



OFFICE OF THE PROVOST
2020 ANNUAL REPORT



THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM



LEARNING AMIDST CHALLENGES

Education is the first pillar of forging the Future, UAB's strategic plan for growth, which challenges us to meet the evolving needs of our students, faculty, staff and patients. This past year, to say we were challenged is an understatement. Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic to protect health and safety while also continuing to deliver education and service forced us to radically rethink our operations.

I never expected the pandemic to last beyond a month, and there was so much we would face that I just could not predict. In looking back now, it is clear that UAB faculty, staff and students are a part of reshaping higher education in its totality.

Our faculty have ensured students are engaged and are keeping pace with their learning. Not only did our course offerings and research opportunities continue to adapt to the changing nature of the pandemic, our teams provided exceptional support to students dealing with challenges related to isolation. Our team mobilized to help UAB's more than 1,000 international students.

As we reviewed the Education Pillar for this annual report, I was just in awe of the creativity and commitment our faculty and staff have demonstrated throughout this experience. From proctoring tests remotely and setting up effective online tutoring sessions to arranging cultural learning opportunities with international partners in the absences of travel, our faculty and staff have ensured students are engaged and are keeping on pace with their learning.

While I am excited to share our recent successes and bring attention to the innovative programs and services within the Office of the Provost that were instrumental to these over the last year, I also know we have more challenges to face in this pandemic.

While I don't know what this next year will bring, with your help, we will prepare new generations of leaders and create a promising future for Alabama, the nation, and the world. I look forward to all that we will continue to accomplish together.

Sincerely,

PAM BENOIT, PH.D.

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND PROVOST



MISSION STATEMENT

Provide 21st-century, world-class, socially responsible education that prepares diverse students to lead, teach, provide professional services and become prominent scholars and societal leaders of the future.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- 1

Strengthen and expand innovative academic programs to enhance UAB's national and global reputation.
- 2

Ensure student success through holistic development that addresses diverse needs.
- 3

Create a signature core curriculum focused on modeling and developing socially conscious global citizens and leaders.
- 4

Engage students, faculty, staff, and community members in experiential learning.
- 5

Foster access, inclusive excellence, and equity in teaching, learning, and mentorship development programs.

WHO MEASURES OUR SUCCESS: Our Institutional Effectiveness and Analysis (IEA) office plays a key role in helping administration, faculty and staff monitor progress toward our shared objectives. Detailed data collected and published by IEA—including some numbers in this report—supports strategic decision making. IEA also is developing customized dashboards for use by the UAB community.





A NEW RECORD FOR ENROLLMENT

Student enrollment reached new heights for the fourth consecutive year, and it wasn't the only new benchmark set in 2020. The Enrollment Management and Retention office is responsible for recruiting a diverse student body and providing them with tools to help them succeed throughout their years at UAB. This coming year, institutions of higher education anticipate declines in enrollment and our team will work on new strategies to face these challenges and continue to recruit new Blazers.



STUDENT POPULATION GROWTH

22,080	22,563
students	students
FALL 2019	FALL 2020

FRESHMEN CLASS GROWTH

2,154	2,413*
FALL 2020	FALL 2021

Most students ever
2019-2020



5,911
DEGREES
EARNED

1

Strengthen and expand innovative academic programs to enhance UAB's national and global reputation.

MEAN ACT SCORE

▶ 25.9

MEAN HIGH SCHOOL GPA

▶ 3.83

**preliminary*

SUPPORTING EDUCATION GOALS WITH BLAZER BEGINNINGS

The pandemic arrived just as UAB Blazer Beginnings rebranded and enhanced its offerings. Rather than wait on a return to in-person events, the team rolled out services in new formats. They provided virtual opportunities for tours, orientations, new student meet ups and introductions to support services.



“

Helpful orientation experiences enable our new students to fully flourish as they move from prospective student to enrolled student to successful alumni. We incorporate our special brand of UAB community-building and an affinity for the learning environment of a vibrant city.”

