



Alabama
Entrepreneurship
Institute

JANUARY 2024



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Message from Dr. Theresa M. Welbourne, Executive Director

Welcome to our January 2024 newsletter.

We hope you all are enjoying the beginning of this new year after time off with family and friends. We are very happy to welcome 2024 and share with you some of our recent and upcoming events.

We are kicking off our competition season with the February 22nd **Tuscaloosa Innovation Community Business Plan competition** (see details below), workshops, and getting ready for our annual **Edward K. Aldag, Jr. Student Business Plan competition** which will be on April 11 and 12. Please consider competing, judging, or coaching.

In January we had the honor of co-sponsoring the USASBE conference, which for the first time came to Alabama. Our faculty and doctoral students from around campus attended, and many presented at this event. With over 500 in-person attendees and another 200 or so virtual, we were able to share and learn during this 5-day event. Thank you to everyone who helped make it a success.

Thank you for all your help, and I look forward to seeing you at one of our events soon.

Roll Tide,

Theresa M. Welbourne

Theresa M. Welbourne, PhD
Will and Maggie Brooke Professor in Entrepreneurship
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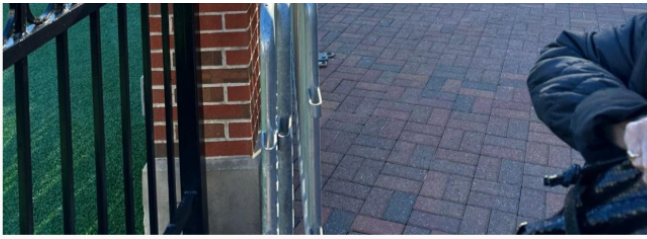
WE STARTED 2024 OFF WITH A BANG!



The University of Alabama recently helped sponsor the annual United States Association of Small Business and Entrepreneurship ([USASBE](#)) Conference. As part of the conference, our team hosted a pre-conference all-day learning journey on January 10th that focused on NIL (name, image, and likeness). On January 11, we hosted a Summit addressing the challenge of finding and helping new entrepreneurs in our own back yards. The rest of the conference, from January 12-14, featured numerous speakers and workshops, many conducted by our UA faculty, staff and doctoral students. We thank the many Alabama companies and universities that also sponsored, and we are happy to report the overall positive impression a lot of first time visitors to Alabama took away with them.



From left to right: Dr. Alice Gordon Holloway, Dr. Lou Marino, Doctoral



Above: NIL participants at Bryant Denny Stadium

To the right: First NIL panel, Dr. Lou Marino (moderator), with (left to right), Cole Price, Director Advantage Center and NIL Partnerships, Jay McPhillips, Executive Director, Yea Alabama, and Riley Edwards, Associate Athletics Director, Professional Sport Services and NIL (all from UA).

student Seth Butler, Dr. Vishal Gupta, and Dr. Theresa M. Welbourne



2023 COMMUNITY BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION

ABOUT THE COMPETITION

This competition helps innovators and entrepreneurs with their early-stage business ideas. Small business owners who have ideas for expanding their business with a new concept or idea also can compete. Not only can they win funding to move their ideas forward, but they also receive valuable feedback and connections

It is FREE to participate and open to any within West Alabama who is not eligible to otherwise compete in the UA student business plan competition or the UA faculty and

staff competition. The competitions details for these events can be found below in "Upcoming Events".

The Grand Prize winner will receive **\$10,000!!!**

Event Details:

Date: February 22, 2024

Time: 12:00 PM - 7:00 PM (kick off lunch included)

Location: The EDGE | 2627 10th Avenue | Tuscaloosa, AL 35401

SIGN-UP TO COMPETE



ABOUT THE ERGs

Are you interested in collaborating with other entrepreneurs and getting more resources to move your business or your idea forward? If so, join our newly formed Entrepreneur Resource Groups (ERGs) at The EDGE.

Modeled after corporate employee resource groups (ERGs), this new program was launched to connect and assist people with different interests and identities to learn more about each other, support each other, and bring resources together to help build and grow their businesses. Join us for monthly learning events, and networking where we also emphasize the power of positive collisions.

