

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY

DEAN, COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

UAB The University of Alabama at Birmingham

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB, or the University) seeks an accomplished, collaborative, and forward-looking dean to lead the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS, or the College).

The College of Arts and Sciences encompasses the arts, humanities, social and behavioral sciences, natural sciences, and mathematics across 19 departments and 10 interdisciplinary programs, including five joint programs with the Heersink School of Medicine. As the largest academic unit at UAB, the College offers more than 41 baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral degrees, as well as a wide range of certificates and minors. The College of Arts and Sciences is home to approximately 6,000 students, 307 faculty members, and 157 staff.

The Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences serves as its chief academic and executive officer, reporting to the University's **Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost**. The next Dean will unite the College's departments, programs, and perspectives behind a compelling shared vision that celebrates their individual strengths while fostering a strong collective identity and purpose. This individual will build strong teams, support departmental leaders, promote interdisciplinary engagement, and serve as a persuasive advocate for the liberal arts and sciences within a university widely recognized for excellence in health care, medicine, and research. Working closely with faculty, staff, students, alumni, University leadership, and community partners, the Dean will advance the priorities of the College's Strategic Plan 2024–2028 and UAB's broader Forging Ahead Strategic Plan.

As a leading urban research university and recently announced member of the Association of American Universities (AAU), UAB offers exceptional opportunities to connect classroom learning with research, service, and engagement in Birmingham. The Dean will build upon these opportunities to strengthen recruitment, retention, experiential learning, undergraduate research, career preparation, and post-graduate outcomes for a student population that includes first-generation, Pell-eligible, transfer, adult, and non-traditional learners. The Dean will also champion excellence across the full range of the College's research, scholarship, and creative activity, supporting externally funded research, creative performance and exhibition, public and community-engaged scholarship, interdisciplinary collaboration, and the pursuit of funding from varied sources.

UAB has retained **WittKeiffer**, a national executive search firm, to assist in this search. All applications, inquiries, and nominations, which will remain confidential, should be directed to the search firm as indicated in the "Procedure for Candidacy" section on page 8.



OPPORTUNITIES AND EXPECTATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP

The next Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences will be expected to advance the following priorities, among others:

Lead a large, complex college through a shared vision and strong advocacy.
The College of Arts and Sciences occupies a unique role at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, bringing together disciplines across the creative arts, humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences while serving as the academic home for much of the undergraduate educational experience. The next Dean will be expected to unite a broad range of departments, programs, and perspectives behind a compelling vision that celebrates the strengths of individual departments while fostering a strong sense of collective identity and purpose. This individual oversees a large team in the Dean's Office and the chairs of 19 departments, requiring a collaborative leader who builds strong teams, supports departmental leaders, leverages the expertise of faculty and staff, and promotes interdisciplinary engagement across the College and University. The Dean will also serve as a passionate advocate for the liberal arts within a university widely recognized for excellence in health care, medicine, and research, and will be expected to clearly articulate the value and impact of the College's teaching, scholarship, creative activity, and community engagement. Working closely with faculty, staff, students, alumni, and leadership, the Dean will be expected to advance priorities outlined in the College's Strategic Plan 2024–2028, UAB's Forging Ahead Strategic Plan, and the broader goals of the University of Alabama System.

Advance student success and leverage the distinctiveness of UAB and Birmingham.
As a leading urban research university, UAB provides extraordinary opportunities to connect classroom learning with research, service, and community engagement. The College of Arts and Sciences plays a central role in the University's **The City is Our Classroom** initiative, creating opportunities for students to engage meaningfully with the Birmingham community while preparing for lifelong success. UAB and the College have also been active partners in serving local students through the **Birmingham Promise** program, which provides up to four years of tuition assistance for graduates of Birmingham City Schools. The next Dean should be a student-centered leader who understands the needs and aspirations of UAB's student population, including first-generation, Pell-eligible, transfer, adult, and non-traditional learners. This individual will work with faculty and staff to strengthen recruitment, retention, experiential learning, undergraduate research, and career preparation while ensuring that students benefit from the breadth of opportunities available at a major research institution located in a growing metropolitan area.

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Champion excellence in research, scholarship, and creative activity.
The College has a history of excellence in research, scholarship, and creative activity across a wide range of disciplines, playing a key role in UAB's ascension and recent invitation to join the **Association of American Universities** (AAU). The breadth of activity and success from the College's efforts is represented through the **Ireland Award for Scholarly Distinction**, the College's annual **Arts Week** celebration, the **Haddin Arts & Sciences Forum**, and its efforts pursuing extramural funding (the College generated $23 million in extramural funding in FY2025 and $24 million in FY2026). The next Dean will be expected to build upon this success while embracing the broad range of scholarly contributions that define a comprehensive college of arts and sciences. This individual must understand and value multiple forms of academic excellence, including externally funded research, creative performance and exhibition, public scholarship, community-engaged work, and the production of new knowledge across disciplines. The Dean should create an environment in which faculty and staff are supported in pursuing ambitious goals, developing interdisciplinary collaborations, and pursuing funding opportunities from a wide array of sources. The Dean must demonstrate intellectual curiosity and a commitment to supporting excellence across all disciplines.

