

A-State student wins national competitive scholarship

University sees its first Goldwater Scholar in 25 years

BAYLEIGH FREEMAN

NEWS WRITER

Despite the past year of hardships brought on by COVID-19, students at A-State have remained committed to excelling academically. Fortunately, their hard work and determination in these unprecedented times has been rewarded.

Nathan May, a sophomore biotechnology major from Newport, is a perfect example of an A-State student who has been awarded for his achievements. He became the first A-State student in 25 years to win a Goldwater Scholarship.

"The Goldwater Scholarship is an undergraduate research scholarship given to students in the US," May said. "It is named after the late senator of Arizona, Barry Goldwater, as an endowment to the sciences, and it is the premier undergraduate scholarship for scientific research."

According to May, the Goldwater scholarship requires that its applicants must be

full time sophomore or junior students at a two to four year institution and have above a 3.0 GPA. In addition, scholarship guidelines require that each applicant is pursuing a career in either the natural sciences, mathematics, or engineering.

May emphasized that it is extremely competitive. "The scholarship is highly competitive, and only around two students are selected from each state," May said. "I was the only student selected from Arkansas this year."

May plans to pursue a PhD in Bioinformatics. As for what he wants to do with his degree, he said he wants to make a career out of scientific research.

Along with his classes, May said he has been committing extra time and work to better understanding his field. His tactic in this has been working with professionals in his free time.

"Right now I work with Dr. Sudeepa Bhattacharyya on healthcare data analytics," May said. "I also work in recombinant DNA with Dr. Jianfeng Xu at the Arkansas Bio-

sciences Institute here on campus as a part of an honors course I am taking this semester."

Adding to his resume, May says he says he spent the last summer working on tracking COVID-19 in Arkansas using R.

"This project and its statistical results were the basis of the paper I submitted as part of my scholarship application," May said.

May said he is very committed to his craft and is thrilled to have been selected for the Goldwater scholarship.

"I am excited about the doors it can open for me later on in life," May said, "Whether those be internships or externships or job opportunities."

In addition, he is proud to be a Red Wolf and said he is enlivened about the credit it brings to ABI and A-State.

"All of this just goes to show that A-State is a competitive research institution on a state, national and international level," May said.

Despite the pandemic, May said he is going to continue his work and is not going to let anything put a damper on his passion.



Photo by: Morgan Blankenship | Staff Photographer
Nathan May

Students travel across the U.S. during Spring Break

AN NGUYEN

NEWS WRITER

During the pandemic, many colleges and universities had decided to cancel Spring Break as an attempt to stop students from traveling. Nonetheless, A-State still allowed students to enjoy a full week off.

Houston and Austin, Texas, were two popular destinations for students to visit.

Ca Nguyen, a sophomore, said that she went to Texas to visit her grandparents. "It was warmer than Jonesboro, when I got back I felt really cold," Nguyen said.

Nguyen said she thinks that Asian food in Texas is better than in Jonesboro, and she had the chance to try a variety of Vietnamese dishes and boba.

"Traffic is horrible, but other things are amazing," she said. "Austin and Houston at night are breathtaking. I got to do a lot of things."

Yoshika Shibata, a sopho-

more who also spent a week in Houston, agreed that the weather was warmer compared to Arkansas. She chose to visit Williams Tower, Water Wall and the aquarium.

Shibata had some experience with Chinese, Japanese and Indian food during her trip.

Bang Dang, a junior, traveled to Nashville, Tennessee, for three days. She was welcomed with sunny and warm weather on her first and last day and a lot of rain on the second day.

"I went to a lot of museums and galleries, had a walk on Broadway, which is downtown of Nashville, ate at a conveyor belt hot pot and grill restaurant and drank some boba," Dang said.

She had to spend quite some money on the trip since the food and accommodations were costly.

"I normally rent Airbnb, but my boyfriend said since the trip is not very long, it's better be fancy so we can be comfortable," Dang said.

Since she spent most of her

time in museums and galleries, there were not a lot of people, and she protected herself by not going to crowded places, practiced social distancing and wearing a mask outside of her hotel room.

Fortunately, Dang and Shibata's professors did not assign any homework that was due during Spring Break.

"I didn't have to do homework because my assignments are due a week after the break," Shibata said.

Students said having a break helped with their mental health after two months of just studying. Shibata said traveling outside of Jonesboro is very exciting and helped refresh her mind. Since she did not have to study during her break, it was relaxing and prepared her to enter the last month of the semester.

Despite having an enjoyable time in Nashville, Dang felt her depression coming back when she saw the sign saying "Welcome to Jonesboro."

