



**UAB**  
Student Affairs

**2024-25 STUDENT IMPACT REPORT**



# MESSAGE FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

John R. Jones III, Ph.D  
Vice President for Student Affairs



Dear Blazers,  
UAB welcomed 20,905 students this year. And while that number is impressive, it's what lies beneath that truly matters. Each of those students arrived with a vision for their future: to heal, to build, to teach, to lead, to discover. Some brought confidence to UAB, others a quiet hope. They all brought dreams.

Dreams need more than ambition though. They need support, opportunity, connection, and care. That's where the Division of Student Affairs comes in, building spaces and communities where **What If?** becomes **What's Next?**

The Division of Student Affairs starts every year with a vision to support every Blazer's future. This year, our team collaborated to:

- **Provide over 30,000 student health and counseling appointments**
- **Certify \$14.5 million in education benefits for student veterans**
- **Facilitate 12,000 student service hours**
- **Serve over 275,000 meals to the UAB community**
- **Coordinate over 450 student organizations**
- **Support 580 student employees and staff within Student Affairs offices**

But numbers only tell a small part of the story.

They don't tell you about Yonica, a first-

generation student whose service-learning experience inspired her to change majors. Or Demarcus, a student veteran who persevered through incredible health and personal challenges. Or Elise, who transferred to UAB and found a community where she could grow into a campus leader.

The numbers matter, but our work is defined by people, and we are honored to support their stories in all that we do. The students and Student Affairs staff highlighted in the following pages are why tomorrow looks brighter than we dared imagine.

Behind every number is a name. Behind every name is a dream. Behind every dream is a story worth telling.

Blazers make the world better, and Student Affairs works every day to make UAB better for each Blazer—by minimizing barriers, advancing learning, fostering community, developing leaders, and creating an environment in which everyone can thrive.

Behind every statistic is a student. Behind every student is a dream. And helping students grow into those dreams is the most important work we do.

With gratitude and pride,

Dr. John R. Jones III

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## OUR MISSION

We are student-centered professionals co-creating impactful learning experiences, minimizing barriers, fostering a caring community, promoting sustainable environments, and developing engaged leaders in order to assist students in achieving personal and professional success.

## MESSAGE FROM THE VP OF STUDENT AFFAIRS



Dr. John R. Jones III

pg. 1



## FOSTERING A CARING COMMUNITY

- Beyond the Data: Hycall Brooks
  - Welcoming Environments
  - Shared Experiences
- pg. 5



## CO-CREATING IMPACTFUL LEARNING EXPERIENCES

- Beyond the Data: Maisie Davis
  - Creative Collaborations
  - Student Perspectives
- pg. 14



## DEVELOPING ENGAGED LEADERS

- Beyond the Data: Elise Weatherly
  - Campus Impact
  - Community Engagement
- pg. 20



## MINIMIZING BARRIERS

- Beyond the Data: Demarcus Davis
  - Student Employment
  - Basic Needs Support
- pg. 31



## PROMOTING A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

- Beyond the Data: Yonica Marbury
  - Student Wellness
  - Responsible Stewardship
- pg. 25

## WHAT'S NEXT

Forging the Future  
of Student Affairs

pg. 37

## OUR CORE VALUES OUR VALUES STATEMENT

We value an accessible community that is student-centered, focused on advancing wellbeing.

[CLICK HERE](#)

## STUDENT AFFAIRS: FROM “WHAT IF?” TO “WHAT’S NEXT?”

When most people think about a university, they imagine lecture halls, textbooks, and exams. But student success includes far more than the formal curriculum. Success is shaped by the relationships students form, the communities they belong to, and the care they receive when life gets difficult.

Student Affairs meets students where they are, cultivating a community of care that connects them to resources and opportunities. Together - with students and with campus and community partners - we co-create learning experiences that complement classroom instruction and encourage deep engagement. Through such opportunities, students step into leadership roles that strengthen individual, community, environmental, and financial sustainability - both now and in the future.

And underpinning this vital work is a division-wide commitment to minimizing barriers, creating a clear pathway to access and success for every Blazer.

An individual student’s journey is much more than a degree plan; it is a path of growth and resilience, supported by people who recognize each student as a whole individual with dreams, fears, challenges, and triumphs.

Those committed to the vital work of Student Affairs know that when students are fully empowered to live, learn, work, and play, the impact is transformative - for them, for UAB, and for the world they step into as they Forge Ahead.



## Division of Student Affairs Strategic Priorities



### FOSTERING A CARING COMMUNITY

We cultivate a supportive and compassionate community where every member counts every day. Through relationships, mutual respect, and collaboration, we build strong connections and settings for all to succeed.



### CO-CREATING IMPACTFUL LEARNING EXPERIENCES

We are committed to designing and delivering co-curricular educational opportunities that are immersive, engaging, and transformative. These experiences aim to enhance students' academic, personal, and professional growth, equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary for success in a dynamic world.



### DEVELOPING ENGAGED LEADERS

We believe all students have the capacity to lead. We prepare individuals to be active, informed, and responsible leaders. We empower students and staff to contribute positively to their communities and address challenges with a sense of responsibility and purpose.



### PROMOTING A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

We are dedicated to strategic stewardship of human, financial, and operational resources. By encouraging environmentally responsible behavior and integrating sustainable principles into our operations, we aim to create a healthier future for our campus and the greater community.



### MINIMIZING BARRIERS

We actively work to remove obstacles and strengthen pathways to institutional access. By providing resources, support, and advocacy, we strive to create an environment where all students have access to opportunities and the ability to reach their full potential.



## Student Affairs Departments

- Student Health Services
- Student Counseling Services
- Wellness Promotion
- University Recreation
- Veterans Services
- Off-Campus Student & Family Engagement
- Student Engagement & Enrichment
- UAB Career Center
- Student Assistance & Support
- Community Standards & Student Accountability
- Student Involvement & Leadership
- Hill Student Center
- Campus Dining
- Student Housing & Residence Life
- Student Media
- Student Affairs Marketing & Communications
- Assessment & Planning



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY: FOSTERING A CARING COMMUNITY

By actively engaging with others and building meaningful connections, students develop a sense of belonging and are more likely to thrive personally and academically.





