Moving on Up to Maple Hill

The newest residence hall at the University of Arkansas is unlike any other on campus. What do Katie Bruce and Katherine Clifton, two first-year students from Texas, experience on move-in day, and what do they think of the best place to live on campus?

More >>

In Their Own Words: The Silas Hunt Scholar Experience

Silas Hunt Scholar and Senior Tina Fletcher's University of Arkansas experience has taken her from a first year student with jitters to an award winning student leader who has studied abroad in Africa and held internships with the Arkansas Public Policy Panel and the Southern Education Foundation. These are her words.

More >>
That's a Wrap! Student Production Team Calls the Shots on Campus

Students working for UA Productions are creating award winning videos, as well as annual reports, newsletters and Web sites for the UA Division of Student Affairs. Their experience outside of the classroom is opportunity to create individual portfolios of work that will give them an edge in their career search, and so much more.

More >>

Student Affairs Earns Six Regional Awards from Professional Association

The University of Arkansas' Division of Student Affairs recently earned six awards from the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators Region IV-West. This is highest number of accolades the Division has ever received in one awards year.

More >>

Parents Light the Way for Class Gift Efforts

Learn about the Class Gift and how you can participate. The 2007-08 Class Gift will be a beautiful mosaic art piece to be placed above the fireplace in the Living Room of the Student Union. It will encompass four elements that embody the University of Arkansas - Old Main, The Greek Theater, Senior Walk and a Sassafras tree symbolizing diversity.

More >>

Quick Links

- Student Affairs
- Alumni Association
- Arkansas Union
- Career Center
- UA Student Media
- UA Housing
Moving on Up to Maple Hill
- Matthew Brizi

Katie Bruce, left, and Katherine Clifton, both first-year students from Texas, are at home in the newest UA campus housing facility - Maple Hill.

Freshman move-in day for the University of Arkansas' newest residence halls was accompanied by the usual sights and sounds of any other August move-in day of years past: housing staff and volunteers guided the steady stream of SUVs and mini-vans carting belongings ready to be unloaded; one father asked his daughter if she had been to the bookstore yet and taken out her second student loan, joshing about the high price of textbooks; and the ubiquitous parent-child tension permeated the process as eager freshmen were counting down the minutes until they would be free from their parents' turf.

However normal the move-in itself seemed, what it represents is anything from ordinary. The suites and community living spaces in Maple Hill East and West are like none other on campus - or possibly in the state - and could be found easily in contemporary, stylish condos, with vinyl strip flooring that mimics hardwood, private bathrooms and living areas for suitemates, durable leather furniture and carpeting colors and patterns that resemble modern abstract art. It goes without saying that students were more excited than usual to be moving into such an environment.

Freshman suitemates Katie Bruce, a nursing major from San Antonio, Texas, and Katherine Clifton, an international business major from Dallas, Texas, saw pictures of Maple Hill on the Internet but had never seen it up close and personal because they visited campus when the halls were still under construction. Their reactions to seeing their suite for the first time were typical of most residents.

"It was really nice, very spacious and very clean," Katie noted.

One of Katherine's favorite features is how customizable her living environment is. "It's neat how you can take apart all the furniture and move it the way you want to," she explained. Both young women, who didn't know each other prior to move-in, agreed that Maple Hill will enhance their experience as freshmen at the University of Arkansas. "It'll probably make it nicer," Katie said. "I was going to come here no matter what, but living in Maple Hill will make it better. It's already made it a lot better. I haven't seen anything like this at other schools." Michael Seals, resident director for Maple Hill East, pointed out that
the students aren't the only ones excited about the Maple Hill experience.

"We have a wonderful resident assistant staff at Maple Hill," he said. "They are by far the most excited and well-prepared staff I've ever worked with. They really seem to grasp the ideals behind the Maple Hill program, and at the first house meetings the RAs took on those leadership roles with their residents for the first time. Our staff members are looking forward to building strong communities within Maple Hill."

This Maple Hill program is an innovative, research-based residential curriculum that was developed to yield many more benefits that go far beyond traditional residence hall benefits such as forming close-knit relationships between roommates like Katie and Katherine. The 700-plus freshmen and sophomores are the inaugural class of this curriculum, which is designed to focus primarily on academic success and citizenship with the intention of increasing freshman retention and facilitating personal development.

