

UAB The University of Alabama at Birmingham

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY
DEAN, SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....	2
Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership.....	3
Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities	5
Procedure for Candidacy.....	7
About the UAB School of Public Health	8
Leadership and Governance.....	10
Strategic Plan.....	13
Departments	14
Academic Programs.....	14
Research.....	16
University-Affiliated Centers	17
Service Centers and Initiatives	18
Community Engagement and Public Health Practice.....	19
Student Life.....	21
Health Ecosystem at UAB	23
About UAB	26
University of Alabama System	27
UAB Leadership.....	28
Forging Ahead Strategic Plan.....	30
Academics.....	31
Birmingham, Alabama	33



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **University of Alabama at Birmingham** (UAB) seeks a strategic and innovative leader to serve as dean of its renowned **School of Public Health** (SOPH).

The next dean will have an exciting opportunity to advance a compelling vision for the school's future, building on a tradition of excellence in public health education, research, and practice to elevate the school's visibility and impact locally, nationally, and globally.

The dean will inspire and catalyze the ongoing growth of a robust research enterprise, enhance educational opportunities and student success, and expand strategic partnerships and community engagement. To ensure the school's long-term success, the dean will diversify revenue streams while working together with constituents across the school to further strengthen a culture of inclusion, transparency, and partnership.

Founded in 1978, the School of Public Health works to improve health outcomes and reduce disparities across Alabama and around the world. Home to more than 1,100 students, 90 full-time faculty, and 218 staff, it remains the only accredited school of public health in the state. *U.S. News & World Report* ranks the school No. 14 nationally and No. 7 among schools of public health at public universities.

The School of Public Health occupies a prominent place within UAB's health ecosystem. Among the university's 12 schools, the School of Public Health ranks second only to the School of Medicine in extramural research funding. In addition to collaborations across the university and UAB Health System, the school benefits from strong partnerships with government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and community stakeholders.

Located in the heart of Birmingham, the School of Public Health is uniquely positioned to propel applied learning, interdisciplinary research, and community-engaged scholarship while strengthening the economic and social vitality of the region.

UAB seeks a dean with a distinguished record of research and scholarship and a demonstrable commitment to advancing the field of public health. A doctoral degree in public health or a related discipline is required along with qualifications for appointment as a tenured full professor in the School of Public Health.

To confidentially nominate a candidate, express interest in the opportunity, or submit an application, see "Procedure for Candidacy" on page 7.



OPPORTUNITIES AND EXPECTATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP

Reporting directly to Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Janet Woodruff-Borden, the dean is the School of Public Health's chief executive and academic officer and stewards its education, research, and practice mission. The dean is ultimately responsible for all instruction, research, practice, and service activities and administrative and financial operations.

The next dean will provide leadership across academic affairs, research, faculty development, student success, community engagement, public health practice, alumni relations, development, and external relations, among other areas.

Specifically, the next dean will be expected to:

Articulate and advance a strategic vision for the school's future

Working in collaboration with school constituents, the dean will develop and implement strategies and plans to unify and advance the UAB School of Public Health, building on its national reputation and historical success in research, teaching, and practice. Amid a highly dynamic external environment, the dean will advocate for public health with courage and conviction, providing the leadership to elevate the school's visibility and impact locally, nationally, and globally.

Sustain and enhance research excellence

The next dean will inspire, promote, and support a robust research enterprise that advances scientific discovery, improves population health outcomes, and promotes the translation of research into public health practice and policy. The dean will prioritize the recruitment and retention of grant-funded faculty and investments in research infrastructure and administration.

Ensure financial stability

To position the school for sustained growth and long-term success, the next dean must provide exceptional financial stewardship. Priorities will include diversifying revenue beyond NIH and federal grant funding, a commitment to fundraising and cultivating philanthropic partners, exploring new workforce-aligned academic programs, and strategic enrollment management.

Invest in faculty and staff success

The School of Public Health's greatest asset is its people. The dean will prioritize the recruitment and retention of faculty across the school's teaching, research, and practice enterprise and of the invaluable staff who enable the school's success. This will include a commitment to mentorship, providing professional development opportunities, and promoting a healthy work-life environment.

(continued)

