



ACUI

Region III

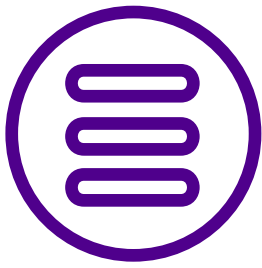
NEWSLETTER

January 2021



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NOVEMBER EXPERIENCE RECAP

With the pandemic affecting everyone and everything, we had to put our plans on hold for our in-person regional conference at Emory University. After much feedback from our regional membership, we reimagined our in-person conference into a virtual offering titled "The Region 3 November Experience."

The November Experience Planning Team worked hard to create a 2-day virtual experience to connect colleagues and help build resiliency during these challenging times. Over 240 students and professional staff attended. The first day consisted of a business meeting followed by a social gathering featuring ACUI/Region III trivia. The next day we had an amazing keynote, vendor expo, silent auction, lunch roundtables, educational sessions, and an awards and recognition closing. Some of the 16 educational sessions included topics of social justice, student learning, facility management, organizational leadership, marketing and more! Approximately \$776 was raised for Region III scholarships through the silent auction.

Our major highlight of the November Experience was our keynote speaker, Chris Singleton. Chris is an inspirational speaker and former professional baseball player drafted by the Chicago Cubs. Over the last four years Chris has traveled the country giving keynote speeches to inspire those young and old. Chris has worked diligently and has presented to over 60 organizations in 2020 alone including companies like: Houston Texans Football, Volvo Cars, and over 20 Colleges across the nation. Chris has also spread his message through various different media outlets and has been featured on ESPN's E:60, Sports Illustrated magazine, CNN, The Today Show, and USA Today.

Chris' mother, Sharonda Coleman Singleton was murdered in a race related mass shooting at Mother Emanuel AME church in Downtown Charleston, South Carolina on June 17th, 2015. Chris inspired his city and the nation by forgiving the man who murdered his mother and stating that "Love is stronger than hate"

The planning team wanted a keynote that would challenge our membership and help us advance our campus communities. The message, love is stronger than hate, is one that is relevant to the world around us and we hope our membership was left inspired to do something.

Article written by November Experience Conference Chair, Stan Sweeney



Recognizing the achievements of outstanding

REGION III MEMBERS

Presented at the 2020 Region III November Experience



Smith-Steele Award for Professional
Staff - James Contratto, University of
South Alabama



New Professional Award - Darien
Garrison, University of Alabama at
Birmingham



Outstanding Volunteer Award - Emily
Reynolds, East Carolina University



Recognizing the achievements of outstanding

REGION III MEMBERS

Presented at the 2020 Region III November Experience



Student Union/Campus Activities
Virtual Program of the Year -
Appalachian State University for
Engagement - Interrupted the
Podcast



Outstanding Mentor-Advisor Award -
Anthony Carinci, University of South
Florida at St. Petersburg



Outstanding Undergraduate Student
Leader - KenAndre Smiley, University
of South Alabama



Get to Know the 2020 Regional Leadership Team



ALISON WARD (SHE, HER, HERS)

Assistant Director of the Student Union - University of Tennessee, Knoxville

RLT Position: Regional Director

Why did you get involved with the Regional Leadership Team (RLT): I first volunteered to expand my network and skills and now I volunteer because it's fun and I get to meet great people.

What has been your favorite moment so far while being a member of ACUI or while serving on the RLT? My favorite moment is not specific; it's a compilation of moments. I enjoy the conferences, both regional and annual, because it allows me to reconnect with all my colleagues.



JENNIFER DUNCAN (SHE, HER, HERS)

Assistant Director for Student Involvement and Building Manager for
Alston Campus Center - Agnes Scott College

RLT Position: Communications Coordinator

Why did you get involved with the Regional Leadership Team (RLT): I wanted to gain a network of professionals outside of my institution as well as stretch myself by learning new things that would help me in my career.

What has been your favorite moment so far while being a member of ACUI or while serving on the RLT? So far it has been the last in-person trip we had for our RLT retreat at USF St. Petersburg. This was in January 2020, little did we know our lives would change just a couple of months after that. I'm grateful for the opportunity to have met my colleagues for the first time in person, socialize together and plan a successful year of events. This group is really like a family, we have so much fun together and we even got to drive a boat! I look forward to the days when we can come back together, not just virtually.