Much like a university's academic curriculum, the residential program has core requirements that all residents must satisfy in addition to specific components for freshmen and sophomores that research has shown help college students succeed. Over the course of the academic year all residents must participate in at least two community service projects, attend six faculty-led activities out of the classroom through the Faculty Associates initiative, participate in at least one registered student organization and get involved with Maple Hill activities.

The First Year Experience requires freshman residents to attend ROCK Camp (Razorback Outreach for Community and Knowledge) through the university's office of First Year Experience, take part in the personality assessment StrengthsQuest and complete the Freshman Seminar, an eight-week course that covers topics like academic skills, time management and personal wellness.

The Sophomore Experience components include serving as a member of hall organizations, regularly engaging in one-on-one dialogues with resident assistants, participating in the StrengthsQuest assessment and workshops for those who haven't done so, completing the requirements of the Professional Development Institute through the University Career Development Center and mentoring freshmen through a buddy program.

Even with all of these experiences ahead of them, Katie and Katherine ended this trailblazing day in the most ordinary of ways.

Their parents left Fayetteville before dinner but not before every box was emptied and their contents were in their appropriate places. "We got everything done in the first couple of hours," Katie noted.

"Our parents basically did everything for us," Katherine said. "Especially our moms. Our moms were like 'We have to have everything done before we leave','" Katie said.

After the new roommates attended a welcome picnic to get some much needed sustenance, they returned to their suite where they were finally able to relax.

"My parents woke me up at 5 a.m. to get ready to move in," Katherine said. Katie added, "We just wanted to relax and get used to our room."
In Their Own Words: The Silas Hunt Scholar Experience
- Tina Fletcher

University of Arkansas senior and Silas Hunt Scholar Tina Fletcher, in green shirt, takes a camel for a ride during her summer trip to Tanzania.

My experience as a Silas Hunt scholar has been simply amazing! The program has offered an abundance of various opportunities to succeed and help others while doing so. Since taking my first step onto the University of Arkansas campus in August of 2004, I have had the privilege over the past four years to participate in a plethora of activities such as ROCK Camp, Emerging Leaders, and the Professional Development Institute all thanks to my acceptance into the Silas Hunt Scholarship program.

Since attending ROCK Camp my freshman year, my life has definitely changed for the better each day. I have joined and held positions in such organizations as Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. where I serve as the President and Secretary, the Black Students Association where I serve as the Vice-President, the Connections Mentoring Program where I served as the Treasurer and as a mentor, the Silas Hunt Scholarship program where I serve as a mentor, and S.A.S.S.: Students Advocating Stronger Sisterhood, an organization in which I founded in the fall of 2006 and served as the 1st President. I have also served as a Resident Assistant for three years, a position that has allowed me to make a great impact on many student's lives. The Silas Hunt Scholarship program has also allowed me to study abroad in Tanzania, Africa this past summer and intern with the Arkansas Public Policy Panel and the Southern Education Foundation in Little Rock, Arkansas and Atlanta, Georgia. Both experiences were life changing and have allowed me to see many important aspects of life from a different viewpoint. Because of my work as a student leader, I have graciously received many honors and awards such as Resident Assistant of the month, the Rodney Momon Youth Award, and the NASPA Region IV-West Rising Star Award. I have also been named the recipient of the Martin Luther King, Jr. scholarship, the Michelle Wilson Scholarship, and the Gordon Morgan Family scholarship.

These opportunities and achievements have molded me into a very determined individual who lives to help others to the best of my ability. Given thanks to the Silas Hunt program, I am currently in a position to successfully transition into the graduate school with the
motivation and desire to conquer any and every task set before me. The mentorship and leadership that the program offers is sincerely amazing and I can honestly say with much sincerity that I would not be the student leader that I am today without the Silas H. Hunt Scholarship program.

That's a Wrap! Student Production Team Calls the Shots on Campus
- Danielle Strickland

Julie Lungaro, left, John Robinson and Clint Fullen are three of the students involved with UA Productions, a student-led multimedia design house in the Division of Student Affairs.

Experiential learning is a great opportunity for students and it complements in-class learning by helping to add to academic life. In an ideal world students gain practical, applied experience in areas of interest - experience that can be directly applied to future careers. UA Productions, a student-led multimedia production group, was established in 2005 as an experiential learning laboratory to provide multimedia support to the Division of Student Affairs. Their skills were soon recognized by others on campus and this unit now specializes in video productions, Web development, photography, event coverage and graphic design.

