



TIDE TOGETHER

THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA
GRADUATE SCHOOL

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

WELCOME 2011 COHORT

Tide Together began in 2009 with its very first cohort of 23 students. The program continues each year, admitting 23-25 students just beginning their graduate programs. Tide Together utilizes a team approach to mentor graduate students who are currently pursuing graduate degrees. Program participants are matched with faculty and peer mentors to help them acquire personal and professional skills needed to succeed in their chosen career paths.



2011 Cohort at the CDR for Fall Orientation

In the fall of 2011, Tide Together admitted 23 new participants, all with different backgrounds and experiences.

Like those that came before them, the 2011 cohort is striving to exhibit excellence in their studies while here at UA. Each member has been paired with a faculty and peer mentor within the guidelines of their discipline and level of need. As the semester comes to a close, the 2011 Cohort has had the opportunity to attend several workshops and social events geared towards helping them develop the skills and resources they need to excel in their professional and personal lives.

Tide Together as a whole has reached a 200 member distribution list made up of participants, peer mentors, faculty, advisors, speakers, and alumni. Tide Together has grown into a truly exemplary program with so much in store for the spring of 2012! We are excited to be on this journey together.

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BOBBY ZAMORA



Roberto (Bobby) Zamora graduated from San Diego State University in 2011 with a B.A. in psychology. As an undergraduate, he was the NIH/NIGMS Minority Biomedical Research Support (MBRS) and Ronald E. McNair scholar who conducted studies on the latencies and amplitudes of olfactory event-related potentials in aging and how they may be used as a promising

assessment tool for Alzheimer's disease, under Dr. Claire Murphy. His work contributed to a first author manuscript, "Adiposity measures predict olfactory processing speed in older adult carriers of the ApoE e4 allele", that was recently accepted in *Clinical Neurophysiology*. Furthermore, Bobby worked under Dr. Sonia Ancoli-Israel on a study that examined the effects of treating sleep apnea on non-motor symptoms in older patients with Parkinson's disease.

Bobby is currently a first-year clinical health psychology student at the University of Alabama under the supervision of Dr. Kenneth Lichstein. His research interests include gerontological behavioral sleep disorders as well as understanding the behavioral sleep changes in normal aging adults. His goal is to pursue a faculty position, teach, conduct research, and encourage others to pursue higher education and a career in psychology.

FEATURED FACULTY MENTORS

Tide Together would not be where it is today without the care and effort provided by our faculty mentors during the three years it has been in existence. The purpose of this section is to highlight some of our faculty members who have been with Tide Together from the beginning in one capacity or another. They have taken on so much outside their normal duties to provide excellent mentoring and guidance to the program and its participants.



The writer Austin Kleon says that when people give you advice, they're really just talking to themselves in the past. I've loved this observation since I first read it about a year ago, but it suddenly held extra-special meaning for me in August when I became a Tide Together Mentor. Remembering Kleon's advice about advice, I embraced this important responsibility by asking myself a deceptively simple question:

What would I teach my past graduate student self?

Having been a first-generation undergraduate nearly two decades before, I was no stranger to being called a "non-traditional student" when I entered my doctoral program at precisely the same time I saw middle age on the horizon. If only it had been as simple as that overly generalized label. The reality: I may as well have been visiting another planet as I learned quickly that my nearly 40 years of living and 14-year career in corporate settings in no way prepared me for the quirks, peculiarities, and special language of academic life. The rigorous courses, endless reading, and late nights in the library presented no problem. It was the little things that

BEBE BAREFOOT

tripped me up. And it wasn't that I was afraid to ask questions; the fearlessness that comes with age gave me that advantage over younger peers. I simply didn't know *which* questions to ask. These are things you can't learn from a textbook or even from a teacher. And then I realized my question needed tweaking. The kind of advice I would give my former me had nothing to do with teaching. Nothing at all. All mentors are teachers, but not all teachers are mentors. So I rephrased the question:

What would I *tell* my past graduate student self?