JEREMIAH JOHNSON

Director of the Hill Student Center - University of Alabama at Birmingham

RLT Position: Corporate Sponsorship Coordinator

Why did you get involved with the Regional Leadership Team (RLT): I was eager to give back and support our amazing region. Meeting colleagues and making meaningful new friendships has been an added bonus!

What has been your favorite moment so far while being a member of ACUI or while serving on the RLT? So far, it has been the great conversations and TONS of laughs that shared with colleagues at the Regional Conference in Knoxville.

Looking forward to being together IN PERSON again someday soon!





CHRISTINA SCHAEFER-CRAWFORD

Assistant Director, Oglesby Union - Florida State University

RLT Position: Student Involvement Coordinator

Why did you get involved with the Regional Leadership Team (RLT): To meet folks outside my institution, continue to expand my knowledge and skills within Student Affairs, gain experience in conference and presentation development.

What has been your favorite moment so far while being a member of ACUI or while serving on the RLT? I've enjoyed getting to know everyone. The team has been really nice and welcoming. I feel like I belong even though I am brand new to ACUI.



EMILY REYNOLDS (SHE, HER, HERS)

Assistant Director for Student Programming - East Carolina University

RLT Position: Communications Coordinator

Why did you get involved with the Regional Leadership Team (RLT): ACUI is my professional home. I have been involved with the association for the past 5 years in various volunteer roles. After moving to Region III from Region VI, I knew that a good way to feel connected with my ACUI region would be through volunteering. And I was so right. I have met the best group of talented, kind, passionate individuals and am so lucky to work with them to "advance campus community."

What has been your favorite moment so far while being a member of ACUI or while serving on the RLT? My favorite moment with Region III was volunteering for the conference in Knoxville. During the late night activities, I was staffing the photo booth and had the opportunity to meet so many people within the region. It was also a really great opportunity to connect with vendors and fellow volunteers.



STAN SWEENEY (HE, HIM, HIS)

Director of Highsmith Student Union & Student Activities - University of North Carolina at Asheville

RLT Position: 2021 Regional Conference Coordinator

Why did you get involved with the Regional Leadership Team (RLT): To give back to Region III and ACUI

What has been your favorite moment so far while being a member of ACUI or while serving on the RLT? Spending time with friends at in-person meetings/events....laughing.....joking....getting hugs!



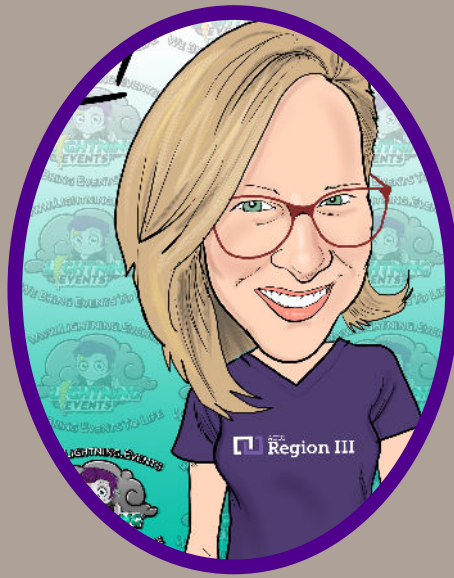
DARIEN GARRISON (SHE, HER, HER'S)

Assistant Director of the Hill Student Center - University of Alabama at Birmingham

RLT Position: Membership Experience Coordinator

Why did you get involved with the Regional Leadership Team (RLT): I decided to get involve with Region III's RLT this year to give back to ACUI, expand my network of friends and professional resources, and to ensure that Region III members have the best experience possible!

What has been your favorite moment so far while being a member of ACUI or while serving on the RLT? Many of my favorite ACUI memories come from annual conferences where I get to reconnect with friends, mentors, and past coworkers from all over the country. Specific to Region III, one of my favorite memories has been serving on the Conference Planning Teams for 2019 and the virtual 2020. I've bonded with the other planning team members and have been proud to plan the event from start to finish.



HOLLY DURHAM (SHE, HER, HERS)

Assistant Vice Chancellor - North Carolina State University

RLT Position: Business Manager

Why did you get involved with the Regional Leadership Team (RLT): To give back to the profession.

What has been your favorite moment so far while being a member of ACUI or while serving on the RLT? We were lucky to squeeze in an IN PERSON leadership retreat in January 2020 in St Petersburg and it was FUN!



