

UAB The University of Alabama at Birmingham

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY
DEAN, SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **University of Alabama at Birmingham** (UAB) seeks an innovative and visionary dean to continue the record growth of its **School of Health Professions** (SHP or the School), which has the most students (2,600+) and most research funding (\$26M+) in its six decade history.

Founded in 1966, the vision of the UAB School of Health Professions is to be recognized as a global leader in teaching, research, and service that develops new scientific knowledge, removes barriers and disparities, and develops leaders who help individuals, organizations, and communities to achieve their highest potential in a changing world. The School is home to approximately 1,200 undergraduate students, 1,400 graduate students, 155 faculty, 150 staff, and 16,000+ alumni. SHP has more than 30 programs and nearly 50 certificates and degrees and every program in the School that can be ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* is ranked in the top 25 in the nation.

The Dean of the UAB School of Health Professions is its chief academic and executive officer, reporting to the University's **Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost**. The Dean's role is to lead the School's core academic functions and further the mission and goals of the University. The new Dean will help advance how the School defines and delivers its education, research, clinical services, and community engagement, building on the unique strengths of UAB as a leading research university and academic medical center.

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 6.



Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

The next Dean will be expected to advance the following priorities, among others:

Ensure a cohesive culture and shared vision for the School. The School of Health Professions has seen significant success in recent years, including record growth in enrollment, expansion of research efforts, continued recognition for its high-quality programs, and exceptional outcomes for its graduates. Individual programs are flourishing, but opportunities exist to create a better sense of identity and cohesion across the School. The next Dean must be committed to engaging all of SHP's constituents to understand their unique needs while also developing a culture that encourages collaboration, builds a sense of community, and celebrates individual and collective successes. While the School recently went through a planning process to align its goals with those of the University's new strategic plan ("**Forging Ahead**"), faculty and staff indicated opportunities remain for the next Dean to bring the School together to further assess its strategic priorities, identify metrics for success, and implement strategies that achieve goals. UAB recently implemented a responsibility-centered management budget model that gives more autonomy at the school level and the next Dean will need to ensure resources align with SHP priorities and account for the unique contributions across departments and programs.

Build a trusted, effective leadership team. The next Dean will be expected to engender trust through authentic engagement, effective communication, and consistency and clarity in decision-making. This individual must demonstrate these traits in their own leadership and ensure a cohesive leadership team that operates in a similar fashion. Several leadership positions are currently held by interims, providing an immediate opportunity for the next Dean to start building their team. The next Dean must demonstrate these traits in their own leadership and actively cultivate a cohesive leadership team that models the same principles, ensuring alignment in vision, communication, and accountability.

Support the success of all students. Given the diversity of offerings within the School, SHP serves a wide range of students – undergraduates, graduate students in professional programs, and graduate students in research-oriented degrees. The next Dean must understand the unique needs of all students as learners and work with faculty and staff to ensure their success through high-quality academic programs, innovative pedagogy, co-curricular learning opportunities, and effective academic support services. UAB offers unique opportunities for students in the health professions given the breadth and depth of its research, its extensive clinical operations, its affiliation with the eighth largest hospital in the country, and its community-based learning opportunities through engagement in Birmingham and the region. This individual must be visible and present with students, seeking their insights and building a sense of connectedness with the School.

Advance research efforts. UAB has seen tremendous growth in research in recent years – both in funding and impact – and SHP has been a significant contributor to those efforts, increasing its grant submissions 32% since 2022 and its funding to a record \$26.4 million this past year. The School's Nutrition Obesity Research Center (one of 11 NIH-funded locations in the U.S.), Diabetes Research Center (one of 17 NIH-funded locations in the U.S.), the Center for Engagement in Disability Health and Rehabilitation, and the National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability are a few examples of many of the impactful research taking place in SHP. The next Dean must have a demonstrated record of supporting faculty, staff, and students in their pursuit of excellence in research and scholarship.

Engage external partners. The next Dean will inherit a strong foundation for external engagement with more than 16,000 alumni making an **impact in their professions**, a supportive donor base (\$8 million in gifts over the last three years), and the potential to grow **specialty clinics** that serve the community. This individual must be able to build and steward strong relationships with external partners – including the **Dean's Advisory Board** – as well as work with faculty and staff to identify opportunities to further the School's impact in Birmingham, the state of Alabama, and beyond. The Dean should have strong communication skills and the ability to effectively promote the exceptional work being done within SHP.



Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The successful candidate must have a demonstrated record of effective leadership within a complex organization and the ability to set a strategic direction that will build on the School's excellence in its education, research and innovation, community engagement, and clinical enterprise. Candidates must hold a Ph.D. or other earned doctorate in a discipline appropriate for the School and have scholarly distinction appropriate for appointment as a tenured professor in the School.

Additionally, this individual should demonstrate the following qualifications and qualities:

- A leadership style that engenders trust; seeks constituent input; prioritizes transparency; ensures accountability; and communicates proactively, effectively, and consistently.
- Experience building strong teams and empowering and enabling others to implement strategies that advance the strategic goals of a unit.
- A record of aligning resources with priorities; strong financial and personnel management skills; and a commitment to transparently communicating resource decisions.
- Demonstrated experience recruiting, retaining, and supporting the professional development of high-quality administrative leaders, faculty, and staff.
- The ability to understand the unique needs of faculty, staff, and students across the range of programs represented within the School; provide support across a range of disciplines; and identify points of connection and opportunities for collaboration across the School.
- A demonstrated record of advancing student success through high-quality and innovative academic programs, student support services, and co-curricular learning opportunities.
- A record of enabling the success of faculty, staff, and students in research and scholarship with a strong understanding of funding models and support for patient-based research.
- The ability to serve as both an advocate for the School and a collaborative partner with other leaders on the Provost's leadership team and across the University.
- Strong relationship building and communication skills that effectively engage alumni, donors, and community partners in the work of the School, including the ability to fundraise.
- The highest levels of personal and professional integrity.

Procedure for Candidacy

A search committee with representation from across the university has been convened to conduct the search and to recommend finalists to the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost of UAB. The search committee is chaired by the **Dean of Optometry**.

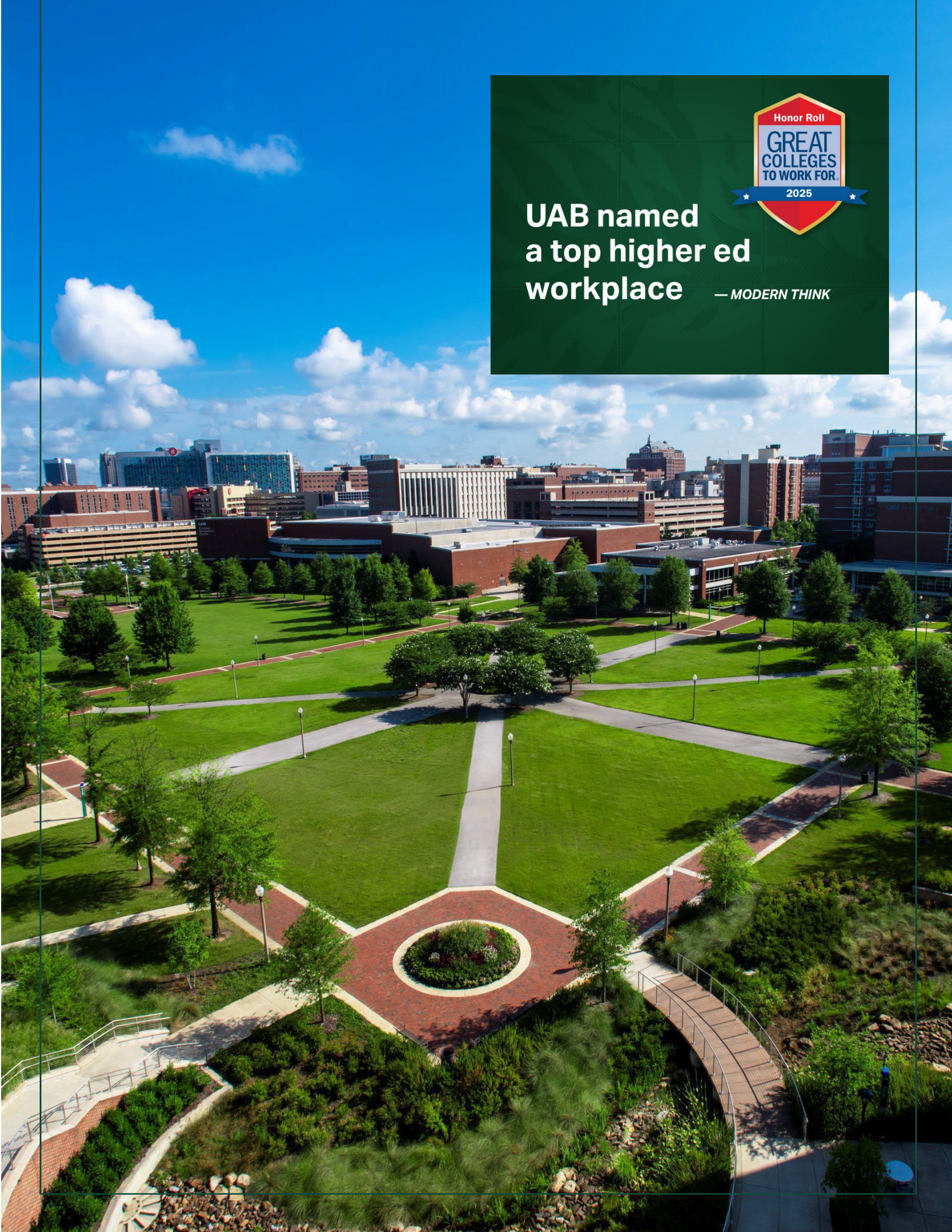
All applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited. For full consideration, candidates must submit a curriculum vitae and cover letter by January 13, 2026. References will be requested later in the process but will only be contacted with the express permission of candidates. WittKieffer is assisting the University of Alabama at Birmingham in this search. Applications, nominations, and inquiries can be directed to Ryan Crawford, Julia Bradley, Vinny Gossain, and Tyler Workman at **UAB-SHPDean@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**.*



UAB named a top higher ed workplace

— MODERN THINK



UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

Ranked among the top 8% of the world's universities by U.S. News & World Report, UAB continues pushing the envelope in all pillars of its mission: education, research and innovation, patient care, economic development, and community engagement.

