challenges of women living in contemporary society.

In its premier issue, PMS includes, among several other pieces, a memoir by nurse Emily Lyons who survived the bombing of Birmingham’s New Woman All Women Health Clinic in January 1998. The narrative not only details one woman’s response to this local tragedy and its ongoing effects, but also presents emotions and thoughts that other readers, professionals, activists, and citizens can relate to. Frost mentions that she’d like to publish other poignant stories like Lyons’, because they “show the personal side of events that have historical significance and national relevance.”

To celebrate the publication of PMS, members of the English Department and faculty from the School of Arts and Humanities joined Frost and her editorial staff for a launching party at Lodestar Bookstore last spring. The evening included readings by contributors Emily Lyons, Vicki Covington, and Melissa Dameron, as well as music by singer/songwriter Libba Walker. The party marked the beginning of an exciting and unique journal that will reflect through diverse literary forms the creative work of women living in Alabama and elsewhere in the nation.

Frost welcomes submissions of poetry, memoir, and short fiction to PMS. For subscription guidelines, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to PMS, Department of English, University of Alabama at Birmingham, Birmingham, AL 35294-1260; for further subscription information, contact Frost at lfrost@uab.edu. PMS is available at Lodestar Books and Gifts, the Alabama Booksmith, Little Professor Bookstore, Vamp and Tramp Bookseller, and other area bookstores.
Theatre Department Takes Risks In Anton in Show Business.

Many fans of live theatre sometimes get the feeling they’re seeing the same plays over and over. But Theatre UAB aims to break the cycle — and that means taking some chances.

“University theatre departments can easily fall into the trap of doing certain plays simply because they’re familiar,” says Marc Powers, UAB’s theatre chair. “And those may be truly great plays, genuine classics of the stage, but that doesn’t mean they haven’t been overdone.”

That, Powers says, can be bad for students in his department. “The professional world of stage and screen is constantly changing, constantly exploring new avenues of self-expression. We have to prepare our students for that by giving them the widest range of experiences possible.”

And the spring offerings from Theatre UAB should certainly provide that variety. Beginning February 13, the department will present R.U.R., the 1920 Czech science-fiction drama that introduced the word “robot” to the rest of the world.

“The play is about a group of scientists and businessmen who create a race of human-life robots to do menial labor,” Powers explains. “But the robots grow increasingly lifelike with each generation, until at last they truly are human — and revolt against their makers.”

Department instructor and playwright Lee Shackleford will direct the show, and is also writing an entirely new adaptation of the script especially for this production. And R.U.R. will offer unique opportunities for the design and technical faculty as well. Scenic designer Kelly Allison and costume designer Kim Schnormeier have the challenge of creating an entire alternate reality — a world similar to our own, but one where an elite upperclass enjoys wealth created by workers who never need sleep or food, and never expect to be paid.

Two weeks later, the department will switch to comedic mode with Jane Martin’s Anton in Show Business. The show features a cast of seven women playing multiple characters — including a variety of male roles.

“It’s a very witty script,” says Powers, “and presents some interesting acting challenges for the cast.” The play is about a women’s acting company in a production of Anton Chekhov’s play The Three Sisters.

Both the acting company and the play are rife with obstacles. So the show is about a group of crass, often heartless people performing a piece famous for its sensitivity and subtlety.

“The play is about the glorious work of art that we dream theatre to be,” explains Powers, “and on the other it’s about the bureaucratic and back-stabbing life in the theatre that exists in our nightmares. So in the play the tension between those two extremes can be hilarious.”

Anton in Show Business will be directed by Karma Ibsen, the theatre professor whose recent work for the department includes the charming production in 2000 of The Importance of Being Earnest, and her lush and imaginative A Midsummer Night’s Dream, which was the first theatre department show produced at the Alys Stephens Center.

So after a technically dazzling drama with actors playing robots, and a comedy with seven women portraying more than a dozen different men and women, what new territory is left for the department to explore? “It’s been a long time since this program has done a show in masks,” Powers answers with a knowing smile. And he should smile: he will direct this production, and masks are one of his specialties.

The season ends, then, with Carlo Goldoni’s 18th-century Italian play The Servant of Two Masters. The piece was written to be performed in the masked commedia dell’arte style which has so profoundly influenced Western theatre — even modern TV sitcoms.