## Finding Courage within a Culture of Care

*F*or Hycall Brooks, fostering a caring community isn't an abstract goal. It's a lived experience. It's what carried him through struggle, what steadied him when things felt uncertain, and what inspires him to keep going - toward graduate school, toward teaching, and toward helping others find the same support he once needed.

The first table Hycall Brooks visited at ConnectFest was Student Media. It was serendipity. He had transferred to UAB after his freshman year - Atlanta had proven too expensive - and was looking for a way to carve out a new place for himself. Photography and short films had always been a creative outlet, something that helped him step back and breathe. Student Media seemed like the perfect fit.

That sense of belonging grew into something life-sustaining.



**CLICK HERE**



Click button for full story and video

## FOSTERING A CARING COMMUNITY



### WELCOMING ENVIRONMENTS

Welcoming environments are more than physical spaces—they're places where students feel seen, valued, and included. From collaboration and lounge areas, to indoor and outdoor recreation spaces, Student Affairs shapes environments that spark connection and nurture a sense of belonging within the campus community.

### New Student Assembly Building Lays Foundation for Student Growth

On Sept. 20, 2024, UAB celebrated the grand opening of the Student Assembly Building (SAB) - a centralized home for all Student Organizations.



Student Affairs creates and manages environments showcasing UAB's commitment to student belonging, success, and community.



Three students looking at pictures in the SAB during the facility's grand opening.

"This facility reflects the continued growth of both our physical campus and our vibrant student experience that supports our enrollment and retention efforts."

UAB President Ray L. Watts

#### SAB Space and Engagement

- 12,790 square feet and 8 multi-purpose rooms
- 3,943 building hours reserved
- 829 events with over 23,500 students



### Hill Student Center Encourages Connection

Affectionately known as "The Hill," UAB's Hill Student Center is a primary hub of campus connection.

The **Off-Campus Student Lounge** is a home away from home for **UAB's commuter students**, featuring sofas, a television, device charging, and a coffee and snack station in addition to off-campus living resources and VMASC tutoring.



The **Alumni Theater** seats 276 and is frequently used to bring the campus community together via town halls, keynotes, student performances, and even campus movie nights.

The Hill's **6,722 square foot multipurpose Ballroom** is the largest private gathering space on campus and is reserved by departments across the university for student events, award ceremonies, presentations, and banquets.



With over 120 video, card, and tabletop games, the Hill's **Game Room** encourages students to unwind, make connections, and build community around shared interests.





**Across its indoor and outdoor spaces, University Recreation encourages students to stay active, build confidence, connect with others, and engage in a vibrant campus community.**

- **Active:** Personal training, swimming lessons, and the rock climbing wall's Golden Route offer accessible entry points for those beginning a new fitness journey.
- **Confident:** A variety of cardio and weight machines, sport courts, specialized equipment, and knowledgeable staff empower students to increase their physical strength and mental resilience.
- **Connected:** Dedicated Spaces for stretching, recharging, and socializing create a welcoming environment for both activity and relaxation.
- **Engaged:** Group fitness classes, intramural, and club sports facilitate community building through shared goals, teamwork, and friendly competition.

**Last year URec had**

**385,000+** facility visits in AY25,  
up 1% from AY24

**287,000+** student visits, up 1%  
from AY24



Combined participation of 1,982 in club and intramural sports



UAB's Club Pickleball team claimed the title of Regional Champions at the DUPR Collegiate Regionals in Chattanooga, earning an automatic bid to Nationals

7,000 Group Fitness and Group Fitness+ participants across 77 different classes





## Student Housing and Residence Life – Room to Thrive

UAB's six residence halls—Blazer, Blount, Camp, Gold, McMahon, and Rast—were home to more than **3,000 students each semester**, providing welcoming spaces where they connect, engage, and thrive.



Living communities for **Honors College students** and **transfer students** connect students with similar experiences to one another and targeted resources.

**400 programs** designed to help students navigate personal, academic, and wellness challenges.



**101 Resident Assistants, 20 Peer Wellness Advocates, and 6 Learning Community Mentors**

Academic learning communities **Business, Engineering, and Health Professions** students offer resources and programs co-hosted by each school and Residence Life.





# FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE

## SHARED EXPERIENCES

Shared experiences give students opportunities to engage with others, strengthen bonds, and grow together. Student Affairs fosters these moments of connection, helping every student find—or—build—their Blazer community.

### Friday Night Live Engages Students After Dark

Responding to student leaders' request for weekend campus programming, Student Affairs launched the **Friday Night Live (FNL)** series this Fall.

Program offerings ranged from tea parties and ASL workshops to movie nights and open mics, culminating the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Crawfish Boil featuring the Blazer State Fair in late April.

Many FNL programs were developed as collaborations across the division and university, such as the **Student Arts Night** featuring a Paint and Sip event followed by a student fashion show, co-hosted by **Student Health Services, USGA, Arts in Medicine, Student Assistance and Support, and Student Engagement and Enrichment.**

Spring 2025 FNL programming drew a combined attendance of over 3,000 students





## Welcome Back Concert Lives Up to the Hype



The Division of Student Affairs, in collaboration with the Alys Stephens Center, hosted UAB's 2024 Welcome Back Concert, headlined by Grammy Award-winning artist Lil Jon. More than 5,000 students were in attendance, with some lining up outside of Bartow Arena an hour and half before doors opened to get floor access wristbands.

Setting the stage for Lil Jon were UAB student emcees Benjamin Smith and R.J. Lee, student performers Kacey Slint and Amari J., and Swanglish, a Birmingham group whose

music blends Afro-jazz, neo-soul, funk, pop, and more. The performers and crowd combined to create an electric atmosphere and a night to remember for those in attendance.

"It was an unforgettable experience, and I loved celebrating the start of my journey as a Blazer!" - UAB freshman Cason Hudgins.

The latest in a series of vibrant UAB Welcome Back Concerts featuring T-Pain, H.E.R., and Weezer, 2024's event set the stage for a year of Blazer energy, creativity, and connection.

[CLICK HERE](#)



Click button for full Welcome Back Concert story





## Student Organizations Offer Something for Everyone

**Student organizations** are at the heart of shared experiences at UAB, offering students countless ways to get involved, connect, and lead. From honor societies and fraternities and sororities to interest-based clubs and professional or academic groups, the university's **455 Student Organizations** reflect the full spectrum of student interests and pursuits, including 65 new organizations this year.

