



UNIVERSITY
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AT PINE BLUFF
1873

School of Agriculture, Fisheries and Human Sciences

Challenging Times Call for Creative Solutions



SAFHS 2021 Annual Report

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A Message from the Dean/Director

In planning for a productive year ahead, we at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB) School of Agriculture, Fisheries and Human Sciences (SAFHS), have first had to reflect on the events of the past year, a period that will forever be marked by the challenges and tragedies of the pandemic that affected us all. Looking back on how we handled the crisis – as individuals, as family members and as a School – reaffirms that times of adversity can show us where our strengths lie. As Americans across the country sought ways to help one another and make personal sacrifices for the greater good, our goal at SAFHS was to answer the call of duty to our constituents as quickly as possible.

Despite office closures and social distancing measures, our program leaders found new ways to support clientele. The Small Farm Program conducted an ambitious series of educational webinars for small-scale and underserved producers, allowing them to obtain the knowledge and tools to stay profitable. In place of traditional on-site demonstrations, the Family and Consumer Sciences department provided nutrition education through instructional videos, regular phone meetings, online video conferencing and direct mail to vulnerable populations at organizations such as schools, Head Start programs, food pantries, women’s shelters, senior living sites and substance abuse recovery sites. UAPB 4-H Youth Programs provided a wealth of entertaining educational activities to children and their parents stuck at home.

Credit is also due to SAFHS faculty and staff who persevered, managing to mentor and inspire students during trying times. And the fact our students excelled and achieved despite having to forgo the benefits and memories of a more traditional year on campus is a testament to their resilience.

This 2021 report is evidence of our School’s creative approach to problem solving and ability to achieve in times of crisis. UAPB’s 1890 land-grant mission in Extension situates us in a unique position to help protect and support the communities we serve. Since Extension started in the 19th century, our role has been to provide information to our constituents to help them improve their quality of life. Our methods are more technologically advanced today, but our mission remains unchanged.

Sincerely,

Dr. Doze Y. Butler

SAFHS Dean/Director



Dr. Doze Y. Butler

*“We are what we repeatedly do.
Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.”*

– Aristotle

UAPB Extension Specialist Leads Efforts to Donate Sweet Potatoes to Pine Bluff Citizens



Doug Talley, graduate of the Sobriety Living Center, left, picks up a donation of sweet potatoes from Shaun Francis, Extension horticulture specialist, right.

Shaun Francis, Extension horticulture specialist for SAFHS, has been leading the School's recent efforts to "sweeten" the lives of Pine Bluff residents. He currently oversees donations of UAPB-grown sweet potatoes to community organizations that serve citizens, including some vulnerable populations.

So far, SAFHS has donated around 1,200 pounds of the nutritious root vegetable to organizations including senior citizen centers, halfway houses and addiction recovery centers, helping feed around 230 people altogether. Additionally, the School donated over 2,000 pounds of sweet potatoes to the City of Pine Bluff for an event meant to encourage local participation in the 2020 census.

Held in the parking lot of the Arts and Science Center for Southeast Arkansas, the "Census Roundup" event allowed citizens to easily participate in the census. According to Pine Bluff Mayor Shirley

Washington, completing the census allows citizens to shape their community for the next 10 years.

"It will determine how much federal funding for services such as our hospitals, health care, fire departments, schools and education, and public transportation will be provided," she said. "The census also plays a vital role in determining how many representatives from our area will be sent to Congress."

Mayor Washington said the census process is designed to be easy and convenient, and on average, it only takes about 10 minutes to complete. This year, however, for the first time, many households were expected to complete the questionnaire online. Because a number of families in Pine Bluff lack internet access, the Mayor's Census Complete Count committee started hosting Census Roundup events throughout the city. At the events, citizens are able to show up to designated wireless hotspots and complete

the census in their cars using Chromebook tablets distributed by volunteers.

Mayor Washington said UAPB-grown sweet potatoes were given to participants of the first Census Roundup as a token of gratitude.

“The sweet potatoes were a hit and made a positive, healthy impact,” she said. “The families were excited by the fact that they were given fresh sweet potatoes that were homegrown at UAPB. We also gave each family a flyer that shared with them the nutritional value of sweet potatoes, along with several simple recipes. Even citizens who had completed the census came by for a bag of sweet potatoes. We are so grateful to Mr. Francis and his team for their hard work and generosity in providing the much-appreciated donation to the City of Pine Bluff.”

Over the course of donation efforts, in addition to the sweet potatoes themselves, UAPB has been providing recipes and practical tips on their preparation. Staff members of UAPB’s 1890 Cooperative Extension Program have provided administrators of community organizations with instructions on how to store and cook the sweet potatoes, which are an excellent source of vitamin A and fiber.

“One of the organizations we regularly work with is St. John Alexander Tower, a living facility for low-income senior citizens,” Marilyn Burch, Extension associate-foods and nutrition for UAPB, said. “The residents who participate in our Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) cooking classes received a donation of sweet potatoes, which provide a source of nutrients and help ensure their food security for the month.”

Covenant Recovery, an organization that rehabilitates the previously incarcerated and those recovering from substance abuse, received a donation of sweet potatoes. Phillip Etheridge, education specialist for the organization, said the donation allowed the staff to prepare healthy and nutritious meal options.

Jennifer Stewart, facility coordinator at Sobriety Living Center said, “Our organization allows men who are released

from incarceration to obtain a support system that will allow them to remain clean, sober and employed so that they can become productive members of society. Kitchen staff were able to utilize the sweet potatoes and the recipes provided by UAPB to make a variety of meals for the men.”

According to Marcie Johnson, drug court counselor, Pine Bluff Adult Probation enhances public safety by enforcing state laws and court mandates through community partnerships and evidence-based programs that hold offenders accountable while engaging them in opportunities to become law-abiding, productive citizens.

“Our clients took home some sweet potatoes, which helped them feed their families,” she said. “The donation helped extend their food budget. Plus, they were excited to try the various recipes they were given.”

The sweet potatoes were also included as part of boxed donations at a university food distribution event in May. The UAPB Lions Cabinet Food Pantry held the event to provide nutritious foods and ingredients to current UAPB students living in the Pine Bluff area. Along with their sweet potatoes, students received recipes and information on safe storage.



Shaun Francis has been overseeing UAPB’s recent efforts to donate university-grown sweet potatoes to community organizations that serve citizens, including some vulnerable populations.