Enhance academic innovation and student success

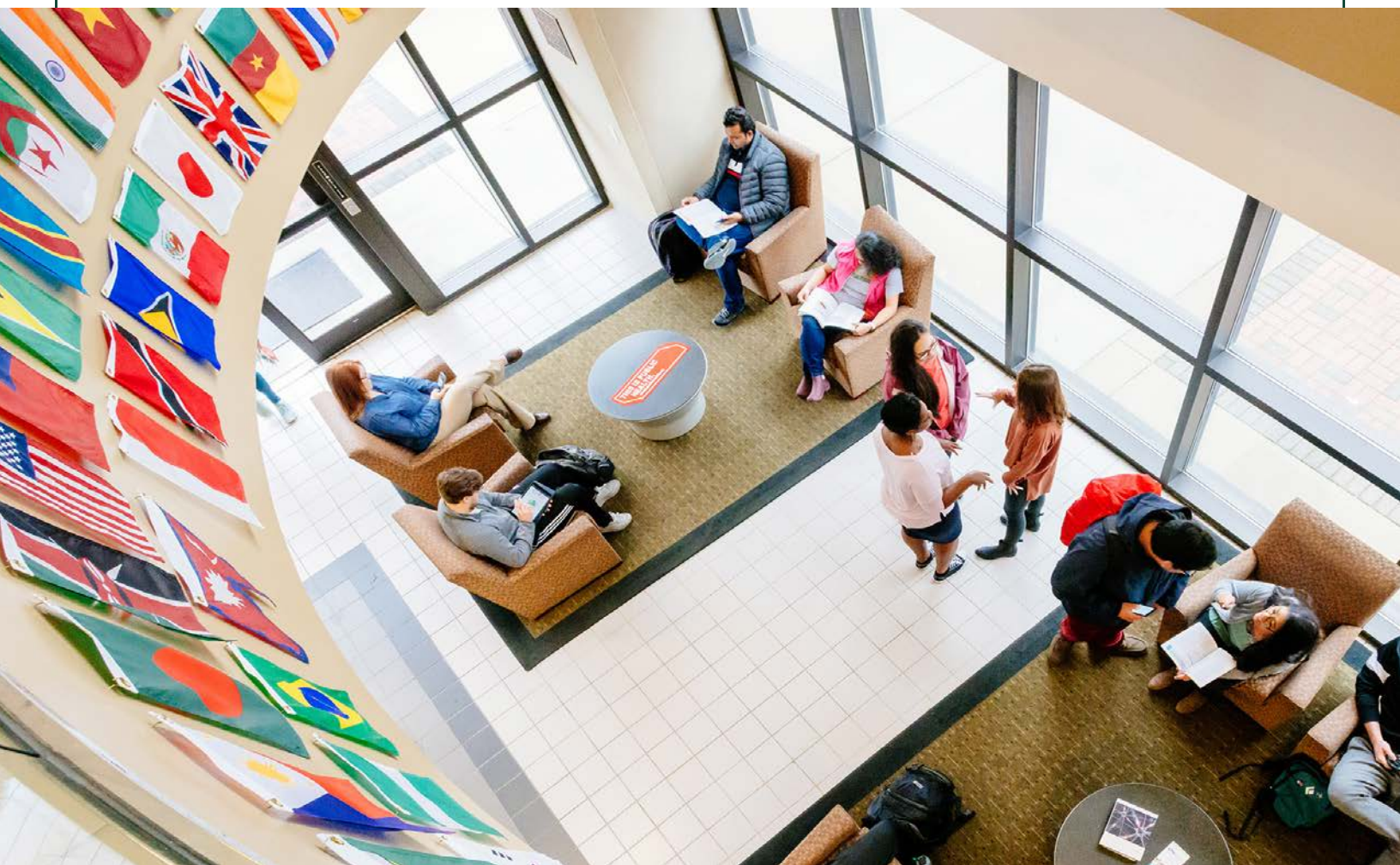
The dean will foster curricular and pedagogical innovation, including through expansion of undergraduate offerings, graduate programs that reflect changing learner and workforce demands, and the responsible growth of online programs, at all times emphasizing excellence in teaching and learning. To ensure student success, the dean will increase scholarship opportunities, strengthen student support services, and expand experiential learning opportunities.

Steward and grow internal and community partnerships

The dean will model and foster collaboration among departments and across the university, building on and deepening its longstanding relationship with the Heersink School of Medicine. To elevate the school's visibility and maximize its impact on health outcomes, the dean will enhance community engagement, expanding partnerships with local and state public health agencies and seizing opportunities to foster and grow community-engaged research and practice.

Build a culture that inspires connectedness, excellence, and impact

The next dean will lead and nurture a community in which all faculty, staff, and students feel valued, supported, and empowered. Through transparent communication, collaborative decision-making, and a commitment to shared governance, the dean will foster an environment that emphasizes accountability, prioritizes equity and inclusion, and unites the school with a shared mission, vision, and sense of purpose and belonging.



PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND PERSONAL QUALITIES

The University of Alabama at Birmingham seeks an accomplished, collaborative, and forward-thinking leader to serve as the next dean of the School of Public Health. The dean must possess a commitment to advancing health equity, improving population health outcomes, and addressing complex public health issues through evidence-based practice, research, and policy.

The school's continued success will require a dean with deep expertise in public health and the ability to balance and advance the school's research, teaching, and practice missions. The ideal candidate will have demonstrated success as a research leader with a strong record of extramural funding, particularly NIH-supported research, and a deep understanding of how to build, manage, and sustain a research enterprise.

A doctoral degree in public health or a related discipline is required, along with qualifications for appointment as a tenured full professor in the school.

Additionally, the ideal candidate will possess the following qualifications and qualities:

Visionary leadership and a growth mindset

Capacity to develop and advance a strategic vision for the future of the school, combined with the ability to guide growth, innovation, and adaptation in a rapidly changing public health and higher education environment. An entrepreneurial and innovative mindset capable of identifying new opportunities and responding creatively to emerging challenges.

Willingness and ability to champion public health

A strong understanding of the scientific, educational, community, and policy dimensions of the field; the ability to advocate effectively for the school and for public health at UAB, in the community, and beyond; and the political acumen to navigate a complex external environment while defending institutional priorities and evidence-based public health.