In fall 2025, UAB welcomed its **largest freshman class in history** with just over 2,500 new Blazers coming to campus. This marks a 25% increase in freshman enrollment for fall 2025 compared to fall 2024. The class is academically engaged, with an average GPA of 3.8 and average ACT score of 27.

The surge in enrollment reflects growing interest in UAB's expanding academic offerings, innovative learning spaces, and vibrant campus life — all part of the university's **SUCCESS Initiative**. A record number of students received national and international fellowships and scholarships in recent years, including Goldwater Scholars, Fulbright Scholars, and Rhodes Scholars. New state-of-the-art facilities, cutting-edge degree and certificate programs, and a revitalized athletic student organization are also helping drive this momentum.

UAB's undergraduate degree in cancer biology is the only one of its kind in the United States, and its biomedical engineering program aligns the expertise of UAB's schools of Engineering and Medicine to prepare students to tackle the most daunting health problems facing society. The Bachelor of Science in eSports Performance Management and Coaching is the first of its kind in the state of Alabama. Through this program, students will learn how to create training programs, support mental and physical health, and communicate with individual competitors or organized teams.

UAB continues to develop innovative and novel academic programs and research opportunities for students at all levels. The university's **Blazer Core Curriculum**, launched in 2023, equips undergraduates with competencies vital for success in a global, knowledge economy. In the 2026 Best Colleges rankings from U.S. News & World Report, UAB climbed four spots to No. 132 out of 434 institutions in the Best National Universities category — placing it, once again, in the top third of ranked schools across the country. UAB continues its upward trajectory in faculty research performance, climbing to No. 24 in the national Bibliometric ranking for 2026 — up from No. 28 last year and marking a 12-spot rise over the past two years.

UAB is carrying on the most successful era of research funding in the university's history, with research expenditures growing by 82% over the past decade and currently at \$780 million.

UAB's world-class academic medical center and health system has roughly two million patient visits annually and is home to the eighth largest hospital in the U.S. (1,207 beds), the only National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center in Alabama and a four-state region, and the state's only level 1 adult trauma center. The latter is currently undergoing a \$73 million expansion (with \$50 million of that funding coming from the State of Alabama) to meet a 20% volume increase in the past five years.

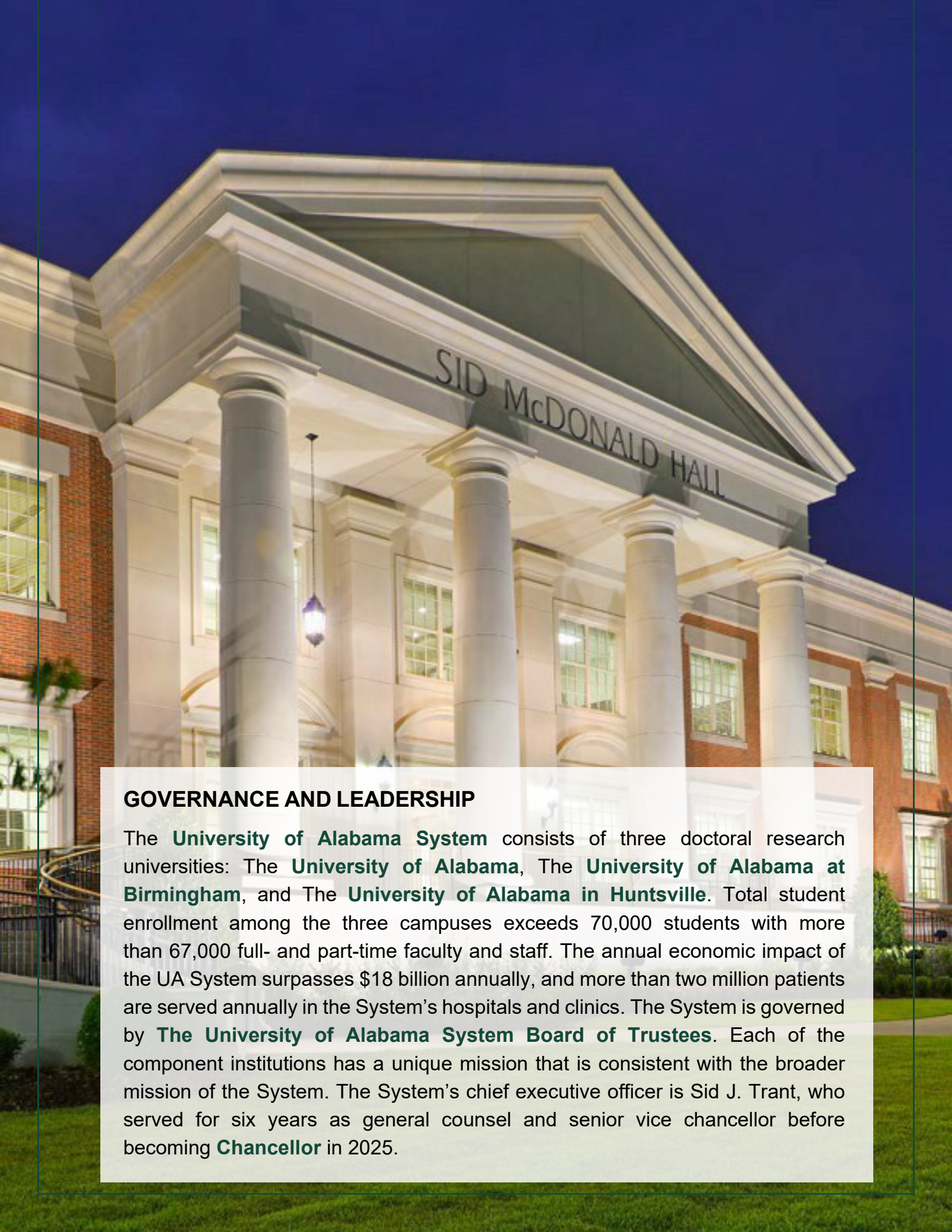
With some 38,000 employees, UAB is Alabama's largest single employer and has an annual economic impact of more than \$12.1 billion statewide.

UAB ACADEMICS

In addition to the School of Health Professions, **the university has 11 other academic units** (the **Heersink School of Medicine**, **Collat School of Business**, and Schools of **Education**, **Engineering**, **Dentistry**, **Nursing**, **Optometry**, and **Public Health**, the **College of Arts and Sciences**, as well as the **Graduate School** and **Honors College**).

UAB has created a **Find Your Degree** website that includes graduate, professional, and online programs to make it easier for traditional and non-traditional students to find the degree that is best suited for their career goals and life needs. And that is because UAB is committed to giving potential students everything they need to make a big decision just a little bit easier. UAB was the first academic partner to support the **Birmingham Promise** scholarship in providing **Birmingham City School** graduates an opportunity to attend the university with a tuition scholarship match.





GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

The **University of Alabama System** consists of three doctoral research universities: The **University of Alabama**, The **University of Alabama at Birmingham**, and The **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, MD, became UAB's seventh **president** in 2013. Before being named president, Dr. Watts had been Senior Vice President and Dean of the School of Medicine since 2010. From 2007 to 2010, he was the John N. Whitaker Professor and Chair of the UAB School of Medicine Department of Neurology.

Dr. Watts is a Birmingham native and 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 an interest in medicine, and four years later, he graduated from Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis as valedictorian of his class. He later joined the faculty at Emory University in Atlanta, 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 latest strategic plan ***Forging Ahead*** is its blueprint for growth between 2024 and 2028. The more than 28,000 employees of UAB have taken this blueprint and have set measurable goals, allocating resources and establishing metrics to assess progress, all to build an even brighter future.



Provost Janet Woodruff-Borden, Ph.D., is the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost at UAB. 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 chief academic officer of UAB, Dr. Woodruff-Borden has general oversight of all academic affairs. The deans of the university's schools and colleges report to her, and she also leads the professionals in the **Office of the Provost** responsible for functions such as enrollment management, faculty relations, institutional effectiveness analysis, academic planning, and international student and scholar services. She works closely with President Watts on strategic planning and implementation initiatives.