UAPB Specialists Work to Restore Aquatic Vegetation at DeGray Lake



Traditional and down-imaging sonar images of coontail, left, with actual coontail collected by a weed collection rake from the same location at DeGray Lake, right.

Faculty and staff at the UAPB Department of Aquaculture and Fisheries continue to make progress on a number of research projects that benefit the university's partners and the Arkansas public. As part of one ongoing initiative, Scott Jones, small impoundment Extension specialist, has been poring over recent video footage shot with a submersible drone in the depths of DeGray Lake, located in southwest Arkansas in the Ouachita Mountains foothills.

Jones said the recording documents his attempts in getting familiar with operating the new underwater drone technology. The video takes viewers on a journey from over the side of a boat, through surface waters and down to the lakebed.

"We travel through a plethora of aquatic plants and past obstacles such as submerged logs," Jones said. "Gliding over carpets of macroalgae, we encounter species such as black bass, suckers, catfish and turtles along the way."

Surveillance of the lakebed is one component of an Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

(AGFC) effort to reestablish aquatic vegetation in DeGray Lake, Jones said. Because UAPB recently established a line of research specifically addressing the habitat needs of fish, the AGFC is collaborating with UAPB's research laboratory for assistance in reestablishing native aquatic plants as a way to benefit the lake's fish populations and overall biodiversity.

Jones said DeGray Lake once had one of the strongest black bass fisheries in the state and also supported an abundant aquatic plant community. By 2010, however, a combination of biotic (animal) and abiotic (weather) factors negatively influenced the ability of aquatic vegetation to survive and reproduce. The result was a near complete loss of submersed aquatic plants in the lake.

"At the same time, the quality of the black bass fishery declined to the point that anglers began requesting AGFC intervention regularly," he said. "While it's difficult to find empirical evidence that an abundance of aquatic plants was directly responsible for a healthy black bass fishery in DeGray Lake, numerous studies have shown that fisheries tend to respond

strongly to the condition of the aquatic plant community. Plants provide multiple benefits including the provision of important habitats for aquatic taxa.”

Efforts to reestablish aquatic vegetation in the lake commenced in 2019. The project was initiated after James Arnold, owner of the Arkansas Bass Team Trail (ABTT) who has lived near DeGray Lake his whole life, approached UAPB aquaculture/fisheries staff to discuss his ideas on ways to enhance the lake’s black bass fishery. Public, private and casual discussions eventually turned into a partnership between AGFC, UAPB and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

“It was determined that one of the primary goals for reestablishment of native aquatic plants in DeGray Lake would be to enhance its overall ecological integrity and promote healthy populations of recreationally-important fish species,” Jones said.

At the start of the project, AGFC and UAPB personnel had to come up with a way to plant aquatic vegetation considering the challenges associated with a flood-control and power-generation reservoir. The specific hydrological characteristics make traditional planting techniques difficult because the ideal depth range for plants is very narrow and shifts depending on the season and year.

“Reservoirs like DeGray Lake regularly experience substantial water level fluctuation,” Jones said. “Aquatic plants in these reservoirs can only survive in a narrow range of water depths. It can be challenging for plants to survive both at greater depths when the lake rises during the wet spring season or when they become exposed when the lake level decreases during dry summer and fall seasons.”



Jamie Kindschuh, UAPB graduate student of aquaculture and fisheries, pilots a submersible drone at DeGray Lake.

The AGFC installed eight floating vegetation dispersion cages on navigation buoys in DeGray Lake to account for the challenges of planting vegetation. The floating cages are not influenced by water level fluctuation, allowing them to effectively disperse plants regardless of weather conditions in a given year.

“The AGFC stocked the cages with coontail, an aquatic plant native to Arkansas that can spread by stem fragments,” he said. “As waves and current flow through the cages, fragments of coontail stems break away and drift until they settle on the lake bottom. Some of those stems should attach to the bottom and begin new colonies of the plant.”

To ensure a steady stock of native aquatic plants for the project, coontail, American pondweed and eelgrass are being grown in greenhouses at DeGray Lake. The greenhouses contain shallow pools of water in which the aquatic plants are grown in small planter pots and trays.

In 2019, coontail plants were grown in the greenhouses until mature, then transported by boat to the floating plant cages, Jones said. The cages were loaded until completely full and allowed to disperse plants throughout the year.

“When a cage started getting low on plants, it was reloaded with fresh coontail from the greenhouse,” he said. “The floating cages were removed in early winter for evaluation and maintenance.”

The UAPB team is currently evaluating the success of project efforts up to this point using the submersible drone, as well as boat-mounted sonar. Specifically, they are monitoring the estimated area coverage of aquatic plants and species composition.

“The increase in abundance of submerged aquatic plants will increase the abundance of microbes and both invertebrate and vertebrate primary consumers, including several species of baitfish, crawfish and snails,” Jones said. “In turn, this will increase the populations of secondary predators such as black basses and crappie.”

Vegetation may also provide anglers a more defined area to target for fishing and increase catch rates. Encouraging the spread of abundant native aquatic plants could also help slow the spread of non-native plant species, Jones said.

UAPB SNAP-Ed Recommendations Help Pine Bluff Resident Adopt Healthy Exercise, Eating Habits



Paris Brown does alternating side lunges, one of the exercises she learned through UAPB SNAP-Ed programming.

In June 2020, Paris Brown, a 49-year-old resident of St. John Alexander Tower in Pine Bluff, decided to start out on a health and weight loss journey. In just over three months, she lost 10 pounds thanks to adopting healthy exercise and eating habits.

Brown said she decided to start making more healthy lifestyle changes to achieve a healthier weight and alleviate some of her knee pain. She went from walking in the mall and around the Pine Bluff High School track to walking the stairs at St. John Alexander Tower and around the parking lots.

Brown credits much of her success to her participation in cooking classes offered through the UAPB Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed). She started participating in the program four years ago after she moved to St. John Alexander Tower and was approached by Marilyn Burch, Extension associate-foods and nutrition for UAPB.

"Thanks to UAPB SNAP-Ed, I learned how to read food labels, cut back on high salt food items and select the best types of fruits," Brown said. "Using the recipes Ms. Burch provides has been very beneficial. I have also learned to have control and get up from the table when I'm full."

Burch said she encouraged Brown to start small, set realistic goals and practice patience while waiting for results. She also emphasized that variety and moderation are important parts of establishing a healthy eating pattern.

