

# Inclusive PERSPECTIVE



## ***Got a minute? We're Listening!***

When was the last time you took a few minutes to complete an organizational survey? Did you wonder how the data is evaluated, if your comments are anonymous, or even read at all? The DFA-U Alumni Team, pictured above, took these factors and others into consideration when diving into a second-year project to enhance their survey skills and identify solvable challenges at DFA.

They split into two teams, thoughtfully designed engaging questions and distributed surveys to sampling audiences within DFA. The goal was to solicit feedback that would identify areas of improvement in equipment and resources and communication. Then, they analyzed their results and distilled the results down to one main solvable concern.

Both teams did an excellent job of using their data analysis, topic research and persuasive presentation skills to present a final exhibition to the DFA-U Leadership Team this fall.

Congratulations DFA-U Alumni team on your success in the DFA University program and on your continued progress on your DFA leadership journey.



*DFA-U Inaugural Year Alumni Left to Right: Marsharlette Lester, Chelsey Smart, Toniesha Sargent, Brandi Ratcliff, Stephanie Bartley, Terrill Gilliam*

## ***Leaders Growing Leaders at DFA-U***

This fall has been a season of change and new beginnings as DFA welcomes its third-year class of DFA-U candidates and a new head of the Department. In August of 2023, Governor Sanders announced the selection of Secretary Jim Hudson as the state's Chief Financial Officer and DFA's Secretary stating, "He has helped lead our state to record low unemployment and strong economic growth and has the experience we need to keep Arkansas' finances strong." Hudson holds a bachelor's degree from Hendrix College in Conway, a Juris Doctorate from the Bowen Law School in Little Rock, as well as a master's degree in leadership from John Brown University in Siloam Springs, and a Master of Divinity from Southern Seminary in Louisville. Hudson was the opening speaker at this year's DFA-U kick-off and provided participants in the leadership program with encouragement and support. This year's class is composed of twenty-two candidates and their mentors who will meet two times a month to discuss leadership principles and skills. The candidates this year are employed in almost every DFA division and have committed to attending monthly sessions and completing the assignments for each session. The group gathered for the first time in September to get acquainted, share resources, and begin their study of leadership qualities and skills. Many of the DFA-U

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# DFA-U GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT



## Shanquita Berryman

Give applause to Shanquita Berryman for her promotion to a new leadership position from a DFA Revenue Supervisor to DFA Division Manager I in the Office of Excise Tax.



## Scottie York

Congratulations to Scottie York for his promotion from DSMV Hearing Officer to Grants Coordinator for the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, here at DFA.



## Ann Allen

Raise your glass to Ann Allen for her promotion to DFA Division Manager II. Mrs. Allen also celebrated 25 years of employment at DFA in September. Thank you for your service and dedication!

audience had not yet had the opportunity to meet the Secretary and were given the opportunity to hear about his leadership experiences firsthand and ask questions. "People are our number one asset" here at DFA, "money has less value than the 2200 plus employees of DFA. We don't keep our assets in a vault. Instead, our assets walk in and out of the door each day." He emphasized the importance of learning from each other. The leadership experiences Secretary Hudson shared supported positive collaboration and encouraged participants to be better every day, both individually and as a team. He outlined the following points as the "DFA Way", and cultural values that he wants to see grow at DFA:

✓ **Continuously Improve.**

DFA is not the status quo! There is always an opportunity to get better.

✓ **Be efficient.**

While DFA is known for "the money", it is the taxpayers who supply and trust DFA with that money. We must be responsible for spending no more than necessary.

✓ **Be effective.**

DFA must be effective and serve the expectations of our customers. We must be on time and on budget.

✓ **Be honest.**

Every team member must be 100% honest 100% of the time!

✓ **Have Fun!**

Make sure to have fun while serving the customers. What does fun look like in your office?

Continuing the DFA experience sharing, the Drivers Services/Motor Vehicles (DSMV) Administrator, Wayne Hamric planted the fun! Mr. Hamric shared valuable experiences he has learned from his own personal opportunities to help others. He credited some of his success to self-management and expressed the importance of having a clear direction for oneself in order to effectively serve others. The DFA-U team participated with Hamric in a short personality analysis, which was engaging and enlightening. The afternoon continued with an introduction to the leadership curriculum, including teachings from the books: *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, *Atomic Habits*, and *Standout 2.0*.



DFA Secretary, Jim Hudson

In the world of farming and likewise here at DFA, summer isn't the only period of growth. DFA University is in a prime growing season now. In the coming months, contributors will sharpen valuable business skills, gain insight into DFA standards of operation, and put real leadership skills into practice. When leaders grow leaders, the organization yields opulently from the most valuable assets, its' human assets.