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 National Institutes of Health (NIH), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and the Simons Foundation Autism Research Initiative (SFARI).



The **UAB School of Health Professions** is home to the **#1 health care management graduate program in the nation** by *U.S. News & World Report*. Every program in the school that can be ranked, is in the Top 25.

- **Health Administration (1)**
- Physical Therapy (17)
- Physician Associate (21)
- Occupational Therapy (24)



UAB SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS

The UAB School of Health Professions was founded in 1966 and was originally called the School of Health Services Administration. During its illustrious history, the School has had six deans and six different names revolving around allied health professions. The School has long been known as a forward-thinking institution and a catalyst for change. The basis of the culture and the future are guided by three philosophies: Expand and Grow; Connect and Collaborate; and Nourish and Nurture. These philosophies guide the mission and vision.

Mission: Improving the health and well-being of people everywhere through exceptional, collaborative, and innovative teaching, research, and service.

Vision: To be recognized as a global leader in teaching, research and service that develops new scientific knowledge, removes barriers and disparities, and develops leaders who help individuals, organizations, and communities to achieve their highest potential in a changing world.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND DISTINGUISHING FEATURES

- **Every program that can be accredited by a respective agency is accredited**, including the B.S. in Health Care Management, M.S. in Health Administration, M.S. in Health Informatics, M.S. in Healthcare Quality and Safety, M.S. in Medical Laboratory Science, M.S. in Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging Sciences, M.S. in Physician Associate Studies, Clinical Doctorate in Occupational Therapy (Entry-Level), and Doctor of Physical Therapy.
- **Highly acclaimed faculty** who are accomplished, dedicated, and collegial.
- **Every program that can be ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* is ranked in the Top 25**; including the M.S. in Health Administration (#1), Doctor of Physical Therapy (#17), M.S. in Physician Associate Studies (#21), and Clinical Doctorate in Occupational Therapy Entry-Level (#24).
- Recently **completed \$15M renovation to Susan Mott Webb Nutrition Sciences facilities**, including adding a calorimetry suite and metabolic kitchen, and updating classrooms, laboratories, and clinics.
- One of 11 locations in the U.S. hosting the NIH-funded **Nutrition Obesity Research Center**.
- One of 17 locations in the U.S. hosting the NIH-funded **Diabetes Research Center**.
- One of 12 schools with a **continuously funded SHPEP (Summer Health Professions Education Program)** pipeline for college-level students.

- **Home to four specialty clinics;** including Adult Comprehensive Behavioral Intervention for Tics (CBIT) Program, Metabolic Health Clinic, Neuroplasticity Rehabilitation Program, and Adult Sensory Processing Intervention.
- Consistently high level of **alumni giving and engagement** including \$3.2M in FY 2024, and a total of \$8M in FY 2022, FY 2023, and FY 2024 combined.
- Since 2022, grant submissions have risen 32% and **research funding has increased 9.5% to a School record of over \$26 million.**
- Located on the UAB campus, the largest employer in the state, with **national recognition for being the “best place to work”**
- Birmingham is home to **1.2 million metropolitan residents**, the **birthplace of the Civil Rights Movement**, one of America’s **most renowned culinary destinations**, and nestled within the **stunning natural landscapes** of the Appalachian foothills and the Warrior and Cahaba River watersheds.

RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The next dean will look to build upon the momentum of the School and build a vision that will lead it to continued success. Recent accomplishments include the following:

- In September 2025, **received a \$1.2M grant from the NIH to create the UAB Disability Health Promotion Research Center** to leverage digital health technologies to empower individuals with physical disabilities to live more independently and manage their health more effectively.
- In spring 2025, **completed a metabolic kitchen** allowing researchers to mass-produce menus and meals for large research studies and to develop precise dietary interventions for those with chronic conditions like diabetes, obesity and heart disease.
- Few schools have a calorimeter room, but **we built a calorimetry suite with three rooms designed to monitor people’s metabolism for 24 hours**, which is critical because metabolic rates vary by time of day, activity level, and food intake.
- In 2024, received **a \$1M gift to support SHP students who are from, or who accept internships in, the “Wiregrass Region” in Southeast Alabama** – all nine counties in that area are designated as Medically Underserved Areas.
- In 2022, received **a \$3.9M grant from the U.S. Department of Defense** to look at diet’s impact on mobility, physical and cognitive function, as well as on pain, fatigue, sleep, mood, and anxiety in people with multiple sclerosis.
- In 2025, received **a \$750,000 grant from NIDILRR to lead pioneering research on health care accessibility for service dog handlers.**

LEADERSHIP TEAM

In addition to the dean, the UAB School of Health Professions Executive Leadership team is comprised of three Associate Deans, five Department Chairs, and Senior Staff Leaders:

- **Associate Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs**
- **Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs and Strategy**
- **Associate Dean for Research and Innovation**
- **Executive Director of Administrative Operations**
- **Senior Director of Development**
- **Director of UAB Research Collaborative**
- **Director of Student Services and Advising**
- **Director of Communications**
- **Dean's Executive Assistant**
- **Department Chairs**
 - **Clinical and Diagnostic Sciences**
 - **Health Services Administration**
 - **Nutrition Sciences**
 - **Occupational Therapy**
 - **Physical Therapy**

See [SHP Dean's Office Staff](#).

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT PLAN

The UAB School of Health Professions Realignment Plan was created in 2024, to align with the **university's strategic plan "Forging Ahead"** which had just been refreshed. This plan guides activities in the School and is built on the vision for innovative programs, impactful scholarship, transformative research, and committed service. The plan is built on two foundations (Cultural Empowerment, Financial Sustainability and Growth) and four pillars (Education, Research and Innovation, Community Engagement, and Clinical Enterprise). The **Education** pillar creates an immersive student experience centered on excellence in education that produces a successful graduate. The **Research** pillar leads through preeminence in basic, translational, clinical, and health care research. The **Community Engagement** pillar speaks to cultivating community partnerships and establishes the UAB School of Health Professions as one of the best places to work, learn, and serve. The **Clinical Enterprise** pillar is designed to forge new business partnerships to deliver preventive and therapeutic services that will actively participate in initiatives to expand educational and clinical offerings for communities in need of services.

PHYSICAL RESOURCES

School of Health Professions Building (SHPB)

The School of Health Professions Building (SHPB) is home to the administrative and faculty offices of a majority of the Dean's Office (6th floor), including Academic and Faculty Affairs, Clinical Affairs and Strategy, External Relations, and Fiscal and Administrative. It is also home to the Department of Health Services Administration (5th floor), the Department of Clinical and Diagnostic Sciences (4th floor), the Department of Occupational Therapy (3rd floor), and the Department of Physical Therapy (3rd floor). SHPB also houses several large rehabilitation lab spaces, several large clinical lab spaces, several classrooms, the Executive Learning Center, and numerous study spaces for students.

Susan Mott Webb Nutrition Sciences Building (WEBB)

The Susan Mott Webb Nutrition Sciences Building (WEBB) recently underwent a \$15M renovation. It is home to the Department of Nutrition Sciences, the SHP Office of Research and Innovation, the NIH-funded Nutrition Obesity Research Center, the NIH-funded Diabetes Research Center, and the Metabolic Health Clinic. There are several labs that conduct research in metabolism, breast cancer, radioactive materials, and more. It has a newly constructed calorimetry suite with three rooms designed to monitor subjects' metabolism for 24 hours. This is critical as metabolic rates vary by time of day, activity level and food intake. The calorimetry suite is supported by a newly constructed metabolic kitchen that allows researchers to mass-produce menus and meals for large research studies and to develop precise dietary interventions for those with chronic conditions like diabetes, obesity, and heart disease. The WEBB building also has several newly renovated classrooms, conference rooms, study cubicles, hangout spaces, and a kitchen/dining space for faculty, staff and students.

Center for Biophysical Sciences and Engineering Building (CBSE)

The Center for Biophysical Sciences and Engineering Building (CBSE) is home to our Biotechnology programs (graduate certificate, master's, doctoral) and several research labs that are conducting critical work in areas like environmental and genetic effects on human development, as well as developing startups in innovative biotechnology products, technologies, and solutions to improve quality of life and standards of clinical care.

Learning Resource Center (LRC)

The Learning Resource Center (LRC) is the electronic media center for the School and is available to all faculty, staff, and students. The LRC is home to several large classrooms, several breakout rooms for students, individual computer terminals, a multi-media studio, instructional design, and more. In 2026, the LRC entrance will undergo a multi-million-dollar renovation to modernize the space to meet today's needs and improve the user experience.

World-renowned faculty and highly skilled staff advance didactic and clinical education across an impressive range of health care disciplines and interests. Students benefit from an energetic team that brings passion and creativity to all they do in and out of the classroom.



FACULTY

The UAB School of Health Professions faculty headcount **averages 155 full-time faculty** dedicated to learner success and high-quality research. Faculty members in the School are known for their caring and personal attention to learners, exciting innovations in research discovery, and thoughtful leadership.

The School's award-winning faculty are national and international leaders who serve on governmental health care committees and task forces, as well as in leadership positions within the university. Our world-renowned faculty serve organizations and communities locally and globally, spanning an impressive range of disciplines and interests. They have also served in prominent leadership roles in their state organizations such as the Alabama Occupational Therapy Association, Alabama Dietetic Association, Alabama Healthcare Executive Forum, Alabama Association of Health Information Management, and the Alabama Physical Therapy Association.