Teachers "teach" facts and concepts and theories. Mentors "tell" secrets. We tell the secrets of success and we know that success means more than meeting requirements and earning degrees. And that is the difference between teaching and mentoring. Mentoring takes teaching to a completely different level, because a mentor steps outside the

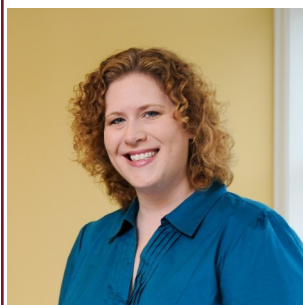
realm of developing skills and into a more personal and committed role in the mentee's life. Teachers share knowledge and mentors often certainly do the same, but they transcend that more traditional or "professional" level and share experience—some of it hard-earned. Mentoring requires building relationships slowly over time, building trust and a bond that makes us sensitive to those hidden hurdles that can trip up even the most brilliant student.

I'm honored to be part of the Tide Together Mentoring program, because it gives me a chance to give back in a way that I can't always do in the classroom. It

allows me to talk to myself in the past as I smooth the road toward someone else's future, and this time I know which questions to ask.



LAURA BUSENLEHNER



Once I heard about the Tide Together program at UA for mentoring graduate students, I knew I wanted to take part in this important venture.

This stems primarily from the void I felt as a female graduate student in a Ph.D. program where the vast majority of faculty

were men; not to mention the lack of diversity in other areas such as race and ethnicity. I had good relationships with the few women faculty in my department, but not to the point where I would consider it mentoring. I remember debating whether to drop out of graduate school in my second year and having no one to talk to about it. I couldn't talk to my research advisor; he wouldn't understand. I was afraid to speak to other female faculty for fear of disappointing them by my weakness. Having someone who might have experienced something similar to what I was going through provide insight would have been monumental for me. I struggled with the decision alone, and I promised myself at that when I became a professor I would mentor graduate students who need support.

This is my third year in the Tide Together Program, and I am enjoying the relationships I have made. I have had the opportunity

to mentor three wonderful young women, two in Chemistry and one in Mathematics. In both Chemistry and Mathematics, women, especially African American women, are highly underrepresented, and many face prejudice on two fronts, both sex *and* race. To me, the true testament that the program can work is my continued mentor relationship with prior mentees. This program has also allowed me to mentor friends of past mentees. I have had several graduate students ask to speak with me about sensitive matters relating to gender, sex or race because my mentees would "vouch" for me. This tells me that they feel the mentoring serves a purpose and that I am doing my job, so to speak. They trust my promise of confidentiality and my opinion, and for that I am grateful.

This program provides much more than moral support. It stresses the essential skills and professional development any successful graduate student will need. My contribution in years past has been a brown bag seminar on non-verbal communication. Students often do not know how their facial expressions, body language, and tone of voice during a presentation influence their perception by an audience member. (They find this seminar quite eye opening!) This year I will have a much more active role in the writing workshop, which is something I personally think is highly

beneficial to all mentees. We should encourage mentees to continue to develop writing and communication skills long after they leave the program.

Finally, many faculty focus on mentoring undergraduates and students under our direct supervision; however, we forget about graduate students. We assume they are prepared—they wouldn't be in grad school if they weren't, right? Well, that is an oversight we cannot afford to make anymore. Many first year graduate students are overwhelmed by graduate school and are not prepared for the world of academia we as faculty are so accustomed to. We need to put ourselves in their shoes and see the world from their point of view. The best things we can provide for our mentees are confidence and support. Teach them about work ethic and help them gain superb communication skills. Show them how to stand up for themselves without confrontation. Share with them the struggles you have faced and how you dealt with them. And finally, just be a friend.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW

I am currently working at Stillman College (since fall 2010) as an assistant professor of English and as chair of the Department of English. Aside from teaching majority composition courses and managing a department at Stillman, I serve as a mentor for incoming freshmen (each year). Also, I am the class advisor of the Student Government Association's Freshman Cabinet, and I have been appointed to three committees: Arts and Sciences Promotion and Tenure Review Committee, Academic Affairs Committee, and Student Affairs Committee.

