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UA PR Student Earns Grant for Internship at Black Warrior Riverkeeper

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. — Hope Runyan, a senior at The University of Alabama, has received a grant from [the Curtis and Edith Munson Foundation](#) to work with [Black Warrior Riverkeeper](#), a nonprofit clean water advocacy organization. Runyan, a senior majoring in public relations, will work for the organization as a communications intern throughout the summer. The grant, provided by a partnership between the Munson Foundation and [The University of Alabama's Department of Advertising and Public Relations](#), is the highest award given to a student in the [College of Communication and Information Sciences](#).

“I am so honored to receive this grant and have the opportunity to work with an organization that has such a big impact on Alabama.” said Runyan, a resident of Bessemer, Ala. “By directly affecting communities and having such a large influence throughout the state, Black Warrior Riverkeeper is allowing me to build on my communications skills in every task.”

Black Warrior Riverkeeper is dedicated to improving water quality, habitat, recreation and public health throughout the 17-county [Black Warrior River watershed](#). The organization identifies pollution problems, promotes solutions and increases public involvement in conservation. Last year, 589 volunteers donated a record 9,526 community service hours through Black Warrior Riverkeeper projects. The majority of those volunteers were students at The University of Alabama.

“We are so blessed to have The University of Alabama's PR program, perennially ranked among the nation's top 5, supporting us through the Curtis and Edith Munson Foundation's innovative internship grant,” said Charles Scribner, executive director of Black Warrior Riverkeeper.

The Curtis and Edith Munson Foundation funds efforts that focus on the conservation of natural resources in eastern North America and the Caribbean Basin, with an emphasis on the United States. In addition to providing financial support directly to environmental organizations such as Black Warrior Riverkeeper, the Munson Foundation assists conservation by funding this internship program at The University of Alabama.

“Thanks to the commitment of The University of Alabama and the generous welcome by hosting organizations, undergraduates have an opportunity to see how a small non-profit operates, and how communications can be a valuable tool in furthering the organization's mission and goals,” said Angel Braestrup, executive director of the Curtis and Edith Munson Foundation. “Black Warrior Riverkeeper is working to ensure that Alabama's amazing river resources are healthy enough to serve current and future generations, and Hope will be part of the next generation of leaders who understands just how important that is.”

“The grant provides a salary for students interning at the conservation organizations,” explained Dr. Joseph Phelps, chairman of the Department of Advertising and Public Relations at The University of Alabama. “The students benefit from the paycheck and the excellent experience and the nonprofit organizations benefit from the student’s efforts in an area that they typically do not have the funds to staff on a full-time basis. This is a great way for the foundation to meet its objectives and help students at the same time.”

For a high-resolution photo of Hope Runyan by the Department of Advertising and Public Relations at The University of Alabama, [click here](#).

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Black Warrior Riverkeeper’s mission is to protect and restore the Black Warrior River and its tributaries. The citizen-based nonprofit organization promotes clean water for the sake of public health, recreation, and wildlife habitat throughout the Black Warrior River watershed. To learn more, visit BlackWarriorRiver.org.