Faculty have also served at the national and international levels within the Academy of Management's (AOM) Health Care Management Division, American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE), Association of University Programs in Health Administration (AUPHA), American Association of Clinical Endocrinology (AACE), American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), American Academy of Physician Associates (AAPA), American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA), American Physical Therapy Association (APTA), European Academy of Management (EURAM), Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging (SNMMI), Academy of Cardiovascular & Pulmonary Physical Therapy, and others.

Many faculty have achieved Fellow status in prestigious national organizations such as the Academy of Health Sciences Informatics, AOTA, American Society for Nutrition, ACHE, Healthcare Financial Management Association, AHIMA, American College of Medical Informatics, APTA, and the SNMMI–Technologist Section.

ENDOWED FACULTY

One of the foundations of UAB has been its commitment to excellence in faculty. In an effort to support and retain the best faculty, the School has several endowed faculty positions.

- L.R. Jordan Chair in Health Services Administration
- Webb Chair in Nutrition Sciences
- C.E. Butterworth, Jr., MD, Professorship in the Department of Nutrition Sciences
- Howard W. Houser Endowed Professorship in Health Administration
- Bergman/Pinkston Endowed Professorship
- Lakeshore Foundation Endowed Chair in Health Promotion and Rehabilitation Science
- Will Ferniany Endowed Professorship in Healthcare Leadership

SELECT FACULTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In addition to being collegial and diligent in their respective roles, the School of Health Profession's faculty is a talented group with many accolades and recognition at the national and international level.

These stories provide a sampling of recent faculty accomplishments.

- **Amy Landry earns Fottler Service Award from HCM AOM**
- **Goss Honored as Inaugural Excellence in Nutrition Fellow of ASN**
- **William Reed named American Chiropractic Association Researcher of the Year**
- **Garvey receives Gerald Reavan Distinguished Leader in Insulin Resistance Award**
- **Borkowski named recipient of 2025 Filerman Prize for Educational Leadership**
- **Shannon H. Houser receives AHIMA Triumph Influencer Award**





The UAB School of Health Professions has **five interdisciplinary academic departments** and the **UAB Research Collaborative**, which is home to the legendary National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability.

DEPARTMENTS

There are **five** departments within the UAB School of Health Professions, representing a diverse range of allied health professions: Clinical and Diagnostic Sciences, Health Services Administration, Nutrition Sciences, Occupational Therapy, and Physical Therapy.

The **Department of Clinical and Diagnostic Sciences** has **eight programs** offering **13 degrees and certificates** from the bachelor to the doctoral level. This department is home to the second oldest Physician Associate Studies program in the U.S. Two of its Master's degrees can be earned in one year or less: Biotechnology, and Biomedical and Health Sciences. And several of its programs are the only ones of their kind in Alabama: Genetic Counseling, Health Physics, Medical Laboratory Science, and Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging Sciences.

Programs

- Biomedical Sciences
- Biomedical and Health Sciences
- Biotechnology
- Genetic Counseling
- Health Physics
- Medical Laboratory Science
- Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging Sciences
- Physician Associate Studies

Degrees and Certificates

- B.S. in Biomedical Sciences
- Graduate Certificate in Biotechnology Regulatory Affairs
- Graduate Certificate in Computed Tomography
- Graduate Certificate in Industry Genetics and Genomics
- Graduate Certificate in Magnetic Resonance Imaging
- M.S. in Biomedical and Health Sciences
- M.S. in Biotechnology
- M.S. in Genetic Counseling
- M.S. in Health Physics
- M.S. in Medical Laboratory Sciences
- M.S. in Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging Sciences
- M.S. in Physician Associate Studies
- Ph.D. in Biotechnology

The **Department of Health Services Administration** has **seven programs** offering **12 degrees and certificates** from the bachelor to the executive doctoral level. The department is home to the only UAB program ever ranked #1 by *U.S. News & World Report* – M.S. in Health Administration. Its online M.S. in Healthcare Simulation is one of only three programs in the country. The department's graduate programs in Health Informatics and Healthcare Quality and Safety are the only programs of its kind in Alabama. Since 1980, it has hosted the National Symposium for Healthcare Executives, a must-attend event for C-Suite leaders.

Programs

- Administration-Health Services
- Health Administration
- Health Informatics
- Healthcare Leadership
- Healthcare Management
- Healthcare Quality and Safety
- Healthcare Simulation

Degrees and Certificates

- B.S. in Healthcare Management
- Graduate Certificate in Applications of Mixed Methods Research
- Graduate Certificate in Artificial Intelligence in Health Services
- Graduate Certificate in Dissemination and Implementation Science in Health Care
- Graduate Certificate in Healthcare Leadership
- M.S. in Health Administration (Residential)
- M.S. in Health Administration (Executive)
- M.S. in Health Informatics
- M.S. in Healthcare Quality and Safety
- M.S. in Healthcare Simulation
- Executive Doctor of Science (DSc) in Healthcare Leadership
- Ph.D. in Administration-Health Services



The **Department of Nutrition Sciences** has **three programs** offering **five degrees and certificates** from the bachelor to the doctoral level. The M.S. in Nutrition Sciences degree offers five tracks. The department launched a new M.S. in Applied Nutrition degree in fall 2025. The department is dedicated to research to prevent chronic metabolic disease. It is home to two NIH-funded centers, the Diabetes Research Center (1 of 17 in the U.S.) and the Nutrition Obesity Research Center (1 of 11 in the U.S.). It also houses the Metabolic Health Clinic, which provides nutrition therapy to optimize people's health based on their individual metabolic phenotype.

Programs

- Nutrition Sciences (B.S.)
- Nutrition Sciences (M.S.)
- Applied Nutrition (Fall 2025)
- Nutrition Sciences (Ph.D.)

Degrees and Certificates

- B.S. in Nutrition Sciences (BNS)
- Certificate in Nutrition and Dietetics (only open to BNS students)
- Graduate Certificate in Nutrition for Community Health
- M.S. in Nutrition Sciences (five tracks)
 - Clinical Track/Dietetic Internship
 - Clinical Track/Prior Learning Option
 - Dietitian Education Program Pathways
 - Lifestyle Management & Disease Prevention Track
 - Research Track
- M.S. in Allied Nutrition (Fall 2025)
- Ph.D. in Nutrition Sciences



The **Department of Occupational Therapy** has **three programs** offering **five degrees and certificates** from the graduate to the doctoral level. For more than 50 years, it has been a leader in advancing the profession through innovation, education, and service. Its entry-level OTD program is ranked among the Top 12 public university programs according to the latest *U.S. News & World Report* rankings – it is a reflection of the department's commitment to excellence in education, research and practice. Its low vision rehabilitation program is recognized worldwide as the leading program for occupational therapists.

Programs

- Entry-Level Clinical Doctorate in Occupational Therapy (OTD)
- Post-Professional Clinical Doctorate in Occupational Therapy (OTD)
- PhD in Rehabilitation Science (interdisciplinary with Dept. of Physical Therapy)

Degrees and Certificates

- Entry-Level Clinical Doctorate in Occupational Therapy
- Post-Professional Clinical Doctorate in Occupational Therapy
- Graduate Certificate in Low Vision Rehabilitation
- Graduate Certificate in Multitiered Approach to Trauma
- PhD in Rehabilitation Science



The **Department of Physical Therapy** has **three programs** offering **six degrees, certificates and specialties** from the bachelor to the doctoral level. Fully accredited since 1967, the department has offered outstanding educational programs and has long been known to be among the first to advance the entry-level PT degree to the next level. It also has multiple research collaborations and laboratories funded by P-CORI, NIH and other federal funding agencies and foundations. Students at all levels participate in education, research and service endeavors across UAB, Birmingham and the state of Alabama.

Programs

- Disability Studies and Rehabilitation Science
- Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT)
- PhD in Rehabilitation Science (interdisciplinary with Dept. of Occupational Therapy)

Degrees and Certificates

- B.S. in Disability Studies and Rehabilitation Sciences
- Doctor of Physical Therapy
- Graduate Certificate in Primary Care Physical Therapy for Underserved Populations
- Neurologic Physical Therapy Residency
- Orthopedic Physical Therapy Residency
- PhD in Rehabilitation Science





The UAB School of Health Professions has **more than 2,600 students** from bachelor through doctoral; in-person, online and blended; traditional and non-traditional.

STUDENTS

On the first day of classes in Fall 2025, the UAB School of Health Professions had a **record 2,601 students enrolled**. The breakdown by degree level includes 1,425 graduate students and 1,176 undergraduate students. Our students come from all across the United States and around the world, with the majority from Alabama. We have 1,867 in-state students and 734 out-of-state students.

STUDENT SERVICES AND ADVISING

The SHP Office of Student Services and Advising provides a rich academic experience with several programs, opportunities, and services for students. Its services include supplemental instruction and degree tracking, plus, academic coaching and development. In addition, it provides opportunities for community outreach, develops career readiness skills, and is our students' campus resources connection.