—DEEDEE BARNES BRUNS,
Executive director of
UAB's Community
Recruitment Partnerships





GLOBAL EDUCATION EXPANDS HORIZONS

The Office of Global Engagement introduces students, faculty and staff to a world of knowledge through initiatives such as Education Abroad, Sponsored International Programs and International Student and Scholar Services. Since 2016, INTO UAB has been helping to increase our global diversity and provide opportunities for faculty to expand their international teaching, research and service activities.

1,084
STUDENTS
FROM 92
COUNTRIES

972
ENROLLED IN
DEGREE-SEEKING
CURRICULUM

146
ENROLLED
IN ACADEMIC
ENGLISH AND
UNDERGRADUATE
AND GRADUATE
PATHWAY
PROGRAMS



282
international exchange visitors
and medical graduates

TOP 10 MAJORS

Computer Science
Public Health
Data Science
Business Administration
Electrical & Computer Engineering
Civil Engineering
Biology
Mechanical Engineering
Biomedical Engineering
Psychology



I'm working in the engineering department of Ford Motor Company. The company was seeking skills that I gained as a student at UAB. The School of Engineering graduate assistantship I served in after I completed my INTO pathway also helped me to get this new position."

—SOURABH SHARMA,
who came to UAB from India and
earned a master's degree in electrical
and computer engineering in 2018

EDUCATION ABROAD

With international travel on pause, Education Abroad found new ways to develop cultural connections for students and faculty. The team developed an interactive app to help students prepare for future travel, participate in remote international internships, locate financial aid resources, link to service learning opportunities and engage with the Education Abroad staff. Education Abroad also worked with faculty to develop virtual international internships to keep the university connected to cultural experiences.

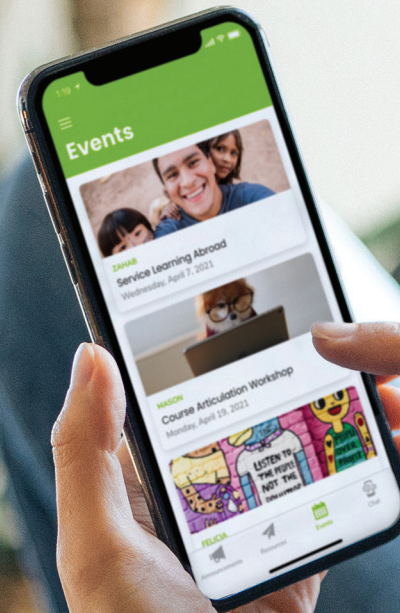


As part of the internship Human Rights with Clinica Verde in Nicaragua, students interact virtually with staff at Clinica Verde and helped develop community-driven projects and support.



Our temporary virtual environment led us to developing this tool. As we resume more in-person activities, this app will be here to stay; it really helped streamline access to services and provides another platform in which our students can link to new experiences."

—ASHLEY NEYER,
Director of UAB Education Abroad





MORE SUPPORT FOR FACULTY

Each year, the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) offers faculty new development programming and workshops. The goals of these initiatives are to promote innovative instructional practices; to align teaching, learning, and mentorship development programs; and to foster a culture of learning that supports and encourages academic, professional and personal development. Over the last year, the CTL has offered even more courses and delivered them virtually along with tailoring programs to specifically prepare faculty for hybrid teaching. The CTL also worked with the Employee Assistance and Counseling Center to provide seminars focused on faculty mental health and wellbeing and also worked to help UAB's more than 1,000 international students address complicated challenges and questions brought on by the pandemic.

UAB's eLearning and Professional Studies team members provided faculty with tools and advice in getting courses delivered remotely and ensured along with Information Technology that each classroom was equipped with the technology needed for hybrid learning. The team developed on-site faculty instruction books and met one-on-one and in groups to share best practices in course delivery and to assist instructors with Canvas and other teaching resources.

“

This past year was my first year at UAB, my first year as an assistant professor, and my first year teaching online. The classes offered by the CTL helped me navigate all of these 'firsts'. They enabled me to get a sense of the culture at UAB and feel more connected to the university. They helped me quickly adapt to unfamiliar instructional technology so that I could focus on the content of my instruction rather than the format.”