For instance, **The Gamer's Guild** was formed in 2024 by UAB students who met in the **HSC Game Room**. HSC staff supported them in the initial process of forming the student organization, including providing the venue space - free of charge - for their first event while the group was still in the process of being formalized as a student org.

**Student Orgs hosted 4,475 events with a combined attendance of 42,000+**

**89% of students surveyed at Fall Connect Fest - UAB's flagship involvement fair - agreed with the statement "I belong at UAB."**



**Five student involvement fairs through the academic year attracted more than 5,300 students, including 1,007 First-Gen students, 661 transfer students, and 181 international students.**

At UAB, student involvement is supported by the digital platform Engage, which empowers students to explore campus opportunities and connect with communities built around shared passions.

ENGAGE	Engage Activity 62,206 users 117,630 sessions 795,534 page views
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**STRATEGIC PRIORITY:**  
CO-CREATING IMPACTFUL  
LEARNING EXPERIENCES



Collaborating with peers and staff to apply classroom knowledge to real-world contexts encourages students to solve problems creatively and take ownership of their learning.

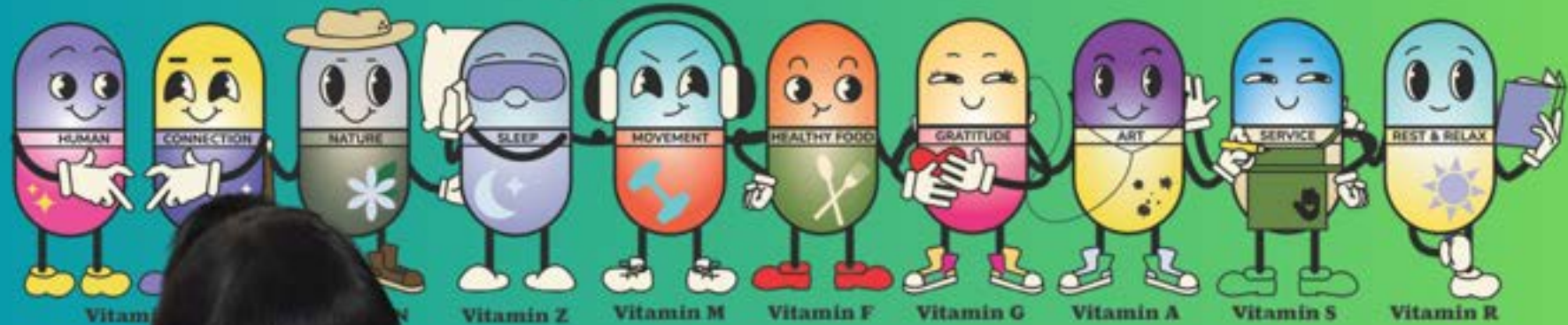


## BEYOND THE DATA: STUDENT PROFILE

# Designing Campus Impact through Collaboration

For Maisie Davis, co-creating impactful learning experiences has meant more than building a portfolio. For her and for the other UAB students who take advantage of such opportunities, it means building confidence, resilience, and experience that bring their dreams closer to reality.

## Get Your Daily Dose to Feel Your Best



Maisie Davis led the design effort for UAB's "Feel Your Best" campaign

In AY 24, this campaign helped promote nine key evidence-based behaviors - to help us feel our best, both physically and mentally.

[CLICK HERE](#) 

Click button for full story and video



## CREATIVE COLLABORATIONS

When students engage in learning they helped design, they earn higher grades and experience greater satisfaction and loyalty to their institution. Student Affairs co-creates opportunities and experiences with students, helping them make the most of their learning.

### Peer-led Wellness Initiatives Inspire UAB Students



The Promoters of Wellness (POWs) peer education and leadership program empowers students to create and champion wellness initiatives across campus. The program included 22 students this year, who collaborated with Wellness Promotion Director Mica Hughes-Harrell and Associate Director Alyssa Howard to develop programs that contribute to holistic individual and community wellness.

POW's **Feel Your Best** campaign inspired **72% of student survey respondents** to adopt at least one new healthy behavior, while another student initiative, the Healthy Relationships Board Game, was accepted at the national conference of NASPA, the leading professional organization for Student Affairs.

UAB's POW program was a finalist for NASPA's Outstanding Peer Education Group Award

### Student Artists Draw Inspiration, Build Wellness



Mural, entitled "Hydrostatic" by Rocky Kimble, a senior majoring in Biomedical Sciences

Student Affairs coordinates the student representation for **Live HealthSmart Alabama** committees and initiatives, fostering opportunities for co-created projects that blend creativity and wellness. One initiative, **Stairway to Wellness**, transforms everyday campus stairways into works of student art, encouraging their use over elevators. As part of a broader effort to promote physical activity, nutrition, and wellness education, this initiative empowers UAB students to apply their skills - balancing artistic vision and practical execution - to support campus and community health.



### Student Media Amplifies Blazer Voices and Visions



Student Media member RaeAnn Alexander and Director Jackie Alexander receiving award from the College Media Association (CMA)

Guided by its mission to provide co-curricular experiences that develop leadership, storytelling, and communication, **UAB Student Media** is truly student-driven.

The campus literary magazine, **Aura**, celebrated its **50th year in 2024**, while **Kaleidoscope**, the campus newspaper, continues to deliver breaking news and feature stories **58 years** after its founding. Any UAB student can join the staff, gaining hands-on experience in reporting, editing, video production, and graphic design.

Student Media's newest outlet, **UABtv**, produces original web-based video and podcast content, from creative skits to in-depth storytelling, bringing student voices to life in dynamic multimedia formats.

This year, **53** students served as editors, writers, designers, producers, and broadcasters as part of their Student Media experience, gaining real-world experience while shaping campus culture with their creativity and vision.

### Award-Winning Student Media



UAB Student Media received 4 Pinnacle Awards, granted by the College Media Association, in the categories of Magazine Feature Spread, Recruitment Ad, Magazine Table of Contents, and Overall Campus Engagement (for Aura)

*49% of the combined Student Media staffs are majoring in something other than Communications, English, Marketing, and Art*



Students recording in Student Media's podcast room



Staff of Kaleidoscope's show "Blazin' Bites," a local UAB take on "Hot Ones," set up for filming.



## STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

Students' insights and experiences provide invaluable guidance on what helps them thrive. As co-pilots in shaping Student Affairs they help shape the student experience while gaining confidence and professionalism.

### Student Advisory Boards Unite for Holistic Approach to Wellness



Members of the integrated Student Advisory Board

This year, **Student Health Services (SHS)**, **Student Counseling Services (SCS)**, and **Wellness Promotion (WP)** created an integrated Student Advisory Board, resulting in increased student participation as well as enhanced quality of services and operations between the three departments. The board includes undergraduate and graduate students from a variety of majors who share insights on student needs and help identify the most effective ways to reach and support their peers.

The restructure was inspired by networking and benchmarking that Student Affairs directors and staff took part in at the 2024 American College Health Association conference. Through this change, these Student Affairs offices are better equipped to address the needs of UAB's students and promote a holistic approach to health and wellness on campus.



STUDENTS HAVE THE POINT OF VIEW  
THAT DR. JONES IS LOOKING TO  
CONTINUE TO INNOVATE AT UAB FOR THE  
BETTERMENT OF THE STUDENTS.

Ashlyn Hill, board member and undergraduate  
kinesiology student

## Student Voices Help Shape the Future of Student Affairs

The **Division of Student Affairs Student Advisory Board** creates a vital space for dialogue between students and Student Affairs leadership, ensuring that student perspectives remain central to the division's work. Two dozen students, representing a variety of student organizations and Student Affairs programs, meet monthly with the Vice President of Student Affairs, Dr. John Jones, and Assistant Vice President Dr. Mary Wallace to share feedback and offer ideas for a more connected and supportive UAB student experience.

The board's role is rooted in partnership. Students bring insight into what resonates with their peers and where challenges lie, while staff contribute expertise and the capacity to act on that feedback.

Together, we co-create approaches that are both student-centered and sustainable.

This year, for example, the board collaborated to address topics that included *Friday Night Live programming*, *campus safety*, *wellness promotion*, *Hill Student Center updates*, and *U Rec rental space*.

The Student Advisory Board helps ensure that the division remains attentive, responsive, and innovative. By listening with intention and acting with care, Student Affairs and its student partners continue to shape a campus environment where students can thrive.



**STRATEGIC PRIORITY:  
DEVELOPING  
ENGAGED LEADERS**



Through meaningful service on campus and in the larger community, students develop personal accountability and are empowered to expand their impact now and in the future.



## Building Strength, Lifting Others

Molecular motor proteins are tiny engines inside our cells, carrying life forward step by step. For Elise Weatherly, they're not only the focus of her Ph.D. research, but also the perfect metaphor for the kind of leader she has become at UAB.

"Motor proteins move things forward," she says. "That's what I want to do - help people get to where they need to be."

That philosophy has shaped her time at UAB - defined not just by her own accomplishments - but by the momentum she has created for others.

Elise's journey didn't begin at UAB. Her first year of college, spent closer to home in Atlanta, left her feeling unmoored. "**I didn't feel a part of the community,**" she remembers. Transferring was a leap, but the moment she arrived at UAB she knew it was different. "**I immediately felt like I belonged. It felt like home.**"

[CLICK HERE](#) 

Click button for full story and video



## CAMPUS & COMMUNITY IMPACT

Student leadership experiences build accountability, sharpen decision-making, and develop professional skills that last well beyond graduation. Student Affairs provides a variety of leadership opportunities that prepare students to take initiative and make a lasting impact.

### USGA Leaders: Partners in the Process



The **Community Standards and Student Accountability (CSSA)** office partnered with the **Undergraduate Student Government Association (USGA)** on a new initiative to train nine student leaders to serve on conduct hearing boards. The training equips students to review documentation, attend pre-hearing meetings, ask trauma-informed questions, and uphold confidentiality.

In addition to serving on hearing boards, these trained students provide confidential peer support to students navigating the conduct process. Having peers who are specially trained for this role creates a supportive and approachable environment while maintaining the integrity of the conduct process. Students benefit from guidance and reassurance from someone who understands their experience, helping them navigate the process with confidence, care, and clarity.



The **Leadership and Service Council (LSC)** is a student-led organization designed to promote volunteerism, conscientious

citizenship, and leadership development through the planning and execution of signature university service initiatives.

**Into the Streets** a bi-annual day of service led by the Leadership and Service Council, connects UAB students with Birmingham nonprofits. Despite stormy weather, the fall 2025 event grew participation by 16%, with another successful program held in March.

• Across its two events, **Into the Streets** facilitated **1,157 hours** of service and **\$33,000 in economic impact** with the help of **595 volunteers**.

**Rise Against Hunger** brings the UAB community together to fight global food insecurity through hands-on meal-packaging events that build teamwork and leadership skills while making a tangible impact.

• As part of two **Rise Against Hunger** events this year, **219 volunteers** packed **35,856 meals** to be shipped to areas fighting food insecurity.





## Engaged Leadership Through Service

**Blazers on Break**, is an experiential leadership and service program scheduled during academic breaks. This year's trips - to North Carolina, Tennessee, and Puerto Rico - gave participants opportunities to build empathy, strengthen collaboration skills, and develop a strong sense of responsibility.

During Blazers on Break UAB students recorded 839 service hours, generating \$23,945 economic impact



One fully online student joined the Puerto Rico trip, immersing himself in leadership development for the first time and discovering his capacity to lead through direct engagement and collaboration.



**Serve 205** links students, faculty, and staff with local partners such as food banks and humane societies. The program offers year-round opportunities for meaningful service while strengthening ties between UAB and the Birmingham community.

Student Affairs - supported service initiatives this year produced:

- \$338,170 total economic impact
- 11,849 total service hours
- 1,503 volunteers
- 40 unique community partnerships

### Serve 205:

- 80 bi-weekly service projects
- 16 community partnerships
- 536 volunteers
- 1,073 hours served





## Giving and Growing in Peer Mentorship

This year, the Student Engagement and Enrichment (SEE) office launched the **Blazer Mentorship Collective (BMC)**, a peer mentoring program supporting Pell-eligible, conditionally admitted, low ACT, and test-optional students. While mentees receive guidance navigating campus, accessing resources, and building belonging, mentors develop leadership, communication, and critical thinking skills, often inspiring mentees who later become mentors themselves.

