



# UAB Student Affairs

## 2020-2026 Strategic Plan

*Creating Transformational Experiences for Students*



# Vice President Dr. John R. Jones, III

Over the last five years, our first strategic plan laid the groundwork for creating a 21st century model for Student Affairs, providing extraordinary student experiences and advancing student success. Additionally, we worked tirelessly to build a Division that would be the epitome of excellence and develop students into the best version of themselves.

UAB Student Affairs provided students with opportunities for active learning, removed barriers to their success, and established spaces for their community engagement. We also developed experiential learning pathways and career ready competencies, constructed new safe spaces, launched university-wide health initiatives, hosted national and regional conferences, created new offices for parents and families as well as for our off-campus students and led the effort to create UAB's first-ever creed. We have accomplished a lot, and our students are better served and connected to their university.

We could not have done any of it without our talented and passionate team of Student Affairs professionals. It was important to me that throughout the strategic planning process, not only each member of the Division had a voice, but actively participated in the process.

As we embark upon our next five years with our new strategic plan, we will build on our strong foundation and the inspiration of our institution. Rooted in the pillars of The University of Alabama at Birmingham and University of Alabama system, we created a plan that will take us into the future. Developing it was a collective effort with assistance and feedback from students, colleagues and stakeholders from across the Division, UAB and the City of Birmingham.

I am proud to introduce our new vision, mission and values. Using these as a guide, we developed priorities, objectives and goals as we further construct new, supportive programs, develop innovative initiatives and build curricula bridges with faculty and staff. We know that our "living document" will continue to evolve as our students develop and change.

I am excited about the future and look forward to what these next five years will bring. I cannot wait to see how what we do continues to create transformational experiences for our students and our campus community.

Go Blazers!

Sincerely,



**John R. Jones, III, Ph.D.**

Vice President for Student Affairs





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# Institutional Profile

The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) is a comprehensive public university located in downtown Birmingham, which is Alabama's largest city. It is one of three campuses in the University of Alabama System (University System), together with the University of Alabama, established in Tuscaloosa in 1831, and the University of Alabama in Huntsville, created in 1966. UAB was established as a separate campus of the University System, also in 1966.

UAB is well on its way to achieving its vision of being one of the most dynamic and productive comprehensive universities—and the preferred academic medical university—of the 21st century. UAB's faculty has garnered international recognition for excellence in education, health care and research. UAB was ranked as the top young university in the United States for the second year in a row—and in the top 12 worldwide—in the Times Higher Education 2019 Young University Rankings. Also, in 2019, the university set a record with \$602 million in research funding awards. UAB's educational programs provide a high-quality, diverse curriculum in an intensely collaborative setting to undergraduate and graduate students. A premier academic medical center, UAB delivers world-class clinical care to its patients. Over the past five years, UAB's clinical trials portfolio has grown by 107% as part of an intentional, institution-wide effort to offer the newest and most efficacious treatments to even more patients. UAB ranks eighth among all public universities in clinical trials expenditures. In addition, UAB provides a variety of services and programs to meet the needs of the professional and business communities of Birmingham.

UAB is one of only 16 colleges and universities in the nation identified as a Diversity Champion by INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine in both 2018 and 2019. These honors recognize

UAB's diverse student population, with underrepresented groups making up 41.9% of the student body, as well as the commitment to diversity and inclusiveness embodied in the institution's Shared Values, which also include respect, integrity and accountability.

UAB offers innovative academic programs that equip students for the demands of today's global "knowledge economy," including 55 baccalaureate programs, 66 master's programs, 38 doctoral programs, three first-professional and three certificate programs. These programs are offered through the College of Arts & Sciences and the 10 schools of Business, Dentistry, Education, Engineering, Health Professions, Graduate School, Medicine, Nursing, Optometry and Public Health.

UAB provides undergraduates the types of leading-edge, closely mentored research opportunities found primarily in graduate programs at other universities. In the past few years, the university has started new majors in immunology, digital forensics, genetics and genomic sciences, public health, bioinformatics and cancer biology. The acclaimed UAB Honors College also offers advanced research and scholarship experiences to more than 2,250 high-ability undergraduates through such offerings as the Science and Technology Honors Program.

