

## NEWS RELEASE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **UCM Alumni Foundation Awards FY18 Opportunity Grants to Faculty, Staff**

WARRENSBURG, Mo. (September 20, 2017) — Eleven projects that range from a new financial literacy and default prevention program for students to brand new state-of-the-art sales lab recording equipment have received funding in fiscal year 2018 through the [University of Central Missouri \(UCM\) Alumni Foundation Opportunity Grants Program](#). The Opportunity Grant Program was established by the UCM Alumni Foundation in support of faculty and staff with incredibly innovative ideas, but require additional funding for these projects.

The UCM Alumni Foundation Board of Directors committee for awards approved FY18 projects at their meeting held in the spring. In the fifth year of this program, funding was increased to \$40,000, which provides the highest amount ever funded for the Opportunity Grant Program since its inception in 2013.

Funded through unrestricted gifts to the UCM Alumni Foundation, Opportunity Grants range from \$100 to \$5,000 per an individual maximum and are awarded each fiscal year.

Recipients and projects for FY18 are:

- Ashlee Binggeli, Coordinator of Student Loan Programs: Financial Literacy and Default Prevention Program.
- Vanessa Walker, Academic Advisor for the College of Health, Science, and Technology: B-SOMbody-UCM's Black Male Initiative.
- Karen Breshears, Instructor of Food and Nutrition: Quantity Foods kitchen upgrade.
- Darian Huff, Graduate Assistant for the TRIO program: Senior Summit event for first generation graduating students.

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- Chalice Jeffries, Transformational Learning Initiative Coordinator for the College of Education: Coding and robotics makerspace for preservice teachers.
- Melanie Johnson, Associate Professor of Art and Design: New anatomical models to provide a higher level of engaged learning for students.
- Meera Penumetcha, Assistant Professor of Nutrition and Kinesiology: Cross disciplinary research at UCM that brings students and faculty together to investigate the role of dietary oxidized lipids in fat storage and glucose disposal.
- Joni Porter, Operations Coordinator for Career Development Services: Interview room project for student Career and Development Services.
- Charles Schwepker, Professor of Marketing and Public Relations: Sales lab recording equipment.
- Sumi Singh, Assistant Professor of Mathematics and Computer Science: Preparing a team of UCM students to compete in the interdisciplinary and highly competitive annual Missouri Informatics Symposium (MIS).
- Josh Tomlinson, Interim Director of Broadcasting Services: Red Digital Studios Collaborative Workspace Expansion.

*The UCM Foundation (DBA “UCM Alumni Foundation”), is an IRS 501(c)(3) organization with a mission to cultivate, manage and distribute resources in support of the University of Central Missouri. Since being established in 1979, the Foundation has generated more than \$100 million benefiting the university and its students. For more information, please visit [ucmfoundation.org](http://ucmfoundation.org).*

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