



## UA Students Help Prepare High Schoolers for College Classes

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University of Alabama students recently led high school sophomores and juniors through three weeks of rigorous academic curriculum, including calculus lessons and labs in biology and chemistry, as part of CollegeFirst, a national summer enrichment program designed to prepare the students for Advanced Placement courses in math and science.

Fifteen UA students participated in the program through a new service-learning course developed by the UA Center for Ethics & Social Responsibility in partnership with Impact Alabama and A+ College Ready.

In total, 54 college students from UA, UAB, UAH and Birmingham-Southern College worked with 85 high school students who attend A+ CollegeReady program schools in the Birmingham City, Jefferson County, Huntsville City and Madison County districts.

“This initiative provides successful college and graduate students as both tutors and mentors, helping increase the number of Alabama students who will be ready, not only to attend college, but to excel in college,” said Stephen Black, CESR director.

“The experience benefits university students as well because, in order to teach a concept, one must not only grasp it intuitively, but fully understand the reasoning and logical steps involved. By playing an integral role in an innovative education reform effort, these students are also developing a sense of their obligations toward fellow citizens and a commitment to the common good,” he says.

UA student Connor Johnson, an aspiring physician tutoring in chemistry, said CollegeFirst gave him an opportunity to apply his understanding of science in a way that helps others.

“I have developed a greater teaching ability, learned about organization strategy and implementation, and, most importantly, seen students grow in knowledge and confidence,” Johnson said.



UA student Connor Johnson (left) instructs Jumari Ray (Huffman High School) and Alisha DeVance (Ramsay High School) during a chemistry lab.

Nicholas Kelly, another UA student, said CollegeFirst was a life-enriching experience for both him and the high school students.

“Not only am I able to mentor these inner-city students in AP am biology, but I also teaching them valuable life lessons and critical thinking skills – something that they can take with them for the rest of their lives,” Kelly said.

College students spent an initial week during Summer Term I learning how to be instructors/tutors and studying issues related to educational disparities and creative education reform initiatives.

Advanced Placement courses enable motivated high school students to take college-level courses taught by teachers in their local high schools. Research has consistently shown students who pass AP exams are three times more likely to earn a college degree than students who do not pass, according to the College Board.

“Biology will be vital to my career as a veterinary pathologist,” said Huffman High School student Sydney Armes. “I’ll take lots of mandatory biology classes in college, so I wanted to get a head start,” she said. “This program is giving me a feel for how college is going to be.”

For the 2008-09 year, A+ College Ready’s first 12 program schools posted an 83 percent increase in the number of AP exams passed in just one year. The successful pilot has already grown to 43 schools around the state, and it is expected to impact more than 18,000 students by 2013.

### **About the UA Center for Ethics & Social Responsibility**

Created in 2005, CESR established university-wide programming supporting the development of projects that nurture social responsibility and reflective, thoughtful citizenship. CESR staff develop, and assist faculty members in developing, service-learning courses that engage community organizations in partnerships designed to both enhance academic goals and apply scholarly learning to community issues. Learn more [www.cesr.ua.edu](http://www.cesr.ua.edu)

### **About A+ College Ready**

A division of the A+ Education Partnership, A+ College Ready was created with a \$13.2 million grant from the National Math and Science Initiative to implement a proven Advanced Placement training and incentive initiative in public schools throughout Alabama. Learn more at [www.apluscollegeready.org](http://www.apluscollegeready.org).