DR. DEAN SMITH (HE, HIM, HIS)

**Director of Student Centers - East Carolina
University**

RLT Position: Educational Programs Coordinator

**Why did you get involved with the Regional
Leadership Team (RLT): Alison asked me to help out**

**What has been your favorite moment so far while
being a member of ACUI or while serving on the
RLT? Hosted ACUI Region III conference at ECU**



KIM TILUS (SHE, HER, HERS)

Associate Director for Student Development in
Student Development and Campus Vibrancy -
Stetson University

RLT Position: Recognition Coordinator

Why did you get involved with the Regional Leadership Team (RLT): I got involved with RLT because I have been looking for a professional association home to learn and grow as a mid-level professional. I have been involved with other associations, but the resources provided were not as plethora as in ACUI. Within a year of being involved with ACUI and Regional III, I was a guest speaker at the national conference. I participated in the Aspiring Directors Institute, I participated in the Closing the Gap program, and I took a badge course, Building Management 101, to help serve my students. The saying "ask a question because chances are someone else may have the same question" holds true in ACUI and ACUI has been a great resource for answering those questions. The discussion boards such as Student Employee Supervisors and Facilities and Operations served as a great resource, especially in the height of the pandemic and managing a student union. So, with all the support given by ACUI just within a year, I have decided to make it my professional association home and serving and getting involved as a regional leader I felt would be a great start.

What has been your favorite moment so far while being a member of ACUI or while serving on the RLT? So far, my favorite moment is seeing the community atmosphere Region III has among its leaders and members. Every time I have been in the same "virtual" space that centers Region III I have left feeling inspired. Also, I enjoyed the speaker Radha Agrawal from the conference.



ERIN PARRISH (SHE, HER, HERS)

Assistant Director of Student Engagement - Wake Forest University

RLT Position: Inclusivity Coordinator

Why did you get involved with the Regional Leadership Team (RLT): I was looking to become more involved in a professional organization and wanting to network with folks outside of my institution.

What has been your favorite moment so far while being a member of ACUI or while serving on the RLT? I have really enjoyed working with ACUI's DEI team and other Inclusivity Coordinators to create the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Virtual Series. It's been so rewarding to work with such passionate professionals to bring FREE professional development to members of ACUI around topics that focus on allyship and advocacy in action!



STEPHEN R. MCCAY (HE, HIM, HIS)

Associate Director for Operations - University of Southern Mississippi

RLT Position: 2022 Regional Conference Coordinator

Why did you get involved with the Regional Leadership Team (RLT): I got involved with the RLT to build community within the region. My first time on the team my position focused on the financial aspects of the region and making sure the funds were used to support all the initiatives of the region. Now through my position I get to directly help create the regional experience by developing conferences, virtual and hopefully in-person. The conference is truly one of the best times of the year to spend time together with peers.

What has been your favorite moment so far while being a member of ACUI or while serving on the RLT? My favorite moment has been being a part of a region that tries new things and supports its members in those pursuits. Also, getting to meet and work with amazing people throughout the country is pretty awesome. ACUI and this region is filled with amazing people who want to make a difference.



KATIE KRONK (SHE, HER, HERS)

Mississippi State University

RLT Position: Student Member

Why did you get involved with the Regional Leadership Team (RLT): Because I have a passion for serving others and leading!

What has been your favorite moment so far while being a member of ACUI or while serving on the RLT? I love all of the meetings but my favorite memory was presenting at the virtual conference in 2020!