Interestingly, when I participated in the Tide Together Peer Mentor program, I had completed my coursework as a Ph.D. student and had begun the process of working on my dissertation. Erica Jordan, a fellow Southern Regional Education Board scholar and a former assistant to Dean Natalie Adams, had contacted me to serve as a mentor and not a "mentee."

Because I earned my master of fine arts at UA

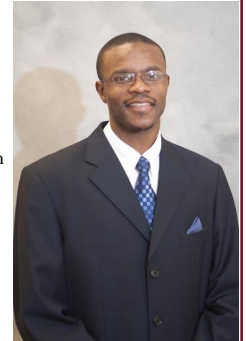
NORMAN GOLAR, PHD

and by the time I approached the end of my doctoral career, I had a seven-year experience not only as a graduate teaching assistant but also as a graduate student, so Erica Jordan expressed to me that I would be a good candidate to serve as a mentor.

Although I did not have the experience of working with a mentor which meant that I did not have the experience of turning to someone who would provide clarity for any information relevant to my graduate studies, I walked away from the Tide Together Peer Mentor Program with a different yet greater lesson: I understood the importance of reliability and dependability. I knew that my peer mentee, Kenneth Ulmer, might call on me at any given time in search of an answer, in need of a task, in want of a conversation.

Because I retained all of these ideas, I had to place great importance on being a reliable and dependable person with whom Kenneth Ulmer may communicate.

I truly believe God granted me the opportunity to participate in Tide Together because He knew what awaited me after receiving my doctorate. I do not consider it to be a coincidence that I am at Stillman working as a person in a leadership position: I consider it to be a blessing. My role, my position, my knowledge partly has to do with the fact that I and other peer mentors and mentees along with respective deans of UA had been "tied" together for a reason greater than our own understanding.



Entering the doctoral program in August 2009 was an emotional experience both physically and mentally. I felt academically challenged as I engaged in the return to the campus for several reasons. First, my age was doubled the average for college students. Second, I maintained employment, am married and actively involved in a community based organization.

Lastly, my father became terminally ill, declined rapidly and expired during my first month of school. However, despite these challenges, I successfully completed that semester and the doctoral program.



MARILYN ARCHIBALD, RN, DNP,

My acceptance to the Tide Together mentoring program profoundly impacted my success in the doctoral Studies. The selection of a peer and faculty mentor truly enabled me to receive support and encouragement to endure the challenge. I credit the program and my professors for my achievement. Dr. Felecia Wood, CCN served as faculty mentor and Audrey Austin, doctoral psychology student was my peer mentor. Their insight and encouragement was commendable.

Tide Together provided ready access to several programs that otherwise I would not likely have utilized during my study such the extensive library resources, the writing center and the computer laboratory assistance. I capitalized on every

learning opportunity provided by Tide Together to gain resources that were beneficial. I utilized the statistical support, career center, library resources, writing center resources, and attended the writing boot camps and graduate research conference.

Tide Together mentoring program should be offered to all students entering a doctoral program to promote success and support throughout the nursing field. I appreciate the guidance and support received from fellow peers and faculty. It is an experience I encourage every student to obtain and treasure.

TRACEY BARNETT

As I look back over the past two years of my life, I am truly grateful to have been a member of Tide Together (TT). No other organization on campus could have provided me with a more realistic insight into what I would encounter when applying to PhD programs as well as the experiences encountered therein. Knowing that I would be paired with a social work faculty member as my faculty mentor and a possible social work student as a peer mentor made me so excited about the program. During my first year in the program, I was assigned to Dr. Steve and Mrs. Fay Hobbs (faculty mentors) and Kedra James (peer mentor). These three provided me with a plethora of insight during my first year that will never be forgotten.

TT exposed me to Refworks, writing and presentation workshops, CV builders, various outings that afforded me with the opportunity of meeting likeminded individuals, a graduate ambassadorship, and the chance for poster presentations. In March 2010, I presented my first poster presentation at the GSA conference. This would not have been possible without the help of Dr. Adams, Erica, Regina DeWitt and Dr. Josephine Pryce.