In its inaugural year, the BMC trained mentors who engaged with over **120 student** participants, providing consistent guidance and serving as role models.

In addition to the BMC, SEE offers broader opportunities for student and mentor development, including the **Free Food for Thought** dialogue series and academic and tutoring partnership with VMASC. Together, these initiatives reflect the office's commitment to fostering engaged student leaders and supporting student success.



Blazer Mentorship Collective members tabling during Connect Fest.

**80 BMC mentees maintained GPAs of 3.0 or above this year.**



"A year ago, I didn't even know if I was going to graduate," says BMC mentor Bryan Jackson. "Ever since I stepped into the SEE office, I have been embraced and made friendships that will last a lifetime."

— Bryan Jackson, Class of '25 & BMC mentor



**STRATEGIC PRIORITY:**  
PROMOTING A SUSTAINABLE  
ENVIRONMENT

In a culture that emphasizes holistic wellbeing and responsible stewardship, students thrive both inside and outside the classroom.





## Cultivating a Sustainable Future

While many college students head to the beach for spring break to unwind in the sun, Yonica Marbury had a different mission. Instead of lounging on the sand, she was knee-deep in saltwater, planting mangrove trees along Puerto Rico's coastline. These trees aren't just scenic - they're essential. Their dense root systems stabilize shorelines, reduce erosion, and serve as natural buffers against storm surges. In a region increasingly vulnerable to hurricanes and rising seas, mangroves are frontline defenders.

Yonica's experience in Puerto Rico was part of a Student Involvement and Leadership Blazers on Break program, a service-learning initiative that sends students into communities to work on sustainability, health, and education projects. Alongside other students, she spent her days hauling plastic debris from beaches, sorting recyclables, and helping build barriers to protect native wildlife. The work was physical, sometimes messy, but deeply rewarding.

Yonica's passion for health and sustainability has deep roots. Growing up in Huntsville as the oldest of five children, she helped care for her grandmother, whose chronic health conditions sparked Yonica's initial interest in medicine and public health. She first enrolled at UAB as a Biomedical Sciences major, drawn to the clinical side of healthcare. But over time, she realized her interests extended beyond the doctor's office. She wanted to understand how environments, policies, and social systems shape health outcomes - especially in underserved communities.

**CLICK HERE** 

Click button for full story and video



## STUDENT WELLNESS

Sustaining student success begins with supporting student wellness. Student Affairs fosters a holistic approach to well-being, helping students navigate challenges, maintain balance, and thrive academically, personally, and socially.

### A Data-Driven Culture of Care



NATIONAL COLLEGE HEALTH ASSESSMENT

This year, **Wellness Promotion** administered its third **National College Health Assessment (NCHA)**, piloting a custom question on student major. The results provide Deans and Chairs with tailored insights into student needs and challenges, supporting targeted, data-informed strategies to enhance health and success.

#### NCHA 2025 Snapshot

- 11 tailored executive summaries for Deans/Chairs
- 100% of academic units represented
- Response rate more than double national average

## UAB Students Embrace Wellness During Health Promoting University Week

Student Affairs hosted the University's inaugural National Health Promoting University (HPU) Week April 21–25, celebrating well-being and sustainability with events including "Cycling on the Green" and a community crawfish boil.

Hundreds of students signed the HPU/Okanagan Charter pledge, affirming their commitment to "healthy people, healthy places, and a healthy planet."



*Our commitment to becoming a Health Promoting University isn't a campaign, it's a culture. And it starts with our students.*

Angela Rowe, Ph.D.  
Director of Student Counseling Services

Students also joined the national webinar *Shaping the Future of Health Promoting Campuses*, where Dr. Rebecca Kennedy, Assistant Vice President of Student Health and Wellbeing, presented UAB's progress and leadership as the first Health Promoting University in the U.S.

**BLAZERS**  
**MAKE THE WORLD**  
**BETTER**

HEALTHY PEOPLE • HEALTHY PLACES • HEALTHY PLANET



Take the  
HPU Pledge

BLAZERS MAKE THE WORLD BETTER

Healthy People



Healthy Places



Healthy Planet



**OKANAGAN CHARTER**  
AN INTERNATIONAL CHARTER  
FOR HEALTH PROMOTING  
UNIVERSITIES & COLLEGES



### Promoting Resilience, Empowering Advocacy



Members of UAB's revised Mental Health Advocate course cohort

This year, **Student Counseling Services (SCS)** continued its commitment to student well-being, expanding and enhancing services to support mental health and resilience.

- SCS provided 8,561 appointments, a 2.7% increase from last year.
- Counselors in Residence provided drop-in hours across more than 130 days for on-campus students, who comprised 23% of SCS appointments.
- Embedded counselors provided 818 appointments—almost 10% of all SCS appointments—to students in the School of Medicine.
- 1,369 students attended a suicide prevention workshop.
- The Collegiate Recovery Center reached 1,526 students through its events and outreach, including 63 group meetings and 21 individual coaching sessions offered as a new service this year.
- The Mental Health Advocate course for students, faculty, and staff was revised in Fall 2024 and launched in January 2025, with 116 individuals completing Level 1 of the new course.

“ I have lost 3 friends who did not have any emotional support. But now, I will not let anyone around me feel that thanks to this program. ”

Anonymous student response to a Mental Health Advocate program survey

### Sustaining UAB and Students Through Thoughtful Health Care

Student Health Services (SHS) continues to strengthen its role in creating a sustainable, student-centered health environment by building resources, streamlining processes, and fostering collaboration.

SHS provided students with timely, flexible, and high-quality care this year for a total of **22,488 visits**.

In addition to medical visits for illness or injury, SHS supports overall campus health through

- Immunizations and screenings
- Reviewing 21,737 records
- Administering 5,340 vaccinations and 2,346 tuberculosis tests.

SHS also clears all UAB students for health and safety requirements before they begin clinical experiences as part of their degree programs.

