In a partnership with the Daniel Foundation of Alabama, USA’s Archaeology Museum is reshaping the way Alabama students will learn about our shared cultural history. The museum has created a book that will be used as part of the State of Alabama Curriculum for the fourth grade. It has also designed a series of specialized tours that incorporate elements of the state’s curriculum for elementary through high school students that reinforce classroom work, including: Alabama Prehistory & History, Life in Colonial America, Art & Archaeology, Storytelling through Time, and Chemistry & Archaeology. These enhancements to the museum’s offerings can benefit every student who is learning Alabama history.

The partnership is supporting other enhancements of the museum’s programs, including: adding a bone lab to teach students about skeletal analysis and supporting teachers by developing lesson plans for the classroom.

“The Daniel Foundation is allowing us to serve the community through innovative educational and outreach programs. Without this funding we would not be able to provide the wide variety of informal education opportunities to schools, like Counsel Traditional Elementary School, whose students we have visited in their classroom and have had them return again and again for programs at the museum,” said Dr. Philip J. Carr, the Chief Calvin McGhee Endowed Professor of Native American Studies and director of the museum.

Barbara Filion, associate director of the museum, appreciates what the partnership with the Daniel Foundation means for the museum. She states, “With the support of the Daniel Foundation of Alabama, the Archaeology Museum can continue to further our mission to fuel curiosity, awareness, and appreciation for the region’s rich past.”
Mr. and Mrs. Herbert A. Meisler, two of the university’s most devoted friends, have expanded the Jewish Studies program they helped USA establish through a gift to add the Fanny and Bert Meisler Endowed Professorship in Jewish Studies. Speaking about the gift, Fanny Meisler said, “Bert and I have long thought about the need to further research and document the history of Jewish people in the Mobile region. It’s our hope and expectation that university students will take advantage of the opportunity to chronicle this history before it’s gone.”

In August, the university will welcome Dr. David Meola (pictured above with his family) as the Fanny and Bert Meisler Visiting Professor of Jewish Studies. Meola specializes in German and Jewish history from the Enlightenment through the nineteenth century. He earned a master’s in European Studies and a doctorate in history at the University of British Columbia.

The Crampton Trust has been providing scholarships to USA medical students for more than two decades. A portion of the trust — founded by Katherine Crampton Cochrane in honor of her father, noted Mobile physician Orson L. Crampton — is “dedicated to the support of the medical school,” said Regions Bank Vice President Roger E. Cole, who manages the trust. As a recipient of a Crampton Trust Scholarship, second-year medical student Jordan Nickols knows firsthand the impact of the trust’s support.

Nickols said that he was excited when he learned that he had received a scholarship from the Crampton Trust. The 24-year-old Holtville, Alabama, native said he took advantage of early admission to medical school and soon after his acceptance learned that he had received the scholarship. The scholarship is renewable for each of the four years he attends medical school. “I was very excited,” Nickols said. “The money will go a long way.”

The 2014 Troy University honor graduate received his bachelor’s degree in biomedical science one day, got married the next, and headed to his honeymoon in Mexico the day after. Nickols and his wife, Hope, then moved to Mobile so that he could attend medical school.

Nickols is working in a research lab this summer under the guidance of Dr. Sarah Sayner. The research project is studying the effectiveness of a treatment for acute respiratory distress syndrome. “There can be implications for what the treatment needs to be as opposed to what it is,” Nickols said. “The treatment does make the syndrome better, but the treatment is not great and has side effects that could make patients worse.” In addition to the summer research project, Nickols will spend 10 days this summer participating in a medical mission trip to Peru as part of the Christian Medical Ministry of South Alabama. In 2013, he took advantage of another mission opportunity where he spent two months in Brazil.

Roger Cole says the trust committee has been pleased with how the university has used its gifts and hopes to continue to work with USA in the future. The university is grateful to be able to count on the stalwart support of the Crampton Trust and is committed to this partnership to improve healthcare in Southwest Alabama.

The Meislers have dedicated their lives to civic and philanthropic endeavors that have touched our community broadly. Mr. Meisler has held numerous leadership roles with non-profit agencies, including the American Cancer Society, the American Cancer Society, and the Heart Foundation. His active involvement has been recognized through awards, including: the Mobile Jewish Community’s “Man of the Year,” the Alabama Heart Foundation’s “Person of Vision,” and the City of Mobile’s “Philanthropist of the Year.” Mr. and Mrs. Meisler were jointly recognized with the Distinguished Service Award from the USA National Alumni Association.

Helping to establish a Jewish Studies Program has been a long-held vision of the Meislers. Regarding their most recent gift, Bert Meisler said, “USA is a tremendous asset to Mobile and to the Gulf Coast region. We are indebted to the university for providing Fanny and me the means to make this happen.”