"Ms. Paris inspires others by living by example," Burch said. "She is visible with physical activity and as she shares her nutritional successes or challenges with others. She often tells her neighbors and friends about the featured SNAP-Ed recipes she prepares."

Burch said the main challenges for the people she works with who want to lose weight or be healthier overall include self-control (resisting their food temptations and cravings), time-management and endurance/perseverance.

"One of the most important things for people to remember when they want to adopt new healthy habits is to start small so the body and digestive system can adapt slowly and not be thrown in shock," Burch said. "It is also important to make a conscience choice to incorporate a new fruit and/or vegetable every week to broaden their food variety."

People should also remember to extend physical activity every session, she said. For example, if someone does five minutes of walking today, then tomorrow they should add one or two more minutes. It is important to always add to the foundation.

After her months of consistent exercise and weight loss, Brown also has a few practical tips for people looking to get healthier.

"Throw away the salt and eat healthier fruits and vegetables," she said. "Go power walking after eating instead of eating after power walking. And remember not to eat after 7 p.m."

UAPB SNAP-Ed is a part of the university's 1890 Cooperative Extension Program, which currently serves Jefferson, Lincoln, Monroe and Ashley Counties. Its mission includes teaching Arkansans the importance of proper nutrition and physical activity.

Howard County Landowner Furthers Family Farm Legacy Through Partnership with UAPB Forestry Program



Members of the UAPB Keeping it in the Family (KIITF) Sustainable Forestry and African American Land Retention program and representatives of the Adamson Estate participate in a sign installation ceremony that recognized their family land in Howard County, Arkansas as a certified American Tree Farm. From left: Kandi Williams, UAPB-KIITF outreach coordinator, Helen Adamson, one of the estate's owners, Norman Ransom Adamson Jr., Helen's son, Justin Mallett, KIITF program partner, and Joe Friend, UAPB forester.

Over the course of the past few years, Shawn Boler has figured out ways to be actively involved in his family's forestland from afar. As an absentee landowner and participant in UAPB's Keeping it in the Family (KIITF) Sustainable Forestry and African American Land Retention program, he manages and improves his family's land in Howard County, Arkansas from his home in Torrance, Los Angeles County, California.

His active stewardship of the land has paid off. This year, the family farm, known as the "Adamson Estate," was recognized as a certified American Tree Farm and Arkansas Century Farm.

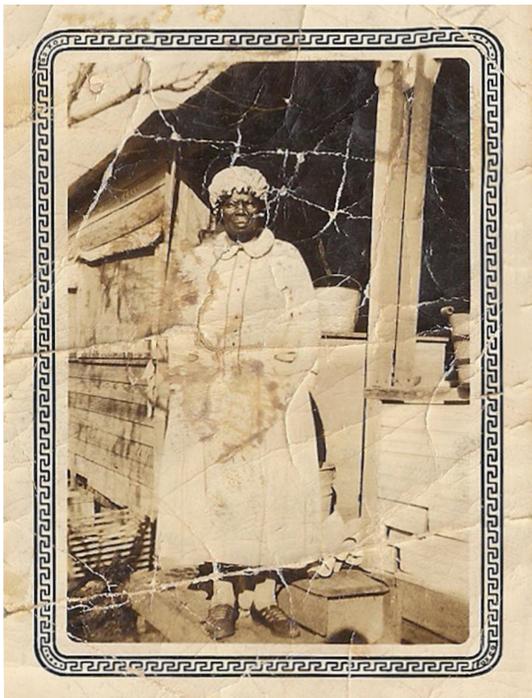
Boler said his career in the automotive aftermarket industry has taken him across the U.S., and he regularly collaborates with business partners from China. To this day, however, the small town of Center Point, Arkansas, where his great-grandfather purchased land over 120 years ago, plays a crucial role in his life.

"As you entered town, there used to be a sign that said, 'Center Point: Population 144,'" he said. "I have always said that of those 144 people, I am probably related to 155. Everyone there is related by some distant relative. It's been that way forever."

Boler said Center Point was primarily an agricultural community when his grandparents lived there. Over time, Center Point's residents have since scattered across the country, working in different urban centers in a variety of professions.

"Since living in California, I have actually stumbled upon relatives from Center Point," he said. "It was two or three years before I realized one of my grandfather's sister's grandsons lives nearby."

Boler has long been interested in his family's history and has taken it upon himself to study his family tree as well as the legacy of the Adamson Estate.



Nancy Whitmore Adamson, Boler's great-grandmother.

"As best I can tell in reviewing the original handwritten deed, my great-grandfather, Ransom 'Tack' Adamson, paid the Callahan family \$700 for the 60-acre farm, which is pretty much bordered by Bluegrass Road and Highway 26, on April 20, 1896," he said. "They agreed to installment payments that ended in 1901. My great-grandfather and great-grandmother, Nancy Whitmore Adamson, had 12 children and managed livestock and crops."

Boler recalls hearing stories about livestock getting loose and crossing the road. As a child, he and his cousins would play in the log cabin his great-grandparents originally lived in. The structure stood on the land until it was pushed down in 2019.

Boler's personal connection to the land and to Center Point began when he was 10 years old. When his mother, Joyce Annette Adamson Boler, passed away from breast cancer, his father, Leo Roscoe Boler I, moved his children to the family farm in Center Point.

The transition from Chicago to rural Arkansas proved challenging for Boler.

"At the time I was a husky city boy wearing polyester pants, cotton shirts and Buster Brown tie-up shoes," he said. "My cousins in Center Point, on the other hand, were all wearing overalls and cowboy boots. At the time I didn't like living there. But I look back on that time very fondly. I reminisce on memories hunting squirrels and deer, fishing, pulling up potatoes from the vegetable garden and swiping peaches from the neighbor's field."