Few American actors have the training to be authentic commedia performers. Powers will have to first train the actors in the performance style, and then guide them through the complex twists and turns of the light-hearted script.

“Commedia can be very physically demanding,” Powers says. “It’s an extremely energetic style of performance — as much like dance as it is like any kind of acting — and this show in particular will be a real workout for our performers.”

The latest news of the Theatre Department’s various projects can always be found on their web site at www.theatreuab.bham.net.
In Fall 2001, UAB’s Department of English welcomed two new full-time faculty members.

Assistant Professor Gale Temple completed the Ph.D. in English at Loyola University Chicago, specializing in American literature. His scholarly work focuses on the ways American writers from the American Revolution to the Civil War respond to economic change, thus analyzing literature primarily as a kind of commodity that helps people deal with socioeconomic conditions that might be unsettling, alienating, or simply unfamiliar.

Temple particularly enjoys teaching courses in early American literature, introducing students to literary works that respond to various kinds of social change. He has, for example, asked students to look at literature within the context of such historical and political events as the rise of Enlightenment philosophy in the 18th century, the “Great Awakening” of religious fervor in America and Europe as a kind of backlash against the cold rationalism of the Enlightenment, the shift in American life near the beginning of the 19th century from an agrarian to a more market-based economy, and several mid-19th century reform movements that critiqued many of the institutions of mainstream American life. Temple believes that literature should never be viewed as a “phenomenon isolated from social and historical movements and debates. . . . Rather, we should view them in dialogue with one another.”

Among Temple’s favorite authors are Charles Brockden Brown, Henry David Thoreau, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Herman Melville. Temple is also drawn in his teaching and research to some of the more popularly oriented writers from the 19th century like George Lippard and Fanny Fern. In the future, Temple would enjoy developing a course that explores how particular 19th century writers responded to the development of modern science.

Also new to the English Department this year is Dan Butcher, who earned the M.A. in English and the MLIS (Master’s in Library and Information Science) at Louisiana State University. Butcher teaches composition and literature courses, with a particular focus on online composition classes.

In the classroom, Butcher attempts to create a comfortable atmosphere that allows students to view reading and writing as pleasurable and useful processes. One way Butcher overcomes this obstacle is by asking students to watch a “flash movie” (an animation for the web) that includes a caricature of Butcher, voice and all. The caricature, Butcher offers, “is a way to get students to see that there’s an actual person on the other end of the computer.”

Temple is married to Cheryl Temple, who works for the Alabama Humanities Foundation. He also admits to a “frustrating affinity” for the Chicago Cubs. He says “many students see composition and literature as both irrelevant and boring, a ‘necessary evil’ for graduation. . . . I want them to see that composition will help them achieve their goals in college and beyond and that analyzing and discussing literature can help them develop an enjoyment of reading for its own sake.”

Butcher is clearly just as enthusiastic about the learning that takes place in his online courses. “The majority of my online students are non-traditional students,” Butcher explains. “They are juggling family and full-time work responsibilities while they go to school.” Online courses are an excellent way to help these students reach their academic and professional goals, since students can log on and off at convenient times and still accomplish the required work for the course. The biggest challenge of such courses, according to Butcher, is “making myself ‘real’ to my students. Smiles, humor, personality, genuine concern— all of these can be difficult to communicate over a distance.”
Lourdes Sánchez-López was attracted to a teaching position in the UAB Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures for several reasons, including the opportunity to live in Birmingham. “I like the South,” she says. “Especially after having attended high school in a small rural setting in the northern part of the United States.”

Sánchez-López hopes that her UAB teaching of Spanish and second language acquisition will enhance literature studies. “Although it is very important to study the literature of the target language, it is equally essential to prepare today’s students to function in an environment where they understand the culture and speak, write and read the language with an acceptable level of proficiency,” she says.

Students need to prepare themselves for a number of situations that require second language skills, such as business, health care, law enforcement, government and education, according to Sánchez-López. “I hope to contribute this aspect of foreign language education, not only to UAB, but to the greater Birmingham Area,” she says.

Sánchez-López sees great potential for her career at UAB. “I wish to create new courses in the study of the Spanish language, as well as to help consolidate the classes that are part of our current program. I would also like to help establish something like a Birmingham Language Institute, similar to the English Language Institute presently operated by BACHE (Birmingham Area Consortium for Higher Education).”