UAB continues to attract the best and brightest students from Alabama, the nation and nearly 100 countries around the world. In fall 2019, the university enrolled 22,080 students, setting an enrollment record for the fourth straight year. UAB also had its largest freshmen class ever, with 2,346 students. This class has an average ACT of 25.6 and average high school GPA of 3.78.



**RETENTION**

**86.4%**

First-year retention (fall)

**ENROLLMENT**

**22,563**

Total enrollment (fall)

**IMPACT**

**\$80.5M**

UAB community impact

# *Guiding Principles*

## *The University of Alabama at Birmingham*

### **VISION**

One university inspiring and empowering the creation of knowledge that changes the world.

### **SHARED VALUES**

#### **Integrity**

We act ethically and do what is right.

#### **Respect**

We treat others with courtesy and civility.

#### **Diversity and inclusiveness**

Everybody counts every day. We actively seek varied perspectives in our decision-making.

#### **Collaboration**

We trust each other and work cooperatively across disciplinary boundaries in the spirit of shared governance.

### **MISSION**

UAB serves students, patients, the community and the global need for discovery, knowledge dissemination, education, creativity and the application of groundbreaking solutions. We are a leader among comprehensive public urban research universities with academic medical centers.

#### **Excellence and achievement**

We constantly innovate, solve problems and improve ourselves and others through learning.

#### **Stewardship**

Fiscal and environmental sustainability guide our decisions.

#### **Accountability**

We are answerable to each other and act with the best interests of the university in mind.

*At UAB, we have never settled for merely finding what's next — we have helped build the future through new ideas and initiatives in the classroom, the laboratory, the studio and the clinic. The coming decade presents us with opportunities and challenges. How should we build on our strong foundation in order to meet them? Forging the Future, UAB's strategic plan for the next five years of growth, offers a blueprint.*

## EDUCATION

**Strategic Goal: Offer a world-class, socially conscious education to diverse students to prepare the next generation of citizens and leaders.**

- Strategic Objective 1: Strengthen and expand innovative academic programs to enhance UAB's national and global reputation.
- Strategic Objective 2: Ensure student success through holistic development that addresses diverse needs.
- Strategic Objective 3: Create a signature core curriculum focused on modeling and developing socially conscious global citizens and leaders.
- Strategic Objective 4: Engage students, faculty, staff and community members in experiential learning.
- Strategic Objective 5: Foster access, inclusive excellence and equity in teaching, learning and mentorship development programs.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**Strategic Goal: Engage with the community in meaningful and mutually beneficial collaborations that contribute to the public good.**

- Strategic Objective 1: Expand access to community engagement resources.
- Strategic Objective 2: Develop mutually beneficial partnerships.
- Strategic Objective 3: Broaden scholarship in the field of community engagement.
- Strategic Objective 4: Integrate engagement throughout the university.

## RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Strategic Goal: Empower innovative research, scholarship and creative activities that drive knowledge creation focused on improving society.**

- Strategic Objective 1: Enhance UAB's institutional culture of collaboration and innovation.
- Strategic Objective 2: Drive research and innovation across the enterprise.
- Strategic Objective 3: Implement a campus wide effort to select and meet "grand challenges."
- Strategic Objective 4: Improve society through processes and products.

## PATIENT CARE

**Strategic Goal: Lead in the delivery of the highest-quality patient-centered integrative care that reflects our ability to translate discoveries into revolutionary therapies in one of the nation's premier academic health care centers.**

- Strategic Objective 1: Improve patient access and satisfaction through integration of clinical services across UAB's healthcare delivery entities.
- Strategic Objective 2: Invest in signature treatments that will be delivered through recognized flagship programs.
- Strategic Objective 3: Develop infrastructure to ensure statewide access to telehealth services.

# The University of Alabama System

## MISSION

The University of Alabama System, an institution of higher education created for learning, exists to improve the lives of everyone we affect through the teaching, research and service rendered by our component campuses and health system.

## VALUES

- Integrity
- Leadership
- Accountability
- Diversity, Inclusion & Respect

## VISION

We will be the preeminent public system of higher education and health care in the United States.

## CORE PRINCIPLES

- Assure that everything we do is for the purpose of improving the lives and health of the citizens of the State of Alabama.
- Make higher education accessible and diverse, prepare our students for success, and meet the workforce needs of the State.
- Be accountable for every dollar we receive while maintaining the highest standards of excellence in every program and endeavor.
- Work to lead a unified approach to improving education at every level in Alabama.
- Work to help lead a unified approach to improving the economy, opportunities, and comprehensive health care for all citizens of Alabama.
- Elevate the status, stature and influence of the University of Alabama System so that we can call on all people devoted to the University of Alabama, UAB, UAH, and the UAB Health System to unite for common purposes.