Academic and administrative leadership experience

Demonstrated teaching experience and commitment to educational excellence, student success, and curriculum development. A successful record of mentoring, recruiting, developing, and retaining talented faculty, staff, and students. Ability to support interdisciplinary research and academic activities across diverse public health disciplines and programs.

Sophisticated financial and operational acumen

Capacity to generate resources via diverse mechanisms, including through private philanthropy, federal and state agencies, and corporate or foundation partners. Ability to align resources with institutional priorities to enable sustainable growth.

(continued)

Collaborative and inclusive leadership

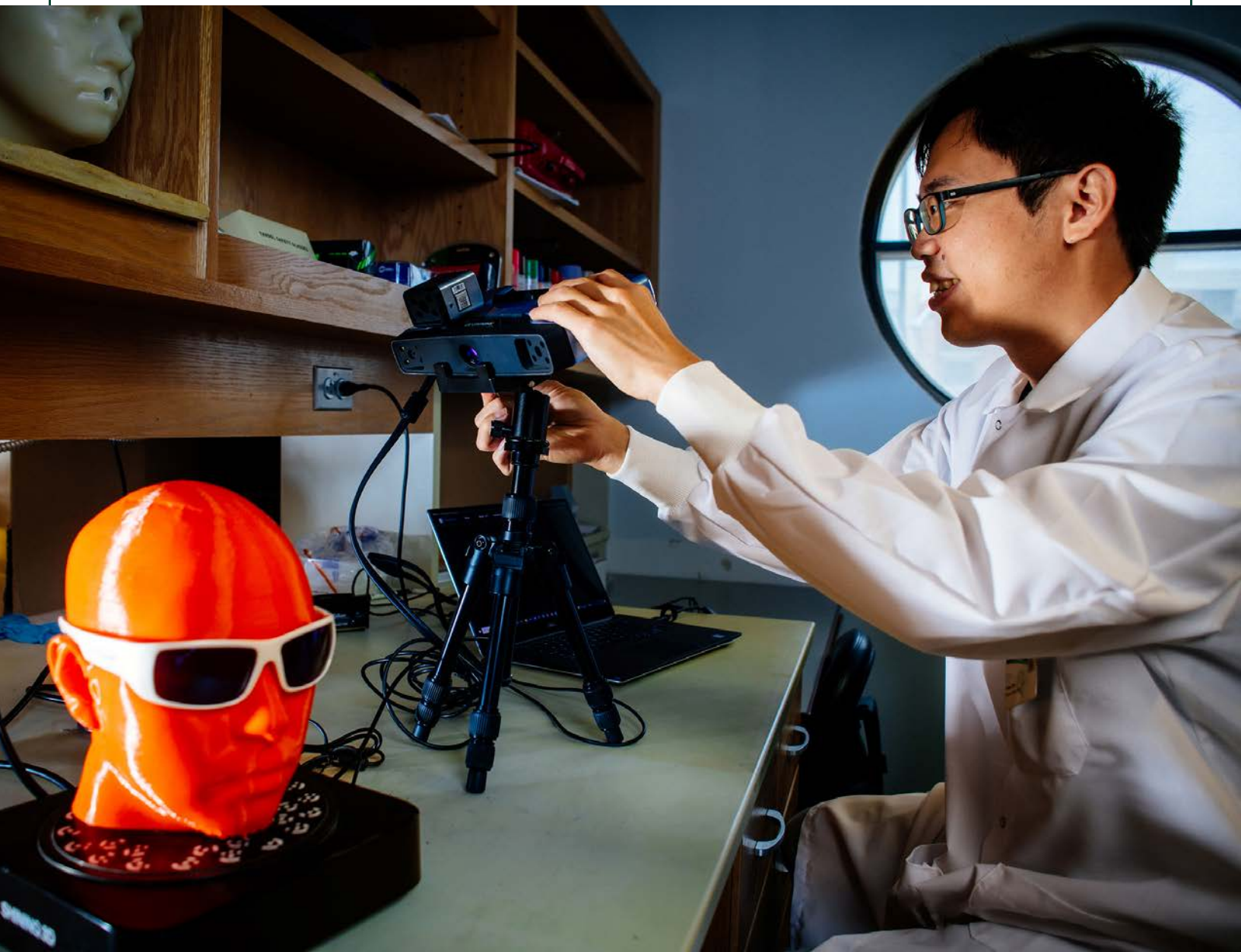
Ability to unite constituencies and bridge differences among stakeholders with divergent or competing interests. A commitment to shared governance and inclusive, transparent decision-making. A servant-leadership orientation grounded in listening, empathy, emotional intelligence, and respect for people at all levels of the organization.

Exceptional communication and relationship management skills

Capacity to build and maintain effective relationships within the school, across the university, and with community and external partners, donors, policymakers, and others. Strong communication skills coupled with a visible, approachable leadership style that fosters transparency, trust, and open dialogue.

Integrity and character

Honesty, humility, and a willingness to lead by example. A commitment to equity, fairness, and recognition of the contributions of all community members.



PROCEDURE FOR CANDIDACY

A search committee led by **Dr. Maria Shirey**, dean of the School of Nursing, and comprising representatives from across the university has been convened to conduct the search and to recommend finalists to **Provost Janet Woodruff-Borden**.