Who's Innovating in Region III

PROGRAMMING DURING COVID-19

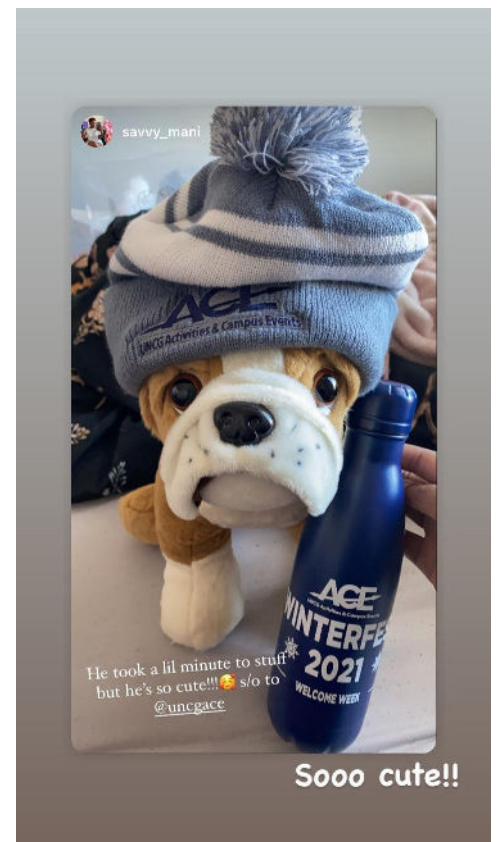
UNC Greensboro

For almost a year now, programming in higher education has looked, felt and been executed differently. For many of us, we've been put in situations where we had to quickly adapt and make decisions that would keep ourselves and our students safe. The 1,000 plus student events, dance parties and other high contact events for now, are a thing of the past. My students have heard the word "no" more than ever before. Keeping the safety and health of students and staff in mind has meant that what "used to be" may no longer be, and are no longer realistic and practical.

Because of COVID we've had to think on our feet, we've had to challenge what's been done in the past, and we've had to become more innovative and creative than ever before. My students have been challenged to critically think of ways we can still meet the needs of our students. How can we get our students to connect to one another, connect to campus, and bring them some sense of normalcy in the times of mask wearing and socially distancing?

As the advisor of the programming board I made the executive decision that at UNC Greensboro we would extremely limit our in person events, and drastically change what those in person events look like. My biggest fear has been hosting an event put on by the programming board would lead to a cluster of COVID cases.

In the Fall semester I would say we were able to successfully transition to mostly virtual events, with some hybrid events thrown in from time to time. It took us a while to perfect our approach and master our marketing but I do feel like we were still able to bring entertainment to the students on campus while acknowledging that it looked and felt different. Some of our most popular events were DIY or grab and go events. We've been able to create many versions and different "kits" that students have come to pick up in person, and then offered a virtual zoom session later that day to serve as instructional how to's, or connected those kits to a movie that would be shown later in the evening. These two part events helped us to give students a space to show up and connect with students on the programming board and other students on campus.



Our completely virtual events have varied from homegrown events, or events facilitated by various vendors. The students on the programming board have served in different roles during these events that have utilized zoom. We've had hosts, ice breakers, students in charge of a playlist, someone controlling the spotlight and highlighting other students and more depending on the event. Creating and assigning these different roles have helped students to feel more ownership of the events that are taking place and helped keep the students of the programming board and the students in their committee invested and involved.

The biggest lesson, which has always been a part of our process but is done even more intentionally now is the reflection of the event. Talking with the students to see what went well, what didn't go well, what could be done differently and taking those reflections to change things up the next time to enhance the event experience even more has been so beneficial. I've had to remind myself personally, and my students that we must give ourselves grace during these times. That none of us planning and executing these events has gone through a pandemic before. So that if things don't go exactly how we envisioned, or we don't have as many students attend as we are used to from the past, that it's all okay. As long as we are reflecting, continuing to be intentional, pushing to be innovative and creative then we are doing the best we can.



Erin Parrish was the Coordinator for Programs at the University of North Carolina- Greensboro. She is beginning her new role as an Assistant Director at Wake Forest University this month!

COVID-19 Resources

<https://www.acui.org/resources/covid-19-resources>



COVID-19 is changing the world and impacting higher education. The ACUI resources online may assist you in navigating how to best serve your students and colleagues through this ever-changing situation.



Who's Innovating in Region III

MARKETING IN A HYBRID WORLD

How to market events and keep students engaged when they are not in person (from a student's perspective)

We all know that COVID-19 has had a major effect on what campus life looks like. Whether you are a freshman starting your college journey or a graduating senior, you recognize that our current college experience is not close to what it used to be like. University leaders, professors, campus organizations, and students have gotten creative with bringing virtual experiences to life as an attempt to bring together the community that we all miss and yearn for. It might not be what we are used to, but any experience that we can create to engage students, is an important one. College students are far from home and already struggling with so much, it is our job to create a sense of community!

So, you may be thinking: "But how do we keep students engaged in events when we can't gather in person?" 2020 was the year that we all learned to adapt, and that is exactly what we need to do now. Learn to get creative with virtual events and take advantage of all of the recourses you have. For example, use Zoom, Webex, or Microsoft Teams to host events for large groups of people. Make sure that the event feels authentic and normal as possible. If you know someone who is a great motivational speaker or has a unique skill, ask them to lead a virtual meeting and give the opportunity for students to learn a new skill and work on their own personal development. There are so many life lessons that we might not get taught in the classroom, keynote speakers are a great way to teach us short lessons that make a lifelong impact.