Provide strategic financial leadership and cultivate new resources.
The next Dean must be able to align resources with priorities, make thoughtful and transparent decisions, and communicate openly about financial challenges and opportunities. The Dean will be expected to navigate UAB's transition to a hybrid responsibility-management budget model while ensuring that resources are invested

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strategically to support academic quality, faculty success, student outcomes, and long-term sustainability. This individual should be comfortable working with enrollment, budget, and performance data to inform decisions and identify areas for growth.
The Dean must also be an active partner in fundraising and external engagement efforts, cultivating relationships with alumni, donors, foundations, community organizations, and corporate partners whose investments can strengthen the College's future.
The ability to identify new revenue opportunities, support faculty pursuit of grants and external funding, and align investments with strategic priorities will be essential.

Navigate a rapidly evolving higher education environment.
Higher education continues to encounter significant change, and the next Dean must be a thoughtful and adaptable leader who can help the College respond proactively to emerging challenges and opportunities. This includes navigating evolving expectations from state policymakers, accreditation organizations, and University leadership while maintaining a steadfast commitment to academic excellence and student success. The Dean will be expected to engage constructively with issues such as post-tenure review, increasing emphasis on workforce outcomes and return on investment, ensuring degree programs are financially and academically viable, and the changing relationship between technology, teaching, and learning. Artificial intelligence, academic integrity, and the future of knowledge creation will require careful consideration and collaborative leadership. The successful candidate will foster a culture of transparency, adaptability, shared governance, and continuous improvement, while ensuring the College remains responsive to the needs of students, faculty, staff, and society. Building upon the momentum of UAB and the College's strategic priorities, the Dean will have the opportunity to shape the future of one of the University's most dynamic and consequential academic units.

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND PERSONAL QUALITIES

UAB seeks an accomplished, collaborative, and forward-looking leader with a deep appreciation for the breadth of disciplines represented within a comprehensive college of arts and sciences. The successful candidate must have a demonstrated record of effective academic leadership, a record suitable for appointment as a tenured full professor in one of the College's departments, and a terminal degree in an appropriate discipline.

The next Dean should possess many of the following professional qualifications and personal qualities:

- Experience engaging constituents to shape vision and goals and leveraging the knowledge, skills, and abilities of others to implement and adapt a strategy to achieve desired results.
- A collaborative and inclusive leadership style grounded in transparency, active listening, shared governance, and meaningful engagement with faculty, staff, students, alumni, university leaders, and community partners.
- A demonstrated commitment to supporting and celebrating varied forms of academic excellence across the creative arts, humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences.
- A record of supporting faculty and staff achievement, promoting interdisciplinary collaboration, and strengthening research, scholarship, creative activity, public scholarship, and community-engaged work.
- A strong commitment to student success and an understanding of the needs of first-generation, Pell-eligible, transfer, adult, and non-traditional learners, including experience advancing recruitment, retention, experiential learning, undergraduate research, career preparation, and post-graduate outcomes.
- Demonstrated financial and operational acumen, including the ability to align resources with strategic priorities, use enrollment and performance data to inform decisions, communicate financial realities clearly, and lead effectively within evolving budget models.

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- Experience cultivating philanthropic, corporate, foundation, alumni, and community partnerships, coupled with enthusiasm for fundraising, external engagement, grant development, and the creation of new revenue opportunities.
- The ability to serve as a persuasive advocate for the liberal arts and sciences, articulating their essential contributions to student learning, research, innovation, and civic life in an urban research university.
- The judgment, adaptability, and resilience to navigate a changing higher education environment, including evolving public expectations, accreditation and policy requirements, workforce priorities, and the implications of artificial intelligence for teaching, academic integrity, and knowledge creation.
- Unquestioned integrity, intellectual curiosity, humility, empathy, courage, and a visible commitment to building a positive culture in which people feel respected, supported, and empowered to contribute.



PROCEDURE FOR CANDIDACY

Applications, nominations, and inquiries can be submitted through the **WittKieffer Candidate Portal**. Applicants should submit, as separate documents, a CV or résumé and a letter of interest that addresses the themes outlined in this profile. **WittKieffer** is assisting the University of Alabama at Birmingham in this search. For full consideration, candidate materials should be received by **January 20, 2027**.

Nominations and inquiries can also be directed to Ryan Crawford, Phillip Tang, and Sarah Seavy at **UAB-CASDean@wittkieffer.com**.