**\$10 Billion**

ANNUAL IMPACT

**45,000**

EMPLOYEES

**1.7 Million**

PATIENTS TREATED ANNUALLY

**70K+**

STUDENTS





# Student Affairs

# The Role of Student Affairs

Our Student Affairs professionals are committed to enhancing the student experience and advancing student success by providing activities, leadership opportunities, services and guidance that are necessary to support the rigorous academic learning environment at UAB. We have a responsibility to contribute to students' educational achievement while equipping them to serve as leaders in a global society. Additionally, the services we provide help to minimize obstacles that inhibit students from performing well academically.

By engaging students in learning and self-discovery beyond the classroom, we intend to help students develop values and ethical standards, foster an environment of

cultural humility, establish educational partnerships that enhance student learning, and build safe and inclusive communities necessary for student success.

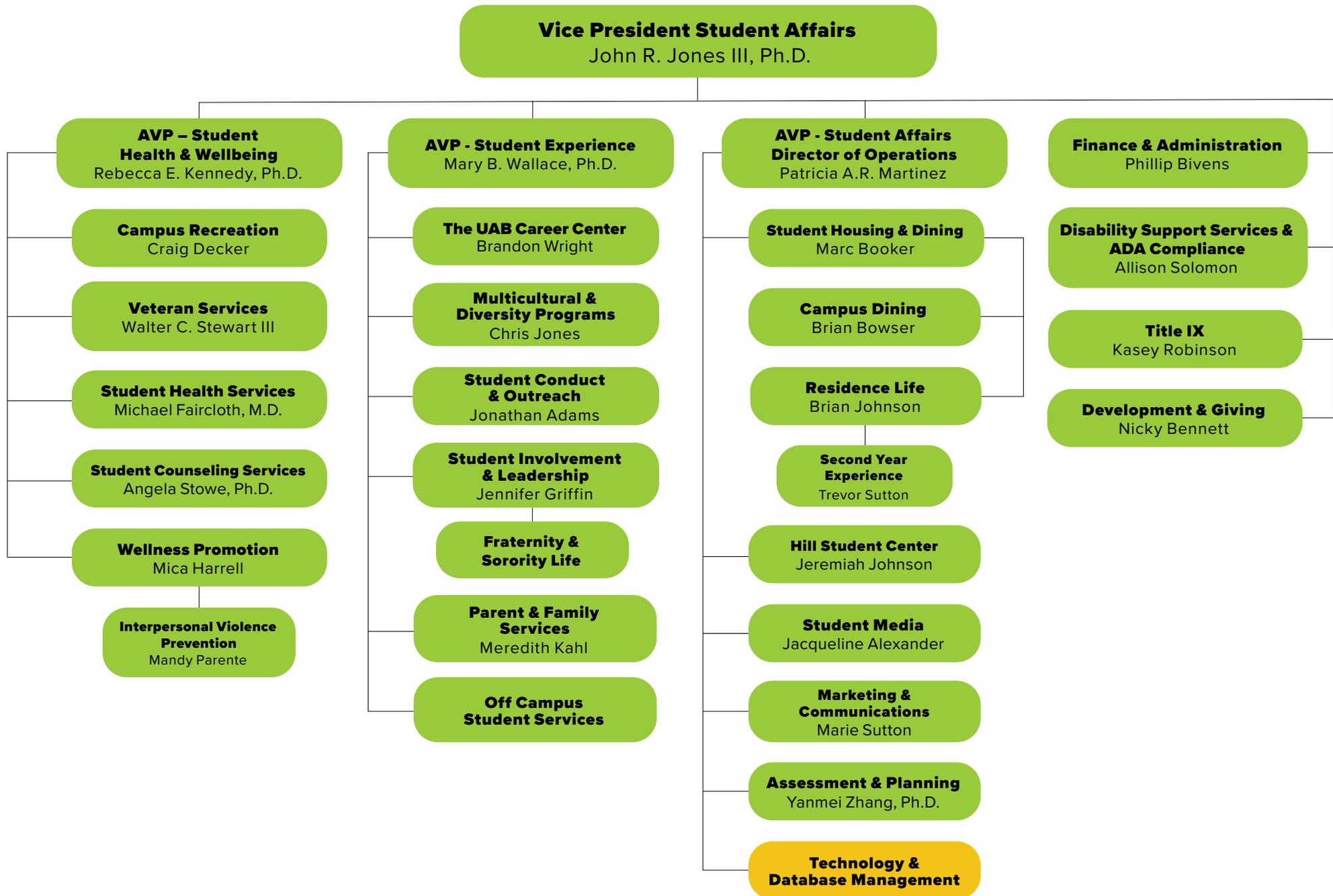
Some of our important services include university recreation, counseling, career development, health services, housing, leadership, dining and student advocacy. Our expertise centers around the highest standards, high impact practices, reducing barriers to student success and promoting safety and wellness.