The office's team includes a director, two academic recruiters, and four academic advisors. The academic advisors are embedded within the department they support so students have quick and easy access for any services needed. The office itself is in the process of being relocated as part of the Learning Resource Center's renovations. This update will provide direct access to advisors in the main space where SHP students congregate, attend classes, and enter two buildings.

HRP 101: EXPERIENCING THE UNIVERSITY TRANSITION

All freshmen declaring a pre-health major – that is any SHP undergraduate program – are required to complete a first-year experience course during their first fall term. This class is designed to ease a student's transition to the university experience and to prepare them for success in health professions majors. Students interact with faculty, advisors, and other students to learn academic skills and lifestyle management tactics.

SHP BLAZER CLOSET

The SHP Blazer Closet is open to all SHP students and recent alumni to obtain professional attire for career fairs, networking events, interviews, and other career-related occasions free of charge. Students and recent alumni may take up to three items – enough to form one complete outfit from the closet per year. It contains a wide variety of professional dress options that have been donated by alumni, employees, and friends of our School. We are proud to say the SHP Blazer Concept is an expansion of an idea originally created by students in our M.S. in Health Administration program.

STUDENT CEREMONIES

The School of Health Professions hosts several important ceremonies for our students that celebrate transitions in their learning and mark their commitment to professionalism.

WHITE COAT CEREMONIES

Our Clinical Doctorate in Occupational Therapy (Entry-Level), Doctor of Physical Therapy, and Physician Associate Studies programs each host an annual White Coat Ceremony. This tradition is a rite of passage as their students move from the didactic to the clinical studies of their education. The white coats are symbolic of their entry into their health care profession.

PINNING CEREMONY

Our Doctor of Physical Therapy program holds a pinning ceremony each year for their newest cohort. Once every student receives their pin, the entire group – including faculty and alumni – recite the Physical Therapist Pledge to prioritize patients and uphold professional ideals.

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

The School of Health Professions has an active array of student organizations across the undergraduate and graduate levels that create community and help students be more successful and engaged, including:

- Biomedical Science Student Organization
- Disability Studies and Rehabilitation Science Student Organization
- Health Care Management Student Association
- Health Care Leadership Academy
- Nutrition Club
- Pre Physician Associate Association
- Pre Physical Therapy Society
- Pre Occupational Therapy Society
- SHP Ambassadors
- Student Physical Therapy Organization
- Student Occupational Therapy Organization
- Coalition of Occupational Therapy Advocates for Diversity

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

At the School of Health Professions, community engagement is at the heart of our mission to improve health and well-being through collaborative and innovative service. We foster meaningful partnerships that bridge classrooms, clinics, and communities – empowering students, faculty, staff, and alumni to lead with compassion, integrity, and a shared commitment to social responsibility.

Our work includes:

- **Albert Schweitzer Fellowship**, where students spend 200 hours on an organized community-based project to address health disparities
- **Miracle League Baseball**, where students, faculty, and staff play baseball with children and young adults with disabilities.
- **Red Cross Blood Drive**, where we are known for collecting more units of blood and recruiting more first-time donors than any other UAB school/college.

EXCHANGE PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS

We have several opportunities for our students to study abroad and experience education and health care in other countries.

Service Learning in Greece

This course is focused on the differences in health and wellness in rural Greece and rural Alabama. Students conduct a service-learning project with a local Greek humanitarian group. Our students have been involved in helping to determine the needs of the organization and organizing a food bank to support the local population.

Occupational Therapy in South Africa

For several years our Entry-Level Clinical Doctorate in Occupational Therapy program has led a study abroad program in South Africa that shows what it really means to walk alongside ‘sister’ communities. On these trips – partnership is not a buzzword – it is a commitment that begins with truly listening; and impact does not come from a single moment – it comes from showing up over and over and over again. Students live the “Community as a Classroom” by delivering care and compassion to everyone in need.

Executive Healthcare Leadership

Our Executive Doctor of Science (DSc) in Healthcare Leadership curriculum includes travel with their cohort to a location outside of the United States. The group visits another country for two weeks to study how health care is organized, financed, and delivered in their health system. It is at once a life changing and a leadership changing experience.

STUDENT RESEARCH

The School of Health Professions has numerous opportunities for students to participate in research from the undergraduate through the doctoral level.

Undergraduate Research and Honors

This exclusive program facilitates putting the classroom into action. Through our mentoring process, driven undergraduate students have the unique opportunity to participate in components of research programs that are conducting cutting-edge work across the UAB campus. Students in this program have access to individual mentored experiences and team-based experience, all of which bring to life the interprofessional health care team in a community service setting.

SHP Research Day

For several years the School of Health Professions has offered a Research Day where students at the bachelor, master's, and doctoral level can show off their diligent work through poster presentations. This day includes lectures, presentations, judging, and awards. Each year has witnessed substantial growth in abstracts submitted by students, faculty and staff in attendance, and UAB-wide judges. It is a testament to the growth of research in SHP.

SHP Centers

The School of Health Professions has numerous research centers that provide opportunities for students to participate at the level that matches their experience including:

- The **Center for Engagement in Disability Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (CEDHARS)** has a mission to accelerate and implement scientific discoveries, technological advances, behavioral practices, and social norms that will allow people with disabilities to live independently in their communities, manage their health better, and increase their overall quality of life.
- The **Diabetes Research Center (DRC)** focuses on developing new methods to treat, prevent, and ultimately cure diabetes and its complications. It is a multi-disciplinary operation with faculty researchers from UAB's Schools of Health Professions, Public Health, and the Heersink School of Medicine.
- The **Nutrition Obesity Research Center (NORC)** focuses on a multidisciplinary approach to basic, clinical, and translational research and research training with an emphasis on understanding the causal factors underlying nutrition and obesity-related health problems and the generation and evaluation of evidence.

COLLABORATIONS

The School of Health Professions maintains partnerships and collaborative arrangements with multiple schools, departments, and programs across the university as well as with other universities and state-wide partners.

- Notably, the School has developed key partnerships as pathways to engage future students from populations underrepresented in health professions. **UAB is home to a funded Summer Health Professions Education Program (SHPEP)**, a free six-week summer enrichment program focused on improving access to information and resources. SHPEP offers students a number of academic and career experiences, including an introduction to inter-professional education that addresses effective collaboration across health professions. At UAB, SHPEP is a partnership between the **School of Health Professions**, the **Heersink School of Medicine**, **School of Dentistry**, and the **School of Optometry**.
- The School of Health Professions and the **Collat School of Business** collaborate to form the **MSHA/MBA** program that prepares students to be business savvy health care professionals. They learn to manage staff, create budgets, develop policies, and other essential tasks critical to operating health systems.
- The School has several programs that offer a coordinated dual Master of Science degree with the **School of Public Health**. These programs prepare students for leadership roles that address community health care needs and improve access, quality, and cost of care. The programs involved in this innovative dual degree include M.S. in Health Administration, M.S. in Physician Associate Studies, and Doctor of Physical Therapy.
- The M.S. in Health Physics program – the only one of its kind in the South – recently created a partnership with McMaster University, a prestigious Ontario university in Canada, to share hybrid/online courses, provide co-mentorship for graduate students, develop a joint international certificate, and more.
- A partnership between the School and the Jefferson County Department of Health, the Alabama Board of Medical Examiners, and Auburn University Harrison College of Pharmacy provides a curriculum to promote the best practices of safe opioid prescribing and dispensing appropriate for use by all health care professions schools in Alabama. The program is ALAHOPE: Alabama Health Professionals' Opioid and Pain Management Education. It is a comprehensive, asynchronous, multimedia, standardized, unbiased, and modular online training tool.

SELECT STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

Students have excelled in a number of areas, including research, community engagement, and service.

Here are several highlights:

- **SHP Students Selected as Alabama Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) Scholars**
- **Nutrition Sciences Student Bre McDonald named Albert Schweitzer Fellow**
- **Biomedical Sciences Student Snekha Rajasekaran completes prestigious summer research programs**
- **Occupational Therapy Students Explore Birmingham as Living Classroom**
- **PT Student Natasha Brooks Awarded Academy of Neurologic PT Student Scholarship**
- **PA Student Brianna Hampton Named National PAEA Future Educator Fellow**



Recent figures show the School of Health Professions is among the **top in retention rate (93.5%) and six-year graduation rate (74.9%)** among UAB's schools and college.



ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The UAB School of Health Professions has more than 30 programs and nearly 50 certificates and degrees – some are the only one of their kind in the state of Alabama. It delivers offerings from the undergraduate through the doctoral level for the traditional and non-traditional students, and depending on the program, courses are offered in-person, online or blended.

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

B.S. in Nutrition Sciences (BNS)

BNS is about seeing food as medicine. Students will dive deep into the relationship between human health, mindfulness, nutrition, and metabolism. It is a student-focused experiential program that works to prepare graduates to directly address community health and wellness at multiple levels.

B.S. in Biomedical Sciences (BMD)

This is a flexible, unique degree that gives graduates a strong advantage in the ever-changing world of health care. For those who plan a career in physician associate studies, dentistry, physical therapy, clinical laboratory sciences, occupational therapy, or other health related professions – this is the degree that can help take them there.