Sánchez-López received her Ph.D. from the University of Jaén, Spain; her area of study is Second Language Acquisition. Dellita Martin-Ogunsola, the chair of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, is pleased to welcome Sánchez-López to UAB and thinks her ideas “are exactly what we need.”

ALUMNI

**Department of Art and Art History**

- **David Barksdale** (B.A. Studio Art/Graphic Design, 1996) is in his second year of the M.F.A. program in Interactive Media at Savannah College of Art and Design.
- **Elizabeth Mansour Barksdale** (B.F.A. Studio Art/Sculpture, 1995) is an adjunct professor at Georgia Southern University.
- **Jennifer Jaia Chen** (B.A. Studio Art/Sculpture, 1995), after teaching for a year at Florida State University, was hired as an Assistant Professor of Art by the Ringling School of Art and Design, Sarasota, Fla.
- **Belinda Haikes** (M.A. Art Education 2000) is studying in the MFA program at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.
- **Bryan Miller** (B.A. Studio Art/Painting, 2000) was accepted last year into the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts’ Post Bac program. Miller finished that year and is the current recipient of an 80 percent scholarship, only one of which is available to PAFA’s post-bac students entering the MFA program.
- **Jeff Nesmith** (B.A. Art History, 1994) returned to UAB after graduation to take graphic design courses and is now working as a designer in New York City at KPMG, a large accounting firm, in their national design presentation and proposal division. He also has pro bono design for the Volunteer Referral Center in New York.

**Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures**

- **Eric Wallace** (B.A., Spanish) is in Veracruz, Mexico, for the 2001-02 academic year on a Rotary International Scholarship before he returns to UAB (Fall 2002) where he has been accepted to Medical School. Eric reports that he is enrolled in a philosophy class, enjoying speaking Spanish daily and playing his guitar. Eric writes: “I was pleasantly surprised to find that my city (Xalapa, Veracruz) has a world class symphony that plays weekly (that is when they aren’t traveling around the world) and it costs only three dollars. I went to hear them and was amazed. They played Tchaikovski phenomenally well.” Eric was in the UAB Honors Program and studied in Spain last fall.

**Department of English**

- 1994 graduate **Andria Hurst** was recently named a member of the Board of Trustees of the University of Alabama system. She is one of two UAB grads now serving on the board. An English major and philosophy minor, Ms. Hurst is currently Foods Editor for Southern Living magazine.
- Former A&H student **Christopher Lawson** earned a 4.0 in his first semester at Monterey Institute for International Studies in Monterey, California. He thanks his UAB teachers in English and Foreign Languages for preparing him so well!
- **Alumnus William O’Bryne** (1993) is now Director, Emergency Room, Birmingham Veterans Affairs Medical Center and Assistant Professor, Division of General Internal Medicine, UAB School of Medicine.

**Lourdes Sánchez-López J oins Foreign Languages and Literatures Faculty**

Lourdes Sánchez-López

Sánchez-López, a University of Jaén, Spain graduate, has been accepted as a UAB Professor in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. She has a strong passion for teaching Spanish and is looking forward to her new role at UAB.

Sánchez-López received her Ph.D. from the University of Jaén, Spain; her area of study is Second Language Acquisition. Dellita Martin-Ogunsola, the chair of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, is pleased to welcome Sánchez-López to UAB and thinks her ideas “are exactly what we need.”
NEW MUSIC DEPARTMENT FACULTY

To keep up with its rapid growth, the music department hired three new full-time and one half-time faculty members over the summer bringing its total to 13 full-time and four half-time positions. In addition to Dr. Jeff W. Reynolds being named chair of the department, significant changes have been made in the instrumental division.

Mr. Martin C. Reynolds was hired as the new director of bands. Serving most recently as assistant director of bands at the University of Arkansas, Reynolds conducts the Marching Blazers, the Blazer Basketball Bands, the UAB Wind Ensemble and teaches within the music education and conducting curriculum. He received the Bachelor of Music in Education from the University of Central Arkansas, the Master of Music from the University of Arizona and is a candidate for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in wind band conducting from the University of Arizona. Bands under his direction have performed by invitation for the NFL Denver Broncos, the Las Vegas Bowl IX, the Tazon Aztec Bowl in Mexico City and national meetings of the American School Band Directors Association and the Music Educators National Conference. When asked what attracted him to UAB, Reynolds said that it was obvious that everyone has a high commitment to growing the band program and he is thrilled to be a part of that endeavor.