As a member of TT, I wanted to gain as much experience as possible, so if someone suggested that I make a presentation, volunteer, etc., and it would be beneficial to me as a PhD applicant, I did it.

During my second year in TT, I began submitting applications to doctoral programs. So many schools were impressed with my CV because of my activities at UA, and I have TT to thank for that. Although I was still enrolled as a student in the spring of 2011, I was in Washington, D.C. completing an internship. Nadia touched base with me at least once a month, which made me feel like I still had a connection with TT although I was not physically present in Tuscaloosa, AL. During my second year in TT, I had the privilege of being paired with another social work faculty member, Dr. Cassandra Simon. She allowed me to partake in a poster presentation with her and three other PhD students that was presented at the Rural Health Conference during the fall of 2010. By the time I left UA in the fall of 2010, I had already presented three posters and submitted my applications to social work doctoral programs.

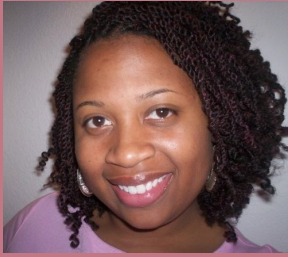
After much prayer and careful consideration, I chose to attend The University of Texas-Arlington to pursue my PhD. Throughout my undergraduate and graduate years, I have come in contact with many professors who were alumni of this program, and since I thought so highly of them, I could not pass up the opportunity to attend such a prestigious institution.

I moved to Arlington, TX, in August 2011 and I love it. Growing up in a small town, Ripley, MS, and now living in the Dallas-Fort Worth area is a dream come true. I am currently working on a white paper that addresses racial and ethnic minorities, especially those with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), and integrated health care with Dr. Katherine Sanchez, and I serve as the GTA for the Fort Worth campus. I have been exposed to so many opportunities since moving to TX that it is not possible to list them all. Currently, I am interested in researching how poverty leads to obesity and how obesity can impede one's chances of joining the military. TT exposed me to a world that I had no idea existed. TT introduced me to colleagues who I now consider as friends. But most importantly, TT provided me with the support, encouragement, confidence, and tools that I needed as a graduate student to apply and be unconditionally admitted to a PhD program. Thank you so much!



FROM PARTICIPANT TO PEER MENTOR

JEENA WILLIAMS



Since 2009 I have been a participant in the Tide Together Mentoring Program. As a participant I have been introduced to various aspects of preparing for a career as future faculty including how to prepare a curriculum vita, the importance of presenting at academic conferences and

opportunities to improve my writing skills. In addition to academic preparation, Tide Together has provided a support system through individualized mentorship.

During the program I developed a strong relationship with my faculty mentor, Dr. DoVeanna Fulton-Minor, Chair of Gender and Race Studies. As my faculty mentor Dr. Fulton-Minor has always been open to questions regarding ways I can maximize my experiences as a graduate student. As a way of preparation, Dr. Fulton-Minor invited me to her class as guest lecture to discuss my research interests. Presently, Dr. Fulton-Minor and I maintain our relationship and she serves as a member on my dissertation committee.

In addition to my faculty mentor, another asset of Tide Together is connecting with other students from various fields of study. As a participant I connected with students from English, Women's Studies, Chemistry and Social Work. Tide Together hosts an array of social events which provides a way for students to meet other participants and faculty while taking time to unwind and have fun.

This year I transitioned to a role as a peer mentor. When asked if I would serve as a peer mentor I immediately replied, "yes". I wanted to share the information I learned during my graduate studies with other students. As an emerging scholar I enjoy sharing knowledge I have gained to enhance my graduate experience and prepare for a career in academia. Participation in Tide Together is a rewarding experience and I am pleased that I was selected to maintain involvement with the program as a peer mentor.

Tide Together began in 2009 with its very first cohort of students. Since then we have had the great fortune to have several of our participants stay on as mentors.

EDWARD DILLION



The Tide Together Program has served me well. As a mentee of the first cohort, this program challenged me in many ways. Yet, this program provided me with the necessary enrichment for my journey as a graduate student.