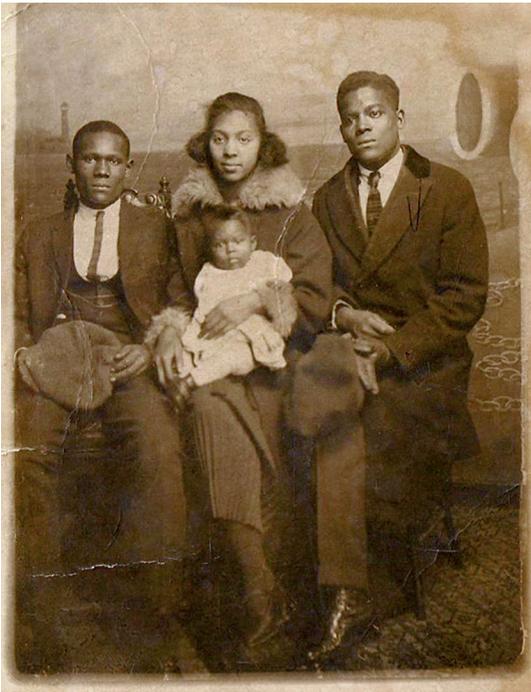
Living on the land, Boler had to get used to a number of new responsibilities, which included helping his grandfather, Morris Adamson, feed chickens at the local chicken farm.

"My grandfather would wake me at 3 a.m. and we would drive to the chicken houses," he said. "I remember those long early morning hours, walking through sawdust and chickens, manually putting cornmeal in the feeders."

Boler's grandfather Morris and his twin brother, Forrest, grew up on the family land. In the 1920s, they left town for St. Louis together in search of greater opportunities. There, they played in the Negro Baseball League. It is likely they played with and against Negro League stars and baseball Hall of Famers James "Cool Papa" Bell and Leroy "Satchel" Paige, Boler said.



Morris Adamson, Boler's grandfather, hunts on his farm.



Forrest Adamson, his wife, Nona Adamson and Morris Adamson in St. Louis. Morris and Forrest, his twin brother, grew up on the family land. In the 1920s, they left town for St. Louis together in search of greater opportunities. There, they played in the Negro Baseball League.

“At the time, my grandfather wasn’t making much money, and he had a family to provide for,” Boler said. “So, in the 1930s, he and my grandmother, Nobie Lee, came back to the farm in Center Point and stayed there for the rest of their lives. They lived in the old log cabin on a six-acre parcel of land and managed the family’s 60 acres.”

After his grandfather died, Boler’s uncle, Norman Adamson became executor of the land. In 1993, he signed up for the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forestry Incentives Program to receive management recommendations and a management plan. He made some progressive changes to the land, including the planting of 60 acres of trees.

“Towards the end of his life, my uncle told me he wanted the farm to be maintained and sustained for the future,” Boler said. “I remember expressing how much I really wanted to play an instrumental role in caring for the land and our family’s legacy. Later, in 2015, after my uncle passed away, my aunt, Helen Adamson, asked me to take over the 60 acres as executor. It was a huge honor.”

Boler said he feels much of his family’s legacy comes from strength. His great-grandfather showed strength in originally purchasing the land. His uncle was the first family member to go to college and showed strength in his career as a postmaster general, minister and farmer.

“I always wanted to follow in their footsteps,” Boler said. “I always felt I had a strong legacy to look toward. I want to be cast in that same sort of light.”

Boler said the Adamson Estate’s recognition as a certified American Tree Farm and Arkansas Century Farm is in some way a realization of this aspiration.

Kandi Williams, outreach coordinator for UAPB’s KIITF program, said when a landowner receives certification for their land as an American Tree Farm, it means that they stand among the best forestry stewards in the nation. To become eligible, individuals must develop a forestry management plan and implement forestry and/or wildlife conservation practices.

“Being recognized as a Century Farm is an astonishing accomplishment within its own right, but it is even more impressive to see an African-American family maintain and stay committed to being good stewards of the land by promoting healthy woodlands and wildlife habitats,” she said. “In the last century, African-American landowners have lost their land at an alarming rate, from approximately 16 to 19 million acres in 1910 to around 3.8 million acres in 2017.”

Williams said Boler’s participation in the KIITF program can serve as an example for other landowners. Justin Mallett, KIITF Program partner and county forester for the Arkansas Department of Agriculture-Forestry Division, developed a forestry management plan for Boler and helped him submit an application for recognition as a certified American Tree Farm. After multiple site visits and close work with KIITF team members, Boler’s goal was realized.

“Getting the official tree farm signs installed at our property was an emotional experience,” Boler said. “I shared that moment with my siblings and other heirs. They said my grandfather and uncle would have been

extremely pleased. To me, this moment means that the sweat and efforts of my great-grandfather have not gone unnoticed and are not forgotten. The strength of the family has paid off. It is a high honor – a foundation we can grow from for future heirs.”

Boler said collaboration with UAPB’s KIITF program has helped him develop a better understanding of ways to improve the land for future generations. Currently, program members are assisting him receive funding through the National Resources Conservation Service Conservation Stewardship Program for establishing fire lanes, thinning trees and sequential patch burning. He has also obtained Special Forestry Funds for surveying from the Sustainable Forestry and African American Land Retention Program.

Since he sees managing a tree farm remotely is feasible, Boler said he wants to convince other family members they can be actively involved in the land too. In the short-term, they have to make sure timber is sold. But by putting a proper corporate structure in place where the tree farm is the foundation, Boler believes he and other heirs can discover new revenue streams, including opportunities in agriculture, minerals, marketing and technology, philanthropy, business and education.

“For me, it’s not about money,” he said. “It’s about creating a mechanism to encourage others to give back and honor our ancestors’ legacy. It’s establishing a foundation for heirs.”

Boler said people of color, including landowners, have been socially disadvantaged and deprived for generations. In terms of opportunities, great disparities exist because of lack of education or systematic ills.

“Those ills have been identified and are now being isolated,” he said. “In our family’s case, we can now make this land more gainful. But it takes smart planning now. We need to make sure young heirs take the helm. They can better navigate the corporate structure with the education they have and are able to take advantage of knowledge gained in the private sector.”

Boler said he wants his family to think outside the box to determine ways to ensure opportunities for their family and for the community. He was excited when one heir expressed his desire to direct monetary inheritance toward a scholarship fund.

He sees the potential ability to give scholarships or stipends from farm proceeds as another reason it is important his family establishes a corporate structure. He is in the process of creating a cooperative structure called “R.A.E. Holdings,” and he wants his grandfather Morris’ siblings, Tena, Snow, Robbie, John, Milas and Forrest, represented as much as possible.

Boler said the town of Center Point holds a town meeting and celebration every two years. The celebration offers citizens, former residents and their descendants a chance to catch up with each other. At the next Center Point town meeting, he aims to unveil plans associated with his family’s land and share ways to get involved, including gainful non-agricultural pursuits.