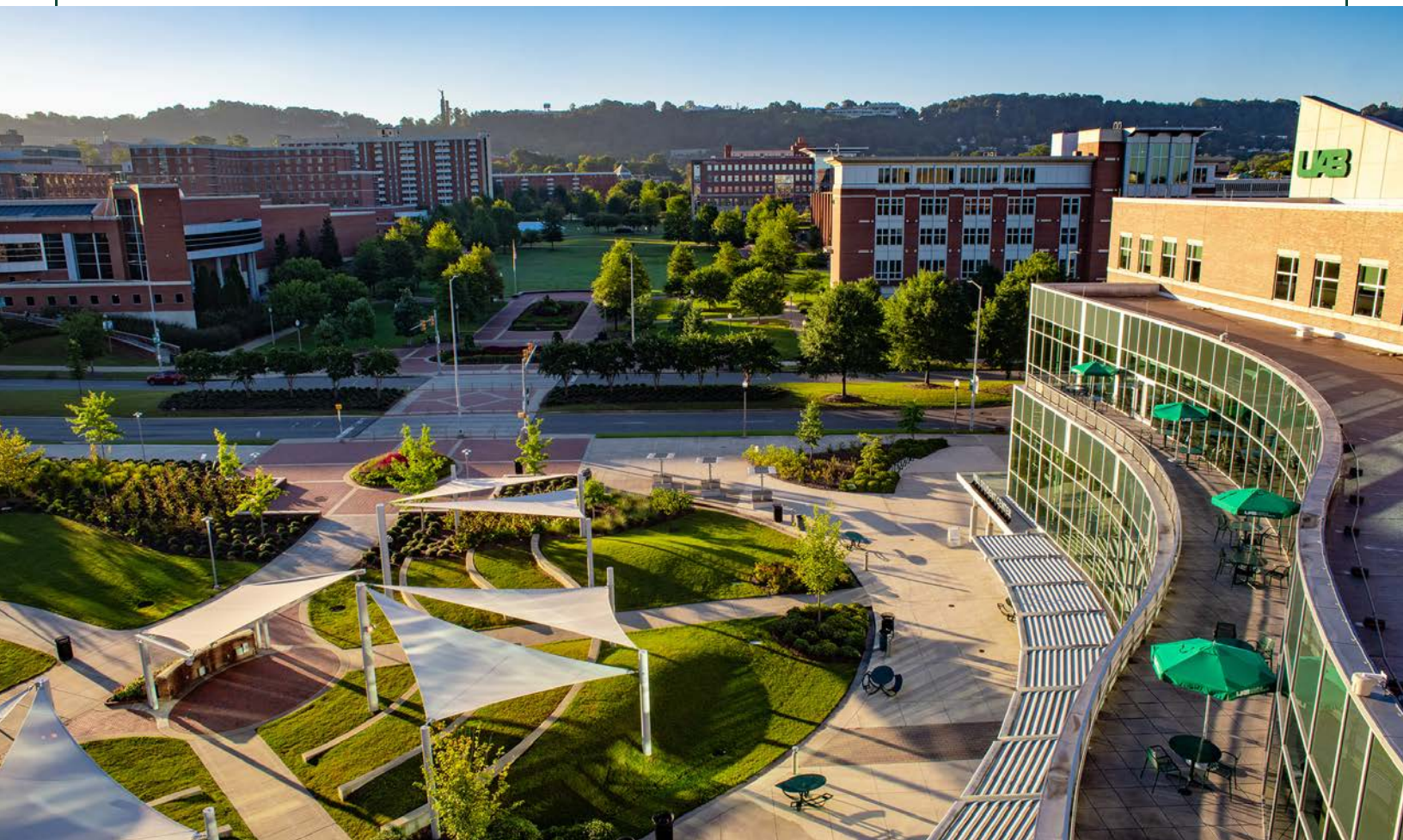
All applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited. **WittKieffer** is assisting the University of Alabama at Birmingham in this search.

For fullest consideration, candidates should submit a CV and cover letter by October 15, 2026, using WittKieffer's **candidate portal**.

References will be requested of finalists and will only be contacted with candidates' permission.

Confidential nominations and inquiries can be directed to Philip Tang and Sarah Seavey at **UAB-SoPHDean@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 SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Founded in 1978 as Alabama's first school of public health, the UAB School of Public Health has spent nearly five decades preparing the next generation of public health leaders, scientists, and practitioners, awarding more than 7,600 undergraduate and graduate degrees along the way. As the only CEPH-accredited school of public health in Alabama, the school advances its mission to improve the health and well-being of populations locally and globally through excellence in education, research, and service, preparing graduates dedicated to assuring the conditions in which people can be healthy.

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, environmental injustice, structural racism, and the 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.

The school enrolls approximately 1,100 students across five departments, supported by 90 full-time faculty and 218 staff. Its FY 26 operating budget was \$74 million. *U.S. News & World Report* ranks UAB No. 14 among schools of public health across the nation and No. 7 among those at public universities.

In FY 2025, the School of Public Health secured more than \$47.7 million in extramural funding, including more than \$22.5 million in awards from the NIH. Faculty submitted 176 grant applications, received 187 grant awards, and led or contributed to more than 460 peer-reviewed publications. Among UAB's 12 schools, the School of Public Health ranks second only to the School of Medicine in sponsored research. UAB ranks No. 39 for NIH funding among all schools of public health and No. 28 among those at public institutions.



*The UAB School of Public Health
works to improve health outcomes
and reduce disparities across
Alabama and around the world.*





Leadership and Governance

The dean of the School of Public Health 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 Academics and Public Health Practice
- Associate Dean for Access and Engagement
- Associate Dean for Research
- Executive Director of Administrative Operations
- Director of Development
- Executive Assistant

Directors of the following centers and units have a dual reporting line to the dean:

- **Center for the Study of Community Health**
- **Center for the Study of Sexual and Gender Health**
- **DATA coordinating and Collaborative Research Unit (DATA CRU)**
- **Lister Hill Center for Health Policy**
- **Sparkman Center for Global Health**

In addition to the Office of the Dean, the School of Public Health comprises the following offices:

- **Student and Academic Services**
- **Research**
- **Public Health Practice**
- **Access and Engagement**
- **Finance and Administration**
- **Alumni and Development**

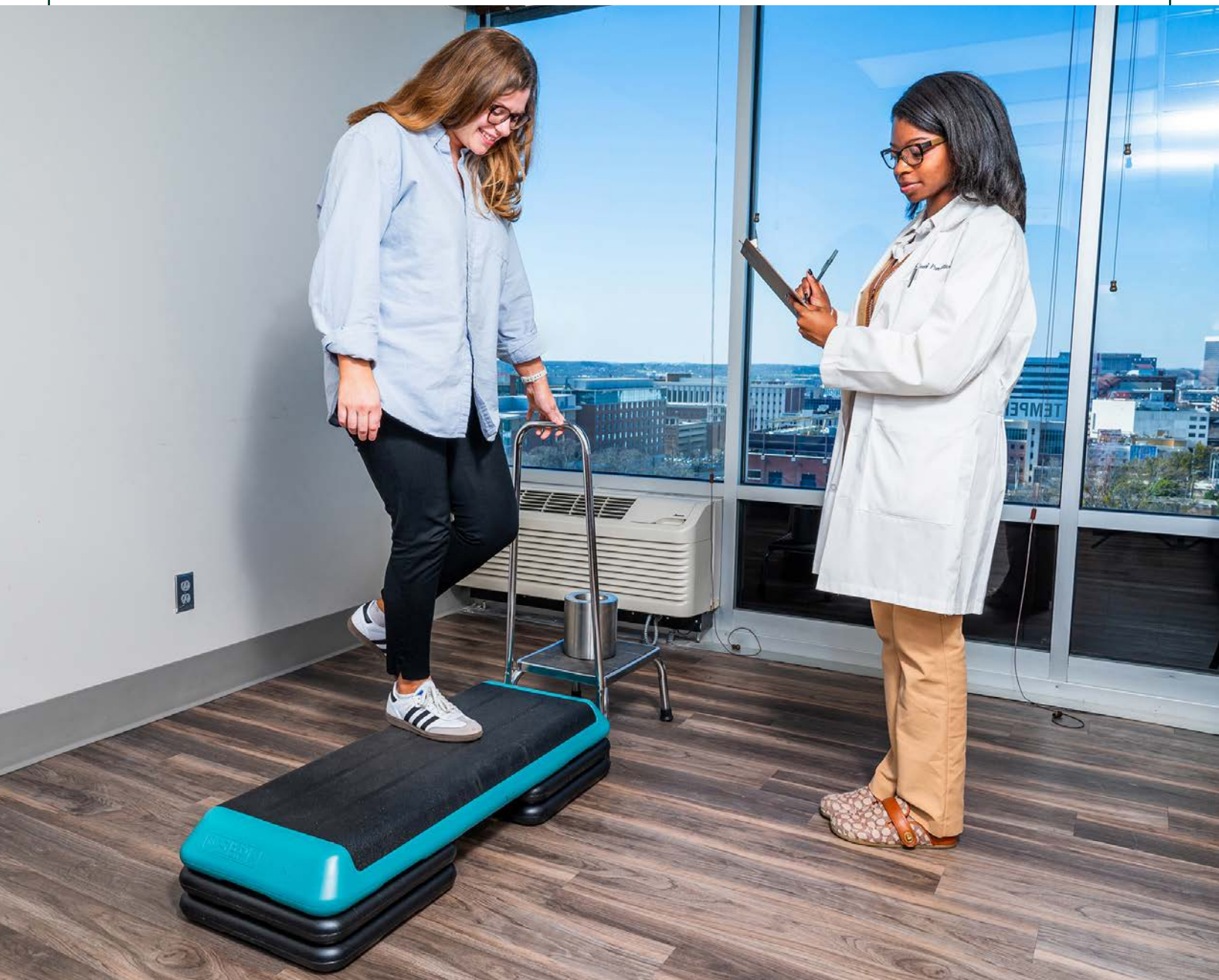
An **Executive Committee** advises the dean on issues and policies related to administration, budgeting and resource allocation, compensation, evaluation policies, planning and procedures. It assesses the extent to which the School of Public Health is achieving its mission and goals while serving as an oversight body for ongoing self-evaluation and accreditation. The Executive Committee comprises the associate and assistant deans, department chairs, center directors, chair of the Faculty Assembly, and a Staff Council representative.

The **Faculty Assembly** serves as a bridge between the school's faculty and administration, enabling faculty to provide input and feedback on policies, plans, and other school matters. The Faculty Assembly consists of all faculty members who have primary appointments in the School of Public Health. It is led by a chair elected from the school's primary full-time faculty for a three-year term. Matters of education policy and appointment, promotion and tenure are handled by the Education Policy Committee and Faculty Affairs Committee, respectively.



The **Staff Council**, comprising representative staff members from across the school's academic, support, and administrative units, supports UAB and the School of Public Health's mission, vision, and goals by promoting a positive, collaborative work environment.

The **Alumni Advisory Board** creates and sustains strong, robust alumni engagement to support the school's ongoing success in preparing the next generation of public health leaders, scholars, and practitioners.



Strategic Plan

A road map for the School of Public Health 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:

Education

Attract and support outstanding students who will learn, grow, excel, and contribute to the mission of the school.

Research

Create and disseminate new and impactful knowledge to improve the public's health through a growing and diverse research portfolio.

Practice

Cultivate and strengthen mutually beneficial opportunities to engage public health practice.

Organizational health

Develop and sustain initiatives to make the school a welcoming place.

External relations and collaboration

Build and sustain mutually beneficial relationships beyond the school.



Departments

The UAB School of Public Health comprises five academic departments:

- **Biostatistics**
- **Environmental Health Sciences**
- **Epidemiology**
- **Health Behavior**
- **Health Policy and Organization**

Academic Programs

The school offers B.S., M.A., MPH, M.S., MSPH, DrPH, and Ph.D. programs as well as several graduate certificates and coordinated degrees in collaboration with other UAB schools and universities. Many programs are offered in flexible and online formats to support working professionals and expand access to public health education. Students benefit from applied learning experiences through partnerships with governmental agencies, healthcare systems, nonprofit organizations, industry, and global health organizations.

Undergraduate Programs

- Bachelor of Science (B.S.)
- Public Health Minor

Graduate Degrees

- Master of Public Health (MPH)
- Master of Science (M.S.)
- Master of Science in Public Health (MSPH)
- Doctor of Public Health (DrPH)
- Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Graduate Certificates

- Climate and Health
- Applied Biostatistics and Epidemiology
- Disability Health Studies
- Global Health Studies
- LGBTQ Health and Wellbeing
- Public Health

Online Programs

- Bachelor of Science (B.S.)
- MSPH – Outcomes Research
- MS – Global Health
- MPH – Environmental Health
- MPH – Epidemiology

- MPH – Health Behavior
- MPH – Health Policy and Organization
- MPH – Industrial Hygiene
- MPH – Maternal and Child Health Policy and Leadership
- MPH – Population Health

MPH/MSPH Coordinated Degree Programs

- MPH/MD
- MSPH/MD
- MPH/DVM
- MPH/JD
- MPH/MBA
- MPH/MSHA (Health Administration)
- MPH/MSW
- MPH/OD (Optometry)
- MPH/PharmD
- MPH/MSPAS
- MPH/MPA
- MBA/MPH
- MPH/PA
- MPH/DPT



*Founded in 1978, UAB remains
the only CEPH-accredited
school of public health
in Alabama.*

Research

Faculty investigators propel a robust and diverse portfolio of research in the School of Public Health. The school secured more than \$47.7 million in extramural research funding in FY2025, including more than \$22.5 million in awards from the NIH.

Among its recent accomplishments, in April 2026, the School of Public Health received federal funding to establish a **Center of Excellence in Maternal and Child Health** — one of only 13 federally funded Maternal and Child Health Centers of Excellence in the nation.

During the pandemic, the school received the two largest grants and contracts in its history, including a \$142 million grant for K-12 COVID-19 screening and testing (a pass-through from the CDC to the Alabama Department of Public Health), and a \$62 million CDC grant to establish the Alabama Regional Center for Infection Prevention and Control.

The School of Public Health leads several major research projects. The school's **DATA coordinating and Collaborative Research Unit** (DATA CRU) specializes in the design, data management, and statistical analysis of such studies and interdisciplinary clinical trials, helping to secure more than \$132 million in research funding since 2009. DATA CRU manages dozens of active protocols, ranging from single-site projects to multi-site international longitudinal studies and randomized trials.

In November 2025, *The New England Journal of Medicine* published a **School of Public Health-led study** showing that stenting with medication cuts stroke risk in half for high-risk patients. Led by Public Health faculty, DATA CRU played a key role in the **CREST-2** (Carotid Revascularization and Medical Management for Asymptomatic Carotid Stenosis) trial, the largest study to date comparing current treatment approaches for carotid artery narrowing.

(continued)



The **REGARDS** (Reasons for Geographical and Racial Differences in Stroke) study — a cornerstone in cardiovascular and dementia research for more than two decades — has received more than \$100 million in funding from the National Institutes of Health's National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke since 2003. Through the groundbreaking study, researchers seek to understand why Southern Americans and Black Americans have higher rates of stroke and related brain health issues.

Other large-cohort studies include **CARDIA**, a pioneering longitudinal study providing four decades of insight into the evolution of cardiovascular health; **RURAL**, which aims to address critical gaps in our knowledge of heart and lung disorders in rural counties in the southeastern United States; and **MOST**, a multicenter study launched in 2001 by the National Institute on Aging to improve understanding of knee osteoarthritis.

University-Affiliated Centers

Center for the Study of Community Health (CSCH)

Founded in 1993, the **CSCH** has been continuously funded by the CDC as a Prevention Research Center for more than 30 years. The center focuses on reducing health risks in communities throughout Alabama and plays a leading role in community-engaged research and action across the state and Southern region. CSCH brings together Center Scholars from across UAB schools, including clinicians, social and behavioral researchers, health-related professionals, and community leaders who collaborate to improve the lives of Alabamians and others around the world.

Deep South Center for Occupational Health and Safety

The **Deep South Center** is the only National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health Education and Research Center in the Alabama region and a critical resource to business, labor, and industry in preventing work-related injury and illness. The center provides strong academic programs of study for its students, including interdisciplinary and field work experiences. Through the center, information is shared on emerging occupational health and safety issues to other educational institutions, public agencies, businesses, workers, minorities, youths, and non-profits organizations.

Lister Hill Center for Health Policy

The **Lister Hill Center for Health Policy** connects and supports those seeking to improve health outcomes through policy. The center enhances opportunities for policy collaboration by educating faculty and students, creating opportunities for disseminating information through newsletters and policy briefs, funding academic research that will make an impact on health policy, providing reputable data sources for academic research, and empowering students and community leaders to effect policy change.

(continued)

Sparkman Center for Global Health

Established by Congress in 1979, the UAB **Sparkman Center for Global Health** champions advancements in public health education, training, research, and practice with a focus on implementing effective health solutions in resource-constrained environments across the globe. The center has long confronted infectious and vector-borne diseases, noncommunicable diseases, maternal and child health, and issues with universal health coverage. Today, the center faces new concerns in reproductive health, climate change, and humanitarian health, as well as emerging threats related to AI and the commercialization of global health.

Service Centers and Initiatives

- Applied Evaluation & Assessment Collaborative
- Climate and Health Initiative
- DATA coordinating and Collaborative Research Unit
- George M. O'Brien Kidney Resource Alliance
- Scoring and Classifying Outcomes for Research in Exercise and Sleep
- Survey Research Unit



Community Engagement and Public Health Practice

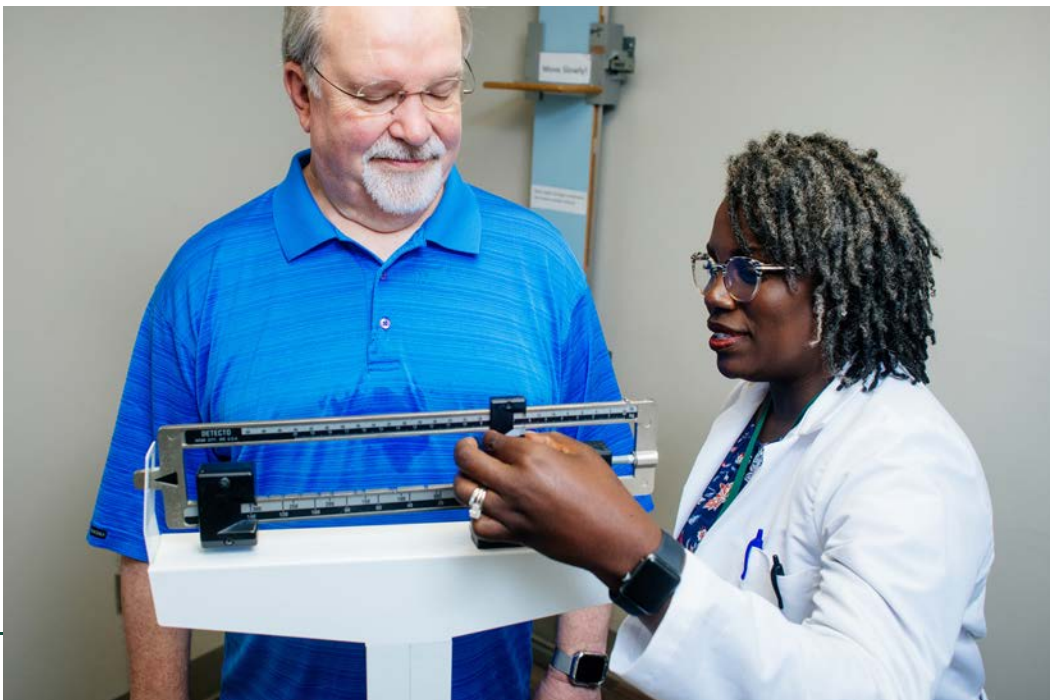
The School of Public Health maintains longstanding statewide public health partnerships with the Jefferson County Department of Health, Mobile County Department of Health, Alabama Department of Public Health, Alabama Department of Emergency Management, Children's Hospital of Alabama, and Cooper Green Mercy Health. These collaborations support the school's commitment to advancing community health through education, service, research, and practice.

Through the **Office of Public Health Practice (OPHP)**, the school promotes and enhances engagement between the practice community and Public Health faculty, staff, students, and alumni. The school supports academic-practice linkages through efforts such as the **Practitioner Affiliates program** and a wide range of practice-based research partnerships that connect faculty expertise with public health agencies and community organizations. Programs and communication channels such as the **OPHP seminar** and **podcast series** raise awareness of public health issues across local and regional communities.

The school also advances inclusive community engagement through the **Office of Access and Engagement**, which fosters partnerships, outreach initiatives, and programs that support health equity and broaden pathways into public health education and careers. In addition, School faculty and students contribute to statewide initiatives through **Live HealthSmart Alabama** collaborations, working alongside community partners to address social determinants of health and improve health outcomes across Alabama.

A strong culture of community-engaged research connects faculty scholarship with community priorities, ensuring that research addresses real-world public health challenges while strengthening relationships with local, state, and regional partners. These efforts create opportunities for collaborative problem-solving, knowledge exchange, and sustainable community impact.

(continued)



Internships, practicums, student service-learning experiences, education abroad programs, and volunteer opportunities connect students to applied practice settings and community partners. BS and MPH students have additional opportunities through capstone experiences that integrate classroom learning with public health practice.

OPHP promotes, coordinates, and tracks training and educational opportunities geared to the public health workforce. It strives to connect practice and research in innovative ways through seminars, publications, and partnerships with public health professional organizations.

The office serves as a liaison to the **UAB Career Center** and coordinates student-employer networking and engagement opportunities. OPHP also coordinates school-wide community service projects and activities, serves as the hub of the **Public Health Student Association**, and represents the School of Public Health across various local, regional, and national venues.



Student Life

The School of Public Health's approximately 1,100 students are members of a broader community of more than 22,000 undergraduate and graduate students across UAB and nearly 300 student organizations. All Public Health students are represented through the Public Health Student Association (PHSA), which provides numerous opportunities to participate in service to the school, community, and profession. School committees routinely include student members to ensure their perspectives are represented in policies and planning.

In addition to the PHSA, Public Health students can participate in organizations such as the Global Health Interest Group, Maternal and Child Health Student Association, UAB Mental Health Ambassadors, Biostatistics Student Organization, and UAB EcoWellness Alliance. These groups foster community and help students build connections, develop leadership skills, and stay engaged throughout their academic careers.



Select Student Highlights

- Undergraduate student spotlight: Josie McGuire
- Doctoral student spotlight: Olivia Blanton, MPH
- International student builds community through creativity and compassion
- 30 Years later, Blazer mom returns to pursue her MPH
- Mentorship and research shape a path in Environmental Health Sciences
- Public Health students named Goldwater Scholars
- Public Health alumna found her people and purpose at UAB
- Public Health student tackles food insecurity with Live HealthSmart Alabama
- Public Health students named 2026–2027 Schweitzer Fellows

BEST
GRAD SCHOOLS

& WORLD REPORT
U.S. News

PUBLIC HEALTH
2026



HEALTH ECOSYSTEM AT UAB

The School of Public Health is 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.

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.

(continued)

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.





ABOUT UAB

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 more than 2,500 new Blazers coming to campus. This marks a 25% increase in freshman enrollment over the previous fall. The class is academically engaged, with an average GPA of 3.8 and an 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 (240+), and a revitalized athletic student organization are also helping drive this momentum.

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.

UAB climbed four spots to No. 132 in *U.S. News & World Report's* 2026 Best Colleges list, placing it in the top third of national universities. *U.S. News* ranks 17 UAB graduate programs among the top 20 in the nation. The university continues its upward trajectory in faculty research performance, climbing to No. 24 in the national Bibliometric ranking, marking a 12-spot rise in the past two years.

UAB is in the most successful era of research funding in the university's history. Research expenditures have grown by 82% over the past decade to \$866 million.

UAB's world-class academic medical center and health system serve approximately two million patients annually and are home to the **fifth-largest hospital in the U.S.**, the only National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center within a four-state region, and Alabama's only Level 1 Adult Trauma Center. The latter is currently undergoing a \$73 million expansion, supported in part by \$50 million in state funding, to meet a 20% volume increase in the past five years.

With more than 35,000 employees, UAB is Alabama's largest single employer and has an annual economic impact of more than \$12.1 billion statewide.



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 13 academic units: the Heersink School of Medicine, School of Health Professions, School of Education and Human Sciences, School of Engineering, School of Dentistry, School of Nursing, School of Optometry, School of Public Health, College of Arts and Sciences, Honors College, Graduate School, and Libraries. Other units include Education Abroad, Athletics, The Institute for Human Rights, National Alumni Society, Sparkman Center for Global Health, Visual and Performing Arts, Vulcan Materials Academic Success Center, and WBHM.

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. UAB was the first academic partner to support the Birmingham Promise scholarship in providing Birmingham City Schools graduates an opportunity to attend the university with a tuition scholarship match.





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 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 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.

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, with both passenger traffic and freight continuing to show growth. 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.





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.

Birmingham is also a renowned culinary destination, with one of our signature restaurants recently winning two James Beard Foundation awards and 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. Pepper Place, a historic, redeveloped warehouse district east of downtown, hosts an award-winning farmers market weekly. The market is one of Alabama's largest producer-only markets, featuring local farmers, artisans, live music, and chef demonstrations.

A host of attractions are only a short walk from UAB's campus, such as the Birmingham Civil Rights District National Monument, which comprises the 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, 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.



