

UNA's LionCam goes live again

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Want an inside look into the daily life of UNA's live mascots, Leo III and Una? Check out the LionCam on UNA's website.

The university hosted a LionCam through its own Comcast Cable network about 10 years ago, but had to shut it down due to technological complications, said Associate Vice President for Advancement Services Judith Jackson.

"What happened was, only a limited number of people could log in," Jackson said. "When a certain number of people logged in, the whole system crashed and our IT people would have to reset it. So, we waited until we felt like we could do a streaming service."

The streaming service is powered by [EarthCam](#), an online streaming service.

LionCam is not a free operation. Jackson said the first year of streaming costs about \$6,000. No tuition or state funds supplement the streaming service, so donors support the service through financial gifts.

LionCam started live streaming again right before Winter Break, she said.

Junior Stormy Morgan said she often watching the LionCam on her computer.

"I wish we had cameras inside their actual facilities so we could see them sleeping and eating and stuff," she said.

Jackson said many people said they previously enjoyed the LionCam when the university hosted it 10 years ago.

"When we had the LionCam 10 years ago, we found out that the grandchild of somebody that worked at UNA was at St. Jude Children's Hospital in Memphis," she said. "They got all the children there to log onto a laptop so they could sit in their bed and watch the lions. It's been used for a lot of different things, and we're getting a lot of positive response back. I think people are thrilled that it's back up."

She also said university President Kenneth Kitts wanted the streaming service working, too.

"He wanted people to be able to see our lions in real time," Jackson said. "So, I guess you could say it was a presidential initiative."

Jackson said she thinks it is important for the university to promote and support Leo III and Una.

"Everybody loves the UNA lions," she said. "The lions continue to be very popular. We continue to print literature for school groups who come through, and they always take our literature. Especially in the spring when students take their field trips, we'll have several thousand students from elementary and junior high schools visit."

She said UNA has had live African lions on campus since 1974 when Leo I came to campus.

In 2015 alone, Jackson said over 78,000 people visited the lions on campus. She said this number includes visitors, student groups on field trips, SOAR student groups, LaGrange Society tours, athlete tours and general campus visitors.

Now with LionCam, even more people can view the lions, she said.

After the first year, the operating cost will be about \$3,000 per year. She said the \$6,000 cost for the first included the cost of cameras and equipment needed for EarthCam compatibility.