—CLAIRE GREENSTEIN, PH.D.,
Assistant Professor,
Department of Political Science
and Public Administration

2

Ensure
student
success
through
holistic
development
that
addresses
diverse
needs.

LEARNING TOGETHER

"Learning in a Team Environment" was the theme for Year Four of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), a five-year initiative to strengthen student learning. Faculty responded eagerly by engaging students in innovative new ways. For example, assistant professors Jenna LaChenaye, Ph.D., and Claire Mowling, Ed.D., of the School of Education explored the power of gamification to improve student engagement in online courses about research methods. Such efforts will make a difference not only as students pursue their careers, but also when the Commission on Colleges within the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools evaluates our QEP results at the end of five years.

42 CTL-QEP
TEACHING
INITIATIVE
AWARDS

 **\$185,300**
in support of new teaching initiatives

QEP UNIT-
BASED
PROJECT
AWARDS

 **14**

\$177,684 
in funding for developing
new approaches to improving
instruction and learning

HELPING STUDENTS FIND THEIR VOICE

The University Writing Center is a free, important resource for UAB students. Its one-on-one tutoring sessions help both on-campus and online students grow their critical thinking and communication skills at any stage of any writing process. The Writing Center team provided all virtual sessions starting in spring 2020 and developed writing projects to help students, faculty and staff connect to each other's pandemic experiences over social media.

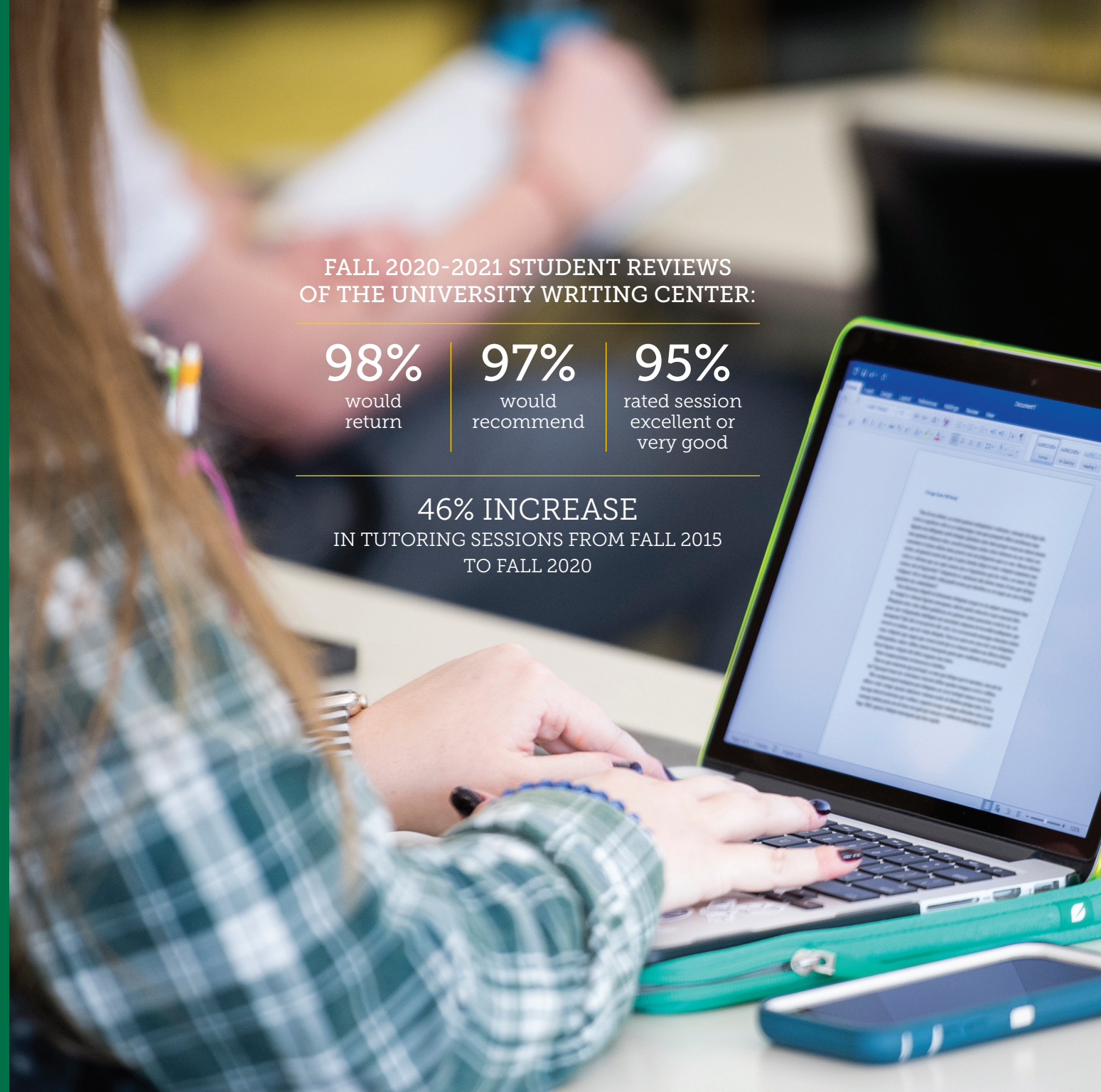
FALL 2020-2021 STUDENT REVIEWS OF THE UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER:

