

Mindy Benson named new Executive Director of Alumni Relations

On January 17, new SUU President, **Dr. Michael Benson**, hosted a Spring Engagement event for employees to reveal his First 100 Days Plan. The presentation included major announcements to jumpstart our freshly-paved path of progress. One of these key messages was the introduction of SUU's new Executive Director of Alumni Relations—**Mindy Benson**.

No relation to President Benson, Mindy has formally served the University the past 11 years as the Director of Student Life and Leadership. We say “formally,” because she became affiliated and a devotee of the University many years before. As a young girl, she spent plenty of time on campus with her father, the late **Ken Benson** (*associate's, '56*), who set the footprint for Mindy's career as he served in the same capacity—the Director of Student Activities—for 14 years. Mindy's mother, **Donna Benson**, is also an SUU grad, having received a degree in elementary education in 1976.

In her former position, Mindy spent countless hours advising and mentoring students, and producing major events and activities across campus. Mindy is more than qualified to guide students to a career in event management as she freelances as a national events specialist. In affiliation with LogiCom Project Management, Mindy has produced events within such widely-known programs as the 2004 Republican National Convention, the U.S. President's Inaugural Gala, and the National Race for the Cure. She also regularly directs headlining concerts in locations throughout the country. She is the producer of the Utah Summer Games

Opening Ceremonies each year, and has partnered with Cedar City to found the SUU/Cedar City FallFest Street Fair. She is a founding committee member of the Cedar City Relay for Life and was a 2002 Olympic Volunteer in Salt Lake, and directed the Olympic Torch Run Celebration in Cedar City.

In just this past year, Mindy kept particularly busy on campus and in the community, serving on the Michael O. Leavitt Center Dedication Committee, the Commencement Committee, and the Presidential Search Committee. She worked on the Triple Deuce 222nd send-off, and holiday concert for the families. She shares that one of the most rewarding events of her career came this past summer when she had the opportunity to serve on the Triple Deuce Welcome Home Celebration and Veteran's Memorial Park committee.

Last year, she was given the President's Award in the T-Bird Awards program for her solid and compassionate mentoring of students. And just this year, was named Woman of the Year by the Cedar City Chamber of Commerce.

Mindy attributes her success to student leaders, and their unquenchable dedication to making events at SUU and in Cedar City successful. Likewise, she foresees any achievement in her new position possible because of SUU's wonderful alumni. She also praises the strong foundation that the current Office of Alumni Relations has already laid.

Her love of SUU comes naturally as she is an alumna herself. As an SUU undergrad, Mindy was involved in Student Activities and the Cedar City



Community. She served as Spirit Director, Assistant to the Student Body President, volunteer for the Utah Shakespearean Festival since she was 12, and is a founding member of the Student Alumni Association. She graduated in 1994 with a degree in Biology and Communication, and is currently pursuing a graduate degree in the SUU Master of Professional Communication program.

As President, Michael Benson suggested in his announcement regarding the sense and appropriateness of her new role, “Mindy knows even more people than I do!” It's true, she has kept in touch with numerous fellow Thunderbirds through the years, and many of them remember her fondly from their time on campus. She has made a difference in hundreds of students' lives. Now, she hopes to share her energy and passion advancing alumni programs.

Mindy is the daughter of Donna Benson and the late Ken Benson, and the youngest of five children. Her parents have both been an inspiration to her, particularly her mother who has taught her that with strength and grace you can endure any situation. Mindy loves to travel, experience new sights, and run concerts. Her parents, siblings, nieces and nephews are the greatest joy in her life.