

# First-year students showcase projects at annual expo

**BENJAMIN MCDOWELL**  
**STAFF WRITER**

The First-Year Experience (FYE) Academic Expo, a showcase of first-year students' research, philanthropy, creativity and connections, was held Thursday. Projects featured mostly focused on degree-specific exploration and hands-on learning. Students developed and executed a service project for the campus or the surrounding community for the expo. Shaquita Renelique, director of the FYE, oversaw the planning, coordination and execution of the expo. She said her role included guiding the overall vision, supporting faculty as they prepared their student groups, coordinating logistics with campus partners and ensuring the event aligned with the goals of the making connections program.

"This year's expo had our largest participation to date, with more than 1,200 first-year students taking part. The variety of projects was broader than ever, and the energy in the room reflected a level of engagement we're really proud of. We also streamlined some of our processes, such as the judging rubric and project categories, which helped create a more consistent and transparent experience for students," Renelique said. The FYE director said the event was a campus-wide effort, with success often determined by collaborations and support from the many organizations on campus. Macy Ward, a first-year nursing major from Barton, Arkansas, said she used what she learned from her making connections course to create a pediatric cart for St. Bernards Hospital. Ward and her group themed their project around

the children's show "Bluey." The cart included items like pinwheels, bubbles, coloring books and crayons. Ward said the purpose of the cart was to bring joy to hospitalized children and alleviate some of the dread associated with hospitals, especially during the respiratory season. Ward said working with her team helped her learn that simple acts, like providing a cart filled with fun items, can significantly improve children's hospital experiences. "I think the thing that I learned the most is something so simple, such as just taking a cart with coloring books and pinwheels, can be so helpful. And so I think one thing that I took away is, whatever you do, wherever you go, you can bring joy in it," Ward said. Brinley Beville, a first-year nursing major from Jonesboro, said her group's project was about collecting donations for the

NICU at St. Bernards Hospital. The NICU, established in 2012, provides care for premature babies. The project involved purchasing items from an Amazon list for the NICU, which often faces financial constraints. "I think that the impact that we had was providing things to people who may not be able to even afford those things, or even the hospital. I know that the hospital is limited on how much they can spend on their babies, like little blankets, pacifiers, things like that. Patients sometimes struggle with the cost of health care nowadays, so I think that collecting items and donating them really made an impact on the NICU, especially the nurses," Beville said. Lily Agee, a first-year student from Paragould and Cross Fowler from Wheatley, Arkansas, both political science majors, said their project was to educate others on voting



Photo by Benjamin McDowell | Staff Writer

**First-year students extract DNA from strawberries during the First-Year Experience Academic Expo. With the record number of enrollment, more than 1,200 students participated.**

rights. Agee said she feels like a lot of people are unaware of the history of voting rights.

**CONTINUED:  
EXPO, 4A**

# BAM showcases local talent in the "Inspired 11" Exhibition

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**STAFF WRITER**

The Bradbury Art Museum (BAM) hosted its annual reception for local students selected to be in the "Inspired 11" exhibition this Thursday. "Inspired" is a yearly, competitive exhibition offered to regional high school students in ninth through 12th grade. The exhibition allows these students to experiment and present their own art to the community. Dana Bruff, a high school art teacher at Valley View School District, said "Inspired" is a valuable opportunity for students. "What they learn is the talent that we have like in our community and in other high schools, and we do it every year

just for them to be able to be exposed to how amazing other high schools are at art, how good other students their age are at art, and be inspired by that to go out of the box and create even more cool stuff every year," Bruff said. The road to being featured in the "Inspired" exhibition is a lengthy one. Students first visit the Bradbury Art Museum as a school tour to see current exhibitions and choose artworks to influence their work. This year's professional exhibitions included "Stil/Leven, Still/Even," "Taking Up Space," and "Echoes of Silent Migration." After their visit, students spend a few weeks creating their own artwork based on what they saw on their tour. They can copy color schemes, art styles, techniques, or just



Photo by Ella Dobson | Staff Writer

**McMahan and Faal present awards to Inspired winners. McMahan is the interim museum director and curator and Faal is an artist whose work is displayed in the museum.**

imagery that they liked. When they're finished, the works are submitted to BAM for judging. Ashlynn Monroe, a senior

from Walnut Ridge High School and winner of the Art and Design Department's Emerging Artist Award, said

she loved the "Inspired" process. "Coming to the museum was a little shocking at first. I've never been to an art museum before and it was fun having so much freedom with this, because I could pick anything and do whatever I wanted with it. So that was really nice," Monroe said. "It gives a lot of other students in high school like me an opportunity to get out there with our art." The submitted pieces were judged by BAM employees and Somayeh Faal, an artist whose work is currently displayed in the museum. This year, Abigail Loggins from Bay High School won first place, McKenna Shipman won second place, and Jessie Dale won third. Other students were selected for a variety of recognitions,

including the Excellency in Drawing Award, Juror and BAM Staff Merit Awards and the aforementioned Art + Design Department's Emerging Artist Award. Madeline McMahan, interim museum director and curator, said she hopes the event leaves a lasting impact on students. "I hope that they learn to be okay with taking the risk of applying for things, because being an artist, there's a lot of rejection involved, and you have to learn that it's not an indictment of you as a person or an artist when you get rejected," McMahan said. "So I hope that that's always the takeaway, especially for those who don't always get in—that they're less afraid going forward."

POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS

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# CAMPUS CRIME

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**ALLIE CARSON**  
**NEWS EDITOR**

**Nov. 17 | 4:36 a.m.**  
Officer Kevin Willis was dispatched to Arkansas Hall in reference to a student being harassed over social media. Upon arrival, Willis spoke with the victim. She said she met the suspect student, identified as the suspect, last year, and they exchanged contact information. The victim reported that at the beginning of the last school year, the suspect asked for her phone number. She said that he then began repeatedly calling and texting her. She blocked his number, but he continued to follow her on multiple social media platforms, including TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat and Facebook. She said that each time she blocked one of his accounts, he would create or use another account to add her again, primarily on Facebook. The victim wrote a voluntary statement. In her

statement, she said that on Oct. 12, she messaged the suspect and told him she was uncomfortable and asked him to stop contacting her and following her on social media. Despite this, she stated he continued to add her. She reported that the most recent incident occurred on Nov. 15, when he added her again on TikTok and she blocked that account as well. This report was completed for informational purposes only, as no criminal offense had occurred at the time the report was taken.

**Nov. 14 | 9:26 p.m.**  
Officer Cooper Roberts and Corporal Heidi Custodio were dispatched to the Pike house in reference to a welfare concern. Upon their arrival, they made contact with Associated Person One and the suspect. The suspect said she was concerned about the whereabouts of her boyfriend. She said she had concerns that he was trying to harm himself. At this time, Officer

Marcus Caskey was able to speak with Associated Person Two on the suspect's phone. Associated person two said he was by the pond at the pavilion on campus and that he was not going to harm himself. Upon arriving at the pond, Caskey made contact with associated person two, who was standing by a park bench. He said he was fine and explained that he and the suspect had gotten into an argument earlier in the day regarding his desire to leave school. He said he walked to the pond to clear his head and calm down. Caskey asked if he had made any statements about harming himself, and he said he had not. Caskey then asked if he would like a safety escort back to his dorm at North Park Quad, Building 4, and he stated that he would. During this time with Custodio, the suspect became very hysterical. Associated person one and Custodio were able to calm her down at times,

but spells of hysteria kept happening. While Custodio was understanding of the situation at hand, associated person two was speaking with Caskey and still on the phone, on speaker, where Custodio could hear the conversation. When associated person two told Caskey where he was so they could speak, the suspect was in a frantic state looking around her when she could hear the associated person on the phone saying, "I'm over here." The suspect's actions were of concern to Custodio, so she asked the suspect if she was in contact with the Wilson Counseling Center. She responded that she was. Custodio unsuccessfully attempted to contact the Wilson Counseling Center. During this time, Caskey transported associated person two to his dorm. They arrived at his building, where Caskey let him out of his patrol unit. Caskey asked Associated Person Two one last time if he was okay and if he

had any thoughts of harming himself. Associated Person Two reassured me that he was fine and did not wish to harm himself. With Custodio, the suspect said she wanted to go to her dorm to be with associated person two. The suspect said that she wanted to walk with associated person one. Custodio advised them both that if there was anything more they needed, to get back in contact with UPD. **Nov. 13 | 8:15 p.m.** Corporal Heidi Custodio and Officer Cooper Roberts were dispatched to the Reng Student Union in reference to a report of a stolen scooter. Upon their arrival, they made contact with the victim. He said he left his scooter outside the library and when he returned, his scooter was gone. The victim was able to give a serial number for his scooter and said it has scuff marks on the light. After reviewing the camera footage, they saw that at 6:13 p.m., three individuals took

the scooter from the north entrance to the library bike rack. One female wearing a white pullover jacket with blue jeans and red hair was seen taking the scooter, another female wearing a black jacket and gray pants with black hair was seen riding the scooter, and one male wearing a gray hoodie with a logo on the front and black pants was seen with them. The female wearing a black jacket rode the scooter to the student union and placed the scooter at the bike rack located at the southwest entrance. The three individuals then walked into the student union at 6:16 p.m. At this time, Custodio and Roberts were able to locate the scooter and match the serial number and return it to the victim. The individuals were unable to be located on cameras by dispatch until 6:36 p.m., leaving the south entrance of the library and in a black car.