SPECIAL PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Centers of Excellence

Institute for Innovation and Economic Development

In today’s world, the shift to complexity and the need for rapid changes is all around us— in our corporations, institutions, and non-profit organizations. Finding ways to assist leaders to implement change and learn new ways of thinking, behaving, and doing is what the offerings that the Institute for Innovation and Economic Development provides. The chart highlights the areas of focus and the available programs. The Institute for Innovation and Economic Development supports students, industry, and government with university resources in four areas:

Innovation and Entrepreneurship: Supporting the University and regional need for building a strong entrepreneurial and business creation culture the Institute hosts the Generator, (https://www.una.edu/business/the-generator.html#Generator)UNA's student incubator, and co-working space. The Generator Student Club meets weekly during the semester. Students are mentored as they participate in startup competitions, launch their own startups and seek financial support. The Institute is a key collaborator on Shoals Shift (http://www.shoalsshift.com/), the region's tech movement which includes startup competitions, mentorship weekends, pre-seed and angel funding, and meetups.

Economic Development: The Institute prepares a variety of economic development reports to private and public organizations, including impact analysis, market assessments, feasibility studies, customer perception surveys, retail market analyses, geospatial assessments, and salary surveys.

Corporate Consulting: The Institute provides experts in business services, including human resources, marketing, management, sales, accounting, finance, economics, business law, and information systems. The Institute can help solve real-world business problems. Collaborative Agile Strategy: The Institute is the home of the Agile Strategy Lab (https://agilestrategylab.org/#ASL) and the Strategic Doing Institute (https://strategicdoing.net/#SD) which are at the forefront of research in agile strategy and the science of complex collaboration. Our staff is certified/trained in several agile strategy methods that can assist a community, organization, or company to compete in today's global world.

Center for Learning and Professional Development (https://www.una.edu/professionaldevelopment/)

Our mission is to provide lifelong learning opportunities for people of all ages in the Shoals area and beyond. We serve as the University’s primary means of extending its educational and training resources to the non-traditional student, especially to adults seeking continued personal and professional development, and to employers seeking updated workplace skills and productivity-improving knowledge.

The Center for Learning and Professional Development is located in the UNA East Campus Building, at 1640 Tune Avenue, Florence AL 35630. Parking and classroom access is located behind the building. Most of UNA’s Continuing Education classes take place at the East Campus. Classroom assignments will be given in your confirmation letter after registration.

The Generator (https://www.una.edu/business/the-generator.html)

UNA's student innovation incubator is called the Generator and its goal is to assist students who desire to start a business or commercialize their innovations with resources and expertise. The Generator is open to all UNA students interested in starting or growing a business. Services include assisting new student business owners in developing a working business model, establishing their company and progressing to independent operations. Accepted students are given access to co-working space, connection with mentors from faculty and the business community, taught skills to become fiscally responsible, and provided guidance in solving the problems every newly launched venture faces.

The Generator offers an appropriate setting apart from the classroom which is crucial to making entrepreneurship a more integral part of the total student experience. Students are encouraged to work together to promote the success of each other's ventures and to demonstrate leadership by actively engaging and supporting entrepreneurial activities across campus. Students will be exposed to teaching that focuses on building sustainable companies.

The Generator is housed at 204 Tuscaloosa Street which is a 5 minute walk from campus and has almost 900 sq. ft. of co-working spaces. There are 5 rooms that have flexible configurations.

Contact: Mitch Hamm, Director; 256-765-4825; jhamm1@una.edu

Small Business Development Center (https://sbdc.una.edu/)

The mission of the Alabama SBDC at UNA is to strengthen Alabama's economy by providing high-quality one-on-one confidential assistance, training, and education to small businesses targeted for increasing employment, fostering growth, and improving financial stability.

The Alabama SBDC at UNA has been offering advising and training services at no cost to current and prospective small business owners in the area since its inception in 1980. The SBDC is located at 541 W College St Box 5250, Florence, AL 35632, and is part of the College of Business and Technology. SBDC advisors have years of experience in working with the small business community and are ready to assist with your business endeavors. The SBDC maintains a business library of books, publications, and videos at the Center available for use by the business community.

Steele Center for Professional Selling (https://www.steelesalescenter.com/)

Our Mission: To increase the prominence, credibility, and reputation of the sales profession by educating the next generation of sales professionals in an inclusive manner, in turn, providing a return on investment for students and their families as well as the corporate partners who support our center.

Our History: The University of North Alabama Center for Professional Selling was founded at UNA in 2012 by Jerome Gafford. In 2017, the center was renamed the Steele Center for Professional Selling, in honor of alumnus Robert H. Steele’s father. Mr. Steele has supported the sales center since 2017 and been an advocate for the center in the corporate community. Also in 2017, Dr. Timothy D. Butler became the director, adding Dr. Erin Gillespie in 2018 as the Coordinator for Corporate and Student Engagement. Since 2017, the sales center has grown from 68 sales majors and minors to now over 100.
Certificates

- Data Science Certificate (https://catalog.una.edu/undergraduate/colleges-programs/business/special-programs-activities/data-science-certificate/)
- Professional Selling Certificate (https://catalog.una.edu/undergraduate/colleges-programs/business/special-programs-activities/certificate-professional-selling/)
- Study Abroad Certificates (https://catalog.una.edu/undergraduate/colleges-programs/business/special-programs-activities/study-abroad-certificates/)

Accelerated Master's Program (AMP)

- Accelerated Master's Program - Business (https://catalog.una.edu/undergraduate/colleges-programs/business/special-programs-activities/accelerated20masters20program/)