98%
would
return

97%
would
recommend

95%
rated session
excellent or
very good

46% INCREASE
IN TUTORING SESSIONS FROM FALL 2015
TO FALL 2020



Annisha Borah in the School of Engineering and Honors College was one of eight UAB students selected for the Hoover Fellow initiative, a partnership with Stanford University enabling students to be a part of advancing education, economic development, technology, business and innovation in the state.

FELLOWSHIPS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

UAB's Office of National and International Fellowships and Scholarships helps students compete for competitive awards that support education abroad, undergraduate research, service initiatives and graduate school. With travel opportunities postponed and conferences canceled, these opportunities were harder to find, but the team worked closely with students over the last year and identified fellowships that match students' interests.

ACADEMIC SCHOLARS



2

2021 Goldwater
Scholars

10

BENJAMIN A. GILMAN
INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP
RECIPIENTS

3

FULBRIGHT
U.S. STUDENT PROGRAM AWARD
RECIPIENTS



8

Hoover Fellows

FIRST-EVER ►► UAB BROOK OWENS FELLOWSHIP AND
SCHWARTZMAN SCHOLAR RECIPIENT

3

Create a signature core curriculum focused on modeling and developing socially conscious global citizens and leaders.

DEFINING AN ESSENTIAL EDUCATION

Over the last three years led by UAB faculty Alison Chapman, Ph.D. and Suzanne Judd, Ph.D., the Signature Core Curriculum committee worked across campus and within the community to develop the new curriculum. In May 2020, the new Blazer Core was presented to the UAB Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee for final review and endorsement and was then presented to the full Faculty Senate and Board of Trustees.

The curriculum was developed around a set of guiding principles to engage students on campus and utilize Birmingham as an extension of the classroom:

- ▶ Develop critical, analytical thinking and data-driven decision-making in ways that engage students in the learning process
- ▶ Teach students the skills, knowledge and habits of mind they need to solve real-world problems
- ▶ Teach excellent communication skills
- ▶ Enable students to freely exchange and debate new ideas, question biases and assumptions and test and redefine their personal values

During the next year, as the curricular structure is implemented, courses will be developed and refined to reflect the new core requirements and updates will be entered into in the university course catalogue. Associate Professor of English and Director of Freshman Composition Chris Minnix, Ph.D., was hired as the new director of UAB's Signature Core Curriculum and he plans to utilize Birmingham as a text for teachers to use and students to explore, whether through case studies or field research, in order to learn about the city as both a local and globalizing space.

The 25 top faculty who teach core curriculum courses were named Signature Core Faculty Fellows by the Center for Teaching and Learning. With support from a Strategic Investment Fund grant, they will collaborate on ways to increase and measure teaching effectiveness and

STUDENT SUCCESS.