B.S. in Disability Studies and Rehabilitation Science (RHB)

This is perfect for students who plan to pursue a career in physical therapy, occupational therapy or the rehabilitation science field. This program is for high-achieving students who wish to make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities. This degree is for those who are ready to embark in this growing field of work.

B.S. in Health Care Management (HCM)

The general and clinical manager pathways combine two important bodies of knowledge – health care and management – and this is reflected in students' education. The 'general' track is for those who wish to lead operations or pursue graduate degrees, and 'clinical' track is for credentialed or licensed professionals with certificate or associate degrees.

GRADUATE PROGRAMS (Clinical and Diagnostic Sciences)

M.S. in Biomedical and Health Sciences (BHS)

Completed in less than a year, this program prepares students for success in medical, dental, optometry, physician associate, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and other health science professional schools.

M.S. in Biotechnology (BT)

In only 365 days, this program trains students to see the solution and be the solution. These students are working on tomorrow's answers today and working directly with biotech companies on real-world challenges.

M.S. in Genetic Counseling (MSGC)

The only program of its kind in Alabama, the M.S. in Genetic Counseling provides a dynamic curriculum that combines the passion for science and helping people. Students experience opportunities that deliver knowledge and skills to adapt to positions within their specialties and industry.

M.S. in Health Physics (HP)

Health Physics protects human life – it is the science of radiation protection. This program leads to a unique, multidisciplinary field that is in high demand across industry, medical facilities, defense plants, research laboratories, and classrooms.

M.S. in Medical Laboratory Sciences (MLS)

Medical laboratory science graduates help diagnose the flu, infections, and disease. They provide safe, compatible components for blood transfusion or assess the risk for future development of disease. This is the only master's level program of its kind in Alabama.

M.S. in Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging Sciences (NMMIS)

The only program to access UAB's Advanced Imaging Center and the T24 Cyclotron – the most powerful in any U.S. academic center. Students may choose a track: Imaging Specialist, Radiation Safety Officer, or Research. It is the only program of its kind in Alabama.

M.S. in Physician Associate Studies (PA)

Physician Associate Studies delivers intense didactic and clinical experiences in primary care, medicine, and surgery. It provides a cadaveric dissection and a live pig lab for a practical, hands-on experience to strengthen graduates. This 2nd oldest PA program in the U.S. was ranked No. 21 in the 2025 *U.S. News & World Report* "Best Physician Assistant Programs" rankings, placing it in the top five percent of PA programs across the nation.

Ph.D. in Biotechnology (BT)

In the Biotechnology program, students are taught the knowledge and technical skills to develop innovative products and technologies, as well as the entrepreneurial and executive-level skills to prepare for biotechnology professions. In other words – students produce startup companies.



GRADUATE PROGRAMS (Health Services Administration)

M.S. in Health Administration – Residential (MSHA)

For nearly 60 years, this program has prepared graduates to step into leadership positions across a broad range of health care organizations. This has been the #1 graduate program in the country in its field according to *U.S. News & World Report* since 2018.

M.S. in Health Administration – Executive (MSHA)

This program prepares students for senior management positions in the health field by providing new expertise and a comprehensive understanding, with particular emphasis on leadership, marketing, operations management, quality improvement, and more.

M.S. in Health Informatics (MSHI)

This program is for the cross-cutting leader who impacts health care through analysis, design, implementation, and evaluation. This discipline connects people, technology, and data to optimize health care outcomes and effectively manage health information.

M.S. in Healthcare Quality & Safety (HQS)

Designed for leaders at all levels, this program empowers individuals to improve patient delivery systems. Students learn unique, multidisciplinary approaches to analyzing and solving complex problems. It is offered totally online.

M.S. in Healthcare Simulation (MSHA)

Graduates are taught how to design and implement simulation, improve quality, lead teams, and maximize simulation center success. Students are prepared to move their organization forward and develop a culture of safety. It is offered fully online.

PhD in Administration-Health Services (PhD)

This educational experience includes didactic coursework with experts from a wide range of disciplines relevant to health administration and policy from across UAB. The foundation is based on the active involvement of faculty who are recognized as scholars in their field.

Executive Doctoral in Health Care Leadership (DSc)

This practice-oriented, academic program is designed for experienced health care executives who currently occupy or who are preparing to enter senior leadership positions. The blended delivery format allows students to earn their degree and maintain executive responsibilities.

GRADUATE PROGRAMS (Nutrition Sciences)

M.S. in Nutrition Sciences – Clinical Track/Dietetic Internship

This is an accelerated one-year degree pathway that is designed for students with an interest in clinical nutrition. In only 12 months, graduates are ready for a career in health care, wellness, and food system operations. Graduating students are also eligible to take the Registration Examination for Dietitian Nutritionists.

M.S. in Nutrition Sciences – Lifestyle Management and Disease Prevention Track

This program is offered entirely online and delivers a multiprofessional perspective with classes taught by physician associates, genetic counselors, exercise physiologists, and Registered Dietitian Nutritionists. This is for students who wish to provide general nutrition information to the public for health promotion.

M.S. in Nutrition Sciences – Dietitian Education Program

This ACEND program is offered entirely online so it is flexible, accessible, and student friendly. All graduates are eligible to become a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist, and they are prepared to be highly trained entry-level RDNs through community partnerships, the translation of research, and the acquisition of knowledge.

M.S. in Nutrition Sciences – Research Track

This is a thesis-track graduate degree program that focuses on lab techniques for basic research applications. Students learn from internationally recognized experts in the areas of weight loss, exercise science, metabolism, clinical research, and more. Students have access to scientists in the NORC, DRC, and the UAB O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Ph.D. in Nutrition Sciences

Students learn the science of maintaining the nutritional health and wellness of individuals and populations while conducting mentored, cutting-edge research. They learn from world class researchers, conduct their own original scientific research, and interact with two School NIH-funded research centers.

GRADUATE PROGRAMS (Occupational Therapy) Clinical

Doctorate in Occupational Therapy (Entry-Level)

Fully accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE), our entry-level OTD program is ranked among the top 12 public university programs nationally by *U.S. News & World Report*. The program stands apart by offering unique courses in Low Vision Rehabilitation and Health and Wellness.

Clinical Doctorate in Occupational Therapy (Post-Professional)

This program prepares experienced occupational therapists for important leadership roles in health care, academia, and advocacy. It is offered online so professionals can learn at their own pace wherever they live and work. Currently this is the only post-professional occupational therapy doctoral level program in Alabama.

GRADUATE PROGRAM (Physical Therapy)

Doctor of Physical Therapy

Accredited since 1967, this program prepares evidence-based practitioners to deliver value-based physical therapy services, consultation, education, and administration, with a focus on clinical practice involving diverse populations. Faculty and students work together to influence the profession and the communities they serve in this nationally ranked program.

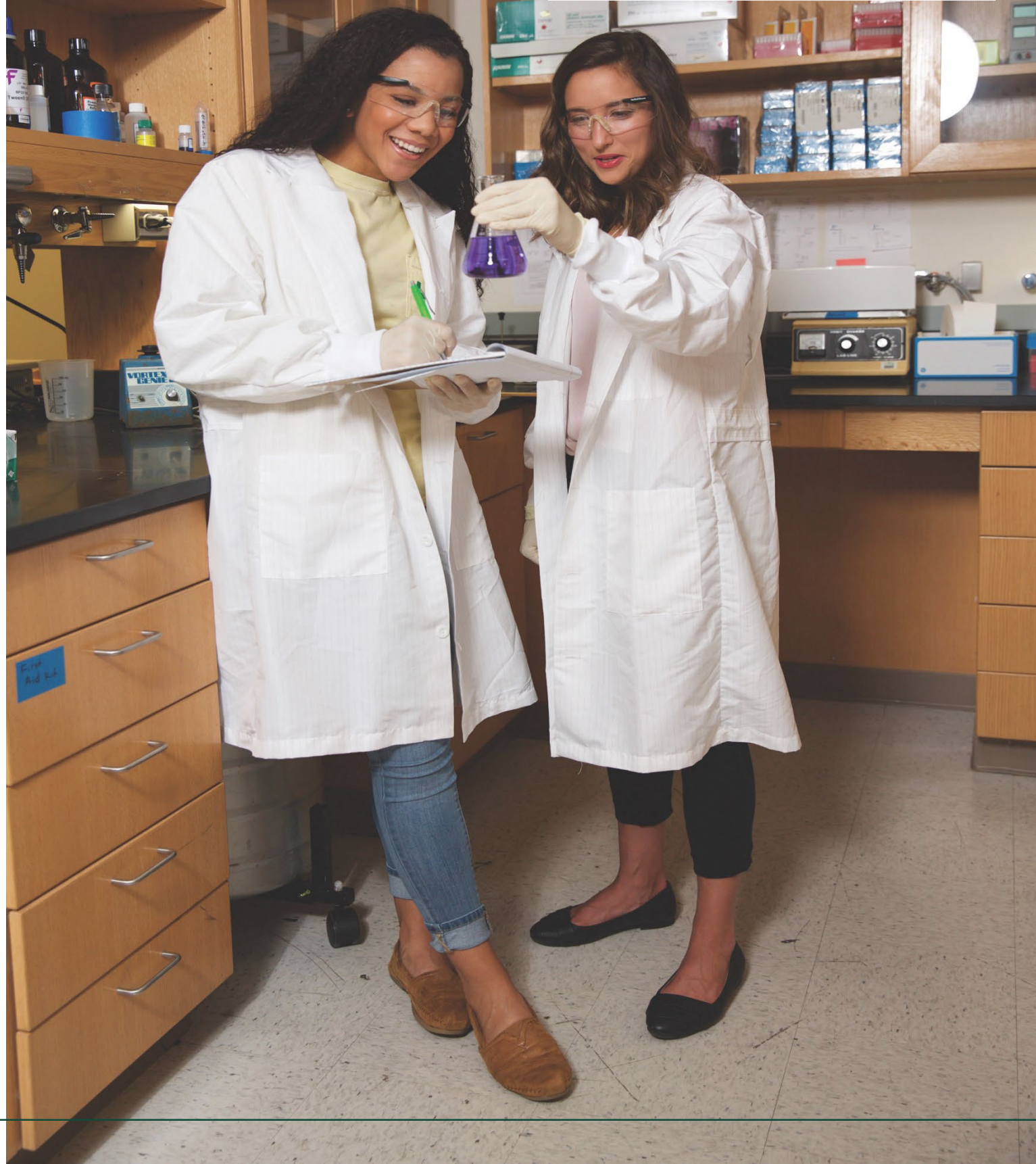
GRADUATE PROGRAM (Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy)