At the same time, SHS has invested in infrastructure that improves efficiency and access. A new electronic insurance verification system reduced time spent on insurance calls by 95%, allowing staff to respond more quickly to student needs, improving both accessibility and overall student satisfaction.





## RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP

Sustainable practices begin with fostering a thriving campus community and responsible resource use. In Student Affairs, this means embracing a holistic vision of stewardship that nurtures the community, manages campus operations thoughtfully, and supports a healthy, lasting environment.



University Recreation staff members

### U Rec Supports Healthy People and a Sustainable Campus

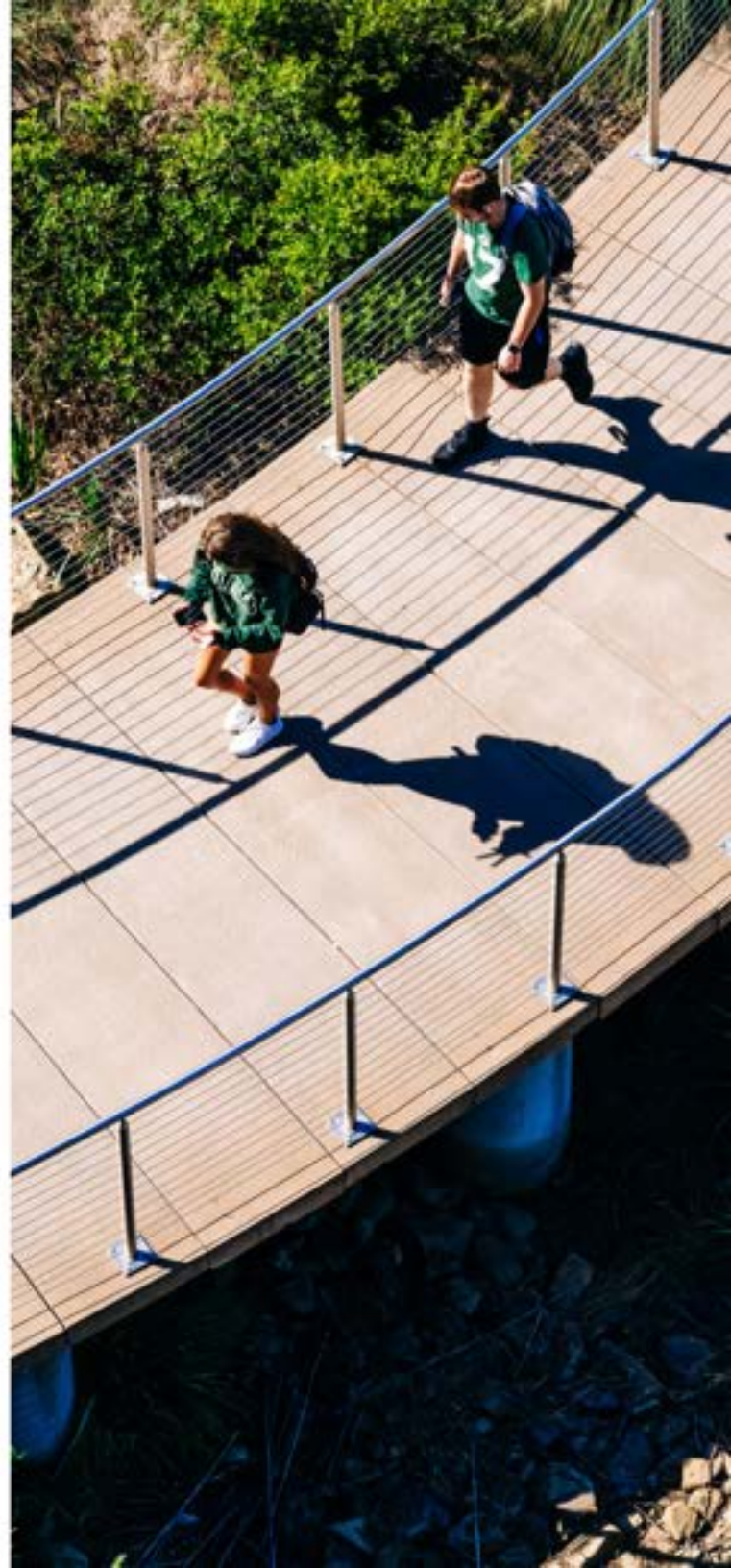
University Recreation worked closely with UAB Facilities to conduct an energy audit of the Rec Center and implement recommendations that reduced the building's **carbon footprint** and saved over **\$100,000** in utility costs. Additionally, U Rec enhanced the Natatorium with a **new water fountain** and improved recreation spaces by **repairing and re-coating the racquetball, squash, and fitness studio floors** -ensuring safe, high-quality environments for students and members.



### Sustainable Living and Dining at UAB

UAB Campus Dining strengthened its workforce by hiring **181 new employees** and promoting 40 from within, fostering a healthy workplace culture that directly benefits the 150 student employees working each year. Leveraging UAB's Handshake platform and partnering with **United Ability**, Dining filled critical roles while advancing accessible employment practices and supporting a socially responsible campus community.

Dining also advanced its sustainability efforts with the launch of the **BioStraw Initiative**, replacing plastic straws with compostable, biodegradable alternatives across all campus locations. Additional eco-friendly measures include the introduction of cutlery made from polypropylene, PHA, and other certified compostable materials.





## The Measure of Success in Student Affairs



The Student Affairs Office of Assessment & Planning supports departments in setting and achieving SMART, student-focused annual goals that aligning with divisional and university priorities.

Through the annual goal-setting and reporting process and the five-year program review cycle, the office helps departments track progress, navigate challenges, and improve student programming. Additionally, Assessment & Planning supports targeted assessment efforts, such as Wellness Promotion's annual administration of the National College Health Assessment (NCHA).

This year, assessment efforts measured program and event experiences, engagement, belonging, satisfaction, and policy and process improvements. The insights gained are actively shaping decisions and helping strengthen the UAB student experience across the Division of Student Affairs.



“



I enjoy working with the Division of Student Affairs departments to ensure that we're equipped to implement the internal controls necessary to appropriately safeguard the University's resources.

Antonio Goodman, Director of Administration and Fiscal Affairs for the Division of Student Affairs

”



## **STRATEGIC PRIORITY: MINIMIZING BARRIERS**

Access to support and opportunities enables students to overcome challenges and fully thrive in all aspects of learning, growth, and campus life.






