



College of Business completely online

Athens State University's College of Business now offers its degree programs in the traditional format, and.... **completely online.**

Athens State University's College of Business, is the first baccalaureate degree business program in Alabama, to be offered completely online. All four degree programs – Accounting, Management, Management of Technology, and Human Resource Management – are being delivered via the Internet, as well as in the traditional format. Athens State is listening to students who

want flexibility in class scheduling as well as relief from high gasoline costs.

Students have the option to earn their degrees without the daily grind of driving to campus, saving time, energy, and money. The College of Business continues to offer its degrees through traditional methods for students who prefer a classroom setting or for those who would like to combine the two formats.

“We believe there is a growing desire among our students to have a choice in how they earn their degree,” said Dr. Linda Shonesy, Dean of the College of Business. “We have provided an additional option for students that offers the same quality instruction as they receive in the traditional classroom.”

Students can submit their admissions application and registration for classes online. Course information is delivered to students via email and online discussion groups. Students can access class information anywhere there is adequate computer capabilities whether that be at home, the office or even a local library.

Athens State University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to offer the baccalaureate degree. The College of Business also is nationally accredited by the

Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs. In addition to the College of Business, Athens State currently offers a significant number of Internet courses in several disciplines. More than one half of the University's 2,650 students are currently taking some form of distance education whether it be through an internet course, telecommunications course or a blended course where students receive course information through the internet but also meet on campus or at one of the university centers, periodically with a professor.

University officials believe the online format is extremely attractive to adult learners who may be working or have family responsibilities. Additionally, Athens State offers the lowest tuition of any university in the state of at \$111 per credit hour.

“It is our experience that the first classes to fill are those that provide a distant learning component,” said President Jerry Bartlett. “We are opening doors for the adult learner in Alabama who might otherwise have to quit a job or uproot a family to complete their bachelor's degree.”



President Jerry Bartlett poses with College of Business Dean Linda Shonesy and Business faculty members following the announcement of the college's online degree programs. L-R: President Bartlett, Dr. Brenda Harper, Dr. Bryan Kennedy, Dean Shonesy, Dr. Denver Betts, Dr. Bill Wilkes, Dr. Bob Gulbro and Dr. Paul Dreyfus.

Athens State grad overcomes adversity

Editor's note: Jennifer Peer graduated in August 2005. She is continuing her recovery.

If there had been a way, Jennifer Peer would have walked across the stage during Athens State University's graduation ceremonies last summer.



Peer completed her degree requirements in time for the summer commencement. A liberal studies major she put an emphasis on art and psychology. Her degree will open new doors that will allow her to focus on a career goal that will take her to graduate school to be a clinical psychologist and writer. Yet, she isn't getting the opportunity to enjoy her moment of accomplishment. Peer is at home following major reconstructive surgery to her back. The recovery will take time but there's no despair in her voice. She's faced it all before.

More than five years ago, Peer, 32, decided to ease her way back into school. The single parent of an adopted special-needs child, she had been out of the classroom for several years. She attended Calhoun Community College and eventually transferred to Athens State in 2001.

"I was very motivated," said Peer.

As a child in 1973, Peer battled cancer, a rare stage III Neuroblastoma. She went through radical treatments including experimental radiation to retard the disease process. In the short term, the radiation proved successful. Sadly, the long-term effects didn't manifest until later in life.

In 2002, the situation became desperate. The radiation that saved her life was now destroying it. Her vertebrae was so damaged that major surgery was needed. Metal rods were surgically implanted into her spine to provide support to stand and walk.

"I truly had to learn to walk again," said Peer.

She was back at Athens State within four weeks to complete the semester.

"I made straight A's that semester," she said. "I've been an honor student through all of this. I couldn't have been successful without the unyielding support of my family, my community and my school."

The road has been painful at times. Completing school and dealing with her physical setbacks hasn't prevented her from moving forward with her education. She still tutors English part-time to Calhoun students.

"There were a lot of days that I didn't feel well but my professors at Athens State worked with me," said Peer. "They were understanding of what I was going through. My education has allowed me to make it through my physical problems, it's a brilliant distraction getting to explore my mind rather than my physical body."

Athens State University art professor Pamela Keller said Peer hasn't let her hardship deter her from her goals.

"Jen is a great gal," said Keller. "She cares for a disabled daughter, keeps her grades up and deals with these health issues – always with courage."