The idea behind this group is to educate the student staff, produce multimedia content, document student life, serve as a liaison between the Office of University Relations and the division and facilitate campus wide collaboration. Because the group is structured like a production studio, the student-comprised staff is engaging in real-world situations in a real-world environment.

John Robinson, student production manager, helped establish the organization. "Without UA Productions, the value of my education would still be good and competitive, but it wouldn't be best-in-class like it is now," he said. "UA Productions is a living testimony to how the Division of Student Affairs is dedicated to seeing students succeed in and out of the classroom."

The staff is composed of full-time students who are paid for their efforts. In their roles as UA Productions staff members, the students are treated like other student affairs professionals by colleagues and supervisors. The students are grateful for the level of trust and respect they have earned and see it as an "added value" for the University of Arkansas
and, more specifically, for their personal lives. They are devoted to doing their part to help serve their campus clients and promote the University of Arkansas. The entire group has enjoyed regional recognition for the many hours they put into producing first-rate publications and other initiatives. For the second year in a row, the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators Region IV-West awarded UA Productions the Publication Award for video-computer software. This award is presented to the individual or institution that has developed outstanding materials that contribute significantly to the field of student affairs.

Scott Flanagin, communications coordinator for the division, manages the students who are UA Productions. "The UA Productions students' value to our university is invaluable," he said. "The quality of work produced by this team never ceases to amaze me and they continue to outdo themselves with each new assignment that they tackle. I am proud to be a part of this operation and I am lucky to work with such talented students. The companies that are fortunate enough to hire these students after graduation are the luckiest of all."

Despite all of the long hours, the students clearly enjoy the work they put into their projects. When asked to talk about his favorite experience with the group, Robinson found it impossible to answer: "It seems like every project is my favorite. I try to bring passion into everything I do. When I am working on a project, it is my favorite. Then, when I move onto a new project, the new project becomes my favorite. That's just how I operate."

The excitement UA Productions work brings to its staff is merely another benefit of this outstanding experiential learning opportunity.

Please visit www.uark.edu/ua/uaprod to learn more.

Student Affairs Earns Six Regional Awards from Professional Association
- Scott Flanagin

Key players from the UA Career Development Center's Professional Development Institute receive their award for Innovative Program at the NASPA Regional IV-West Conference in Little Rock, Arkansas.

The University of Arkansas' Division of Student Affairs earned six awards from the National
Association of Student Personnel Administrators Region IV-West. This is highest number of accolades the Division has ever received from NASPA, beating last years' record by one award. Recipients accepted their awards at the NASPA Region IV-West Conference on Nov. 8 in Little Rock.

The winners are: Career Development Center's Professional Development Institute, Innovative Program; Randy Alexander, Mid Level Professional; Sandy Vasquez, New Professional Award; Tina Fletcher, Rising Star Undergraduate; and Shehan Welihindha, Graduate Student Rising Star; UA Productions' Pat Walker Health Center video, Publications Award.

The Innovative Program award is presented to the institutional department who developed and implemented a program that resulted in improved educational activities, services, or management for an individual campus community.

The PDI program was implemented two years ago with nine student members. As of October 31, PDI reached the 1,000 member mark. The PDI program offers career-building activities consisting of workshop opportunities, one-on-one coaching, and innovative activities designed to enhance a student's career or grad school planning path. The program includes career and/or grad school planning steps a student should generally accomplish while in college, but formatted into an intentional program that coaches them to their highest level of achievement.

"We are very pleased with all of our winners this year. But we are especially excited that the Professional Development Institute has been recognized by NASPA," said Johnetta Cross Brazzell, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. "This program is helping hundreds of students be more intentional about their career or graduate school plans, giving them the tools they need to be successful in these pursuits."

PDI membership information can be found at the following link: http://career.uark.edu/students/pdi.asp or by calling the Career Development Center at (479) 575-2805.

The Outstanding Mid-Level Professional Award is presented to the individual who has been in the profession more than five years, is a NASPA member, and has made significant contributions to his or her campus, the regional organization and the profession. Randy Alexander, Executive Director of University Housing, is this year's recipient.

"During Randy's nearly three-year tenure at the University of Arkansas, he has made an incredibly huge impact in the future growth of the campus, not only with regards to residential facilities and other parts of the physical environment, but more importantly the programmatic revolutions to which he has guided us," said Danny Pugh, UA dean of students.