## Barriers Broken, Dreams Fulfilled

A Humvee accident nearly ended his dreams. After four years at UAB, Demarcus Davis walked the stage with two degree in hand, family by his side, and a story of resilience and unwavering support.

*A*ugust 2018 - The heat at Fort Bliss, Texas, is nothing unusual. The training exercise should have been just as routine. U.S. Army Specialist Demarcus Davis - who had first enrolled in college but traded his textbooks for fatigues at the end of his freshman year after learning he was going to be a father - was now serving in the 6th Field Artillery Regiment. The transition from student to soldier had been challenging but rewarding.

**CLICK HERE** 

Click button for full  
story and video





## ACCESS & SUPPORT

Personal, financial, and/or systemic challenges can be obstacles to enrolling, navigating, or fully engaging in college. Student Affairs helps remove these barriers by connecting students with resources, guidance, and services that support success throughout their academic journey.

### Blazer Market Route Makes Affordable Grocery Shopping More Accessible



To ensure students have access to affordable and culturally familiar groceries, **Student Assistance & Support (SAS)** partners with UAB

Transportation to offer the **Blazer Market Route**. Every

Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., the Blazer Express shuttles students from the Hill Student Center to grocers, including Walmart, Hometown, Mi Pueblo, and Super Oriental Market.

Blazer Market Express usage rose to 1,067 rides this year, while **Blazer Kitchen** usage declined by **42%**, suggesting students are increasingly relying on the Route for sustainable grocery access.

Other basic needs initiatives include **Swipe Twice**, a discreet meal voucher program allowing students to share a meal with a peer in need, and the **Student Affairs Emergency Grant Fund**, which provides short-term financial relief for critical expenses, including \$5,500 for veterans experiencing job loss, medical emergencies and family bereavement.

Through these programs, SAS creates compassionate, responsive support structures that help students overcome adversity, stay enrolled, focus on their studies, and succeed at UAB.

### UAB Disability Support Services: Empowering Access for All



When we design spaces, policies, and learning environments that are accessible and welcoming to those facing the greatest obstacles, we create a richer, more supportive campus for everyone at UAB.

#### A Hub for Accessibility

Disability Support Services (DSS) serves as the university's hub for accessibility—coordinating individualized accommodations, promoting awareness of accessibility and compliance across campus, and assisting any student who needs accommodations to fully participate in university life.

#### What DSS Provides

- Academic and housing accommodations
- Adaptive technology and testing support
- Faculty consultation and training
- Campus-wide accessibility awareness initiatives

#### Impact at a Glance

- 1,347** students supported
- 3,672** tests administered
- 30** campus presentations
- 650** faculty consultations



UAB becomes Alabama's first FirstGen Forward leader



UAB was named a **Network Leader** in 2025 by **FirstGen Forward**, a distinction held by only 60 institutions nationwide in recognition of campus-wide commitment to supporting first-generation student success.

UAB's partnership with FirstGen Forward is driven by the university's First-generation Student Success Advisory Board, co-chaired by **Dr. Mary Wallace**, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs, and **Dr. Kecia Thomas**, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Bringing together faculty, staff, and students from across campus, the board helps shape annual priorities and foster collaboration that strengthens first-generation student success at every level of the university.

**CLICK HERE**

Click button to explore the full range of Student Affairs initiatives supporting UAB's first-generation students

From Service to Success



**Veterans Services** is dedicated to sustaining the success and well-being of **UAB student veterans** and **military-affiliated students**. By fostering connections within the office and across the university and community, the program ensures veterans can access the full range of resources available to them, equipping them to thrive during their time at UAB and beyond.

Veterans Services support of Blazers begins before they're even enrolled, walking students through the procedures and paperwork required by Veterans Affairs to start their UAB journey. This year, staff in Veterans Services **processed 3,290 GI bill benefits**, worth **\$14.5 million**.

**Veterans Services Impact at a Glance**

- **1,920** veteran office swipe-ins
- **176** Student Veterans Association members
- **1,000+** participants and **\$9,000** raised at the *2024 Veterans Day 5k*
- **300** attendees and **50** vendors and community partners at this year's *Veterans Expo*
- **\$5,500** in emergency funding awarded to student veterans

**CLICK HERE**

Click button to view more resources and support provided by Veterans Services



## STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

For many students, employment is a source of financial support, professional growth, and personal purpose. Student Affairs provides opportunities, guidance, and resources that help students manage work responsibilities while staying on track toward their academic and career goals.

### Student Media Facilitates Paid Internships with Sidewalk Film Festival

Student Media piloted an internship program with Birmingham's Sidewalk Film Festival this summer, allowing UAB student RaeAnne Alexander to receive academic credit, real-world media experience, and a living wage. After the success of the summer pilot, the Sidewalk internship program was continued in the Fall, supporting Kendall Wakefield.

Internships are one of the best ways for college students to break into their chosen profession, but nearly half of internships nationwide are unpaid, disproportionately excluding low-income students from valuable resume-building experiences.

Through its partnership with Sidewalk, Student Media removed financial barriers to participation while also guaranteeing fair compensation for students' hard work.



"Interning with the marketing team at Sidewalk Film Center + Cinema helped me grow my skills in social media strategy, content creation, and audience engagement."

-Kendall Wakefield, Class of '26



"I am so thankful to Student Media for connecting me with this organization and for giving me the space to keep building on everything I learned!"

-RaeAnne Alexander, Class of '25



### UAB Career Center Reduces Employment Obstacles for Students

Many obstacles can stand between a qualified student and their desired job—from uncertainty about resume conventions to lack of professional clothing or a headshot, or not knowing how to find opportunities or connect with employers. The UAB Career Center removes these barriers, empowering students to pursue employment goals with confidence.

- **Free Professional Headshots:** Four Spring events used the Hill Student Center’s Iris Photo Booth to provide students with professional headshots at no cost.
- **Career-Appropriate Apparel:** Over 100 students purchased professional clothing at discounted prices during the JCPenney Suit Up event, with 25 receiving \$50 gift cards to further support their wardrobes.
- **Employer Connections & Networking:** The Employer Engagement Program links students with leading employers, including Teach for America, NaphCare Inc., and The Princeton Review, for full-time, internship, and graduate opportunities.
- **Professional Skills Workshops:** Campus workshops on resumes, interviews, and LinkedIn help students present their best selves.