He said he hopes his property will become a conversation starter and showplace that serves as an example for neighboring landowners, as well as those across the country who have also faced similar challenges and hurdles. He urges Arkansas landowners to look into opportunities with UAPB’s KIITF program and all landowners to be aware of available opportunities and resources.

“When I started working with the KIITF team, I had set the moon as my target,” he said. “I would have been happy just hitting the streetlight – but KIITF now has me aiming for galaxies. I am trusting KIITF project members with one of the greatest assets I have been given and am allowing them to show me ways the farm can reach full potential, becoming a testament to ancestors and a foundation for future descendants.”

UAPB Senior Touts Benefits of Education Abroad, Plans Program for Fellow Students



Alyssa Smith visits the Temple of Heaven in Beijing.

As she plans for graduation in May 2021, Alyssa Smith, a senior major of political science at the UAPB, has been working to ensure her peers have access to and interest in the types of study abroad programs she has taken part in. After having pursued a number of international learning opportunities both in high school and during her studies at UAPB, last year, she saw an opportunity to establish a program for UAPB students in the Central American country of Guatemala.

Smith first visited Guatemala when she was 13 years old. Motivated by a deep-seated drive to see more of the world and improve her Spanish fluency, she leapt at the opportunity to attend a Spanish language program for high school students.

“After I returned home, I wrote an essay entitled, ‘The Awakening,’” she said. “My eyes were opened to a lot of things. Before that trip, I felt I had always been searching for something more, and I wanted to know what the rest of the world was like. And after

I returned, I realized traveling, seeing other places and meeting other people were things I want to do my whole life.”

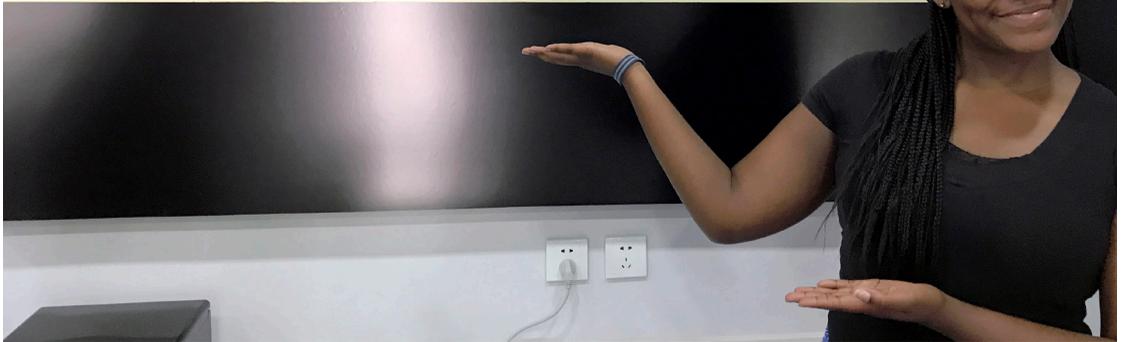
Smith continued to study Spanish language, and during her senior year at Central High School in Little Rock, she signed up for a week-long mission trip to Nicaragua.

“During that trip, I realized I was connecting with the people who lived there in a deeper way,” she said. “I had heard stereotypes about immigrants from places like Nicaragua in the U.S., and I had heard people use the blanket term ‘Mexicans’ to refer to all people from Central and South America. The experience in Nicaragua made me think about these generalizations and also that, at the end of the day, we are all the same and want the same things out of life.”

During her freshman year at UAPB, Smith decided to pursue a different kind of experience abroad. As part of a program sponsored by the HBCU – China Scholarship

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After taking part in a program in Beijing, China in 2017, Smith said she recommends the experience of studying abroad to students who are open to the idea of becoming familiar with a new culture and people.

Network, she spent nearly two months studying at the Beijing University of Chemical Technology in China's capital city in the summer.

"My going to China meant a great deal to me," she said. "At first, my family and friends didn't believe me or know what to think when I told them about my intentions. But after I returned, they started to get the picture that I won't let anything stop me once I put my mind to a goal."

The program in China reaffirmed her notions of the transformative nature of education and travel abroad. During the program, she enjoyed befriending other international students as well as locals.

"My time in Beijing opened my eyes to how 'normal' China really was," Smith said. "I liked the food, the people and the scenery. This trip humanized the people and place that I grew up hearing so many bad things about. It made me realize that I wanted to go back for a longer period of time."

After she returned to Arkansas, Smith started speaking to her peers about her experience and touting the value of education abroad. She also took part in a number of presentations hosted by the UAPB Office of International Programs and Studies (OIPS)

during which she spoke to other students about the ins and outs of study abroad and answered their questions.

During the summer after her sophomore year, Smith traveled to Antigua, Guatemala independently to participate in a two-month Spanish language program. After completion of her solo trip, Smith saw an opportunity to coordinate a study abroad program herself. She started working with Dr. Pamela D. Moore, associate dean for global engagement, OIPS, and Juan Carlos Martínez, director of Centro Linguístico La Unión (La Unión), to develop an internship program for UAPB students. She even contacted some of the people she met on her first trip to Guatemala at age 13 and asked if they would be willing to host UAPB students in their homes.

The following year, Smith's goal was realized. On her third trip to Guatemala, she was group leader for four UAPB students participating in a Spanish language internship that she initiated. This arrangement, which was facilitated by OIPS, enabled her to participate in the program as an intern working under the oversight of a designated staff person with La Unión. As preparation for the experience, she worked as an intern for OIPS under the mentorship of Dr. Moore.

“We at OIPS trusted Alyssa in this leadership role because of her previous experience and maturity,” Dr. Moore said. “When we see that particular students have a passion for education abroad, we try to fashion opportunities for them. In planning these opportunities, there is always a need to ensure the safety of students and simultaneously ensure they have a level of independence. This helps instill long-term confidence and leads to unique educational and career opportunities.”

Smith admits there were some challenges that coincided with travel abroad in a position of leadership; in addition to helping her peers with paperwork and the practicalities of travel abroad, she had to help them overcome doubts related to culture shock and help them adjust to cultural norms in Guatemala.

“We didn’t always agree on certain things, but the memories we made as a group were unforgettable,” she said. “I sat back at the closing ceremony and thought, ‘I’ve done it.’ Juan Carlos gave me credit for accomplishing what I set out to do, and my peers said they were grateful for me. I then was filled with motivation to get more people who look like me to destinations like this.”

Smith said she hopes the UAPB program in Guatemala continues to operate for years to come.