The seminars allowed me to understand some of the general expectations of a graduate student. The writing boot camps helped me with my writing skills, which can be challenging as a computer science major. My faculty, peer, and community mentor(s) were very beneficial by giving their time, attention, and advice. Each mentor has even shared their personal academic experiences with me (both positive and negative). Their testimonies have encouraged me to endure my own academic journey.

As a new peer mentor, I am embracing the challenge of helping a fellow student through their academic journey. My mentee is also a computer science major. This experience has so far been helpful and enlightening. It is helpful because I am now being a service to someone, while enlightening because I am broadening my academic horizons.

DR. BRIDGET GRIGGS

I graduated with my Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Alabama in August of 2010. I am currently a part-time Instructor in Teacher Education at the University of Alabama and an adjunct History professor at Faulkner University. Tide together helped me because it gave me an arena to express the unique challenges I faced as being a black female pursuing a terminal degree. This program is great because throughout your degree program, many of your fellow classmates and professors may not understand your plight because they have not walked in those shoes. Not that they don't want to understand but it's just life. That is why I truly appreciated the Tide Together program and was honored to become a faculty mentor upon graduation.





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TIDE TOGETHER HIGHLIGHTS

Amanda McCracken, who started Tide Together in 2009, recently accepted a position as Vice President/Marketing Analysis Senior Manager at JP Morgan Chase in Columbus, Ohio. She will be moving to Columbus at the end of May after completing her PhD!

Elisabeth Jones, a member of the 2011 Cohort, was invited to speak at St. Mary's University in San Antonio for their Borderlands Seminar Series on November 22nd.

Derrick Stokes, a volunteer for Tide Together and a Graduate Ambassador, was featured in the Crimson White recently on their series on Successful Minority Graduate Students. You can read the article at <http://cw.ua.edu/2011/11/09/minority-students-perform-better-under-minority-professors-study-shows/>

Huiying Zheng, a member of the 2011 cohort, along with her faculty mentor **Shuhui Li**, have had an article "Comparative Study of Maximum Power Point Tracking Control Strategies for Solar PV Systems" accepted for presentation at the 2012 IEEE PES Transmission & Distribution Conference & Exposition in Orlando, FL in May.

Mya McGee, a member of the 2011 cohort presented her poster presentation entitled "Listener Perception of Standard American English and Four Regional Dialects" at the 2011 American Speech and Hearing Association Convention in San Diego, CA..

REFLECTIONS ON TIDE TOGETHER'S FIRST YEAR

When I think back on the first year of the Tide Together program, it always brings a smile to my face. From the beginning, I knew it would be a special program. Dr. Adams and I interviewed twenty-two applicants who became the first class of Tide Together participants. We heard touching stories of graduate students who worked hard to be the first in their families to attend college, and we heard fun stories like the hilarious account of our three-time karaoke champion (Joan Olivia Chang for those who do not know her). These participants became a UA family for me at a time when I really needed it.

I was at the end of my own doctoral program and had become exhausted and "burnt out" on school. Even though I had wonderful support from my major professor and additional support from my departments, I simply did not know if I could muster through one more year of graduate school. My initial excitement had diminished, and the load of my dissertation felt like more than I could bear. Coordinating Tide Together for the first year was like a parachute for me that opened just when I needed it. If a participant had a bad day, we would meet at Starbucks. While we caffeinated, I would tell the participant to push through whatever current frustration they were facing, that it would be over soon, and that I knew they could do it. Those sessions were as helpful for me as I hope they

were for the participants. If I believed in them, then that meant that I had to believe in myself. Furthermore, I had to finish my dissertation so they could see that there was a light at the end of the tunnel and life after grad school. (There really is, I promise.)

To the new class of Tide Together participants, keep up your hard work and know that it will pay off in the end. Hang out with each other. You have the opportunity to form a special doctoral family that we all wish we could have had throughout grad school. Finally, know that one of your extended Tide Together family members is at the University of West Florida, looking forward to the day when you also have your Ph.D. You can do it, and I am glad you have Tide Together to help.

Dr. Erica Jordan is currently an Assistant Professor in the School of Psychological and Behavioral Sciences at The University of West Florida