The Outstanding New Professional Award is presented to an individual who has been in the profession fewer than five years, is a NASPA member, and has made significant contributions to his or her campus, the regional organization and the profession. Sandy Vasquez, Assistant Director, Office of Community Standards and Student Ethics, is this year's winner. Vasquez is in her second year with the University of Arkansas. "Sandy works well and is comfortable with students, parents, and staff from all backgrounds and cultures. People are drawn to her because of her sincere interest in them as individuals and her
warm personable style. Her personal and professional ethics are beyond reproach," said her fellow award winner, Randy Alexander.

The Rising Star Undergraduate Award is given to a junior or senior undergraduate student who has a lot of involvement in campus activities and organizations, has a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.5; shows great campus leadership; has paraprofessional employment with Division of Student Affairs; and intends to pursue a student affairs-related advanced degree. This year's winner is Tina Fletcher, a senior majoring in political science and African American Studies.

"Tina has made positive impacts in her various leadership roles on campus because she understands and employs her unique skills and abilities," said Craig Willie, Associate Director of First Year Experience programs. "Tina consistently models maturity, kindness, responsibility, time management and initiative for her peers, whether she is serving in an official role or simply being herself."

Winners of the Graduate Student Rising Star award are currently pursuing master's or doctoral work in a student affairs-related degree program, with intention of pursuing a career within student affairs; they are involved in campus activities and organizations; hold campus leadership positions; and have paraprofessional employment within the Student Affairs Division. This year's recipient is Shehan Welihindha, a graduate student pursuing a master’s degree in higher education administration. "Shehan has the ability to evaluate situations and determine what needs to be done and develop a plan to reach the end goal. He is willing to reach out to others to help find the best solution to various situations, and is willing to step out of his comfort zone when needed," said Flo Johnson, Director for Administrative Services at University Housing.

The Publication Award for video-computer software is presented to the individual or institution that has developed outstanding materials that contribute significantly to the field of student affairs. This year's winner is UA Productions, a student-led multimedia production department within the Division of Student Affairs. This is the second year in a row for this group to win this award. These students were awarded for an informational video about the Pat Walker Health Center, which is shown to all incoming first-year students and their parents. The video can also be seen in streaming form on the health center Web site. The students involved with UA Productions are John Robinson, a senior from Tulsa, Okla.; Keith Roehrenbeck, a junior from Little Rock, Ark.; Chris Bryan, a senior from Fayetteville, Ark.; Julie Lungaro, a sophomore from Fayetteville; and Clint Fullen, a sophomore from Little Rock. These students are supervised by Scott Flanagin, coordinator of communication and outreach for the Division of Student Affairs.

"The skills of UA Production students stood out as they became experts on the purpose and impact of the Pat Walker Health Center. Through interviews, questions, tours and conversations with professional staff, the students were immersed in health services," said Mary Alice Serafini, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Director of the Pat Walker Health Center. "They took their expertise and creativity in film production and put their knowledge of health services into a story to be told which would reflect the high priority that the University of Arkansas places on student's health and wellbeing." "I am extremely proud of all of these award winners," Brazzell said. "I know they are doing excellent work for the students at this university, and it is gratifying to see this work recognized by the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators."
Parents Light the Way for Class Gift Efforts

Each year, graduating seniors determine how they will honor their experience at their soon-to-be alma mater by voting on a special gift to the campus. This tradition helps build class unity, identity and spirit, and gives students and their families an opportunity to invest in the future of the University of Arkansas.

The funds for each class gift are raised through the efforts of student participation and fundraising. The student-run Class Gift Council works throughout the year to spread the word about the vote, the gift selection and ways students can give.

Parents are integral to this fundraising effort: Last year parents raised a keystone $5,690 that fueled the 2006-07 class gift. Many parents choose to celebrate their student's graduation by making a gift in their name. If you would like to honor your child in this way click here.

The idea of dedicating a class gift at the University of Arkansas is decades old - one of the first was the renovation of the Spoofer's Stone on Old Main Lawn. In recent years class gifts have included a bronze memorial sculpture to honor the victims of the September 11, 2001, attacks; the bell renovation in the north tower of Old Main; and last year's gift: the installation of classic pedestrian light posts along the Old Main walk.

This year's vote is just in and the 2007-08 Class Gift will be a beautiful mosaic art piece to be placed above the fireplace in the commons area of the Student Union. It will encompass four elements that embody the University of Arkansas.

For more information about the University of Arkansas Class Gift and ways you can help, please contact Rachel Neeley, assistant director for annual programs, by e-mail at rachel@uark.edu.

Honor the Experience.