UAB is an Equal Employment/Equal Educational Opportunity Institution dedicated to providing equal opportunities and equal access to all individuals regardless of race, color, religion, ethnic or national origin, sex (including pregnancy), genetic information, age, disability, religion, and veteran's status. As required by Title IX, UAB prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates. Individuals may report concerns or questions to UAB's Assistant Vice President and Senior Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX notice of nondiscrimination is located at ***uab.edu/titleix****.*



ABOUT THE UAB COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

As UAB's largest academic unit, the College of Arts and Sciences was formed in January 2010, when the University's schools of arts and humanities, natural sciences and mathematics, and social and behavioral sciences united to create a single college. Since then, the College has awarded more than 23,000 undergraduate and graduate degrees.

The College of Arts and Sciences is committed to ensuring that every student graduates with the knowledge, skills, and experiences needed to succeed in an increasingly interconnected world. In 2024, the College introduced a strategic plan to guide its growth through 2028 and beyond, with a focus on student success, research, scholarship and creative activities, and community engagement.

The College enrolls more than 10,000 students in its courses each year. As a result, roughly half of all UAB students interact with the College during their time at the University.

The College's FY26 operating budget is more than $131 million and its endowment is valued at more than $22 million. Several of the College's degrees are recognized nationally by *U.S. News and World Report*:

- The online Master of Criminal Justice degree is ranked No. 24, achieving the highest sub-rank in the state of Alabama for both the faculty credentials and training and peer assessment categories. (**Source**)
- The online Bachelor of Psychology program sits at No. 18 in the specialty rankings. (**Source**)

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- In addition, graduate programs in Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Mathematics, Physics, Political Science and Public Administration, and Psychology are recognized in *U.S. News & World Report* specialty rankings. (**Source**)

The College also has a number of events and traditions that reflect its distinctive identity as a unit dedicated to both the arts and sciences. These include the annual **Ireland Award for Scholarly Distinction**; **Arts Week**, a celebration of student and faculty creativity featuring concerts, musical theater, art exhibitions, student films, poetry, and more; the **Haddin Forum**, a faculty lecture series that highlights interdisciplinary scholarship and makes complex research accessible to broad audiences; and touring productions led by the Department of Theatre, which bring talented student performers to communities across the state, among many others.

In FY 2026 to date, the College of Arts and Sciences has secured more than $24 million in extramural funding, including more than $4 million in awards from the NIH and $7 million from the NSF. Faculty submitted more than 175 grant applications and received more than 65 grant awards.

The College of Arts and Sciences ensures that each student leaves UAB with the knowledge and tools to succeed in an expanding and increasingly connected world.





Leadership and Governance

The dean of the College of Arts and Sciences oversees an office that comprises several administrative and academic leaders and invaluable staff members. In addition to the department chairs, direct reports to the dean include the following:

- Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
- Associate Dean for Research and Innovation
- Dean Faculty Fellow for Research and Graduate Education
- Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs
- Assistant Dean for Student Engagement
- Executive Director of Administrative Operations
- Senior Director of Development
- Director of Communications
- Executive Assistant

The Dean's Office manages all administrative operations for the College, which include:

- **Academics and Faculty Affairs**
- **Research and Grant Administration**
- **Advancement and Alumni Affairs**
- **Communications**
- **Business Operations**
- **Academic Advising**
- **Student Recruitment**

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The **Faculty Affairs Committee** serves as the primary faculty committee for the College of Arts and Sciences, providing advice and recommendations to the dean on matters of concern to the faculty.

The **Promotion and Tenure Committee** evaluates candidates for promotion and/or tenure based on departmental, College, and University criteria. This committee is composed of 12 tenured faculty members, including nine members who are elected by the entire College of Arts and Sciences faculty—three members from the arts and humanities departments, three members from the social and behavioral sciences departments, and three members from the mathematics and natural sciences departments to ensure representation across the various disciplinary areas of the College—and three members who are appointed by the dean.

The **Curriculum and Educational Policies Committee** reviews and makes recommendations to the dean about all proposals regarding College-wide educational policies and initiatives, proposals for new programs, as well as substantive curricular modifications to existing programs and majors.

Formed with the mission to promote the excellence of the College, the Arts and Sciences Alumni Board creates and sustains strong, robust engagement among the College's more than 40,000 alumni.



Strategic Plan

A road map for the College of Arts and Sciences through 2028, the strategic plan reflects input and ideas from staff, faculty, students, alumni, and other constituents across UAB and beyond. The strategic plan is built on the following pillars and goals::

Student Success

Provide a state-of-the-art, inclusive academic environment known for excellent teaching and mentoring that will support students' retention and timely graduation.

Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activities

Support faculty, staff, and students as they conduct impactful research, scholarship, and creative pursuits that reflect interdisciplinary perspectives, enhance quality of life, and improve society. The College is especially well-positioned to excel in research, scholarship, and creative activities across the areas of: Health, Emerging Technology and Society, Inclusive Communities, and the Environment.

Community Engagement

Expand community relationships to create meaningful opportunities that produce mutually beneficial outcomes.



