After 38 years of service at Athens State University, Library Director, Dr. Robert Burkhardt is retiring. During his long career at Athens State University, Dr. Burkhardt has become part of the heart and soul of our institution. After speaking with several individuals who have had the pleasure of knowing and working with him throughout the years, it is clear that Dr. Burkhardt has been a vital part in the growth of Athens State University. Dr. Burkhardt has worked in many different capacities on campus, from working alongside Dr. Elva McLin and Dr. Penne Laubenthal as a Sigma Tau Delta sponsor to overseeing the construction of the new library to filling in as Interim Provost for a short time. Additionally his library duties have included hosting various activities, such as writer’s presentations, book discussions, working at the Fiddler’s Convention, the opening of the archives, as well as teaching research classes. He has borne witness to many changes around campus, including Athens State’s transition from Athens State College to Athens State University. Having witnessed the many changes our university has undergone throughout the years makes him the perfect person to help oversee the digitization of our campus history alongside his longtime friend and co-worker, Sara Love.

When Robert Burkhardt first began his library career at Athens State College in 1977, resources were extremely limited. Students and faculty were restricted in the amount of information they could find on any subject matter. Dr. Burkhardt states, “When I first started working, the challenge was trying to help students find enough information. Technology has changed that. Now the challenge has turned to trying to help students find relevant and quality information.” This is a challenge that Dr. Burkhardt has welcomed. Through the use of technology, he has been able to aide in not only student advancement, but also the progression of the institution.

During his extended tenure at Athens State University, Dr. Burkhardt has witnessed many changes. He has valuable insight from the past and into the future of education. After talking to a few of Dr. Burkhardt’s co-workers, it is obvious that he has been a very prominent figure for Athens State University, and although many people are sad to see him leave, they all wish him a very happy retirement. At Dr. Burkhardt’s retirement party, Dr. Robert Glenn, President of Athens State University, stated, “We tried to figure out a way to make Robert a permanent fixture in our library so we chose to rename the Rare Book Room, the Robert Burkhardt Rare Book Room.” The Athens State University Library opened the Rare Book Room in 2011 under the guidance of Dr. Burkhardt, who was simply fulfilling a vision set forth by Dr. Elva McLin when the plans were made for the room in the mid-1990s.

When asked what made his career worth it, Dr. Burkhardt responded, “the students. Working with and trying to help the students. That’s why I got into this business to start with.” Thank you for your service to our institution and community, Dr. Robert Burkhardt.
ATHENS, Ala. - At its April meeting, the Board of Trustees of Athens State University approved a tuition increase range of 1% to 5% and authorized the Executive Committee to make a recommendation to meet with University officials in early June to make a final decision on tuition rates for the coming year. The Executive Committee met on Wednesday morning, June 3, to consider the recommendation of the University’s Budget Advisory Committee, a standing committee of the University chaired by the Vice President for Finance and composed of four faculty members and the presiding officer of the staff senate. The recommendation of the committee was to raise tuition by approximately 2.8 percent beginning with the Fall 2015 semester. After a thorough review of the work and reasoning of the committee, the Executive Committee approved the recommended tuition rates.

Mike McCoy, Vice President for Financial Affairs, remarked, “The University Budget Advisory Committee felt that a moderate tuition increase was necessary in order to fund the University’s operating budget and to help avoid larger tuition increases in the future. The Committee reviewed historical tuition increases among Alabama public universities and felt that this increase was appropriate and at the lower end of the approved tuition increase range.”

The increase in tuition rate will take effect with the beginning of the Fall 2015 semester. Even with this increase, Athens State University will continue to have the lowest per-hour tuition rate for a college or university in the state of Alabama. The increase will take the tuition rate from $179 to $184 per semester hour for traditional coursework and from $225 to $236 per semester hour for distance learning classes.

“A tuition increase is not something that is taken on without sufficient research and is done at a time of purposeful need,” said Athens State President Bob Glenn. “It is a necessity that every institution faces. What sets Athens State apart from other institutions is that we do it marginally and as infrequently as possible. We are diligent in our efforts to offer the best return on our student’s investment and it is clear that we are successful in doing so.”