“I see opportunities for the program to grow and for both UAPB students and Guatemalans from communities across the country to benefit from an exchange of ideas,” she said. “For example, we must connect with the Afro-Guatemalans and share our experiences. The things they are currently fighting for in their society are the things African Americans fought for a few decades ago.”

Smith said she tells other African American students that study abroad opportunities can be affordable. Though some colleagues worry education abroad programs will be too expensive, she insists low-cost opportunities and scholarships exist.

For those new to education or travel abroad, she recommends looking for programs relatively close to home. She also says it is worth staying in a new location for at least

one month to get a better feel for the people, culture and customs.

“In my opinion, it’s best to build up your experience step-by-step to see what you are comfortable with,” she said. “I started in Guatemala for one week and knew that in case of an emergency, my parents could come get me. Eventually, I returned to Guatemala for two months and enjoyed adjusting to a longer stay. In turn, the study abroad trip to Beijing pushed me to try a much longer-term stay in China.”

In the fall of 2019, Smith moved to Shanghai, China and started coursework for a year-long Chinese language program at Shanghai Normal University. Due to the pandemic, however, the university was temporarily closed, and Smith unexpectedly had to return to Arkansas.

Smith, currently a member of the Peace Corps Prep Program at UAPB, plans to join the Peace Corps after graduation. In considering the future, she is certain she wants to enable young people from backgrounds similar to her own to become more globally oriented.

“I want more people who look like me to benefit from the kinds of experiences I have had,” she said. “They stand to see the world in a different way and gain entirely new perspectives and opportunities.”

Local 4-H'er's Recipe Included in New Digital Cookbook



Naomi Jimenez makes cookies at home.

Cooking is one of her favorite hobbies. Now, one of her favorite recipes has been included in the new *4-H Fresh Chefs* digital cookbook.

Naomi Jimenez is a member of the YEAH8 4-H Club. Her recipe was chosen for the cookbook that features nearly 50 recipes from 4-H'ers, supporters and 4-H alumni including chef, author and Tennessee 4-H alumna Carla Hall. The cookbook includes healthy, everyday recipes and dishes for youth and families.

The *4-H Fresh Chefs* digital cookbook is part of the National 4-H Council's 4-H Healthy Habits program funded by the Walmart Foundation. Launched in 2012, the 4-H Healthy Habits program has reached over one million youth from across the country with nutrition education and physical activity, with an intentional focus on populations who face challenges in achieving positive health outcomes.

Jimenez was encouraged to submit her recipe by her mother, Teki K. Hunt, director of 4-H/youth programs at UAPB.

"Recipes were solicited around the time everyone was shutting down due to COVID-19," Hunt said. "I suggested to my daughter that she submit her shredded BBQ chicken sandwich recipe because it is pretty easy and a lot healthier than pulled or shredded pork BBQ," Hunt said.

A 9th grader at Watson Chapel Jr. High in Pine Bluff, Jimenez also enjoys playing basketball, reading and listening to music. Cooking has remained one of her top favorite things to do.

"I like to cook because it's fun and I enjoy making food for myself and others," Jimenez said. "I love cooking shows and I like to try new things."

She hopes to one day get a chance to go on a cooking show, her mom said. "Perhaps one day she will 'Beat Bobby Flay.'"

The pandemic has caused more families to cook at home. Since she already enjoyed cooking, the opportunity to cook more often has been a welcome pleasure.

"With school out (due to COVID-19) my mom didn't want us eating junk, so we tried creating different recipes," Jimenez said. "Mom is always talking about 'eat your colors,' so that is how the bell peppers were added to the recipe. This meal is served on wheat buns because that is a whole grain. You can add tomato and lettuce or coleslaw to your sandwich to make the meal at least half fruits and vegetables."

This is the third year that UAPB's 4-H and Family and Consumer Sciences programs have partnered to provide the Healthy Habits program through the Walmart Foundation's Healthy Habits grant through the National 4-H Council.

“Our motto is, ‘Eat Smart-Move More,’” Hunt said.

The Jefferson County YEAH8 4-H club leader is Laura Hildreth. She has been involved with the program for five years.

“Naomi’s recipe looks delicious and I am definitely going to try it,” Hildreth said. “I am so proud of her and I am thankful 4-H has been so great in encouraging healthy eating,

living and lifestyle. Naomi you rock and I can’t wait for your next recipe.”

The *4-H Fresh Chefs* digital cookbook can be found at <https://4-h.org/parents/healthy-living/cookbook/>. Jimenez’s original recipe for Shredded Chicken BBQ Sandwiches is found on page 33 of the cookbook. Below is her recipe.

FRESH CHEFS

Recipes from 4-H youth, celebrity alumni and supporters, featuring Celebrity Chef, Author, 4-H Healthy Habits Program Ambassador and Tennessee 4-H Alumna, Carla Hall





SHREDDED CHICKEN BBQ SANDWICHES

SERVINGS: 8	PREPARATION TIME: 15 MINUTES	COOK TIME: 45 MINUTES
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2 lb (6-8) chicken breasts
½ large green bell pepper (diced)
½ large red bell pepper (diced)
1 tbsp Mrs. Dash seasoning salt (original)
1 tbsp dried onion
½ tbsp powdered garlic
½ tbsp poultry seasoning
1 cup BBQ sauce (your choice)
1 tbsp of olive oil



With school out my Mom didn’t want us eating junk, so we tried creating different recipes. My Mom is always talking about “eat your colors”, so that is how the bell peppers were added. This meal is served on wheat buns because that is a whole grain. You can add tomato and lettuce or coleslaw to your sandwich to make the meal at least half fruits and vegetables.

DIRECTIONS:

1. In a big pot, boil the chicken with the seasonings in enough water to cover fully.
2. In a large skillet, sauté the diced bell peppers on medium-low until soft, then turn off.
3. Once the chicken is done, remove from the pot (do not throw out the broth) and shred with a fork (it will look stringy).
4. Add a cup of broth to the skillet of bell pepper and add the chicken and the BBQ sauce. Stir and let simmer on medium until it cooks down and is saucy but not soupy.
5. Serve on whole wheat buns with your favorite fries (baked or air fried) and a pickle.

 Submitted By: Naomi, 14, Pine Bluff, Arkansas. 4-H Healthy Living Ambassador

The *4-H Fresh Chefs* digital cookbook can be found at <https://4-h.org/parents/healthy-living/cookbook/>.