**In 2024-25  
the UAB Career Center recorded**

- 39,192 job apps submitted through Handshake
- 3,818 workshop and career event attendees
- 1,525 career advising appointments
- 899 distinct users for the Iris Photo Booth
- 147 utilizations of the Career Closet



### Students Employed by Student Affairs

Students seeking employment while completing their degree often face practical challenges, such as limited transportation, inflexible schedules, or student visa provisions that restrict off-campus work.

Student Affairs is proud to have employed more than **350 UAB students** this year through work-study programs, part-time positions, and internships and to have supported an additional **250 student leaders** through housing and meal plan benefits.

**University Recreation** is the largest student employer at UAB, providing jobs for 150-200 students each academic year.



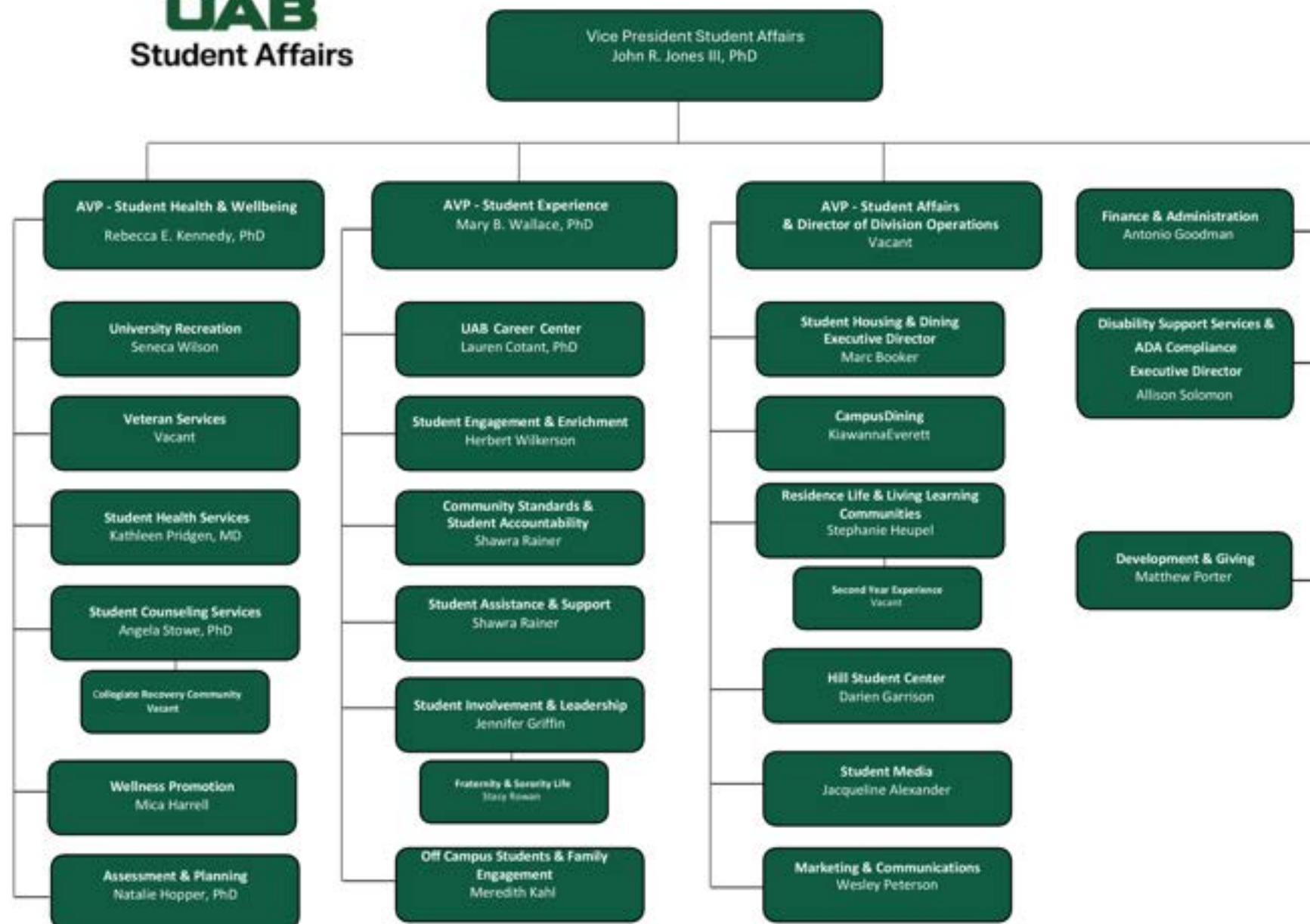
Handshake provides a hub for exploring jobs and internships, researching employers, accessing career resources, and scheduling one-on-one appointments with Career Center consultants.

## BEHIND THE DREAM: STUDENT AFFAIRS STAFF

As leaders on campus and throughout the state and nation, UAB Student Affairs staff bring expertise and passion to their work, creating programs and environments that positively impact Blazer lives everyday.



# STUDENT AFFAIRS STAFF ORG CHART



## FORGING THE FUTURE OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

As we look to the future of Student Affairs at UAB, one truth continues to guide us: students are at the center of everything we do. Every service, every program, every new idea begins with a simple but powerful question - how can we help students not only succeed, but thrive?

Our strategic priorities are more than a framework - they are a promise. They reflect our belief that every student should have the chance to discover their strengths, overcome obstacles, and pursue lives of purpose. Leadership at UAB is not confined to titles or positions - it is learned in the classroom, on the playing field, in student organizations, and in the moments when students lift one another up. We believe that every student has the potential to influence their world for the better, and our role is to nurture that potential through practice, mentorship, and opportunity.

Looking ahead, we will continue to walk alongside students as they dream, as they struggle, as they achieve, and as they prepare to change the world. For us, there is no greater measure of success than seeing students leave UAB with the knowledge, resilience, and hope to make their futures—and ours—brighter.

Scan QR Code to  
view Student  
Affairs Awards  
and Recognitions







**UAB**  
Student Affairs