

Herald adviser to retire after 17 years of guiding student journalists

HERALD STAFF

REPORT

Sandra L. Combs, associate professor of journalism and adviser to The Herald, will retire following the Spring 2025 semester.

Combs began working at Arkansas State University in 2008, when she served as an assistant professor. She has been The Herald adviser since 2015, after the death of the previous adviser, Bonnie Thrasher.

The following statements are from Combs' previous and current students:



PHOTO COURTESY OF ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Sandra L. Combs, associate professor of journalism and adviser to The Herald. She will retire at the end of the spring semester.

Professor Combs has been an amazing teacher. She has helped lead and guide me as an aspiring Journalist in ways I can't even imagine. She has polished me to become a better writer and to strive to master AP Style in a way that impacts the industry of journalism. Her experience and her words of wisdom have pointed me in the direction to succeed as a student now, and she has given me amazing tips for the future. Professor Combs

is one of the best teachers I have ever had, always encouraging me to continue writing and to never give up. She always knew how to teach using her personality with a combination of her knowledge as a journalist. She will forever be remembered here at Arkansas State for her constant loyalty, boldness, and diligence. Wishing her the best retirement, she deserved all the flowers for her amazing career.

Since my collegiate journalism career began, Ms. Combs has been one of my biggest supporters.

So much of what I do and know today comes from her. Even when she would tear one of my stories apart during our weekly editor's meetings, it never came from a place of meanness. She only did to make me better, and I don't think I could have gotten this far without her encouragement, feedback and wisdom.

Even at my current job,

Ms. Combs was one of the most helpful professors I found at A-State. I took several of her classes and worked closely with her at The Herald. One thing I always liked and appreciated about Ms. Combs was she always pushed me and others to do better. She always had feedback on how to make your writing better. She always pushed people to want to do better. She instilled how important journalism was

There aren't words to describe how much Ms. Sandra L. Combs (don't forget the L!) means to me. As a young, Black woman trying to find my place on campus, she was always an encouraging force in my world. Ms. Combs is a great example of a focused, determined and accomplished woman and I

hope to be half the professional she is one day. On top of being a leader and guiding light in my academic ventures, she has also supported me in my endeavors beyond the classroom. It is truly a gift to know her. All the best to you in your next chapter, Ms. Combs, love you!



Benjamin McDowell is a Multimedia Journalism Sophomore. He is a staff writer at The Herald.



Rachel Rudd is a 2024 Creative Media Production graduate. She served as News Editor and Editor-in-Chief at The Herald. She now serves as Editor-in-Chief for Jonesboro Right Now.



Rebecca Robinson is a 2023 Multimedia Journalism graduate. She served as Sports Editor, News Editor and Editor-in-Chief at The Herald. She is now a reporter for KASU.



Destini Lattimore is a 2018 Multimedia Journalism graduate. She served as the Life Editor, News Editor and Editor-in-Chief at The Herald. She is currently a fashion stylist for Dest Dressed.

Campus state fair brings students together before finals

SHAYAAN SAYEED

SPECIAL TO THE HERALD

LAILA CASIANO

OPINION EDITOR

The Student Activities Board (SAB) hosted a campus state fair on the Heritage Plaza Lawn, featuring rides, games, food and entertainment for students.

Haley Cummings, assistant director of student activities and SAB adviser, said the event was designed to give students a break from academics and a chance to connect.

"It's about creating joy and building a sense of community," Cummings said.

She said the event also allows SAB leaders to develop and implement their own ideas.

"I hope students walk away with great memories, a stronger sense of belonging and the feeling that they're part of something special here at A-State," Cumming said.

This year's fair included a petting zoo, DJ set, airbrush hat stand, state fair food and carnival rides.

Lesliejo Sullivan, SAB's director of campus tradition, said planning began earlier this semester.

"We ensured that is something students are excited about by having many favorite activities from years past such as petting zoo, while also bringing in many fun surprises such as the airbrush hats," the junior criminology major from Little Rock said.

She said SAB gathered student input through



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE STUDENT ACTIVITIES BOARD

Students line up to pet a highland cow and other farm animals at the state fair.

Instagram polls during the planning process.

"The state fair is a great opportunity for students to have a fun night and have a much-needed break before finals," Sullivan said.

Students were required to check in on the A-State app to receive wristbands and tickets. Each student received three tickets: a red ticket for an entree (chicken strips with fries or corn dog), a blue ticket for dessert (fried oreos or funnel cake) and a white ticket for lemonade, which was limited to the first 500 attendees.

Louis Gonzalez, a junior biology major from Kansas City, Missouri, said he returned this year after enjoying the previous state fair.

"It was fun last year, it is looking fun this year, we got some nice music, got some good food going around,

some catfish," Gonzalez said. He said campus events are often under-promoted.

"There are a lot of events going around, a lot of nice things, cool things going around, a lot of free things going around that people just don't know about," Gonzalez said.

"If we just have more or better promotion or better student engagement, it would be a much more lively and fun campus."

Gabrielle White, a sophomore wildlife, fisheries and conservation major from Paragould, said she also attended last year's event and noticed an increase in activities this time.

She said the rides and funnel cake were her favorite parts and that campus events like this one help reduce stress before finals.

CONTINUED:
FAIR, 4A

Lupine Wellness Center grows services, builds stronger community connections

BENJAMIN MCDOWELL

STAFF WRITER

The Lupine Wellness Center is expanding its outreach and services as it continues to serve both the campus and local community with accessible mental health support.

Formerly known as the Howls Center, the newly rebranded Lupine Wellness Center is operated by Arkansas State University faculty, staff and advanced graduate-level clinicians. It functions as a training and research center designed to enhance the education of counseling students while offering affordable therapy and wellness services.

Jessica Rainwater, the Lupine Wellness Center's marketing and public relations officer, said the team is currently collaborating with the Wilson Counseling Center and is actively reaching out to local organizations.

"We're starting to build more partnerships as we go. It's going to expand," Rainwater said. "Right now, we're working on the rebrand, but once that's over we're back to it."

The center is affiliated with the H.O.W.L. Transition Program, which provides the A-State experience to students with



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF THE LUPINE WELLNESS CENTER

Graphic depicts the Lupine Wellness Center logo.

intellectual and developmental disabilities and/or autism.

Available services include individual counseling, academic interventions, play therapy, couples and family therapy, expressive arts counseling, social skills training, behavioral parent training and psychoeducational workshops. Services are free for A-State students and offered to others on a sliding fee scale, with no insurance required.

One new collaboration includes the Single Parent Scholarship Association, which recently asked the center to begin hosting regular sessions for single parents seeking mental health support.

Savannah Cormier and Ashley Williams Whitley, co-directors of the center, said they focus on the clinical development of counseling students and emphasize staying

updated on mental health trends through conferences, research and social media.

"We're in a unique position—we're located on a college campus and we're also a community clinic," Cormier said. "So we're available to both worlds but we have to actively work to immerse ourselves back into the community."

Whitley said the center's recent recognition for its community impact allows them to build their network.

"We were recently nominated for the 2025 Community Champion Award for our outstanding work, leadership and efforts in collaboration and we won," she said.

CONTINUED:
LUPINE, 4A