Departments

The College of Arts and Sciences comprises 19 academic departments:

- Anthropology
- Art and Art History
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Communication Studies
- Computer Science
- Criminal Justice
- English
- History
- Mathematics
- Music
- Philosophy
- Physics
- Political Science and Public Administration
- Psychology
- Social Work
- Sociology
- Theatre
- World Languages and Literatures

Academic Programs

The College offers 35 degree programs leading to a bachelor's degree, 52 minors, and 26 programs leading to a master's or doctoral degree. The College offers B.A., B.G.S., B.S., B.F.A., M.A., M.S., MSW, and Ph.D. programs as well as select Accelerated Bachelor's/Master's (ABM) degrees, and several graduate certificates and coordinated degrees in collaboration between departments and with other UAB schools. Some programs are offered in flexible and online formats to support working professionals and expand access to liberal arts education. Students benefit from applied learning experiences through partnerships with governmental agencies, healthcare systems, nonprofit organizations, the arts, industry, education, and more.

Interdisciplinary programs:

- African American Studies
- Digital Forensics
- General Studies
- Human Rights
- International Studies

Joint programs with the Heersink School of Medicine:

- Bioinformatics
- Cancer Biology
- Genetics and Genomic Science
- Immunologys
- Neuroscience

Research

The College of Arts and Sciences aims to support faculty, staff, and students as they conduct impactful research, scholarship, and creative pursuits that reflect interdisciplinary perspectives, enhance quality of life, and improve society.

Faculty investigators propel a robust and diverse portfolio of research in the College, with much of the work falling within these categories:

- **Health- Aging; Pain; Climate; Drug Discovery**
- **Emerging Technologies- Computing and Cyber Security; Nanotechnology and Quantum Power**
- **Welcome Communities- Society, Culture, and Community; Creative Expression**

In FY 2025, the College of Arts and Sciences secured more than $23 million in extramural funding, including more than $6.8 million in awards from the NIH and $4.6 million from the NSF. Faculty submitted 174 grant applications and received more than 100 grant awards. Among UAB's 12 schools, the College of Arts and Sciences ranks fourth in sponsored research. In FY 2026 to date, extramural funding has increased to $24 million.

This fall, UAB opened the Shelby Biosciences Research Building, a state-of-the-art, $190 million facility that houses wet and dry research laboratories, collaborative workspaces, and faculty and staff offices. The building serves as the new home of the Department of Psychology and parts of the Department of Psychiatry.

Among the College's recent accomplishments:

- The University recently received a $2.8 million grant from the NSF to support the development of the nation's first for-credit undergraduate and graduate curriculum in research administration. The Research Administration minor, among the first in the country, is offered through the Department of Political Science and Public Administration and serves as a pathway for undergraduate students to enter the growing and critical field. (**Source**)
- Sadanandan Velu, Ph.D., professor in the Department of Chemistry, co-director of the Undergraduate Program in Cancer Biology and a researcher for the O'Neal Cancer Center, is part of a team leading the potential discovery of a new therapeutic strategy that could address a critical need for patients fighting a rare and aggressive form of thyroid cancer. The therapeutic strategy focuses on blocking a specific voltage-gated sodium channel known as Nav1.7, which could help treat patients with metastatic medullary thyroid cancer, a disease with limited treatment options. (**Source**)
- Recent research led by the Center for Additively Manufactured Complex Systems under Extremes and published in Scientific Reports details developments in the understanding of additively manufactured materials under high pressures

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The College enrolls more than 10,000 students in its courses each year. As a result, roughly half of all UAB students interact with the College during their time at the University.

through the use of high-resolution imaging and computer simulations. To produce better materials for human use in extreme environments, the center studies how 3D-printed materials perform under extremes of pressures, temperatures, and high-velocity impact or shock compression. This research will allow for developments in the design of additively manufactured materials for extreme high temperatures in aerospace and power plant applications, resilient structures under hypervelocity impacts, and high-radiation environments in nuclear reactors. (**Source**)

- With a new grant from the Department of Energy's Joint Genome Institute, faculty in the Department of Biology and collaborators at North Carolina State University are exploring a way to ramp up domestic production of rare earth elements using pokeweed, a hardy, poisonous member of the genus Phytolacca that can grow in tough environments, such as abandoned mines. Pokeweed could help reduce the environmental damage at these sites and bring the rare earth elements to the surface for harvesting, sparing the economic and environmental costs of digging them out, through a process called phytomining. (**Source**)
- A 2026 study published in Alzheimer's & Dementia: Translational Research & Clinical Interventions shows that one type of cognitive training can result in a significant reduction in long-term risk of Alzheimer's and related dementias. UAB served as one of six national sites contributing 20 years of data to the study, with Karlene K. Ball, Ph.D., university professor in the Department of Psychology, serving as one of the study's principal investigators. (**Source**)

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Additionally, all the College's students—undergraduate and graduate—are encouraged to participate in research when possible. The College and the University provide support for our students via faculty mentoring and guidance, identification of research opportunities, facilitating interdisciplinary cooperation, and providing forums for publicizing results.

Students also contribute to the College's culture of research and scholarship through student publications such as The Vulcan Historical Review in the Department of History and The Birmingham Poetry Review and NELLE, both in the Department of English.