This fall, Peer was at the University of Alabama in Birmingham for surgery again. Because her spine has continued to deteriorate, surgeons were fusing more metal to her spine and pelvis to strengthen her back. Like before, her recovery is expected to take some time. But she sees a silver lining.

Adversity is a great source of strength and empowerment," said Peer. "We all go through things in life. You have a choice on your perspective. Stay steadfast on a course of positive thinking. I've had a great life!"



Athens State receives renovation funds for McCandless Hall

Sen. Tom Butler and Rep. Tommy Carter recently presented President Jerry Bartlett with a check for more than \$243,000 in state funds. Approximately \$100,000 will be used toward the renovation of McCandless Hall. Remaining funds will be used to assist in the equipping of classes to support online and distant learning courses offered by the University.

OPENING THE BOOKS ON RELIGION

Teachers at Athens State hope study spreads tolerance

by Kay Campbell

What are Bibles doing in a for-credit class run by professors at Athens State University?

The Bible – and the Quran, for that matter – are among textbooks used in some of the religion classes offered at Athens State. The surprise some people express that religion classes are offered



L-r: Dr. Tony Moyers, Department Chair, and Dr. Robby White, Director of the Center for Religious Studies and Ethics discuss the role of religion in the public classroom.

at a state school illustrates the confusion many people, even some teachers, have over the role of religion and religious books in the public classroom.

Dr. Robby White, director of the Center for Religious Studies and Ethics at Athens State and also a Baptist preacher, says its easy to separate his role in the classroom from his role in the pulpit.

“As a pastor, I’m saying, ‘this is our story,’” White said last week as he and Professor Tony Moyers discussed Ath-

ens State’s program. “As a teacher, I’m saying, ‘This is the story.’ I’m trying to promote understanding and goodwill among religions - not indoctrination, but education.”

“If we offer just one perspective, Baptist, Episcopal or even strictly Christian, it would violate church and state separation,” White said.

“We have students from various denominations,” Moyers said. “We don’t tell them which one is correct or what they should believe.”

There was a time when ASU professors could, and sometimes did, tell students what to believe. But that was when the school was a Methodist institution. Alabama accepted the College – the state’s oldest, founded in 1822 – into the state system in 1975.

The University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa is the only other state college to offer a major in religious studies. Athens State now has 2,650 students, 21 of whom are religious studies majors. Traditionally the major drew only students planning to become ministers. But the major provides a solid liberal arts background for those going into business, law, and other professions, too. As at

other universities offering religion classes, Moyers has seen an increase in interest from general studies students since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

Some get more than they bargained for.

“They come in, thinking it will be an easy subject,” Moyers said. “They’re looking for something like what they got in their Sunday school classes. They think, ‘How hard can religion be?’”

But the study of religion is perhaps even more complex than the study of wars

as a way to get at the history of world cultures and events, so the classes offer challenging concepts. The classes can also be challenging personally when people find out that the monolithic perception they may have had of their own faith is not historically accurate. The first Christians, for instance, had some ideas about some things that seem odd today.

“The history of early Christian thought can challenge people’s conventional understanding,” White said. “But hopefully education is about learning new ideas, being stretched, then reaching one’s own conclusion.”

White remembers his own student days as a religion major at Athens State.

“I saw the world as one-dimensional, then I came here and saw all the ideas – and I struggled,” White said.

He remembers how Professor Daniel Jones, since retired, would force students to think about the platitudes they mouted.

“He’d pin you to the wall,” White said. “He’d ask, ‘Why do you believe that?’ And I’d say ‘Really? Someone actually believes something different?’ We thought everyone in the world believed this.”

“It enlarged the world I live in.”

Both White and Moyers, who considered the ministry before earning a degree in philosophy, see their work in the religion classes as a mission, but different from their mission as Christians.

“What’s brought more violence into the world: openness, understanding and tolerance or fundamentalism and fanaticism?” Moyers said. “Tolerance doesn’t necessarily mean that we all agree.”

“And it doesn’t mean we don’t have our own convictions,” White said.

“But we’re living through days when we’re reaping a whirlwind of fanaticism,” he said. If teaching religious studies can help a little way to create a space for a little more openness, respect and tolerance, I’m willing to dedicate myself to that.”

Reprinted from The Huntsville Times

Athens State University Foundation Honor Roll of Donors

The following individuals, companies and foundations contributed to the Athens State University Foundation during the past year. The contributions recorded are from December 2004 through December 2005. The Foundation expresses its appreciation to all who have supported the University's activities and scholarship programs. Please contact the Foundation office if there is an inaccuracy or omission of your name. The Foundation office may be reached at 256-233-8215.