Partners for a Healthier South Alabama

Dr. Clarence Mohr, professor and chair of history, believes a Jewish Studies Program will bring greater awareness of the impact of the Jewish people on our community, state and region, saying, “With the generous support of Fanny and Bert Meisler, we will explore in greater detail important issues such as identity, genocide and cultural survival. USA’s classes in Jewish history will be of interest to all those who seek a richer understanding of the Jewish experience.”

The Meislers have been instrumental in helping the university achieve other priority initiatives, including: the endowment of Meisler Hall, where student services are conveniently centralized; creating the Ripps-Meisler Endowed Chair in the College of Medicine; and providing extensive support for many university athletic programs.

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USA alumni and parents have responded in record numbers this year through the JagLine Phonathon. Their gifts of every size make an immediate impact on the labs, classrooms, departments, schools, and colleges used by USA students. More than half of these donors doubled the impact of their partnership through the Mitchell-Moulton Scholarship Initiative.

Christian Pearsall—an Honors’ Program student and walk-on wide receiver for the Jaguar Football team—knows firsthand the power of this annual fund partnership. Christian is the first recipient of the 50th Anniversary Alumni Annual Fund Scholarship. His scholarship was funded by thousands of alumni and friends who saw USA’s 50th anniversary as an opportunity to also reach a milestone in supporting USA. Their work to achieve an unprecedented 50,000 gifts helped celebrate the anniversary and created opportunities for hard-working students like Christian.

Col. Gerald Gattis, a U.S. Veteran and retired reserve officer, designated his gift through the Employee Campaign to the new Veterans Resource Room on campus. This new resource—offered through JagSuccess—will help provide encouragement and the tools needed for success to the more than 1,100 U.S. Veterans that attend USA.

Kyle Parrish, president of the Veterans Student Association is grateful for the Annual Fund support that has helped make the new Veterans Resource Room on campus possible. He says, “This ‘rally point’ for U.S. Veterans gives us a place where we know we’ll find other students like us. It’s important to have the support of someone who has faced your same challenges and is there to help you find ways to succeed.”

Employees and friends partnered to support patient assistance funds which help our patients and their families with extraordinary needs. Each USA health facility offers special assistance to our patients through gifts. “These funds work magic,” said Tina Taylor, director of care management and social services at USA Medical Center. “They allow us to do so much more, such as: building ramps for patients so they can go home sooner, arranging rehabilitation services, and filling prescriptions—all easing the stress caused by illness and injury.”

Highlights of the Employee Campaign for the South Alabama Annual Fund

- 2nd largest in 12-year campaign history
- Supported by 150+ representatives
- Enhancing 280+ programs and services
- Nearly 3,000 employees and retirees giving
- Making an $801,391 impact
The South Alabama Dugout Club, the baseball support club of the Jaguar Athletic Fund, has provided vital funding for recruiting, equipment and special projects for the baseball program for more than a decade. Members are invited to a pre-season event to meet the coaches and learn more about the upcoming season. They also receive exclusive access to the Stadium Club, stadium-front parking, pre-game scouting reports, post-game highlights and updates on Jaguars entering the pros. With the help and dedication of JAF Board Representative, Wes Hinkle and volunteer scouting “reporter” Carroll Barrett, the Dugout Club has grown to more than 300 members.

The Toney-Franssen endowment is intended to advance the exchange of scientific knowledge among researchers, clinicians, and nursing staff. Said Toney: “The idea behind the endowment was to make sure it was not limited to researchers or doctors, but include nursing staff and anyone involved in care, treatment and research and to encourage cross pollination of knowledge.”

The couple said they gathered as much information as possible following their parents’ individual diagnoses because they “wanted to be active participants” in their care. Said Franssen: “Going through these experiences ourselves, we learned a great deal about what patients and their families go through, not quite as much with my dad and my mom, but definitely with his father. By getting feedback from my mom, we realized how unique the concept was at MCI.” Through their previous volunteer work and now through the development of the endowment, the couple has a deeper relationship with the institute. Said Toney: “We feel there isn’t anybody around here that we haven’t met. We’ve enjoyed the experience of being a part of this community.”

According to Head Baseball Coach Mark Calvi, the club is invaluable to USA’s baseball program, not only from a fan support standpoint but also from a personal one, “I’ve made friendships that will last a lifetime and I know our players and their families have too.” Calvi went on to say that in his time as head coach, club support has funded essential program needs including pitching machines, batting nets and mats, and travel outfits for players and coaches. Athletic Director Joel Erdmann credits the club with providing the resources necessary for the baseball program to thrive at the Division I level, saying, “The support provided by the Dugout Club allows Coach Calvi to adapt to fluid situations and invest in areas of the program which places them in a position of competitive advantage over other programs.” The club’s efforts helped this year’s team secure the Sun Belt Conference championship (baseball’s 15th conference championship).

The team’s championship clinched the Sun Belt Conference’s Vic Bubas All Sports Trophy (Bubas Cup) for 2014-2015. This is the Jaguar’s 11th time claiming the Cup, the most for any school since the conference’s inception in 1976. Way to go, Jags!