Special Academic Programs

The following programs offer undergraduate students opportunities for new academic experiences, hands-on or on-the-job training, and cultural exchange. All University of Alabama students are encouraged to participate in these programs as appropriate to their degree programs and personal and professional goals. Such programs offer unique ways for UA students to enrich their college experiences, build their resumes and explore career choices.

Center for Ethics and Social Responsibility

Stephen F. Black, Director
Office: Temple Tutwiler Hall

Believing The University of Alabama has a critical role to play in preparing students to serve as effective, engaged and ethical citizens, the Center for Ethics and Social Responsibility (CESR) seeks to assist students in developing a distinct definition of moral and civic maturity, making the values and skills of citizenship a hallmark of a UA education.

The University of Alabama’s strong commitment to civic engagement and UA’s history of community-university partnerships serve as a foundation for the center. Faculty and students in a wide range of departments at UA have earned distinction for their scholarly contributions to the study of ethics and civic engagement. CESR builds upon these substantial resources, with the larger goal of linking curriculum and the campus culture by establishing multiple opportunities through which students can engage in meaningful service for academic credit while giving thoughtful consideration to their ethical obligations toward fellow citizens.

In particular, CESR staff assist faculty members in developing service-learning courses that engage community organizations in partnerships designed to both enhance academic learning and apply scholarly knowledge to salient community issues. Service experiences are integrated into students’ academic curricula, providing structured time for students to think, talk and write about what they did and saw during the activities.

In seeking to better connect social responsibility and ethical development to the academic mission of the University, the work of CESR also entails the development of academic programs such as Moral Forum (a university-wide debate competition that is an integral part of the University Honors Program) and a minor in civic engagement and leadership (co-sponsored by New College, the Department of Philosophy, the ROTC program and CESR) as well as courses such as Documenting Justice (a year-long, justice-based documentary film-making class), and SaveFirst: Poverty in America (a service-learning course that combines academic discussions on perceptions of poverty with volunteer tax preparation services for low-income families), CESR also is concerned with developing and supporting non-curricular activities that incorporate ethical and social discourse into campus life.

The Center for Ethics and Social Responsibility began in fall 2005 as a result of a gift from Mignon C. Smith. Concerned about what she perceived to be an increasing lack of ethics in business and public affairs, Ms. Smith sought to establish a university-based ethics program that would support the study of ethics and develop projects to nurture social responsibility and reflective, thoughtful citizenship. Under the leadership of the president and provost and along with the help of an interdisciplinary group of UA faculty, this vision became the Center for Ethics and Social Responsibility.

To learn more about CESR, contact cesr@ua.edu; call (205) 348-6490; visit cesr.ua.edu; or come into our office at Temple Tutwiler Hall on Colonial Drive, next to Reese Phifer Hall.

National Student Exchange

The National Student Exchange (NSE) offers opportunities for students to broaden their educational experiences through exchange programs with nearly 200 universities across the United States, Canada, Guam, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Through NSE, students may exchange to another member institution for a semester or academic year and pay that university’s in-state tuition. Students coordinate with their college registrar on course selection and credit transferability. Students should discuss their choice of courses with their adviser. Students must at least have sophomore standing and a 2.5 GPA or higher at the time of the exchange. Students receiving federally funded financial aid at UA can expect to receive similar aid from the host institution. With nearly 200 participating institutions and a 97 percent placement rate, students can generally find a location to meet both academic and personal objectives. However, a student’s first choice of a host school is not guaranteed.

For further information, visit nse.ua.edu, call our NSE coordinator at (205) 348-6114, or come by the Office of Student Involvement and Leadership at 55S Ferguson Center. The deadline for applications for each academic year (beginning with the fall semester) is February 1.

University Scholars Program

The University Scholars Program is intended for gifted and highly-motivated candidates for BA and BS degrees at The University of Alabama whose objectives include degrees at the master’s or doctoral level. In participating University Scholars departments, with a closely integrated undergraduate and graduate program, qualified students begin graduate study in their senior year; such a program may lead to simultaneous completion of requirements for both master’s and bachelor’s degrees, each within its specified framework.

Students in the University Scholars Program are classified as undergraduates until they complete requirements for their undergraduate degrees and therefore may not hold graduate assistantships until their classifications are changed to graduate status. At that time, University Scholars will also become eligible for graduate fellowships and scholarships.

Any department that offers a graduate program may, with the approval of the dean of the Graduate School, participate in the University Scholars Program. The following programs are currently approved to participate in the University Scholars Program:

- Aerospace Engineering and Mechanics
- Applied Statistics
- Finance
- Biological Sciences
- Chemical Engineering
- Chemistry
- Civil and Environmental Engineering
- Communication Studies
- Computer Science
- Consumer Sciences
- Criminal Justice
- Economics (College of Commerce and Business Administration)
- Economics (College of Arts and Sciences)
- English
- Electrical and Computer Engineering
- Finance
- French
- Geography
- German
- Health Studies (Sports Medicine Concentration)
- Human Nutrition and Hospitality Management (Food and Nutrition Concentration)
- Mathematics
- Mechanical Engineering
- Metallurgical and Materials Engineering
- Operations Management
- Physics and Astronomy

The following are minimum requirements; divisions or departments may set higher standards.

Phase I

Admission to Phase I is by invitation of the department and the dean of the Graduate School. Admission is chiefly determined by the faculty’s estimate of a student’s talents, motivation and potential for graduate study. Students may also apply for admission to Phase I through their major department during the second semester of the sophomore year. Contingent upon completion of 61 semester hours of study and with a grade point average in all courses taken of not less than 3.3 (as computed without the plus/minus system), students are admitted to Phase I at the beginning of their junior year on recommendation of the departments to which they have applied. During the junior year, students will take between four and six courses in their major field, as advised by their departments, to prepare them for the work of Phase II. Students seeking admission to Phase I will be informed by their departments if their admission requirements differ from those specified here.

Phase II

Admission to graduate study is also by invitation and is facilitated by, but not dependent upon, participation in Phase I. On completion of no fewer than 91 hours (ordinarily at the end of the junior year), students may apply for and be accepted for admission to the Graduate School. They must have grade point averages of 3.3 or higher (as computed without the plus/minus system) in all courses. Transfer students are subject to the published residence regulations and must have completed the
last 30 hours in residence. Admission to the Graduate School will be granted if the student has:

- met all the criteria above as well as other minimum requirements for graduate admission
- completed three-fourths of the hours required for the major and the minor
- met all requirements for the core curriculum
- been recommended by the department to which he or she is seeking admission
  (in special circumstances, departments may elect to invite an application and recommend acceptance of an applicant with a GPA of 3.0 or higher)

Upon admission to the Graduate School, the student will begin a program of study leading to the master’s or doctoral degree as approved by his or her department and by the dean of the Graduate School. The program of study for prospective University Scholars must be submitted to the Graduate School prior to the student’s enrollment in graduate classes.

The bachelor’s degree will normally be awarded at the commencement immediately following satisfactory completion of the first year of graduate study and attainment of a total of 128 semester hours of credit or the minimum required by the college. Those courses taken in the senior year/first year of graduate study may count toward both the bachelor’s and graduate degrees. No more than 15 hours may be dual-counted toward both the bachelor’s and graduate degrees. Interested students should check with their departments for specific coursework requirements. Participants in the University Scholars Program are exempt from the degree limit of 36 hours in a single department. The master’s or doctoral degree will be awarded upon satisfactory completion of the requirements for these degrees. In some cases, the bachelor’s and master’s degrees may be awarded simultaneously. However, the completion of the master’s degree may require an additional time period.