“

We have been so pleased by the initiative of both students and faculty to continue to utilize the high-impact practices of service learning and undergraduate research during the pandemic.

We know that they support student outcomes and foster and support relationships with our community.”

—AMY HUTSON CHATHAM,
Director, Service Learning and
Undergraduate Research

CLASSROOM TO COMMUNITY

The Office of Service Learning and Undergraduate Research enables faculty and students to apply course content and research to address pressing issues with community partners. These efforts bridge the education, research and innovation, and community engagement pillars of the Forging the Future strategic plan. In the pandemic, the Undergraduate Research Expos were moved online and delivered through Canvas but still fully engaging students, faculty and staff in undergraduate research and presentations. Service Learning opportunities continued and students were able to participate in helping the Birmingham community respond to COVID-19.

Notable is how students get to combine their research and service. College of Arts and Sciences biology undergraduate student Ryleigh Fleming did just that and became one of 60 college students from across the country selected to participate in the Council on Undergraduate Research's Posters on the Hill. Posters on the Hill amplifies voices of undergraduate researchers and their mentors to legislators on Capitol Hill—demonstrating the importance of undergraduate research at the federal level. Fleming's poster chosen for this event is titled, “Breaking the Barriers of Traditional Service Learning in a Pandemic with E-Service-learning: Impacts of a COVID-19 Module in a Non-Majors Biology Course.”

4

Engage
students,
faculty,
staff, and
community
members in
experiential
learning.

REAL-WORLD LEARNING

Students across campus, particularly those in UAB's health professional schools, work in collaborative teams that are models of clinical practice through the Center for Interprofessional Education and Simulation (CIPES). CIPES's simulation programs have been especially important during the pandemic.

Students and health professionals were able to develop new technical and patient-interaction skills using telehealth technology. CIPES's Office of Standardized Patient Education worked with physical therapy students to train them to interact with patients in a virtual environment. OSPE also trained 184 first-year medical students to assess patients, worked with the School of Health Professions genetic counseling program and assisted with staff training at Children's of Alabama.

CIPES's Office of Interprofessional Simulation for Innovative Clinical Practice (OIPS) was integral in helping get Alabamians vaccinated. The team translated traffic flow and patient intake into the real world for additional testing, then role-played vaccine scenarios, tested the process, and provided the medical team with data.



4,559

individual learners in the
standardized patient center
in FY 2020

ARTS-FOCUSED

UAB's Abroms-Engel Institute for the Visual Arts, Alys Stephens Center, ArtPlay Community Art Education and Institute for Arts in Medicine, along with the departments of Art and Art History, Theatre and Music, provided our community with challenging and thoughtful art experiences during the course of the pandemic. In fact, the arts have become even more important to our campus and community.

Together, these programs were able to virtually engage audiences via "coloring nights" with regional artists, concerts, children's art activities and camps, online tours of AEIVA exhibits, and more events that offered a creative break from pandemic stress. Rather than pausing these events, UAB made them more accessible.





MCNAIR SCHOLARS:
From left to right: Alivia Moore,
Claudia Datnow, Micah Williams,
Veronica Mixon

ENHANCING DIVERSITY IN DOCTORAL EDUCATION

Our TRIO Academic Success Services provides academic and personal support to help students succeed, and the Ronald McNair Scholars Program helps prepare students from underrepresented segments of society to compete for Ph.D. degrees. Together, these initiatives have inspired many success stories.

“

The McNair Scholars Program set the tone for me, because it exposed me to a higher [academic] level and helped me develop as a researcher. It was a life-changing experience for me.”

—ALIVIA MOORE, pictured at far left. Alivia graduated in Communication Studies in 2020 and received a full scholarship from Cornell University for a Ph.D. program in communications.

5

Foster access,
inclusive
excellence,
and equity
in teaching,
learning, and
mentorship
development
programs.



Despite our many challenges over the past year—
and knowing we are sure to face obstacles in the days ahead—
we can forge the future of education at UAB with
confidence and creativity because our academic community
is resilient and resourceful."

—PAM BENOIT, PH.D.

Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost



THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM