

**General Overview**

The UAB strategic plan 2018-2023 “Forging the Future” provides a guide for our success as a university. Included in it are goals and objectives for our four Mission Pillars. Our past teaching, scholarship, patient care, and service demonstrates a rich history of aiding society. Going forward, we will muster our individual and collective strengths to address significant and pressing needs that will result in positive and tangible outcomes for our university, our city, our state, and society overall. In other words, we intend to define a Grand Challenge, address it, and solve it.

**What is a Grand Challenge?**

Simply put, a Grand Challenge is a significant problem that, when solved, will positively impact a large number of people and society in general. It is large in scope and results from complex causes. Progress towards a solution requires a combination of innovative approaches, technologies, treatments, and/or policies. Interdisciplinary and convergent approaches are essential. Some Grand Challenges include:

- Remove the threat of nuclear war from the world
- Reduce obesity in America
- Transition Los Angeles County to 100% sustainability by 2050
- Achieve health parity in the Black Belt
- Make Birmingham the (healthiest) (most livable) (#1 public arts) city in America

*We choose to go to the Moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard; because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one we intend to win.*

President John F. Kennedy  
May 25, 1961 - Rice University

A Grand Challenge serves as an opportunity to unite university activities (teaching, research, scholarship, commercialization, patient care, service) with external stakeholder engagement around a large-scale issue. It is not intended to hinder individual or departmentally based activities, but instead to augment and enhance them.

**The UAB Grand Challenge - Call for Concept Papers, Planning Grants, and Invited Proposals**

President Ray Watts is pleased to announce the inaugural UAB Grand Challenge. Applicant teams will engage in a four-step proposal process intended to clarify the UAB Grand Challenge mission and engage important campus and community constituencies. The Strategic Investment Fund will provide substantial funding for one or more Grand Challenge efforts, provided that the support is equally matched from other sources with new and/or verifiable in-kind support. A UAB Grand Challenge may be supported from the Strategic Investment Fund for up to 5 years. It is expected that external sources of support will provide longer-term sustainability for the project.

**General Instructions**

The UAB Grand Challenge program is designed to encourage interdisciplinary collaborations in areas of strength and high potential. This will be a four-step process. First, teams are encouraged to submit a concept paper to Chris Brown, Vice President for Research ([csbrown@uab.edu](mailto:csbrown@uab.edu)). These will be used to identify topical areas, to explore collaborative team formation, and to provide workshop content. Second,

interested parties will be invited to participate in one or more workshops intended to foster team building, strategic planning, and funds identification. Third, teams will be encouraged to submit a planning grant to support full proposal development over a six to nine month period. Fourth, full proposals will be invited from successful planning grant teams. An invitation to submit a full proposal does not guarantee selection. Concept papers, planning proposals, and invited proposals will be reviewed internally and externally. All reviews will be provided to the UAB President for consideration.

**Concept Paper**

Interested teams are encouraged to submit their ideas in the form of a concept paper. These should be approximately two pages in length and should include the following:

- Proposed name of the UAB Grand Challenge;
- Description of the problem to be addressed, including its importance to the State of Alabama and generalizable to other states, the US, and the world;
- Conceptualization of the plan of work;
- List of potential team members and/or expertise required, including potential non-UAB partners.

In evaluating the concept papers, the following criteria will be considered:

- Importance of the issue to be addressed;
- Ability to achieve success and national pre-eminence for UAB;
- Alignment with university strategic priorities;
- Demonstration of real interdisciplinarity and/or convergence;
- Potential to utilize and build university strengths;
- Potential for engagement of many/all facets of the university – research, scholarship, teaching, service, patient care, student life, community engagement, alumni, athletics, etc.;
- Partnerships with stakeholders outside the university.

**Planning Proposal**

The planning grant should be approximately five pages and include the following:

- Proposed name of the UAB Grand Challenge;
- Name and contact information of the principal and any identified key participants;
- Brief description of the problem to be addressed, including its importance to the State of Alabama and generalizable to other states, the US, and the world;
- Description of the plans to assemble the team, identify the plan of work, and identify resources for near and long term sustainability.

In evaluating the planning proposals, the following will be considered:

- Realistic plan for team assembly, project plan conceptualization, resources identification, and delivery of a full proposal.
- After six months, the progress of the planning teams will be assessed to determine advancement to the full proposal stage.

**Invited Full Proposal**

Planning grant teams that show significant progress will be invited to submit a full proposal of approximately 15 pages, which includes all the elements of the concept paper PLUS;

- Short biosketches of the leadership team and a description of their commitment to the UAB Grand Challenge (not included in page count);

- Letters of support, including from all collaborating deans (not included in page count);
- A detailed and realistic resourcing plan to include faculty/staff costs, space needs, and programmatic costs. This should include indications of commitment for all cost matching, faculty hires, space allocation, and other costs (not included in page count).

Evaluation of the final proposal stage includes all of the white paper and pre-proposal criteria PLUS:

- Qualifications of the principal and key team members;
- Merit of the proposed plan and feasibility of success;
- Rigor of the evaluation plan;
- Identification of existing resources and potential for future support.

**Important Dates**

March 2018	Announcement of Opportunity
Late Mar 2018	Concept Paper due
Spring 2018	Workshop(s)
Summer 2018	Planning proposal due
Spring 2019	Full proposal due
Summer 2019	Decision and Announcement

Brief quarterly reports will be required. Annual funding is contingent upon successful progress as described in a required annual report due on the anniversary of funding initiation. An extensive review will occur in year three of the UAB Grand Challenge.

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