Bookstore switching to an online form

KRISHNAN COLLINS

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The Arkansas State campus bookstore is going completely virtual and could be changing companies as bids to operate and manage the bookstore were due toward the end of March according to a projected timetable in a request for proposal issued by A-State.

In the RFP issued by A-State, a projected timetable said the completion of proposal review and contract selection was scheduled for March 30, and intent to award letters will be emailed during the month of April. Whatever company wins the right to manage the bookstore will start July 1.

The initial contract awarded will be for one year, and the RFP states if the contractor and A-State mutually agree, the contract can be renewed by A-State for up to six additional one year terms but cannot exceed a total of seven consecutive years.

The RFP also specifically states, "The University

will no longer house an on-campus bookstore."

"One of the things we have talked about is taking the space where the current on-campus bookstore is, which has mostly become an apparel store, and converting that into a student success center and making that a place where we can allow students 24/7 access to a place where they can study," Damphousse said. "And to have access to printing stations and so on."

The current campus bookstore provider, Follett and Follett, does have the opportunity to bid on the bookstore according to Damphousse.

"Our plan is to think about how we're going to reuse that space to benefit students," Damphousse said. "Students have wanted a space that was open later than the library. Turning the library into 24/7 access is really difficult because of the configuration of it. Someone may come up with a better idea through the bidding process. So who knows what the ultimate outcome will look like."

Damphousse noted how more and more students are getting their textbooks through other ways than the on-campus bookstore. Online options, renting textbooks, virtual delivery and other bookstores all exist as other ways students can get their textbooks.

"The traditional model of only getting your books from the on-campus bookstore has been changing for years," Damphousse said. "That's why we wanted to see what kind of models out here would work better for us."

A-State Chief Communications Officer Dr. Bill Smith mentioned bookstores tend to spin up at the beginning and the end of semesters as students buy books to start the semester then return them at the end.

"It's a pop-up store," Smith said. "You could very well see your on-campus bookstore as something that does come into a space for those weeks for distribution and collection."

A-State provides student vaccine clinics on campus

MORGAN EDWARDS

STAFF WRITER

A-State continues to improve the safety of their students and faculty amid the coronavirus pandemic by hosting vaccination clinics for students.

The vaccine was offered from March 30 to April 1 in several different locations on campus. Each clinic administered the Pfizer vaccine.

As soon as Governor Asa Hutchinson announced students living in dorms were eligible to receive the vaccine, A-State organized clinics for students.

On March 30, a clinic was held at University Hall, the all-female freshman dorm, and March 31's clinic was at Arkansas Hall, the all-male freshman dorm. Students did

not have to live in the particular building to participate in that clinic. On April 1, students could get the vaccine at Centennial Hall, which is located in the Student Union.

A number of students taking the vaccine reported that they decided to take it to protect the health of fellow students. Others said they received the vaccine so they could stop wearing masks.

However, all students did not elect to receive the vaccine. Most students who did not receive the vaccine said that they felt they did not need it, but some said they wanted to see how others reacted before getting it.

The process of getting the vaccine on campus had several steps. Step one was reserving a time slot. Students took advantage of the opportunity and filled up time slots very quickly. Space was limit-

ed in each clinic, and most appointments were gone within minutes of Chancellor Dr. Kelly Damphousse's email announcement.

Step two was filling out personal information like medical history.

Then students had to be on time for the vaccination and present verification of registration.

Finally they received the shot which is administered in either arm. A second dose of the Pfizer vaccine must be administered three weeks after the first.

Damphousse has already announced that there will be vaccination clinics April 20 through April 22 in the same locations.

CAMPUS CRIME

TRISTAN BENNETT

NEWS EDITOR

March 31 | 11:31 a.m.

An officer was dispatched to the Dean B. Ellis Library in reference to a theft. Brandon Jones, head of Access & Delivery Services in the Library, stated that a student worker found a book that had the pages cut out of it and brought it to him.

The pages cut were one of the only two copies of artwork done by A-State students, and Jones believes they were taken on either March 26 or 27. They were cut smoothly and not torn out of the book.

The book is usually located on the third floor in the oversize section. There are no

cameras that capture this area.

April 1 | 12:47 p.m.

A University Police officer observed a vehicle run the stop sign at the intersection of Aggie Road and Marion Berry Parkway. He made contact with the driver, Kayla Jagers, who presented her driver's license. Dispatch informed him she had a search waiver on file from Probation and Parole.

Jagers told the officer there was nothing of concern in the vehicle, but there was a small bag containing marijuana along with a marijuana cigarette. The officers took possession of the drugs and issued Jagers a citation.