PhD in Rehabilitation Science

This is a unique interdisciplinary partnership between the Departments of Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy. Students are prepared to design and implement research studies, design and deliver educational courses, and translate innovative rehabilitation research findings into practice in the field of rehabilitation science.



Since 2022, the UAB School of Health Professions research funding is **up 9.5%** and is at a **school record of \$26,427,258.**



RESEARCH

In 2022, the UAB School of Health Professions created the Office of Research and Innovation. Since its inception, the School's research efforts have increased significantly. Grant submissions rose 32% with 86 submitted, and **funding increased 9.5% to reach a school record \$26,427,258 in FY 2024.**

Associate Director Ritu Aneja, Ph.D.

Dr. Ritu Aneja came to UAB in April 2022, after 14 years at Georgia State University. Upon her hire, she was called “a proven leader who is committed to bringing out the best in all around her and an exceptional role model to the dynamic research community in the School of Health Professions.” A big part of Dr. Aneja's mission is what she calls “the power of convergence” – the ability to create teams and teamwork toward the common goal of collaboratively addressing complex health challenges. She believes many experts from many disciplines will integrate ideas, approaches, and methodologies to bear on questions that are too big for any one person or any one discipline to solve in isolation.

In addition to her work as director of SHP R&I, Dr. Aneja continues her research on breast cancer health disparities. Specifically, she is working to understand why breast cancer outcomes differ between White and Black women in the United States. Most of her research projects converge on triple-negative breast cancer, an aggressive subtype of breast cancer that disproportionately affects Black women.

Research and Innovation Team

The SHP R&I team supports SHP scientists on their research journey. The team brainstorms ideas to discuss challenges, to flesh out goals, and to help forge a path for them to get to where they want to go. The team supports junior faculty who are just starting out as well as seasoned researchers who are well involved in their work.

In addition to the associate dean position, the R&I team includes a program director, grants administrator, financial officer, pre-award grant administrator, post-award grant administrator, and an administrative associate.

Research and Innovation Website

The R&I team created a one-stop-shop website for SHP scientists. It includes timelines, such as “one month before your grant is due;” it has an R01 Guidance Summary that includes application components, budget guidelines, and more. It also has helpful links from the school, university, and federal level; and a Grants Due Calculator so SHP scientists can back track their submissions to the minute.

REACH Program

One of the first R&I initiatives was creating the Research Acceleration Holistic (REACH) program to provide mentoring, coaching, and grantsmanship training to help SHP junior and mid-career scientists forge their own unique path to becoming fully funded researchers. The program includes a monthly writing group, one-on-one coaching, and regular large collaborative proposal development support seminars.

The programs help scientists sharpen 'hard skills' related to grant application preparation by training scientists directly in researching, writing, and submitting grants. The program also supports 'soft skills' development to help scientists manage their time and make long-term research sustainable. And, it helps scientists develop the skills that are required to run a research group, including:

- Laboratory and research development, management, and leadership.
- Creating a positive lab culture – hiring right people, having difficult conversations, and ensuring creativity and confidence among team members.
- Building team connections and trust while managing all the logistics.

IRB-FAST Program

In 2024, the SHP Office of Research and Innovation partnered with the UAB Office of Institutional Review board (OIRB) for a pilot program called IRB-FAST: Fast-tracked Assistance and Submission Tracking.

This initiative includes Zoom/phone consultations with OIRB protocol analysts exclusively for SHP faculty and students on an as needed basis. The ultimate goal in this pilot initiative is to streamline the IRB review process and enhance the research experience for all UAB faculty and student researchers.

During the pilot program initiative, the SHP Office of Research and Innovation will be collecting data on various aspects of the program, including the submission date, the number of pre- reviews, the number of Zoom/phone calls conducted, the final approval date, and more. The data will enable the UAB OIRB to analyze and compare turnaround times as well as improve the review program for everyone moving forward.

SHP Research Centers

Center for Engagement in Disability Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (CEDHARS):

Their mission is to accelerate and implement scientific discoveries, technological advances, behavioral practices, and social norms that will allow people with disabilities to live independently in their communities, manage their health better, and increase their overall quality of life.

Center for Health Informatics for Patient Safety/Quality (CHIPS/Q): This group is designed to develop and market salient Health Information Technology (HIT) workforce training and education programs for individuals and health care delivery systems. The center provides expert assistance to health care organizations and medical groups across the nation interested in using Health Informatics and Health IT applications to improve patient safety and health care quality.

Diabetes Research Center (DRC): This NIH-funded center is one of only 17 in the U.S. It focuses on developing new methods to treat, prevent, and ultimately cure diabetes and its complications. The center is a multi-disciplinary operation with faculty researchers from UAB's Schools of Health Professions, Heersink Medicine, and Public Health, among other units. It operates in collaboration with the UAB Comprehensive Diabetes Center to promote excellence in diabetes research and patient care. It supports research in the areas of pathology, animal physiology, human biology, metrics and health services research, and community research.

National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability (NCHPAD): Founded in 1999, the NCHPAD seeks to help people with disability and other chronic health conditions achieve health benefits through increased participation in all types of physical and social activities, including fitness and aquatic activities, recreational and sports programs, adaptive equipment usage, and so much more.

Nutrition Obesity Research Center (NORC): This NIH-funded center is one of only 11 in the U.S. It was established to foster a multidisciplinary approach to basic, clinical, and translational research and research training with an emphasis on understanding the causal factors underlying nutrition and obesity-related health problems and the generation and evaluation of evidence on their consequences, prevention and alleviation. The NORC, which is comprised of four research core facilities, a pilot/feasibility program, and an enrichment program, comprises 159 investigators from 58 academic units, with total direct funding of \$56M for nutrition/obesity research.

UAB/SHP Research Collaborative: This research group, headquartered at The WHARF (Wellness, Health and Research Facility) on the campus of the Lakeshore Foundation, is led by James Rimmer, Ph.D. The Collaborative addresses health equity for people with disabilities through a scientifically sound, interdisciplinary inclusion science framework that reduces ableism both within the UAB campus and across the entire nation. It is home to the UAB Adaptive Human Performance Lab and a hub for professors, partners, and leading disability experts everywhere on programs, research, education, and other projects. By recruiting an inclusive array of students, faculty, staff, and researchers, the Collaborative is positioned to become one of the strongest agents for promoting health equity in children and adults with disability in the U.S. and the world.

CLINICS

In 2022, the UAB School of Health Professions implemented a Strategic Growth Plan. A key element of this plan added a Clinical Engagement pillar. The mission within this pillar was to forge new business partnerships to deliver preventive and therapeutic services, develop a road map for new products and services, and actively participate in initiatives to expand educational and clinical offerings in underserved communities. Today, the SHP Specialty Clinics are bringing care from our faculty and students directly to those in need in several specialties.

Adult Comprehensive Behavioral Intervention for Tics (CBIT) Program

The Children's of Alabama / University of Alabama at Birmingham Tourette Syndrome Center of Excellence Adult Comprehensive Behavioral Intervention for Tics program is a 10-week, eight-session, telehealth program that works with adults (21+) on tics that are bothersome to them. The initial session is an intensive interview and the follow up sessions' durations and the number of sessions are tailored to each client's specific needs.

Metabolic Health Clinic

The Metabolic Health Clinic provides nutrition therapy to optimize metabolic health based on the individual metabolic phenotype that is determined by analyzing insulin, glucose, and lipid levels. The team is committed to helping all individuals living with chronic metabolic disease to achieve sustained, good health. The team's work begins with addressing the root cause, which is not the clients' body weight, but other factors – including the way clients' genes and physiology interact with nutrition.

Neuroplasticity Rehabilitation Program

The Neuroplasticity Rehabilitation Program is a faculty-led practice for outpatient neurorehabilitation for individuals with stroke, traumatic brain injury, and multiple sclerosis. The team consists of UAB faculty who deliver rehabilitation that is driven by evidence-based results and that has been shown to produce beneficial changes in the brain. Faculty have more than two decades of professional experience in Constraint-Induced Movement Therapy (CIMT) research and clinical practice.