Another important thing to consider is the effect COVID-19 has on marketing and event advertising. Without being able to table or campaign in person we are missing an opportunity to tell students who might not be on social media about events going on. Luckily, there are tons of tools that we can utilize to advertise virtually. A great tool is email marketing. Every student is required to have an email account for school so why not come up with an email marketing plan?! Some great email marketing services include Mailchimp, Constant Contact, Drip, and more. I also recommend utilizing social media as much as possible to promote events. If you don't have a lot of followers it never hurts to reach out to the official university account, The Student Government account, or Student Activities account and ask them to help promote your event. It never hurts to ask and the more people that can see your event marketing, the better.

With all that being said, the moral of the story is to get creative! Think outside the box to make these uncertain times feel normal and keep the faith that things will be back to normal soon! Remember to social distance, wear a mask and stay safe!



Katie Kronk is the Student Member of the Region III Leadership Team and a student at Mississippi State University.

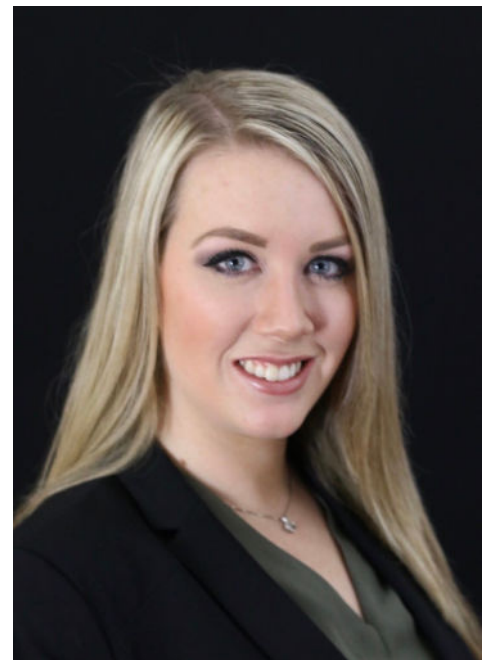


Who's Innovating in Region III

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT DURING COVID-19

For the students at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), much like the students at campuses across the world, the spring 2020 semester took a sharp turn when students were told not to return to campus following Spring Break and went virtual with classes for the remainder of the semester due to the COVID-19 virus. Upon their return to Birmingham this fall, students were looking for some semblance of normalcy- either a return to the UAB they knew before COVID or for the incoming class- the college experience they had dreamed about for years prior. However, COVID-19 was and is still very prevalent in the state of Alabama and students would quickly find out that it would impact nearly every aspect of their college experience. For the student employees of UAB's Hill Student Center, they returned to campus with new job responsibilities, dress code requirements, and employment policies to navigate.

The University of Alabama at Birmingham's Hill Student Center is a 162,000 sq. foot facility built in 2016 in the heart of Birmingham and the University's 100-block campus. The student employee team of approximately 60 staff members span 4 different positions. Due to the hybrid nature of the 2020-2021 academic year, each role has been impacted in its daily operations. The Hill Student Center Game Room, a small space consisting of multiple gaming systems and fabric covered furniture, was taken offline due to social distancing requirements. Students previously working in this space were asked to be flexible and were offered hours in a brand-new position of COVID-19 Door Monitors. The Door Monitors are stationed at the two open entrances to ensure all entering the building meet university requirements: Patrons must be wearing a mask, must be current faculty, staff, or student as demonstrated by their ONE card, and must show a GuideSafe passport clearing them to be on UAB's campus that day.



Our Guest Services staff members perform hourly announcement through the building's PA system in an effort to remind patrons to mask up, stay 6 feet apart, and wash their hands often. Due to very few events taking place this academic year, our Facilities Services crew members' jobs have changed significantly. Instead of spending the majority of their shift doing event set-ups, the crew members now spending their shifts sanitizing touchpoints throughout the building- It's a job that never ends! Finally, our student Building Managers' responsibilities have shifted primarily towards COVID policy compliance throughout the building and supporting other student staff in their interactions with patrons at the entrances. Student trainings have also been altered since March 2020. Instead of the in-person monthly all-staff meetings, virtual townhalls and campus resource presentations provided through Zoom have become the norm. Virtual Ice breaker scavenger hunts and trivia nights have been incorporated to reinforce the HSC team dynamic.