# SEATA CONFERENCE SUCCESS!



In July, the Arkansas State Treasurer and former Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) Secretary Larry Walther and DFA Commissioner Charlie Collins along with the DFA Division of Revenue hosted the annual Southeastern Association of Tax Administrators (SEATA) Conference in Little Rock. The conference which is held yearly is presented by Revenue Commissioners from twelve states, and their staff, who gather to share ideas areas ranging from the implementation of new tax laws to human resource development. A special shout out goes to Karen Hultqvist, DFA Tax Auditor Supervisor who coordinated this year's conference which was an amazing success. Hultqvist spent over a year organizing the conference which included a special presentation from Christina Hulett, State Program Coordinator and DFA trainer and Courtney Brown, DFA Recruiter Coordinator. The two



presented on "Innovative Leadership" and along with Commissioner Collins highlighted the tools being used by DFA to train and retain employees.

The two spoke on the challenges that DFA faces in maintaining cross-divisional engagement and leadership development among DFA's offices and divisions. Hulett provided an overview of the analysis and program implementation that is helping diminish skill gaps across the Department. In 2020, the leadership team began developing a leadership program and soon introduced, through DFA University, a leadership curriculum designed to provide current DFA employees with the opportunity to learn the skills necessary to excel in DFA supervisory roles. Brown, who spearheads employee recruitment for DFA, explained that in 2021, the DFA launched a centralized, internship program that places college students



and recent college graduates in positions to gain real work experience at DFA. She spoke on her recruitment efforts at career events at colleges and universities around the state, where she speaks with potential interns for DFA.

Both the internship and leadership programs are focused on preparing employees to succeed in the DFA workplace. The tools and resources are focused on providing employees with a strong foundation needed to foster a career at DFA and engage in public service for DFA and the citizens of Arkansas. Each solution has allowed DFA to be on the forefront of innovation while continuing to meet the department's mission.

The DFA employs around 2400 people, across 16 divisions. Known mostly for collecting and disbursing tax revenue, DFA employees are unique because they possess unique skill sets utilized throughout the divisions.



Photo Credits: DFA SEATA Planning Committee

# DFA Celebrates a Transformative Summer Internship Program



As the DFA summer internship program concluded, the interns felt deep gratitude and excitement as they reflected on their enriching experiences. The DFA internship program proved to be a transformative journey for these brilliant young people, providing them with a wealth of invaluable skills, exposure to real-world scenarios, and the chance to build lasting connections with industry professionals.



Throughout their internships, these talented individuals had unique opportunities to work on a variety of projects and tasks. Luke Phillis, an audit intern in the Office of Motor Vehicles, expressed that his favorite part of his internship was, "reviewing financial data to attempt to resolve some complex problems." The hands-on experience Luke gained over the summer contributed immensely to his professional growth.



The DFA internship program emphasizes mentorship and support. Hannah Walker is an intern with the Office of Child Support Support Enforcement's Collections Department. When asked about her internship experience, she warmly acknowledged her mentor, Tiffany Robinson, stating "She has been someone that I have looked up to and loved being around this summer. She is so patient and kind and taught me so much about my position." Liz Tilbury, intern for the Office of Communications, cherished the relationships that she built with her mentors Jan Bartlett and Scott Hardin as well as those cultivated with her coworkers. She remarked, "My coworkers made the experience enjoyable, and the exposure helped me see that I might excel in an office job in the future."



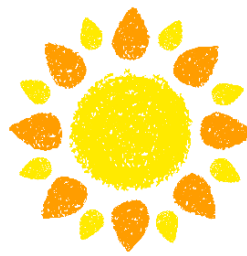
Another focus of the program was the sense of camaraderie and collaboration among the interns and their colleagues. Destan Wilkerson, an Office of Accounting intern, expressed deep appreciation for the opportunity, stating, "I honestly really liked working with everyone. They are so kind." This sense of comradery not only fostered a positive working environment but also facilitated a rich learning experience for all participants.



As the interns embark on the next phase of their careers, they carry with them a treasure trove of invaluable experiences and lessons. The DFA summer internship program not only equipped them with valuable skills but has also left a lasting impact on their personal and professional lives.