As we embark in preparing the future generations of employees, caregivers, leaders, and researchers for life beyond graduation, the co-curricular opportunities provided by Student Affairs are both necessary and valuable. Current research and trends suggest that the effort placed on establishing and encouraging student learning in and out of the classroom – in some cases over instruction – is the best way to insure students' passion for lifelong learning.

Underlying the practice of student affairs are a number of core values centered on the students' holistic development and maturation. These values include student-centeredness, student advocacy, empowering students to create positive change, collaboration, accountability and integrity. In carrying out our values, we will improve student engagement, retention and persistence to graduation.



# Who We Are



# Who We Are:

## *Departmental Mission Statements*

### Assessment & Planning

The Office of Student Affairs Assessment and Planning (SAAP) serves the Division of Student Affairs by developing assessment strategies, leading and conducting assessment projects, and supporting student affairs departments in data-driven strategic planning, decision-making, and the development of programs and services.

### Campus Dining

Our mission is to provide great food and superior service at a reasonable value that both enhances to student experience and exceeds the expectations of our campus community.

### Campus Recreation

The Department of University Recreation strives to enhance transformational learning and the quality of life for the UAB student body & community by providing diverse programs & an inclusive environment.

### Counseling Services

UAB Student Counseling Services provides mental health counseling and educational support for UAB students through high quality individual, couples and group counseling, outreach programs, education and consultation. We are here to facilitate personal growth, promote multidimensional health and enhance the holistic development of our student body.



## Disability Support Services

Our philosophy promotes self-awareness, self-determination and self-advocacy by providing education to students with disabilities about their rights and responsibilities so they can make informed choices in order to meet or exceed the standards of all students at UAB.

## Hill Student Center

Hill Student Center enhances the campus environment by providing quality facilities and services to the students, university, and Birmingham community.

## Housing & Residence Life

Student Housing and Residence Life supports students utilizing a residential curriculum approach in a safe and comfortable living-learning environment that is student-centered, inclusive and focused on the holistic development of the student.

## Off-Campus Student Services

Off-Campus Student Services fosters student learning and development through programming and initiatives designed to serve and retain off-campus students.

## Marketing & Communications

As guardians of the Student Affairs brand, we will serve our students and the Division by advancing the mission through exceptional and consistent messaging and storytelling. We strive to create clear, engaging channels of communication, celebrate the student experience and provide exemplary customer service. We will do this with excellence and with industry-leading standards and practices.

## Parent & Family Services

The Office of Parent & Family Services is dedicated to creating and strengthening the relationship between parents and family members of current UAB students and the University by creating intentional programming and providing critical resources and regular communication to support student persistence and success towards graduation.





## Student Conduct & Outreach

**Student Outreach** supports students through life challenges and connects them with university and community supports to best address their diverse needs. Student Outreach provides individualized assistance to promote student safety and well-being, collaboration and resilience, personal accountability, and self-advocacy. Our team consults and collaborates with campus partners to balance the needs of individual students with those of the overall campus community.

**Student Conduct** is responsible for upholding the integrity and purpose of the university through the fair and consistent application of policies and procedures to students' behavior to ensure a community that respects the dignity and right of all persons to reach their highest potential. Through a student-focused and learning-centered lens, we utilize a comprehensive approach to informal and formal options to uphold community standards, foster personal growth and development of life skills, and promote a civil learning environment.

