CRIMINAL JUSTICE REPORTING

Former Homeland Security Official Speaks at UA Criminal Justice Student Association Meeting

By Kai Schultz



Photo from original submitted story.

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. - The University of Alabama's Criminal Justice Student Association hosted former Homeland Security official Brand Elverston on Wednesday for a discussion focused on leadership, ethics and emerging threats in national security. Elverston, who served for more than two decades with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, spoke about adapting to the evolving challenges of the criminal justice field and encouraged students to remain flexible as technology continues to transform law enforcement.

"In this field, change is constant," Elverston said. "Technology, policy and society evolve every day and the professionals who thrive are the ones willing to learn faster than the threats can grow."

The event, held in Farrah Hall, drew a large turnout of students eager to engage with an experienced federal official. The session concluded with an open Q&A, where attendees asked about career preparation and the impact of artificial intelligence on public safety. Lauren Breault, a senior criminal justice major and president of the Criminal Justice Club, said the guest lecture was one of the organization's most insightful events of the semester.

"Hearing directly from someone who's operated at such a high level gave us insight you can't get from a textbook," Breault said. "It reminded a lot of us why we chose this major in the first place."

Trinity Ferrell, a sophomore criminal justice major and active club member, said Elverston’s visit inspired her to pursue a future in government service. “He made it sound achievable,” Ferrell said.

“He talked about starting small and staying curious, and that really stuck with me.” The Criminal Justice Student Association plans to continue hosting guest speakers throughout the semester to give students greater exposure to professionals working in various areas of criminal justice.