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Dr. Randy Cross, professor of English at Calhoun Community College, was the keynote speaker at the Athens State University Friends of the Library fall benefit. Cross is a well-known Southern author. His talk focused on a variety of humorous personal experiences.



Ashley Ward of Decatur, was crowned the 2005 Ms. Merry Christmas for Athens State University. Ashley is a junior majoring in Business Management. First runner-up was Ashley Carr of Holly Pond. Second runner-up was Alisha Allred Crossley of Athens. From left to right are Crossley, Ward, and Carr.

Athens State to honor Rep. Carter

The Athens State University Foundation will honor State Rep. Tommy Carter on Thursday, May 4 with a reception in the Sandridge Student Center.

Rep. Carter has announced that this will be his final term serving in the Alabama House of Representatives. Serving nine terms for a total of 36 years, he is the senior member of the House.

Rep. Carter has been a long time supporter of the state's education system and particularly Athens State University. His role in Athens State's history is legendary. In 1975, when the private Athens College was preparing to close, Rep. Carter played the pivotal role in keeping the institution open by encouraging the state legislature to support its operations.

His efforts began a success story that has seen the institution grow from 700 to more than 2,600 students today.

To honor Rep. Carter, the Foundation will establish The Rep. Tommy Carter Endowed Scholarship. The goal is to raise \$15,000+ to endow the scholarship. Contributors will be recognized as part of the event.

Contributions may be sent to the Rep. Tommy Carter Endowed Scholarship, Athens State University, 300 N. Beaty St., Athens, AL 35611

College of Education earns top ranking

The College of Education received a top ranking for its teacher preparation programs in a statewide report card issued by the Alabama Department of Education.

The Alabama Teacher Preparation Program Performance Profile used a series of quality indicators to determine whether teacher education programs were meeting standards developed under the Alabama Professional Education Personnel Evaluation (PEPE). Teacher education programs at every state university were evaluated. Athens State University programs were all rated "A".

"The "A" results are due to changes in requirements and additions in the number of weeks of clinical experiences in P-12 classrooms and the use of LiveText software as a tool for better PEPE preparation of our teacher candidates," said Dr. Debra Baird, Dean of the College of Education. "Most of all, the faculty of the College of Education appreciates the support and effort of the P-12 schools as partners in our clinical experiences. We could not train teachers without the classroom teachers who help us and we certainly could not have earned this excellent grade without them."

Teacher education programs were rated on several indicators. Among the most important measures studied were performance reviews of new graduates, the local school system's satisfaction with the teacher and the graduate's satisfaction with the university's teacher education program.

Alumni Association seeks award nominations

The Athens State University Alumni Association is seeking nominations for its 2006 Alumni Awards. The awards will be presented on Saturday, April 8, 2006. Nominations must be completed by February 20, 2006.

There are nine awards. They include:

1. Distinguished Alumnus of the Year
2. Alumni Loyalty Award
3. Three Outstanding Alumni Achievement (awards given in Arts and Sciences; Business, Education)
4. Commitment to Teaching Award (Given to Athens State University faculty member)
5. Dedicated Support Staff Award
6. Alumni Spirit Award
7. Alumni Appreciation Award

Nominations must be received in the Office of Alumni Affairs by February 20, 2006. You may e-mail your nominations to tena.bullington@athens.edu, fax them to (256) 233-8128 or mail to Office of Alumni Affairs, Athens State University, 300 N. Beaty St., Athens, AL 35611. Additional information on the awards is available at the university's website: www.athens.edu/alumni or by calling the Office of Alumni Affairs at 256-233-8243 for further information. The nominee's address must accompany nomination. Additional biographical information is required.

Alumni News

Scott McKinnon (03) recently released his first children's book, "Day Dremz." He teaches math at Oak Park Middle School.

Chris Champion (95) recently received the North American Wildlife Enforcement Officers Association Life Saving Award. He is a Morgan County Conservation Enforcement Officer.

Alice Yarbrough (93) was selected as ALFA's Teacher of the Month for November 2005. She received \$1,000 from ALFA Insurance and her school, Dean Road Elementary in Auburn, received a matching award from the Alabama Farmers Federation.

We want to include you! Please email your promotions, awards and news to Rick.Mould@athens.edu.



Josh Dendy, the first recipient of the Dr. Jenita Smith Endowed Scholarship, speaks at the dedication ceremony for the "Alumni Fountain." The Athens State University Alumni Association raised the funds to create the fountain located between Waters Hall and Sandridge Student Center. At right is Alumni Association President Mike English.