Regina Kyle
All of my life I have labored for a higher education. In high school, I didn’t do well due to obstacles at home. I did not go to College after graduation, but instead decided to get a job. This was fast forward a few years and I would start community college at age 26. I only did it one semester before discovering that being a single mom, having a job, and going to school was too much to handle. I had to let something go, and unfortunately that was school. In 2009 at age 34, I made my mind up—it was now or never. I began slowly, and eventually increased my classes and credit hours, finally graduating in 2013. That was a huge accomplishment for me. Since I was already in the mode, I applied for Athens State. I was extremely excited about furthering my education. I started Athens State in the fall of 2013 with eager eyes and a hunger for learning. I also wanted to be as involved as I could and gain the most from my college experience. First, I joined the Student Government Association (SGA). This was a very valuable experience for me. I met people, served the college at functions, and learned about what Athens State really means to other students. During my time with SGA, I was talking with the advisor (Tena Bullington) at one of our meetings and explaining that I needed a scholarship. She said, “I think I have the perfect thing for you.” She then offered me the Editor position for The Athenian, Athens State’s newspaper. I was very nervous taking this position, but I thought, “I can do this; I have the drive for me at Athens State, and I am very thankful for the chance to show some of my creativity.” I was also asked to serve as president for Delta Mu Delta. This was an absolute honor to me. I am so thankful for the advisors who saw the drive in me and asked me to serve. I also signed up to be an Athenian Ambassador. This experience was very humbling. To be able to show others around Athens State and tell them all the wonderful things that they had to look forward to, made me excited and happy.

In the spring of 2015, just as I was getting ready to graduate, I got very sick. I had just made it past mid-terms. I was unable to do some of the work that other students were doing, but, I had a few awesome instructors that worked with me so that I could graduate. I graduated Summa Cum Laude with a major in Management of Technology and a minor in Entrepreneurship Systems Management. Athens State will always be the best experience that I have encountered in my educational endeavors. I would encourage anyone who is looking to further their education to consider Athens State. You will not be disappointed!

I plan to take all of my knowledge gained at Athens State and apply it to a future career. I would like to say thank you to some of the people who had a special part in my success at Athens State: Tena Bulington, Dr. Lisa Rich, Dr. William McCain, Dr. Mike Highlight, Dr. Laura Kerner, Dr. Kimberly Bell and Dr. Kimberly Roberts, you will never know how much your involvement has impacted my life. Athens State will always hold a very special place in my heart.

Success Story
Limestone County Community Garden

Gage Craig
Thanks to a grant from Lowe’s, Mrs. Sara Cline along with the Traunchy Intervention Program (TIP) are helping tend the Limestone County Community Garden. It is located in the Farmer’s Market Pavilion in downtown Athens. The grant, totaling $25,000, is used for tools and materials. The community gardens allow for the building of a gazebos, a shed for storing tools used at the garden, and assorted types of beds for the plants. Each garden is set up from TIP meeting on Tuesday afternoons to provide volunteers hours to the garden. In an interview Dr. Cline explained that the program is helpful because it offers children who are at-risk of becoming truant the opportunity to serve their community while bonding with their parents. Dr. Cline also said that the program allows parents the opportunity to teach their children about gardening which is something that many parents in this area are familiar with.

At the community garden students are taught about different bed techniques for gardening; Hugelkultur beds are displayed in the garden as well as keyhole beds. Hugelkultur beds conserve the amount of water used for growing plants while keyhole beds use compost to provide the water. The students use these beds to grow an assortment of vegetables that will be donated to a local group; tomato, eggplant, peppers, squash, and okra are some of the vegetables that are growing in the Limestone County Community Garden. These vegetables will be donated to the Limestone County Churches Involved (LCCI); this is a group of over 40 churches that has become one of Athens’ largest sources for donated food.

SGA Ducky Awards

Students now have the opportunity to nominate their favorite faculty or staff member with an SGA Ducky Award. In addition to getting a cute little rubber ducky, they also get a card with your comments. Just keep an eye out for an e-mail from Student Activities toward the end of each semester with the nomination link. You can check out previous Ducky Award recipients at the website in the Sandridge Student Center. All comment cards are re-posted there for all to see—minus student names. The next round of Ducky nominations will open in Mid-July.

Student Writing/Photography
Dr. Wayne McCain, Professor of Management of Technology
Dr. Kimberly Roberts

The Athenian is published with funds from the Athens State University Student Activities fund and advertising revenue. It is distributed free of charge to members of the faculty, staff, and student body.

Submissions should focus on the issues rather than personalities. Proof of identification may be required. Submissions must be limited to 400-500 words, and may be rejected. Submissions must be accompanied by a name, address and phone number. The editorial board reserves the right to edit submissions for brevity, style, clarity and liability.

Tuition Increase

Athens State Alumni Sponsoring British Landscapes Trip with Sherlock Holmes Highlights

Gay McClure
Athens State Alumni sponsoring British Landscapes Trip with Sherlock Holmes Highlights

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