Dowling Family Serve as Faculty in Residence

Informal interactions can occur between faculty and students in unexpected locations: the Ferguson Center, a football game. Some students, however, might run into faculty while waiting outside their residence hall during a fire alarm. These students live in communities with Faculty-in-Residence.

Nine living-learning communities at UA have faculty-in-residence. The faculty member in Riverside West, a part of the Honors Community, is Rick Dowling, an adjunct instructor in the department of telecommunication and film and instructional developer in the Faculty Resource Center. Rick is in the middle of his second year living in Riverside with his wife, Suzanne, a communication specialist in University Relations, and their son, Sam.

Faculty choose to move into a residence hall for a variety of reasons, including their pleasure in working with students. The Dowlings had another motivation; they wanted to give Sam, who has autism, the college-like experience he would otherwise never have. Sam and his parents have adjusted well to living surrounded by three hundred students. As Rick shared with a writer for Mosaic, the Honors College magazine, “Sam is diggin’ it.”

In addition to participating in Honors College programming in Riverside, Rick and Suzanne open up their home each week for students, who may want assistance with school projects or just want to talk. One of the most important things they’ve discovered is that students’ schedules are different from their own. While they are winding down by 10:00 p.m., students are just getting started, and successful programming has to start late.

Despite the differences in their schedules, when asked about the downside of this unusual faculty role, Rick says, “I really can't think of any.” Adds Dr. Ross Bryan, Director of Residential Communities, “You can't overestimate the importance of out-of-classroom interactions with faculty. The mentorship that occurs over a cup of coffee is invaluable.”

Hall of Fame Event Big Success

The Student Affairs Hall of Fame is located in the Ferguson Student Center. The Hall of Fame recognizes outstanding contributions to student life and culture at the Capstone. Honorees were inducted into the Hall of Fame this fall.

For more information, please go to the Hall of Fame website located at sa.ua.edu/halloffame.

The event, held September 30th, honored the first inductees: Dr. John Blackburn, Mr. Melford Espey, Jr., and Dr. Sarah Healy Fenton.
University Recreation has had an outstanding fall semester with record numbers of students, faculty, and staff participating in UREC events and taking advantage of services offered through the Student Recreation Center and Aquatic Center.

This fall over eighty percent of the student body participated in programs and the Student Recreation Center (SRC) is approaching 500,000 Action Card swipes. Faculty and Staff are also taking advantage of the facilities; over 1,700 are members of the SRC and/or Aquatic Center.

The SRC is open over 115 hours per week and offers patrons more than 100 group exercise classes, free of charge. All of this is part of the effort to promote UREC’s mission of encouraging healthy interaction through active and safe lifestyle opportunities for students and the greater University community that strengthens learning and personal growth.

To sustain a growing program and student body, plans are being made for a new recreation facility on the north end of campus, tentatively set to open late 2013.

The planning and design for a new on-campus outdoor challenge course is underway and the initial phase of a low-ropes team building course is scheduled for opening May of 2011.

The low ropes course will provide a convenient location for departmental retreats, student group team building, and a variety of other uses. It is our hope that by strengthening existing programs and creating new opportunities we can further promote a healthy, active, and safe lifestyle for the UA student body.

Sitters for Service Assists Student Parents

UA student parents have a new program to help meet their childcare needs. Sitters for Service, an extension of the Undergraduate Parent Support Program, enlists undergraduate student volunteers to provide free babysitting for student parents. After successful completion of a pilot program in April, Sitters for Service was officially launched in October.

“After researching many babysitting programs operated on various college and university campuses around the United States, I realized that, while these programs were helping parents locate possible sitters, they were not assisting in the financial burden that student parents face when utilizing a babysitter,” said Jason Doblin, undergraduate parent support coordinator in Student Affairs.

Student volunteers must go through an application and interview process as well as infant/child CPR training. If selected, the student agrees to provide 20 hours of free babysitting over the course of the semester.

Student volunteers earn community service hours for participating in the program. Over 300 undergraduate students expressed interest in serving as a babysitter.

Student parents who wish to take advantage of this program must complete an application at the beginning of the semester. Parents receive 24 hours of free babysitting over the course of the semester and must re-apply for the service the following semester. The program only allows for a select number of parents who are randomly selected to take part in the program depending on the number of volunteers available for babysitting.

Currently, the program is available only to graduate student and undergraduate student parents, but Doblin hopes to see the program grow. “It is my desire to pilot a for-pay program for faculty/staff members who have children next semester.” The proposal for the future program is to provide faculty and staff with a list of past volunteers from the program for paid babysitting positions.

For more information about this program, contact Jason Doblin at jadoblin@crimson.ua.edu.
The annual National Pan-Hellenic Council’s Homecoming Step Show had the distinction of being the first event held in the newly renovated Foster Auditorium.

“We are so elated, so ecstatic about this because it really is surreal to be the first event to be hosted in Foster Auditorium, considering the history and especially as it relates to African Americans,” said Temani Beck, the director of NPHC events and a member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority.

The NPHC Step Show has been hosted on campus for the past thirty years. This year the show was a marquee event during Homecoming festivities. Six fraternities and sororities compete for a cash prize and a chance to perform on the Alumni Affairs Homecoming Stage on the Quad.

The winners for this year’s competition were the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority and Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity.

“It feels really good to win, especially for our chapter because our chapter hasn’t won in ten years,” said Melissa Ellis, a senior member of the AKA team. “We put a lot of work, time, blood, sweat and tears, everything, into this show.”

Kennard Edwards, junior and vice president of Kappa Alpha Psi, said, “We worked hard for a month and we knew we had a lot on our shoulders, but we didn’t let that get us too much. We just did what we had to do and tried to be smooth.”

The auditorium was the sight of George Wallace’s “stand in the schoolhouse door” to prevent the integration of the UA campus. The auditorium has recently been renovated and the plaza in front of it named for James Hood and Vivian Malone, the first African-American students to matriculate at the University. According to Rosalind Moore, the advisor to the National Pan-Hellenic Council, “The NHPC was very grateful to be the first event held in Foster Auditorium since its renovation. The students used the phrase “Historic Venue. Epic Event” to advertise the event. I think this captures the essence of what it meant to them.”

Student quotes from this article first appeared in the October 14 & 17 edition of The Crimson White.

The 2010 volume sold for $35 compared to $70 for the previous year’s edition.

“When we can add pages and color to the yearbook and cut the cost to the students by half, we consider that a very positive change,” noted Paul Wright, Director of the Office of Student Media.

“We believe this change will allow us to keep the yearbook operating as one of UA’s oldest traditions.”

A copy of the 2011 edition of the Corolla can be ordered at the yearbook’s website: corolla.ua.edu.
The University of Alabama is a member of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA).

As a member of the Assessment Consortium, the University of Alabama Division of Student Affairs participates in annual benchmarking surveys.

In the spring of 2010, students were asked to participate in a survey asking about their experiences with University Recreation.

Responses from UA students indicate positive experiences as compared to the national averages on items associated with self confidence, quality of life, and skills & abilities students will use after college.

* Agree is the combined data for Strongly Agree and Somewhat Agree. Disagree is the combined data for Somewhat Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

For more information about Division of Student Affairs assessment, please contact Holly Hallmann, Director of Assessment.