University-Affiliated Centers

Center for Additively Manufactured Complex Systems Under Extremes (CAMCSE)

The scientific goal of the Department of Energy-funded CAMCSE is to advance fundamental understanding of how Additively Manufactured Compositionally Complex Systems respond to extreme environments of pressure, temperature, and strain rates. Specifically, the center seeks to reveal the nature and mechanisms underlying their phase transformation, microstructure evolution, strength, and plasticity.

Center for Community Outreach and Development (CORD)

CORD offers students in grades K-12 and teachers from all areas in-depth, hands-on, inquiry-based science experiences both during the school year and in more intense summer programs. Students experience these programs at their Birmingham area schools, at CORD's GENEius and LabWorks classrooms at the McWane Science Center and in CORD's laboratory classrooms at UAB.

Center for Cyber Security

Established in 2011 and hosted within the Department of Computer Science, the Center for Cyber Security is at the forefront of cyber defense and education, with a mission to drive innovation, research, education, workforce development, and outreach in the dynamic realm of cyber security. As a National Security Agency Center for Academic Excellence in Research (CAE-R) designated institution, the center brings together a diverse team of experts specializing in cyber security and forensics. Their collective knowledge and expertise address the ever-evolving challenges posed by cyber threats and vulnerabilities. The Center's groundbreaking research initiatives are supported by grants from the National Science Foundation (NSF), the Department of Energy, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Defense Advanced Projects Agency (DARPA).

Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities

The Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities strives to improve the well-being and quality of life across the lifespan for individuals and families impacted by developmental disabilities in Alabama and beyond through clinical and community

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service, education, research, and advocacy. The center's programs include the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND), the Regional Autism Network (RAN), and Partners in Policymaking® Alabama (PIPA).

Center for Nanoscale Materials and Biointegration (CNMB)

This interdisciplinary center is housed in the Department of Physics with participation from faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences, Collat School of Business, School of Dentistry, School of Engineering, and Heersink School of Medicine. CNMB is a world-class research and undergraduate and graduate student training center focusing on the synthesis and characterization of nanoscale materials with broad applicability in materials under extreme environments, nano-enabled biomedical imaging and drug delivery platforms, and nanostructured coatings and materials for biomedical implants and vascular grafts. CNMB is also actively involved in partnerships for innovation with Birmingham Business Alliance and small businesses to translate lab-based discoveries into viable commercial products and promote technology-based economic development of the Birmingham region.

Institute for Human Rights (IHR)

IHR is dedicated to advancing the protection, understanding, and promotion of human rights on a global scale. As a dynamic center for education, research, and advocacy, IHR works collaboratively with scholars, students, and local, national, and global partners to address pressing human rights issues, foster inclusive dialogue, and empower communities. This includes engaging in community-driven research and outreach that addresses both civil and political rights, as well as economic, social, and cultural rights.



Community Engagement

Community engagement is a pillar of the College of Art and Sciences' strategic plan and reflects the College's commitment to creating meaningful opportunities alongside community partners that produce mutually beneficial outcomes.

Faculty members have long-standing partnerships with nonprofits, schools, entrepreneurs, and more, providing students in the College with access to service-learning courses and valuable internships that allow them to apply knowledge and competencies outside of the classroom.

For example, the Alabama Public Service Training Initiative, housed within the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, hosts the Pathways to Public Service Internship Program. Through the program, students complete internships with local community organizations, gaining valuable professional experience while contributing to the Birmingham community.

Likewise, the Institute for Human Rights administers the Birmingham Immersive Community Empowerment Program (BICEP), which provides undergraduate students with opportunities to engage in immersive civic learning and capacity-building experiences alongside community-based organizations across Alabama.



Student Life

The College of Arts and Sciences' approximately 6,000 students are part of a broader UAB community that includes more than 20,000 undergraduate and graduate students and nearly 300 student organizations. The College is also home to the College of Arts and Sciences Champions, a student ambassador program that helps connect students to the University and the wider community. Champions partner with the Dean's Office to support storytelling initiatives, assist with special events and recruitment activities, and contribute to Homecoming Week and alumni engagement efforts.

Many of the departments and programs within the College host student organizations to foster community and help students build connections, develop leadership skills, and stay engaged throughout their academic careers. A few examples of these groups include:

- Award-winning Public Relations Council of Alabama/Public Relations Student Society of America at UAB
- Student Affiliates American Chemical Society
- Sociology Club at UAB
- Palomitas Spanish and Latin American Film Club
- Rocketry Club at UAB



Select Student Highlights

- Undergraduate student spotlight: **Graduate strives to change the perception of chemistry**
- Graduate student spotlight: **For Beth Shelburne (MA '18), the path to the Oscars ran through UAB**
- CAS students named Goldwater Scholars: **Three UAB students honored as Goldwater Scholars**
- **Abbott shares her SUPER experience at the Mayo Clinic**
- **UAB students win state, regional and national awards in the arts**
- **UAB students honored by NASA Alabama Space Grant Consortium**
- **From tortilla Española and sushi to tarte au citron, UAB professors connect students to foods' cultural roots**
- **Community garden to support food access in Titusville hopes to thrive with UAB student partnership**



HEALTH ECOSYSTEM AT UAB

The **College of Arts and Sciences** is a part of a robust health ecosystem at UAB. Key partners include the following:

The **Heersink School of Medicine** consistently ranks among the nation's very best academic medical centers for research, education, and clinical care. The school trains the next generation of physicians and physician-scientists, answers basic scientific questions that lead to medical innovations, and brings the highest quality health care to its patients.

