



# PRESS RELEASE

## **UNF Student Honored for Service at Summer Commencement**

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The University of North Florida will honor a student with an outstanding record of volunteerism when it hands out nearly 860 degrees Friday, July 31, during summer commencement at the UNF Arena.

Southside resident Kristen Ballentine, who will graduate with a bachelor's degree in Psychology and a 3.67 GPA, will be recognized as the recipient of the Senior Service Award during the 11 a.m. ceremony. The UNF Alumni Association presents the Senior Service Award to a graduating senior for outstanding volunteer service to the University or community.

Over the past four years, she has become well known on the UNF campus and in the community and has volunteered in several capacities. Some of these include serving as a peer mentor for at-risk high school students, as a volunteer for a day-of-fun with disabled adults, as a counselor for female inmates and as a dedicated volunteer in activities with students attending the Florida School for the Deaf and Blind.

As president of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, Ballentine helped transform the casual campus group into the active UNF campus club it is today, including planning and participating in the Planning for College Success Program with students from Sandalwood High School.

Her compassion and drive is focused on serving those in need, and more specifically, those in prison. Throughout her studies at UNF, Ballentine spent time volunteering at Lowell Correctional Institution, conducting interviews with female inmates and the men and women employed by the institution. She collaborated on research concerning recidivism in female prisoners to not only further her knowledge of the issue but to offer a compassionate heart to discouraged women.

Although Ballentine feels that all volunteer experience is important, her most rewarding experience was the time she spent with these women at the prison.