Monthly Meeting Details:

Date: Third Tuesday of every month
Time: 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM
Location: The EDGE | 2627 10th Avenue

[Learn more about the ERG initiative here.](#)

GET CONNECTED & JOIN AN ERG TODAY

HIGHLIGHTS

STUDENT LEARNING AT THE EDGE

In September, Vishal Gupta hosted an entrepreneurship panel at The EDGE.

To access this panel discussion, join our FREE Acelevents community platform, The AEI Hub, by clicking [HERE](#).

On this platform you also can see the videos of winners of the 2023 student business plan competition (go to regular sessions, and hit the show past sessions icon on top) or learn more about the student Collegiate Entrepreneurship Organization (CEO), a student group that is affiliated with a global CEO network (go to the lounge button on the main left navigation section).

SPOTLIGHTS

NEWEST EDGE MEMBERS

Bucks & Bills Media

Bucks & Bills Media, owned by Kessler Park, is an Alabama-based outdoor apparel media company that was established in September of 2021. This venture started out as a media page dedicated to posting pictures and videos of hunting and fishing adventures through different forms of



social media. Within the last year, they have started to sell merchandise featuring the Bucks & Bills logo. The current products offered include hats, shirts, stickers, and koozies. In the future, they hope to expand the product line to include, sweatshirts, beanies, and other wearables.



Bucks & Bills



High Society Essentials

Ariah Bashir is the owner of High Society Essentials. This company helps to elevate your space with functionality and design by incorporating botanicals. From college dorms (College Essentials by High Society) to office spaces and bedroom makeovers, they offer tailored solutions for any environment. They offer a custom curated selection of plant and scent solutions to help complete your space.

Click [HERE](#) to shop or book an appointment.

Honey Bridge Technologies

The founder of Honey Bridge Technologies is Alyssa Bosby. They are a team of highly skilled IT professionals with a proven track record of developing and implementing advanced technological solutions. They bring fresh ideas and creative solutions to every project, ensuring that they not only meet the clients requirements, but exceed them by uncovering opportunities for process optimization and efficiency gains. By staying ahead of technological trends and advancements Honey Bridge Technologies is able to provide technological solutions that allow our customers to work smarter not harder.



Click [HERE](#) to learn about the services they offer.



Purposeful Healing

Jordan Pope is the founder of Purposeful Healing. A company committed to empowering women as they navigate their healing journey. Their focus is to inspiring positive lifestyle choices that nurture physical, mental, and emotional well-being, fostering a sense of community. They aim to spread love, supporting women in discovering their purpose, embarking on a journey of healing through self-discovery, and reclaiming ownership of their well-being and identity. Purposeful Healing offers women diverse creative platforms within the arts encouraging self-expression, and utilizing

movement as a therapeutic outlet for healing.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Edward K. Aldag Student Business Plan Competition

- Date: April 11 - 12
 - (Hybrid = Round 1: April 11 - Virtual | Round 2: April 12 - In-person)
- Time: April 11 - 12:30PM - 5:00 PM | April 12 - 7:30 AM - 8:00 PM
- Location: April 11 - Zoom | April 12 - The EDGE (2627 10th Avenue)
- **Registration portal opens on January 31**

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Read Dr. Welbourne's latest article about [Hybrid Entrepreneurship](#) and how it can help employees learn to innovate

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Office for Research & Economic Development
West Alabama Chamber of Commerce
City of Tuscaloosa
The EDGE and EDGE Labs

Connect with us using the links below



The Alabama Entrepreneurship Institute is housed at [The EDGE](#), Tuscaloosa's home for startups. The EDGE is a partnership between The University of Alabama, the West Alabama Chamber of Commerce, and the City of Tuscaloosa. Resources from all three groups come together to help grow a vibrant ecosystem that supports entrepreneurship, business growth, and personal enterprise. The Alabama Entrepreneurship Institute is a campus-wide initiative powering the programs that are offered at The EDGE.

