

Biology Lab, Piano Lab To Benefit From Centennial Opportunity Fund

(10/1/14)

MONTICELLO, AR — The biology and music programs at the University of Arkansas at Monticello are about to benefit from the generosity of a group of donors known as The Centennial Circle, according to Linda Yeiser, vice chancellor for advancement.

The Centennial Circle is comprised of 100 donors giving \$10,000 each to create a \$1 million unrestricted endowment. The spendable earnings from the endowment make up the Centennial Opportunity Fund and are distributed annually for special University projects. This year, the Centennial Opportunity Fund Committee has allocated \$30,000 to purchase 30 microscopes for a biology lab and another \$20,000 for the creation of a new piano lab.

The biology and piano labs were two of 26 proposals totaling \$247,213 submitted to the Centennial Opportunity Fund Committee, which reviewed each proposal and selected two for funding.

“This will be a tremendous addition to our biology program and will benefit our pre-medicine program as well,” said Dr. Morris Bramlett, dean of the School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences. “The new microscopes will replace outdated equipment that we could not afford to purchase within our current operating budget. I want to thank each of the donors who joined The Centennial Circle for making this possible.” Bramlett added, “An anonymous donor is matching the \$30,000 Centennial Circle award to make it possible for two labs to have new microscopes. With the generous gift from the anonymous donor, we can replace all the basic scopes at one time. This makes it easier for the students having to learn only one scope, and it simplifies maintenance issues.

UAM’s current piano lab is more than 20 years old and in need of an update, according to Dr. Paul Becker, professor of music. Funds from the Centennial Opportunity Fund will be used to purchase new Yamaha electronic pianos, which will be connected to computers and integrated into the Division of Music’s music technology courses to allow students to play, compose and arrange. “The Yamaha electronic pianos are the industry standard,” explained Becker. “Most colleges are using them. This is a huge lift for our program.”

“The Centennial Circle endowment supports wonderful projects that we would be unable to fund otherwise,” said Yeiser. “We asked students, faculty and staff to submit thoughtful and creative proposals that would benefit the University at large. The rule of thumb was ‘Ten years later, can we say that the project made a substantial difference to the University and/or to many students?’ I want to commend the committee for their diligence and hard work in selecting projects that promise to do just that.”