Also in the instrumental area, Mr. Gene Fambrough is the new assistant director of bands and percussion. Prior to his appointment at UAB, he spent three years teaching at Oak Grove High School in Bessemer. While at Oak Grove, Fambrough conducted the symphonic band at Carnegie Hall in New York City as part of the Southern Band Festival. He holds degrees from the University of Georgia and East Carolina University and is currently pursuing the Doctor of Musical arts in percussion performance at the University of Alabama. He directs the UAB Percussion Ensemble and Steel Band and serves as percussion arranger and instructor for the Marching Blazers. A published composer, he has written works for many different mediums including solo marimba, multiple percussion with tape, marimba quartet and percussion ensemble. Fambrough served as percussion coordinator for the Spirit of Atlanta in 1997 and has twice been on the staff of Southwind Drum and Bugle Corps. When asked what attracted him to UAB, Fambrough said, “I feel that there is so much potential in the city of Birmingham that UAB will become a strong statewide and regional attraction for students eager to pursue a well-rounded and complete music education. Its location in the heart of Birmingham enables easy access to so many diverse musical opportunities that students will find it to be an obvious choice for their collegiate studies. The faculty here are first-class and I have enjoyed working with them immensely in the short time I have been at UAB—I hope to continue here for a long, long time.”

Also in the instrumental area, Mr. Gene Fambrough is the new assistant director of bands and percussion. Prior to his appointment at UAB, he spent three years teaching at Oak Grove High School in Bessemer. While at Oak Grove, Fambrough conducted the symphonic band at Carnegie Hall in New York City as part of the Southern Band Festival. He holds degrees from the University of Georgia and East Carolina University and is currently pursuing the Doctor of Musical arts in percussion performance at the University of Alabama. He directs the UAB Percussion Ensemble and Steel Band and serves as percussion arranger and instructor for the Marching Blazers. A published composer, he has written works for many different mediums including solo marimba, multiple percussion with tape, marimba quartet and percussion ensemble. Fambrough served as percussion coordinator for the Spirit of Atlanta in 1997 and has twice been on the staff of Southwind Drum and Bugle Corps. When asked what attracted him to UAB, Fambrough said, “I feel that there is so much potential in the city of Birmingham that UAB will become a strong statewide and regional attraction for students eager to pursue a well-rounded and complete music education. Its location in the heart of Birmingham enables easy access to so many diverse musical opportunities that students will find it to be an obvious choice for their collegiate studies. The faculty here are first-class and I have enjoyed working with them immensely in the short time I have been at UAB—I hope to continue here for a long, long time.”

New to the music education department is Dr. Philip L. Copeland who most recently served on the choral music faculty at Tupelo (Mississippi) High School and the University of Mississippi. In the summer of 2000, he and his jazz choir toured Finland, Russia, Germany and Austria as they traveled to compete with 600 other choirs from over 80 countries in the Choir Olympics in Linz, Austria. His jazz choir placed first in their category and performed on the prestigious “Concert of Champions.” They also performed concerts in Helsinki, St. Petersburg and Munich. Copeland holds the Bachelor of Music from the University of Mississippi, the Master of Music from Mississippi College and the Doctor of Musical Arts from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is in constant demand as a conductor, clinician and adjudicator. An active church musician, he is currently serving as interim director of music at Trinity United Methodist Church. At UAB, he conducts the Chamber Singers as well as teaching music education and conducting courses. When asked what attracted him to UAB, Copeland said, “I think UAB has huge potential to be the top music program in the state in the very near future. The faculty, departmental leadership, and Alys Stephens Center make this an exciting place to teach and perform.”
THE FACULTY, STAFF AND STUDENTS of the UAB School of Arts and Humanities would like to thank and recognize the following individuals and organizations for their gracious financial support during the period from January 1 - September 30, 2001. Please forgive any errors or omissions. For corrections, contact the Dean's Office at (205) 934-2290. For information on how to contribute please contact the Development Director for the UAB School of Arts and Humanities at (205) 934-2290.

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