UAPB Small Farm Program Awarded Grant to Train Beginning Farmers, Ranchers



Chicot County beginning farmer Howard Brown.

UAPB's Small Farm Program has been awarded a \$600,000 Beginning Farmer and Rancher Grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture. The grant will be used to train beginning farmers and ranchers.

UAPB in cooperation with the East Arkansas Enterprise Community in northeast Arkansas and the Silas H. Hunt Community Development Corporation in southwest Arkansas implemented the program last October.

The grant runs for three years and targets socially disadvantaged and limited resource farmers (SDLRF) in 20 counties that have a large number of SDLRFs who have been underserved because of such barriers as limited access to credit, lack of knowledge of land acquisition and transition, limited access to existing and viable markets, and lack of

skills in financial planning and production. In Arkansas, an average limited resource farmer had Gross Farm Sales for 2018 and 2019 of less than or equal to \$180,300 per year, with an Adjusted Gross Income of less than \$26,200. Figures vary by county throughout the country and Small Farm Program instructors can help individuals determine if they qualify.

"The program will identify and work with beginning farmers and ranchers in the targeted areas. Participants will be trained and assisted with farm business planning, livestock and crop production and marketing," Dr. Henry English, director of the UAPB Small Farm Program, said. "Information on alternative enterprises, use of USDA programs and heirs' property issues will also be included."

As a part of the program, UAPB will conduct beginning farmers and ranchers classes

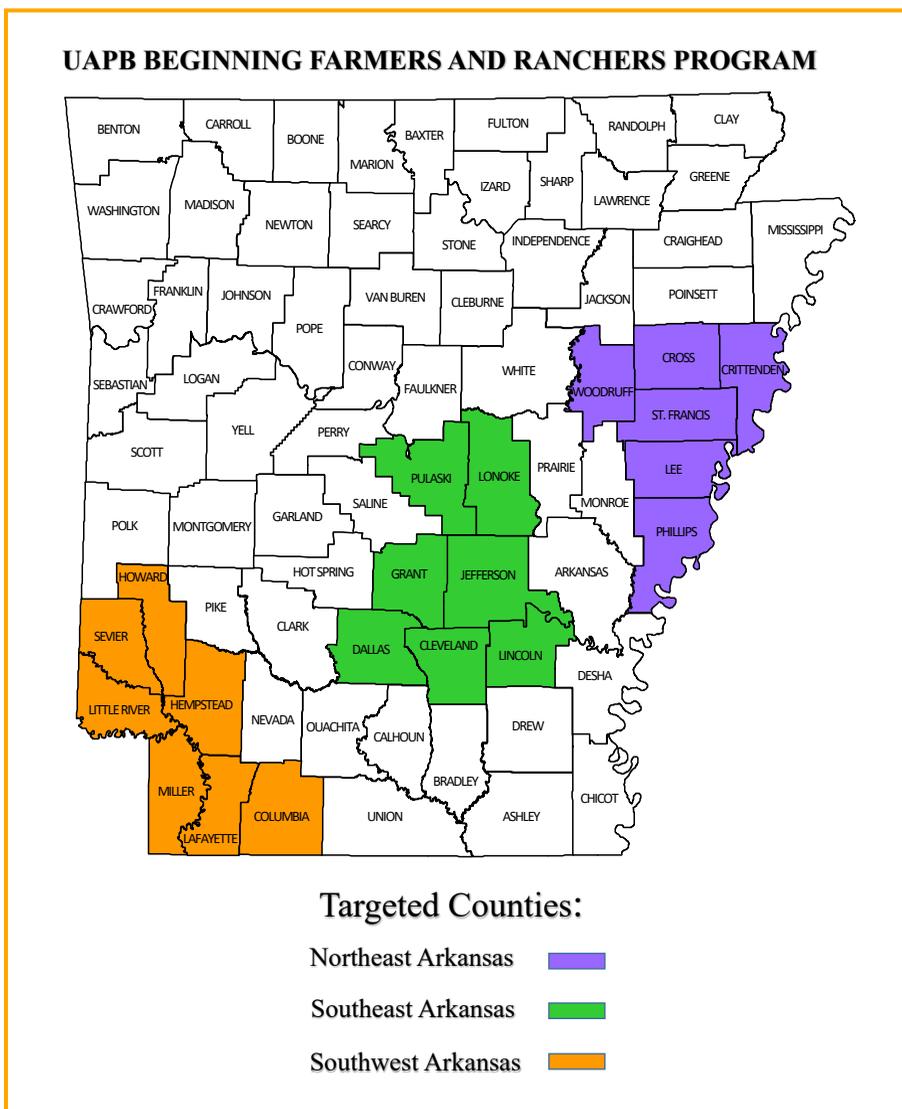
on campus, consisting of seven monthly workshops. These began in early 2021. The workshops will be a mixture of classroom sessions, farm and ranch tours, UAPB experiment station tours and hands-on field activities.

Beginning farmers and ranchers are those who have been farming for 10 years or less, Dr. English, said. Qualifying farmers may sign up for both the training and technical assistance and the seven monthly campus workshops or just one or the other.

Dr. English said that socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers include American

Indians, Alaskan Natives, Asians, Blacks or African-Americans, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders, Hispanics and women.

The 20 counties in the grant include the seven southwest counties of Howard, Sevier, Little River, Hempstead, Miller, Lafayette and Columbia. The seven southeast counties in the grant are Cleveland, Dallas, Lincoln, Jefferson, Grant, Lonoke and Pulaski; and northeast counties are Phillips, Lee, St. Francis, Woodruff, Crittenden and Cross.



Participating counties in the Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Program.

UAPB Project Studies Effects of Invasive Asian Bigheaded Carps on Native Fish Populations



Cody Salzmann, UAPB graduate student of aquaculture and fisheries, catches a silver carp during an assessment on the White River.

Researchers at the UAPB Department of Aquaculture and Fisheries are studying the effects of invasive Asian bigheaded carps on fish species native to Arkansas. This research is part of a larger project intended to provide science-based information to increase understanding of the overall impact of invasive fish species in the state.

“Natural resource agencies nationwide have become concerned about aquatic nuisance species to the point of adopting state-level management plans to complement existing national management plans,” Dr. Michael Eggleton, UAPB professor of aquaculture and fisheries, said. “The Arkansas Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan has specific criteria to identify focal or target species, which include Asian bigheaded carps.”