## **Student Health Services**

UAB Student Health Services delivers comprehensive, high quality, confidential, evidence based primary healthcare in an efficient, friendly, and caring manner to students so that they may succeed in their studies and professional lives at UAB and beyond. By promoting health education, prevention and wellness, Student Health Service contributes to student development and success.

## **Student Involvement & Leadership**

Student Involvement & Leadership exists to provide intentional experiences outside of the classroom that prepare UAB students to serve, inspire and lead.

## **Student Media**

Our mission is to be a renowned media organization that provides students with co-curricular experiences that will empower them to be great leaders, communicators and storytellers.

## **Student Multicultural & Diversity Programs**

Student Multicultural & Diversity Programs (SMDP) empowers, engages, and challenges students to increase resiliency; support retention and graduation; and develop global leaders. In order to contribute to student success, SMDP provides learning environments that value and respect underrepresented student populations through community building, education, and resources.

## **Title IX**

The mission of the Title IX Office is to ensure that UAB fulfills its commitment to provide an environment that respects the dignity of its students, faculty and staff and is free from discrimination based on sex. Ensure compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and other related federal and state civil rights laws.

## **The UAB Career Center**

To engage and empower members of the UAB community through meaningful career and experiential learning opportunities, to revolutionize the future of work.

## **Veterans Services**

To assist veterans, service members, dependents, and survivors in capitalizing on military educational benefits and promote successful transition into an academic setting. To provide, facilitate, and coordinate programs and services to meet all special needs of this population to enhance their college life and fulfill their educational goals.

## **Wellness Promotion**

Wellness Promotion is committed to empowering students with the skills and information needed to achieve health and well-being.

# *Excellence Through the Years*

*Reestablished in 2015 under the leadership of Dr. John R. Jones, UAB Student Affairs has lived up to its charge of removing barriers to student success. Here are just a few of our accomplishments:*



- Developed Experiential Learning Pathways
- Led the creation of The Blazer Way University Creed
- Expansion of Student Health Insurance Requirement
- Creation of leadership development courses in the Honors College
- Implementation of Summer Bridge Program
- Launched university-wide Suicide Prevention Taskforce
- Constructed new intramural and club sports fields
- Launched peer coaching, education and certificate programs with groups throughout the Division (Peer Career Advisors, etc.)
- Design of the new Green and Gold Residence Halls 2020
- Launched Strategic Innovation Grants
- Creation of First Year Convocation
- Launched UAB Career Closet
- Hosted a number of conferences: RA Drive In, Alabama NASPA, ACCED-I (Association of Collegiate Conference and Event Directors-International), Alabama Parent and Services Drive -In
- Established the Second-Year Experience Office
- Launched Resiliency Program
- Provided online counseling services
- Hosted critical Conversations Dialogue series
- Launched residential curriculum program
- Hosted Mental Health Townhall meetings
- Established Faculty Mental Health Advisory Board with

#### Graduate School

- Established Accessible Sexual Health Clinic
- Launched Blazer Welcome engagement programming series
- Created an Office of Parent and Family Services
- Created an Office of Off-Campus Students Services
- Hosted first transgender Conference in Alabama
- Opened of New Freshman Hall
- Established Transgender Care Multidisciplinary Services
- Created Collegiate Recovery Community
- Hosts annual Second-Year Experience Symposium
- Established a counselor-in-residence
- Facilitates Living, Learning Communities
- Hosts SafeZone training
- Led university-wide Traditions Committee
- Conducted first biennial report for Drug Free Schools Act
- Established Board Trans Support Group
- Launched QPR Suicide Prevention Program
- Created Hill Student Center International Wall
- Established an assessment culture inclusive of benchmarking, needs assessment and internal/external review
- Launched division-wide Career-Ready Competencies
- Developed and hosted university-wide memorial gathering: “Remembering Our Blazers”

# *UAB Student Affairs*



## **VISION**

Creating Transformational Experiences for Students

## **MISSION**

We create learning environments and experiences; build a culture of social justice, innovation, and wellbeing; foster a sense of belonging; remove barriers to enhance student success; and develop leaders who create change.

# A Vision for the Future

## OUR CORE VALUES

### Accountability

We take responsibility for achieving personal and professional development; set high expectations and enact changes based on data.

### Collaboration

We create intentional partnerships for the shared purpose of supporting student success and achieving university goals.