The **School of Health Professions** is the fastest growing school at UAB and one of the largest health professions schools in the nation. With more than 20 programs and more than 40 offerings at the bachelor, master, and doctoral levels, students have the opportunity to develop skills and expertise in some of healthcare's most challenging and rewarding fields.

The **School of Nursing** shapes patient-centered healthcare by preparing recognized nurse leaders who excel as clinicians, researchers, and educators in Alabama, nationally, and internationally. The school prepares the next generation of nurse leaders through world-class education and innovative research and scholarship that improves society. The school engages with the community in meaningful and mutually beneficial collaborations that contribute to the public good.

The **School of Public Health** is at the forefront of addressing complex challenges such as infectious disease, clean water, housing instability, education access, food insecurity, transportation systems, and environmental and social determinants of health, as well as the health impacts of severe weather events. Through interdisciplinary research, community-engaged scholarship, and innovative partnerships, the school works to improve health outcomes and reduce disparities across Alabama and around the world.

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UAB Medicine is one of the top academic medical centers and the fifth-largest hospital in the nation. In addition to providing health care services for more than 1.6 million patients annually, it is committed to educating medical professionals and advancing medical science through research. UAB Medicine is anchored by **UAB Hospital**, which provides care to the sickest patients in the state and offers many services not available at other medical centers in the region, including research trials for promising new treatments.

The **O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center** is world-renowned for cancer research, cancer care, and the delivery of that care to all people. It is the only NCI-designated comprehensive cancer center across Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Arkansas, and one of only 57 such centers in the country. More than 400 clinicians and researchers are united in their commitment to eliminating cancer as a public health problem. The center seeks to transform the field of oncology and the lives of its patients by translating cutting-edge research into the most advanced treatments for clinical care.

UAB's **Center for Clinical and Translational Science** is at the forefront of innovative research aimed at reducing the burden of cardiometabolic, vascular, and cancer-related diseases that disproportionately affect the greater Alabama region. As the only CTSA in the state, UAB is committed to fostering collaborative efforts that transcend institutional boundaries. The center's regional **partner network** comprises 11 academic health centers, research institutes, and universities across Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana, providing a unique platform for researchers to engage in transdisciplinary research.

The **Center for AIDS Research** has been at the nexus of HIV research since 1988. It supports HIV research across all domains, from basic and clinical work to implementation and community science, in partnership with the communities UAB serves. The center is at the forefront of cutting-edge methodologies needed to advance science and make gains towards controlling the HIV epidemic.

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The **Mary Heersink Institute for Global Health** improves overall health and well-being and promotes equity in health outcomes among people around the world. It works to establish coordinated, comprehensive, and sustainable infrastructure across UAB schools and colleges as well as for international partners, fostering educational opportunities, facilitating cutting-edge biomedical research, and providing multidirectional services, capacity building, and mutual support to address pressing global health challenges.

Founded in 1999, the **National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability** is a public health practice and resource center for people with disabilities and other chronic health conditions, helping them achieve health benefits through increased participation in physical and social activities.

The NIH-funded university-wide **Nutrition Obesity Research Center** fosters a multidisciplinary approach to basic, clinical, and translational research with an emphasis on understanding the causal factors underlying nutrition and obesity-related health problems and their consequences, prevention, and alleviation.

UAB's **School of Education and Human Sciences** develops transformative professionals who advance education, health, and well-being. Its graduate programs in **Community Health and Human Services** prepare practitioners to meet the growing demand for pioneering health interventions guided by behavioral theory and evidence and to serve as effective community health leaders.



UAB The University of Alabama at Birmingham

ABOUT UAB

The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) continues to strengthen its position as a nationally and globally recognized research university, with a broad mission spanning education, research and innovation, patient care, economic development, and community engagement. In the 2024–2025 *U.S. News & World Report* Best Global Universities rankings, UAB was ranked No. 164 among 2,459 institutions worldwide, placing the university in the top 6 percent globally and making it the highest-ranked university in Alabama.

UAB continues pushing the envelope in all pillars of its mission: education, research and innovation, patient care, economic development, and community engagement. In fall 2026, UAB welcomed 2,600 new freshmen, representing a 2.9% increase from fall 2025. The entering class had an average high school GPA of 3.83 and an average ACT composite score of 26.4 among students with scores on file.