Get your ASU License Plate!

"Help Promote Athens State!"

Request the Athens State plate from your local license commissioner when you renew your license plates this year. For an additional \$50 (\$48 goes to Athens State) you will be supporting student scholarships at Athens State.

The prefix on the new license plate is "AMA" by state mandate. If you would prefer one with the "AS" prefix contact Betty Marks at 256 233-8242. There is a very limited number of these available.

Athens State University grad a Disney Teacher Award Nominee

Dr. Suzy Bass, Class of 1960, is a Disney Teacher Award Nominee. She currently teaches mathematics at Paulding County High School in Dallas, Georgia.



She is being recognized for her creativity and success in the classroom and has submitted an application to be considered for the 2006 Disney Teacher of the Year Award.

"I am exuberantly overwhelmed and humbled to receive such an honor as to be a Disney Nominee. I love my "kids" and I love my school. Teaching "kids" is a privilege and I can't imagine what else I am supposed to be doing with my life. I feel an enormous responsibility to meet my students where they are and help them to pinpoint their passion. Education is not just filling the brain with facts, it's lighting a fire for learning," Bass said upon receiving the nomination.

She said her kids keep her on her toes and inspire her to be the best, as does the following quote by William Arthur Ward, "The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires."

"Dr. Bass may be the finest teacher/inspiration I have ever been associated with in 32 years of education. Not only is she extremely knowledgeable of content, but her personal drive and real relationships with students, faculty, staff and parents provide inspiration for all to model. Her commitment to educating our young people is unmatched. Paulding County High School is fortunate to have her serve our students," said Mr. Jim Gottwald, Principal.

There will be a selection committee of experts from around the country who will review and select the 2006 Disney Teacher Award Honorees. The Honorees will be announced in late spring and celebrated at a red-carpet Awards Gala in July where four will be selected as Outstanding Teachers and one will be named the 2006 Disney Teacher of the Year. In addition, the Honorees each receive \$10,000, a \$5,000 grant for their schools and a six-day professional development institute with their principals at the Walt Disney World Resort. At the institute, teachers share ideas to refine their innovative teaching approaches and learn how to engage other teachers to build an effective collaborative teaching culture at their schools.

Congratulations to Dr. Suzanne Bass.



The Tennessee Valley Old Time Fiddlers Steering Committee recently named four endowed scholarships. The scholarships will be named: The Sam McCracken Memorial Scholarship; The Mary Simpson Endowed Scholarship, The George Rose Endowed Scholarship; and The Dave Fitzsimmons Endowed Scholarship. The committee selected the honorees for their contributions to the convention. McCracken was one of the founders of the convention. Rose, a longtime radio personality, has promoted the convention for many years. Fitzsimmons and Simpson have played key roles in the convention's operations. From left are: Dave Fitzsimmons, Mary Simpson, Joann Sandlin and Ed McCracken.

ALUMNI GOLF TOURNAMENT

JUNE 8, 2006

CANEBRAKE CLUB
LUNCH AT NOON
1:00 TEE TIME

Dr. Ron Fritze receives prestigious honor

Each year, the History Section of the Reference and User Services Association of the American Library Association honors outstanding book-length English-language bibliographies in the field of history.

This year, a winner was Reference Sources in History: An Introductory Guide, principally authored by Dr. Ron Fritze, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Athens State University.

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Join the Alumni Association for 2006. Your membership is important to us and we value your support. This year the Alumni Association is pleased to offer the following benefits to active members.

- Student ticket/or discounted prices to Athens State University-sponsored arts and cultural events
- Book checkout privileges at the Athens State University Library.
- Employment and career advancement assistance through the University's Office of Career Services.
- Discounted rental car fees through Enterprise Rent-A-Car. The discount is available through any Enterprise location nationwide.
- Discounted admissions tickets to the U.S. Space and Rocket Center Museum in Huntsville. Home of Space Camp and Aviation Challenge.
- Alumni News – Newsletter featuring Alumni Association events and activities.
- Reduced monthly membership fee to Athens-Limestone Wellness Center
- Ten percent discount on regular-priced Athens State University merchandise (excluding books) from the Off-Campus Bookstore.
- Quizno's (Athens only) - Discounted sub sandwich
- Sci-Quest Interactive Museum - Free child admission with purchase of adult, and/or 10% discount on annual pass.

ATHENS STATE UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP FORM

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