### Equity & Inclusion

We uphold the principles of fairness, equity, and social justice by creating an environment where students feel welcome across and at the intersections of their social identities.

### Excellence

We pursue the highest standard of quality in how we engage with others, manage resources, support our staff, develop ourselves and contribute to student success.

### Innovation

We strive for and advance impactful services and programs which generate contributions of distinction.

### Integrity

We commit to honesty, transparency and consistency by modeling and teaching ethical behavior.

### Wellbeing

We champion a holistic culture of resiliency, mental and physical health that improves the long-term health of our communities.







# Strategic Planning Process

# Summary of Process:

Creating an innovative strategic plan for the UAB Division of Student Affairs was a collective effort with assistance and feedback from students, colleagues and stakeholders from across the Division, UAB and the City of Birmingham. In fall 2019, under the leadership of Dr. John Jones, we assembled to build a path toward a plan.

An environmental scan was needed to assess challenges, opportunities and threats for a UAB Student Affairs in the future. Four areas of focus were identified: **UAB/Birmingham, Alabama/System, National/International and Data Collection.**

Next, a call was made across the Division for experienced colleagues to serve on the subcommittees conducting the scan. More than 40 professionals were selected to work under the charge of discovering, analyzing and synthesizing current trends, perceptions, limitations, needs and resources to be incorporated into a series of Divisional priorities that align with those of the University of Alabama System, the University of Alabama at Birmingham, the community and our students.

Over the course of ten months, colleagues evaluated current Student Affairs programs, events and initiatives

as well as conducted interviews, reviewed and analyzed countless data, hosted focus groups and facilitated surveys. Soon, the information began to take shape into what could be an innovative future Student Affairs. Then, the collective drafted a series of priorities, objectives and initiatives for the next five years. This draft of a plan was distributed with several efforts to collect feedback from the entire division, which included directors leading discussions with their staff and the distribution of a division-wide survey.

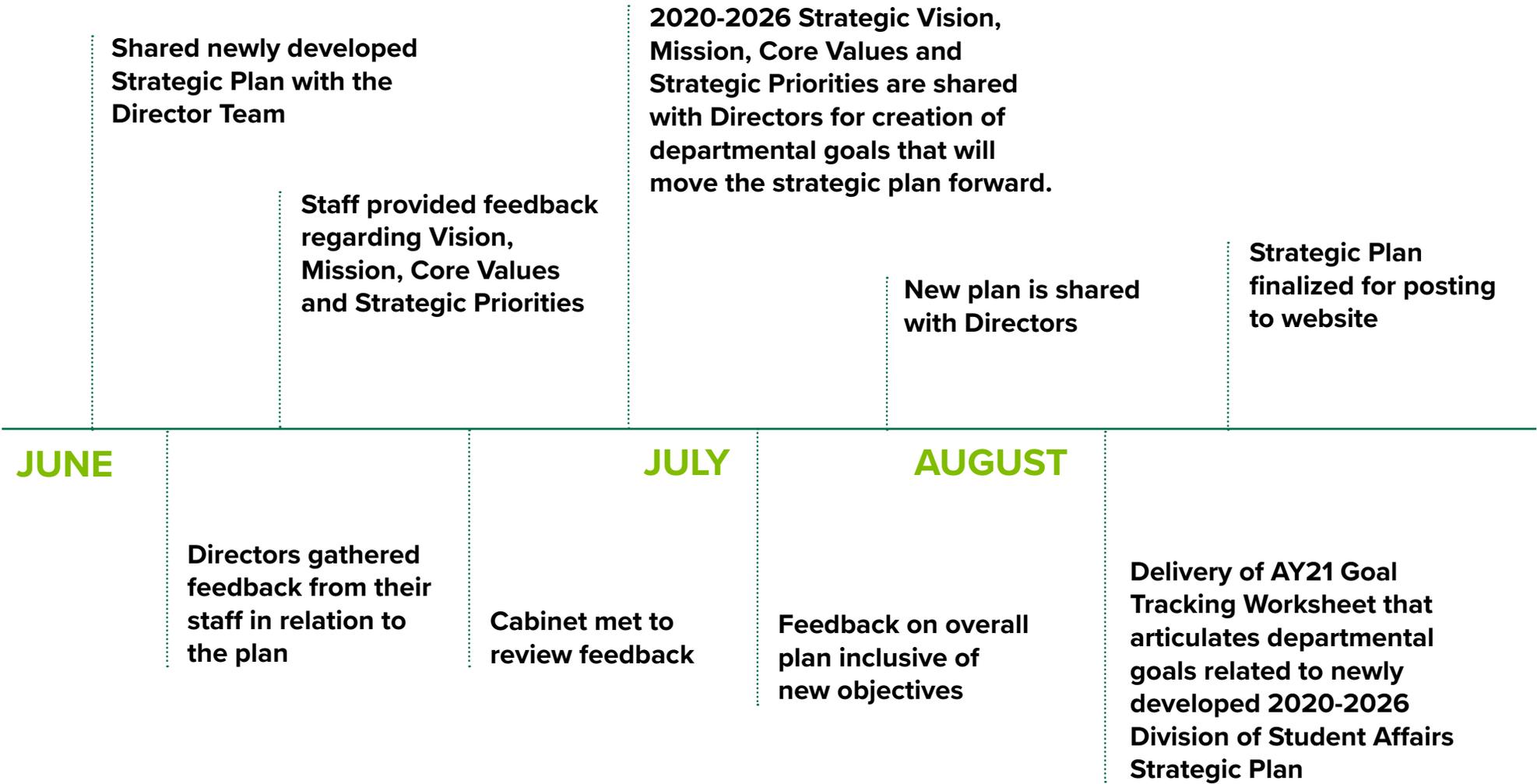
The plan presented herein outlines those priorities, objectives and goals in detail. It is a living, breathing document; some initiatives are already in motion and some areas may even have gaps that we intend to fill. This is a journey for us, with the goal of constantly revisiting our efforts as we forge a path for success.

