



For Immediate Release

ATHENS STATE CELEBRATES GRAND OPENING OF NEW CASElab

Dateline: October 23, 2024, Athens, AL – Athens State University celebrated the grand opening and ribbon cutting of the new Crime Analyzation, Simulation, and Experimentation Laboratory (CASElab) today. Located on campus in the Freehauf House, the CASElab provides educational training to Criminal Justice, Homeland and Corporate Security, as well as Child Advocacy Studies Training (CAST) certificate students in the areas of examination, documentation, observation, experimentation, and assessments. In addition, the lab will offer opportunities to conduct reenactments, academic research, and mock case simulations.

The CASElab is a house which consists of rooms used to create adaptable spaces to achieve different sequences of events and tasks. The lab will allow students to conduct exercises in everything from initial and critical responses, case management, home visits, active shooter, cyber criminology, crime scene and forensic investigations, fingerprinting analysis, drug identification, crisis prevention, and evidence collection. Students will have access to equipment and utilize best practices regarding crime scene documentation, photography, measurements, evidence collection techniques, etc. In the lab's training area, students will have the ability to successfully analyze ballistics (e.g., comparisons of bullet striations, firing pin comparisons, etc.), prints from various surfaces, tire and foot impressions, physical and trace evidence, blood spatter, and to record visual, latent, utilize cyber technology and physical evidence at the scene of a crime for documentation purposes used for police reports, child abuse cases, DHR, and court cases, and other legal documents.

"The primary purpose of the CASElab is to implement investigative techniques utilized in the identification, collection, preservation, and analysis of evidence," said Dr. Quanda Stevenson, Full Professor of Criminal Justice. "The CASElab is a dedicated space for our students to engage in experiential learning through role-playing scenarios and various investigation exercises. This lab will provide students with opportunities to apply what they learn in class in a simulated space so they can learn in a safe and controlled environment. In addition, students will learn techniques used by the FBI, lawyers, police, fireman, first responders, MDT, DHR, child advocacy, forensic experts, investigators, and other local, state and federal agencies. The lab will allow faculty and practitioners to fully train our students with workforce readiness skills."

"We live in a world with crime on the rise both nationally and locally, highlighting the fragile nature of our law enforcement ecosystem and the critical need for a well-trained workforce in Criminal Justice," said Dr. Dave Ragsdale, Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences. "Athens State has responded to this need with the recent addition of several thriving academic programs in Criminal Justice and Homeland and Corporate Security. With these programs and expert faculty in place, Athens State is uniquely poised to **escalate its impact within the university and Athens communities through the addition of the CASElab.**"

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Athens State University – Founded in 1822, Athens State is Alabama's oldest educational institution of higher learning. As one of only a few "upper division" universities in the entire country, Athens State is a destination for transfer students and students with more than 36 hours of credit who may have paused their education and are seeking to finish their degree. Offering over 50 undergraduate degree programs and options in addition to graduate programs, Athens State focuses on providing affordable, flexible, and high-quality options for all learners. At Athens State, we understand it isn't how you began your education that matters. It's how you finish. And a strong finish is only the beginning.

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