The surge in enrollment reflects growing interest in UAB's expanding academic offerings, innovative learning space, and vibrant campus life – all part of the university's **SUCCESS Initiative**. UAB has a strong record of success with nationally competitive fellowships and scholarships. Our students have been selected for 3 Rhodes Scholarships, 3 Marshall Scholarships, over 50 Fulbright Scholarships, over 20 Critical Language Scholarships, over 35 Goldwater Scholarships, and over 60 Gilman Scholarships. New state-of-the-art facilities, cutting-edge degree and certificate programs (300+), and a revitalized student-lead athletic student organization are also helping drive this momentum.

The university's Blazer Core Curriculum, launched in 2023, equips undergraduates with competencies vital for success in a global knowledge economy. UAB continues to develop innovative and novel academic programs and research opportunities for students at all levels. In the 2027 edition of *U.S. News & World Report's Best Colleges*, UAB is ranked No. 137 among National Universities and No. 67 among Top Public Schools. A total of 17 UAB graduate and specialty programs has earned the distinction of ranking in the top 20 of their peer disciplines.

Research is a central component of UAB's institutional identity and one of the major drivers of its national and global profile. UAB is in the most successful era of research funding in the university's history. Research expenditures for fiscal year 2025 reached $915 million, up from $866 million in fiscal year 2024.

UAB's service mission remains central to its identity, with UAB Medicine operating as the 5th largest hospital in the nation and providing more than 2 million patient visits annually.

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UAB is also investing in health-care capacity to meet growing demand. The $73 million expansion of UAB's Emergency Department continues, adding 66,000 square feet of clinical space and 59 exam rooms. Completion is anticipated in summer 2027. There has been a 20% increase in patient volume at the state's only Level 1 Adult Trauma Center over the past five years. In 2025, UAB Hospital cared for a record 929,021 unique patients. UAB Hospital has 1,400 licensed hospital beds.

Beyond its academic and health-care missions, UAB has a substantial economic and community impact throughout Alabama. With more than 35,000 employees, UAB is Alabama's largest employer and has an annual economic impact exceeding $12.1 billion on the state.





University of Alabama System

The University of Alabama System consists of three doctoral research universities: University of Alabama, University of Alabama at Birmingham, and University of Alabama in Huntsville.

Total student enrollment among the three campuses exceeds 70,000 students with more than 67,000 full- and part-time faculty and staff. The annual economic impact of the UA system surpasses $18 billion annually, and more than two million patients are served annually in the System's hospitals and clinics.

The system is governed by the University of Alabama System Board of Trustees. Each of the component institutions has a unique mission that is consistent with the broader mission of the system. The system's chief executive officer is Sid J. Trant, who served for six years as general counsel and senior vice chancellor before becoming chancellor in 2025.

UAB Leadership

President Ray Watts

Ray Watts, M.D., became UAB's seventh president in 2013. From 2010 to 2013, he served as senior vice president and dean of UAB School of Medicine where he previously served as the John N. Whitaker Professor and chair of the Department of Neurology.

A Birmingham native, Dr. Watts earned his bachelor's degree in engineering from the UAB School of Engineering in 1976. The collaborations he had with biomedical engineering students as an undergraduate sparked his interest in medicine. Four years later, he graduated from Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis as class valedictorian.

He went on to join the faculty of Emory University where he was part of a team that created an internationally renowned research and clinical center for Parkinson's disease and other movement disorders.

Dr. Watts is a passionate advocate for the value of strategic planning to inspire others toward growing the university and achieving excellence. UAB's *Forging Ahead* strategic plan is a blueprint for growth through 2028. The plan enables UAB's more than 35,000 employees to set measurable goals, allocate resources, and establish metrics to assess progress, all in service of building an even brighter future.



Provost Janet Woodruff-Borden

Janet Woodruff-Borden, Ph.D., took office as UAB's senior vice president for academic affairs and provost in February 2024. She joined UAB from the University of Oregon, where she served as interim provost and executive vice president and dean of the Graduate School.

As UAB's chief academic officer, Provost Woodruff-Borden oversees all academic affairs. She leads the **Office of the Provost**, which comprises a team of professionals responsible for functions such as academic planning, faculty relations, enrollment management, institutional effectiveness analysis, and international student and scholar services. She works closely with President Watts on strategic planning and implementation initiatives. The deans of UAB's schools and colleges report to the provost.

Dr. Woodruff-Borden is a clinical psychologist whose research focuses on the etiology, developmental psychopathology, and treatment of anxiety disorders. Her work examines risk and protective factors in the development of anxiety, including biological, cognitive, and psychosocial markers, as well as the complex interactions among these factors across development. She is widely published, and her work has been supported with grant funding from the NIH, NASA, and the Simons Foundation Autism Research Initiative.



FORGING AHEAD

STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2028



Forging Ahead: UAB Strategic Plan

Forging Ahead, UAB's 2024–2028 strategic plan, provides a clear and ambitious roadmap for advancing the institution's impact as a leading public research university and academic health system. Developed through a highly collaborative, campus-wide process, the plan reflects UAB's strong culture of shared governance, alignment, and accountability, and serves as a unifying framework to guide decision-making and resource allocation across all schools and units.