During the last decade, invasive Asian bigheaded carps (primarily silver carp) have become established in the lower Mississippi River and several tributary rivers. Despite the high abundances of these fish in some river systems and probable ecological consequences, the effects of carps on native fish assemblages (groups of species living together in the same space and time) – specifically their variety and abundances – are largely unknown.

Recent UAPB research compared current fish assemblages in the lower White River to historical assemblages using data collected prior to carp invasions. In this case, oxbow lakes in the lower White River were comprehensively assessed by UAPB between 2002 and 2005, which preceded establishment by carps.

“This historical study presented us a unique opportunity to examine possible carp effects in these systems,” according to Dr. Eggleton.

Data on current fish assemblages in the lakes was collected using experimental gill nets, mini-fyke nets and boat electrofishing, Dr. Eggleton said. Initial results suggested that gross assemblage measures such as fish species richness (the bulk number of species present) and diversity (how those species are distributed compositionally) were comparable between the pre-carp period (2002-2005) and post-carp period (2017).

“Although eight species collected in the pre-carp sampling were absent in the post-carp sampling, 10 new species were recorded,” he said. “Three of these species, however, were Asian carp species themselves.”

Although gross measures did not appear to differ in response to invasive carps, Dr. Eggleton said the study identified several noticeable structural changes in lower White River oxbow lake fish assemblages that had occurred during the past 10 to 15 years.

“In particular, we observed sharp declines in bluegill abundances, along with decreases in gizzard shad and white crappie numbers associated with establishment of carps. This was significant given the importance of bluegill and gizzard shad in these lake food webs. At the same time, several other sunfish species, buffalofishes and weed shiner appeared to become more abundant in the presence of carps.”

“Currently, it is not possible to conclude that all shifts in fish assemblage structure are entirely related to Asian bigheaded carps,” he said. “River systems are driven heavily by their hydrology, with fish assemblages periodically reshuffled based on annual flooding patterns. However, the establishment of carps are one of the most pervasive changes to have occurred in this ecosystem during the past two decades. Given observations from other river systems, this study suggests that carps

could be negatively influencing native fish assemblages, which underscores the need for continued research.”

The study will also lay the groundwork for future experimental research that could be conducted to determine specific influences that Asian bigheaded carps are having on individual fish species, Dr. Eggleton said.



Data on current fish assemblages in the lakes in the lower White River was collected using experimental gill nets, mini-fyke nets and boat electrofishing. Joseph Kaiser, UAPB alumnus of aquaculture and fisheries, catches a silver carp during an assessment.

UAPB Alumna Accepted into Purdue University's Veterinary College



Lizney Rudds, who started her studies at Purdue University College of Veterinary Medicine in August 2020, has been passionate about animals since she was a child.

Lizney Rudds, a May 2019 alumna of animal science at UAPB, was recently accepted into the Purdue University College of Veterinary Medicine. She began her studies at the university in August 2020.

“When we learned about my acceptance into the program, my parents were happy for me,” Rudds said. “My mom was especially excited since she knew I had been anxiously waiting for word from Purdue since my interview in February. My best friend was also ecstatic because she’s known this has been my dream since we were little girls and has always supported me.”

Following her graduation from UAPB, Rudds participated in Purdue’s Vet Up! College Program, a six-week-long residential summer program at the Purdue University College of Veterinary Medicine designed to prepare students to be competitive in the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) applicant pool.

The funds for her travel and stay at Purdue University were provided through a collaborative grant between UAPB and Purdue University, which was funded by a U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture capacity building grant awarded to Dr. Jayant Lohakare, associate professor of animal science at UAPB and Rudds’ mentor.

Over the course of the Vet Up! Program, Rudds and her peers experienced a mixture of course work, exams and lab practice from all four years of the veterinary program. They received mentorship from faculty and current DVM students and also completed modules to increase awareness of cultural diversity and inclusion in the veterinary medical field.

“I was excited to learn of my acceptance at the university because Purdue has been my top choice since attending the program,” she said. “However, I still had a tough decision to make since I had also been accepted to Michigan State University. The deciding factors were the feelings of inclusiveness and belonging while at Purdue’s campus.”

After completing the Vet Up! Program, in September 2019, Rudds moved to Kalamazoo, Michigan and started working as a research technician at Charles River Laboratories. In this position, she learned a variety of clinical skills and different aspects of laboratory animal medicine.

“Since working at Charles River, I’ve really sparked an interest in laboratory animal medicine,” she said. “I’m not sure what career path I will choose for my future, but I do know that I want to use my time at Purdue to explore as many options as possible. I’ve missed the structure of academia. I look forward to learning more clinical skills and working more closely with a larger variety of animals.”

Rudds said she has been passionate about animals since she was a child.

“When it came time for me to pick my major, I only considered two paths – music and animals,” she said. “I chose to major in animal science because I felt it was the more practical option of the two and that it provided many different opportunities as far as what I can do with a veterinary degree.”

During her studies at UAPB, Rudds was one of eight students nationwide selected for the 2018 Extension Service Apprenticeship at Mississippi State University. She also participated multiple times in the annual International Production and Processing Expo in Atlanta, Georgia.

At UAPB, Rudds was a member of the Collegiate 4-H Club, Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences Club, STEM Scholars Academy, Carolyn F. Blakely Honors Program, Spirit Team, Vesper Choir and Sigma Alpha Iota International Music Fraternity.

By the Numbers

Extension and Research Funding (Funding Sources for FY 2020)

University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff
School of Agriculture, Fisheries
and Human Sciences received

\$11 million

from federal, state and local governments,
as well as from grants and contracts.



40%
Federal formula
funds



31%
State general
funds



17%
Funds from local
government

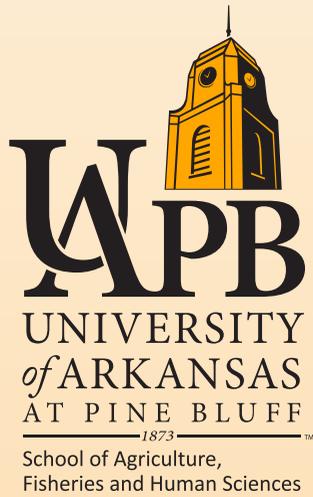


12%
Grants and
contracts

The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff is fully accredited by The Higher Learning Commission, 230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500, Chicago, IL 60604, 1-800-621-7440/FAX: 312-263-7462.

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