# Workplace Wellness



*Move more!  
Stay active!*

## DFA rewards for healthy activities!

Moving more can have positive impacts on physical health, but did you know that it could also help employees earn more time off? The Arkansas Healthy Employee Lifestyle Program (AHELP) permits full-time, regular employees to earn up to three additional days off per year for electronically tracking healthy behaviors like eating fruits and vegetables, exercising, and being tobacco free. For more information, contact DFA AHELP Coordinator, Courtney Brown at [Courtney.brown@dfa.arkansas.gov](mailto:Courtney.brown@dfa.arkansas.gov).

Visit AHELP to enroll today:

<https://ahelp.arkansas.gov/Security/SignIn.aspx>

**Did you Know?** On average, an employee will sit in their office chair for up to 1900 hours annually!

The digital doctors of WebMD say, "Sitting too much can have big consequences, but it's not too late to take a stand!" Employees can engage in simple activities throughout the workday to include physical activity:

- **Take calls while standing.**
- **Walk on breaks.**
- **Hold standing or walking meetings.**
- **Use the stairs instead of the elevator.**
- **Take your lunch break away from your desk.**

Statistics credited to the DFA-U Alumni Projects.

## Transforming from Intern to Employee...

A summer internship wasn't enough for several of this year's summer participants, who decided to officially join the DFA family in August! The DFA internship program requires a participant to be a current student or a recent graduate from an accredited college or university. And what does a graduate need most? Professional employment, of course. The DFA proudly retained five promising summer interns for full-time employment in the Offices of Income Tax Administration, Driver Services Motor Vehicle, Child Support Enforcement, Field Audit Northwest District, and Accounting. DFA is proud to have them onboard. To date the DFA Internship Program has graduated 65 interns.





**Did you Know?** DFA spends approximately \$260k annually for DFA employee email accounts!

While the majority of DFA employees have an email account, there are still some offices where employees do not have an email address. A solution is in the works. The DFA has begun reconciling this issue. Email accounts may be coming to a coworker near you soon!

*Statistics credited to the DFA-U Alumni Projects.*

# “Back to School” = “Back to Work” for DFA’s Fall Interns

*(Top Row)*

**Andrew Garrett**

*UALR Bowen School of Law  
Revenue Legal Counsel*

**Ajano Williams**

*Culver Stockton College  
Office of Field Audit  
(Central District)*

**Kate Hammond**

*UALR Bowen School of Law  
Revenue Legal Counsel*



*(Bottom Row)*

**Victoria Sharma**

*UALR  
Office of Corporate  
Income Tax*

**April Muhammad**

*UALR Bowen School of Law  
Revenue Legal Counsel*

**Lauren Clark**

*UCA  
Office of Child Support  
Enforcement*

## WELCOME TO DFA!

**Jenna Lewis**

*UCA  
Office of Field Audit  
(Central District)*



#NDEAM | #RehabAct50  
dol.gov/odep

CELEBRATE OCTOBER  
**ADVANCING  
ACCESS  
& EQUITY**

National Disability Employment  
Awareness Month

Celebrating 50 years of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973



Governor's Council on  
Developmental  
Disabilities

ARKANSAS

# DOES DFA HAVE THE WINNING SPIRIT?

**YES  
WE  
DO!**



**Little Rock Team**

Dear DFA Team,

We wanted to take a moment to thank each and every one of you for your participation in our recent DFA Spirit Day. We were thrilled to see so many of you embrace the occasion and come together as a team to celebrate the power of collaboration and teamwork.

We want you to know how much we appreciate your efforts, not just on Team Spirit Day, but every day. Your commitment, creativity, and teamwork are what make DFA such a special place to work, and we are grateful for your contributions.

Thank you again for making this day a success. We look forward to many more opportunities to celebrate our DFA team and achieve great things together.

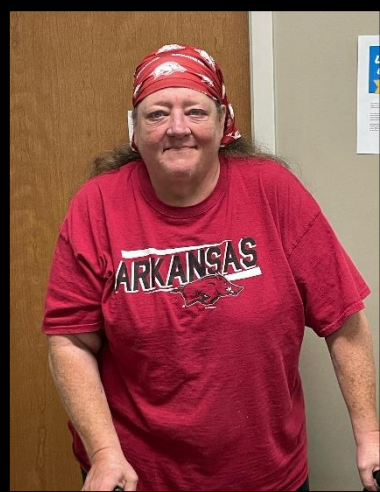
*The DFA Office of Human Resources*



**Fayetteville Team**



**Little Rock Team**







**Berryville Team**



**Hot Springs Team**



**Danville Team**



**Greenwood Team**



**Lincoln Team**



**Hot Springs Team**

**COLLECTIONS**



**Little Rock Team**



**Ft. Smith East Team**