While their roles as they currently exist may not be what our students initially anticipated, UAB's Hill Student Center student employees have learned true flexibility, conflict resolution and communication skills, and how to play their part in flattening the curve this past semester. With widespread distribution of a vaccine on the horizon, the sense of normalcy they started the fall 2020 semester with may not be too far off, but I know the skills they've gained and the bond we've developed working through our virtual/hybrid reality will persist.



Darien Garrison is the
Assistant Director of the
Hill Student Center at
the University of
Alabama at Birmingham.



Who's Innovating in Region III

GRADUATE STUDENT PROGRAMMING

As the Assistant Director for Graduate and Professional Student Programming at East Carolina University, my work would equate to that of a one-woman programming board for our graduate and professional students. Within the past two years we have found rapid success with several programs created specifically for our graduate and professional students such as cooking classes, trivia nights at local breweries, family outings to local family-friendly attractions, art classes and many more. The goal of these programs was to pull students out of their academic silos and help them connect with their peers and local community in fun, relaxing, in-person events.

When the pandemic hit, I balked at the notion of virtual programming; it was the antithesis of everything we had worked to create in the past two years. Additionally, unlike our undergraduate students, many of our graduate and professional students remained on campus during our university-wide shut down and transition to virtual learning because their academics and research required it. (Don't get me wrong, there are some incredible virtual programs out there, it just didn't feel right for our demographic of students). It felt like there was an opportunity to continue some type of in-person or hybrid programming, we just had to figure out how to do it safely.

Our first hybrid programming idea came in late-March from a local pizzeria. Our city's small business owners were scrambling to come up with creative ways to keep their businesses afloat while navigating various city, county and statewide stay-at-home orders. We partnered with this pizzeria to build "Pizza To-Go Kits". These kits contained two balls of homemade dough, pizza sauce, mozzarella, basil and instructions on how to bake the pizza. We marketed this event specifically to graduate and professional students as (1) free food, (2) a way to get to know a local business, and (3) a competition on social media to see who could create the best pizza.

Students reserved their kit online and were then given a 3-hour timeframe to pick-up their kit at the restaurant. While we were happy with the event turnout (we filled 60 reservations in 24 minutes), we were ecstatic to see that it helped address some of our more pressing issues, specifically student food



insecurity and town-gown relations. We received feedback from our students that they were happily surprised with the amount of food the kits created, and that they would have never gone to this pizzeria if we hadn't partnered with them. Several students continued to patronize this business after our event because they were offering "family-style" to-go orders that were relatively cheap and provided a week of food for one student.

We used our experience with Luna Pizza as a framework for our Fall Semester. We created or enhanced several partnerships with local businesses to offer programming that we, as a university, could not provide due to lack of resources or knowledge. For example, we partnered with a local bakery to offer monthly "Make & Bake" programs. The bakery would provide our students with a kit that included all of the ingredients to make a specific baked good (cinnamon rolls, cinnamon swirl bread, apple pies, etc.) and the owner of that bakery would then host a live class on Zoom teaching our students how to make that baked good. We partnered with a local pottery painting studio to offer a Family Pottery Painting weekend in which our students could bring two guests (children, siblings, significant others, etc.) and paint a piece of pottery for free. This event was traditionally a single day event, but we expanded it to include Friday, Saturday and Sunday to accommodate the business' social distancing guidelines and we discovered that our students actually preferred the extended timeframe.



We did explore a few virtual options, such as virtual trivia, virtual music bingo and virtual art parties, however we found that our students were most engaged when they were able to do something with another human being, in-person, even if that that person was their roommate or family member. We saw our students cultivate relationships with their peers through the common thread of completing their project, and we received a wealth of feedback that our students were grateful for a brief reprieve from the stress of the pandemic, their academics and/or life in general. The beauty of these programs is that we can continue them post-pandemic and know that they'll be successful. We plan to continue these programs in the spring, and we intend to expand our offerings with a specific focus on family-friendly programs to help target our graduate and professional students with children.

Emily Waters is the Assistant
Director for Graduate and
Professional Student
Programming at East
Carolina University



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featured in our
next newsletter?**

**Are you working on anything exciting
that you would like to share
with the region?**

Fun project on your campus?

**Research that you believe
will help colleagues?**

New programming idea?

Send it to us!

Please contact Communications Coordinator
Jennifer Duncan at jduncan@agnesscott.edu
with any questions.