Anchored in a mission to enrich society and improve health and well-being through education, research, innovation, and community engagement, Forging Ahead positions UAB to build on its national momentum while responding to the evolving demands of higher education and healthcare. The plan is grounded in a compelling vision of UAB as a world-class, interdisciplinary institution dedicated to advancing knowledge and improving the human experience.

A defining feature of the strategic plan is its emphasis on culture and values, articulated through the university's "We CARE" framework — Collaborate, Act with Integrity, Respect all, and Excel. These shared values underscore UAB's commitment to excellence, inclusivity, and purpose-driven work, and shape the environment in which faculty, staff, and students thrive. *Forging Ahead* functions as both a strategic vision and an actionable blueprint, with clear priorities and measurable goals that align institutional and school-level strategies. This integrated approach creates meaningful opportunities for academic leaders to innovate, collaborate across disciplines, and advance impact in teaching, research, and service.

Academics

UAB comprises 12 colleges and schools:

- College of Arts and Sciences
- Collat School of Business
- Graduate School
- Heersink School of Medicine
- Honors College
- School of Dentistry
- School of Education and Human Sciences
- School of Engineering
- School of Health Professions
- School of Nursing
- School of Optometry
- School of Public Health

Other units core to the academic enterprise at UAB include Academic Advising, the Career Center, Global Affairs, the Libraries, UAB Arts, Undergraduate Service Learning and Research, and the Vulcan Materials Academic Success Center.

The university offers more than 200 degrees and certificates, including graduate, professional, and online programs designed to meet the needs of both traditional and non-traditional students.

Learn more about academics at UAB.




UAB
UAB COLLAT

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

Located in the heart of the Southeast, Birmingham is a short drive from Atlanta, Nashville, New Orleans, Memphis, the Smoky Mountains, and Gulf Coast beaches. With a metro metro population of 1.2 million, Birmingham has been recognized as a "Top 10 Entrepreneurial and Job Growth Hot Spot in America," an "All American City" by the National Civic League, and a "Top 10 American City to Live and Work." *Conde Nast Traveler* named Birmingham one of the "Best Places To Go" in 2022.

Downtown Birmingham has enjoyed a revitalization in recent years, with a surging resident population, new restaurants, and enhanced green spaces. This includes Railroad Park, an award-winning urban park, and adjacent Regions Field, home to the Birmingham Barons, the minor league affiliate of the Chicago White Sox. The park and stadium projects kick-started major growth in surrounding districts, including craft breweries, boutique shops, restaurants, loft and apartment buildings, innovative workspaces, and new hotels.

In addition to the Barons, Birmingham is home to a dynamic lineup of professional sports teams. Soccer fans support Birmingham Legion FC, the city's professional team in the USL Championship, which plays at Protective Stadium, a state-of-the-art venue that also hosts UAB Blazers football and large-scale events. In 2022, Birmingham welcomed the launch of the USFL with the Birmingham Stallions emerging as the league's flagship team and three-time champions, capturing national attention and drawing fans to Protective Stadium. Hockey fans can catch fast-paced action with the Birmingham Bulls, a professional team in the Southern Professional Hockey League, playing at the Pelham Civic Complex just south of the city.

Because of its location, infrastructure, and sports history, Birmingham hosted the 2022 World Games, which drew thousands of visitors from across the globe. UAB played a major role in coordinating this spectacular event, providing athletic venues and hosting 3,600 athletes from more than 100 countries.

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Food critics across the country have ranked Birmingham one of the best food cities in America. Five area restaurants were named 2026 James Beard Award semifinalists. Pepper Place, a historic, redeveloped warehouse district east of downtown, hosts an award-winning farmers market weekly. One of Alabama's largest producer-only markets, it features local farmers, artisans, live music, and chef demonstrations.

A host of attractions are a short walk from UAB's campus, such as the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument, which comprises the 16th Street Baptist Church, Kelly Ingram Park, and the Civil Rights Institute, a major destination for visitors worldwide. Birmingham's thriving cultural scene includes museums, galleries, music and arts festivals, theaters and live music venues, a professional ballet company, a professional opera company, a School of Fine Arts, the Jazz Hall of Fame, and the historic Lyric and Alabama Theatres. Since 1996, UAB's Alys Stephens Performing Arts Center has been the home of the Alabama Symphony Orchestra.

Birmingham has proximity to numerous state and national parks, lakes, urban green spaces, and hiking and biking trails. The city has more green space per capita than any other major city in the United States.

Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport (BHM) is Alabama's largest commercial airport with an annual economic impact of $1.6 billion. In 2025, BHM welcomed more than three million passengers. The airport is served by major carriers and offers nonstop service to approximately 20 destinations across the U.S., including New York City, Washington, D.C., Chicago, and Miami.

Learn more about **Birmingham**.



UAB

The University of
Alabama at Birmingham