Adult Sensory Processing Intervention

Many adults experience sensory processing differences. Often, these are difficulties that were unrecognized or undiagnosed in their childhood. These challenges may be hidden beneath years of masking, leaving unmet needs that continue to impact daily life. The Adult Sensory Processing Intervention clinic is here to support more affirming, sustainable strategies. Sensory processing difficulties can make everyday experiences overwhelming, difficult and painful. The clinic helps adults better understand their sensory processing and improve their quality of life.



Our School has **distinguished alumni** that support the School through their generosity. Our alumni are part of the legacy of touching lives and maintaining the School's margin of excellence.

ALUMNI & GIVING

The Dean of the UAB School of Health Professions collaborates with the School's advancement officers and alumni managers, the **UAB Central Advancement Office**, the **UAB National Alumni Society**, and the department and program alumni groups to engage external constituents and alumni to support our school's numerous innovative programs as well as the success of our faculty and our students.

This team is **committed to building relationships with alumni and fundraising with a strategic purpose**. The team works together closely to coordinate and implement alumni and donor cultivation, fundraising activity, and major gift solicitation. They work with prospective donors to support School priority areas that match a donor's passion. Funding sources counted in development numbers are from individuals, corporations and families, and private or philanthropic foundations. Federal funding sources are not included.

The School's **fundraising totaled \$8M** between FY 2022 and FY 2024.

- **\$3,005,393** (FY 2022)
- **\$1,767,497** (FY 2023)
- **\$3,289,725** (FY 2024)

UAB boasts more than 150,000 alumni worldwide, and the School of Health Professions has **approximately 16,000 alumni** in all 50 states and in 25 countries around the world. Our personal alumni relationships have helped the School successfully raise money for renovations, scholarships, and endowed funds.



ADVISORY BOARDS

The School of Health Professions is supported by the Dean's Advisory Board. This is a group of highly experienced business and community leaders from across the U.S. who are drawn from a wide variety of backgrounds and are committed to connecting and engaging the SHP family. This group is instrumental in supporting the School through development, fundraising, and other efforts to support our programs, students, faculty, and staff.

Many individual programs have their own advisory boards that provide strategic advice to the program's leadership team. These members are comprised of leaders from a number of segments of the health care industry and they are committed to guiding the program's curriculum, service, and mission. Each of these leaders is committed to advancing their program's mission and serving as quality advisors to each director.

ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTS

The School of Health Professions has more than 16,000 alumni located in all 50 states and more than 20 countries around the world. They are "Ever Faithful. Ever Loyal." to UAB and to our School in service, scholarships, and more.

Our External Relations Team – Advancement, Alumni Relations, and Communications – produce an annual magazine called "**Snapshots**," that is delivered digitally to all SHP alumni.

The External Relations Team organizes annual alumni events that are attended by or **hosted by the dean** in several major cities across the Southeast. And the team hosts receptions at professional conferences, webinars where faculty translate their work to daily life practice, and award programs to recognize alumni excellence. Our alumni epitomize our "Go. Give. Serve." efforts – they are more than generous with their time, talent, and treasure – we are forever grateful to each of them.





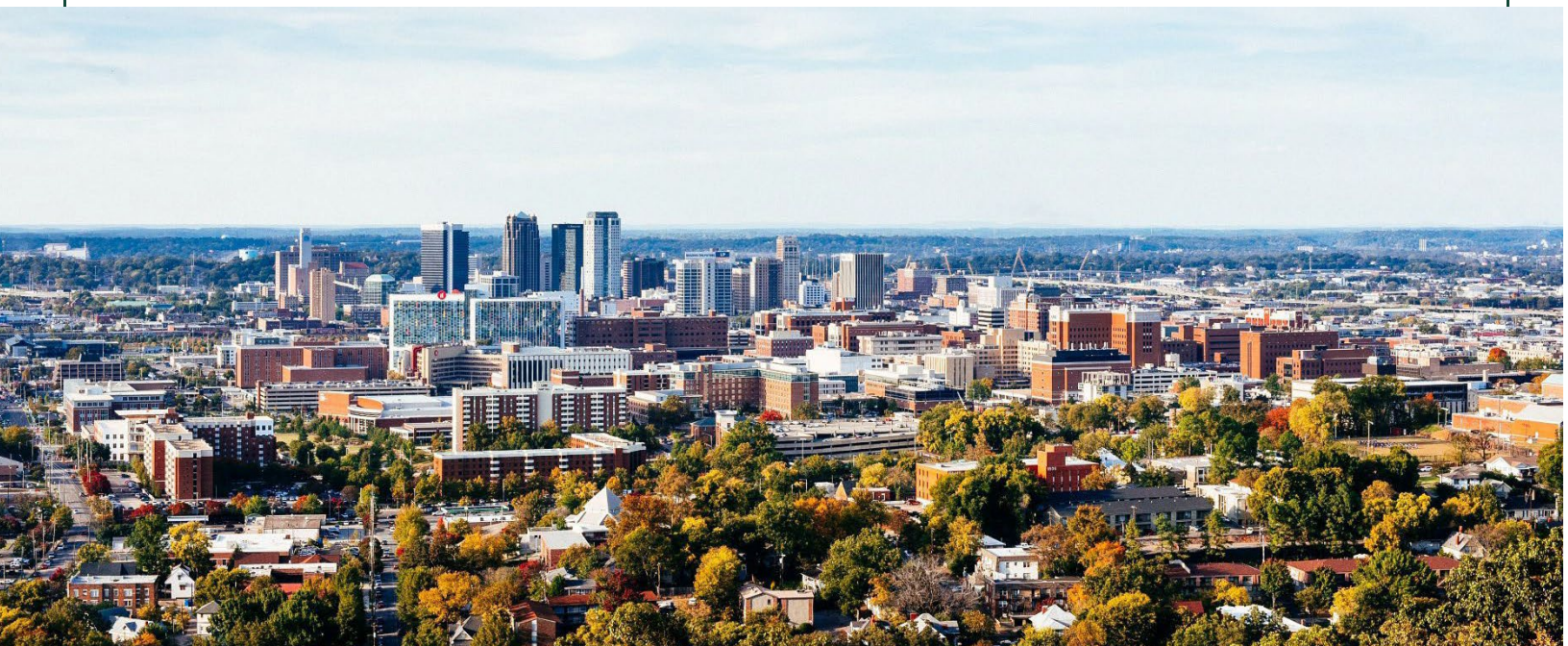
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

Located in the heart of the Southeast, **Birmingham** is a short drive from Atlanta, Nashville, New Orleans, Memphis, the Blue Ridge Mountains, and Gulf Coast beaches. It has been recognized as an "All American City" by the National Civic League as one of the top 10 American cities to live and work, and one of the top 10 entrepreneurial and job growth hot spots in America. Conde Nast Traveler named Birmingham one of the **best places in the world to visit in 2022**.

Downtown Birmingham has enjoyed a revitalization in recent years, including the development of nearby **Railroad Park**—an award-winning urban park—and its adjacent Regions Field, home to the minor league **Birmingham Barons** (Double-A affiliate of the Chicago White Sox)—an award-winning stadium. The park and stadium projects have kickstarted major growth in surrounding districts, including craft breweries, boutique shops, restaurants, loft and apartment buildings, innovative workspaces, and 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.

Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport is the busiest commercial airport in Alabama, with over three million passengers in 2024 (a 6 % increase over 2023). Recent years have also seen new nonstop routes added by Southwest, expanding connections from BHM. The airport is investing in infrastructure, including a \$40 million expansion of FBO facilities and hangars slated for completion by early 2027, as well as upgrades to roadways, cargo areas, and terminal space.



According to the recent ***Economic Impact of Alabama's Six Major Commercial Service Airports on the State's Economy*** report prepared for The Aviation Council, Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport had an economic impact of \$1.6 billion on the state in 2019.

Because of this platform and its sports history, Birmingham was selected to serve as the host city of the **2022 World Games**. Birmingham is also a **renowned culinary destination**, with one of our signature restaurants recently winning **two James Beard Foundation awards** and many other restaurants named as finalists. Food critics across the country have discovered Birmingham's food scene consistently ranks as one of the best food cities in America. An award-winning farmers' market is held weekly at **Pepper Place**, near UAB.

There are a host of **attractions** only a short walk from UAB's campus, including the **Birmingham Civil Rights District National Monument**, comprising sites such as **Sixteenth Street Baptist Church**, **Kelly Ingram Park**, and the **Civil Rights Institute**—a major destination for visitors worldwide. Birmingham's cultural scene is thriving, with **museums**, numerous galleries, **music and arts festivals**, **theatres and live music venues**, a **professional ballet company**, a professional opera company, a **School of Fine Arts**, the **Jazz Hall of Fame**, and the recent restoration of the historic **Lyric** and **Alabama Theatres**. In September 1996, **UAB's Alys Stephens Performing Arts Center** became the home of the **Alabama Symphony Orchestra**. Birmingham is in proximity to many state and national parks, lakes, urban greenspaces, and hiking and biking trails. The city has more green space per capita than any other major city in the United States.