“ It is a living breathing document; some initiatives are already in motion and some areas may have gaps that will intentionally be filled. ”



# Timeline 2019-2020

*For ten months, UAB Student Affairs worked tirelessly to create a strategic plan that would lead to a 21st century model. Below are some significant points along the way.*



# Environmental Scan

## *UAB/Birmingham Committee*

### Charge

The charge of each committee is to utilize multiple methods in order to systematically identify internal and external opportunities and threats to UAB and the communities we serve. The committee will identify trends, using a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis.

### Method

The committee identified various sources to support the data collection process of the UAB/Birmingham scan. A SWOT analysis was conducted in an effort to streamline effort. After the SWOT analysis, subcommittee members were assigned various aspects within the UAB and Birmingham community on which to focus their research.

Interview data was retrieved from both in-person interviews as well as excerpts taken from other subcommittees' interviews with university officials. Interviews were held with a myriad of campus leaders. These individuals were vital in identifying the many emerging and current trends happening at the university.

Reports and data were collected by reviewing various documents within the academic units as well as within a number of administration offices. These reports include the university's plan and the Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion's Diversity plan. Other data included Birmingham census data along with other city metrics.

During committee meetings, group members gave updates to compare information with other members as well as discussed additional information that needed to be collected.

### Results

The committee identified several clear themes that emerged from the focus groups, interviews, benchmarking, and data sources that were reviewed.



## Challenges

- Covid-19's forcing of students into an online environment
- Recovery stemming from the Covid-19 pandemic
- Underutilization of captioning services
- Limited facilities based on recent student growth
- Only 50 percent of students from Birmingham City Schools go on to get advanced education
- Many students need financial literacy before they get to UAB
- Birmingham students can only access the Birmingham Promise initiative if they meet UAB's admission criteria
  - Be eligible for UAB admission, which for fall 2020 is a minimum 20 ACT score and a minimum of 2.75 GPA. Learn more about admission requirements at UAB at [www.uab.edu/admissions](http://www.uab.edu/admissions).
  - Be admitted to UAB as a first-time, full-time freshman in the fall semester of the academic year immediately following their high school graduation.
  - Complete the FAFSA form and UAB application by Feb. 1, 2020. After this year, the deadline will be Dec. 1.
- The average rent is \$900 a month for the city of Birmingham, and that is much higher than the average student budget for rent.
- Public transportation, its routes and dependability, can be a challenge
- City of Birmingham's history of segregation and racial unrest
- Food deserts across the City of Birmingham
- Lack of adequate nearby street parking for students
- Local school system's challenges in preparing students for college

- City crime is increased:
  - 37.20 homicides per 100,000
  - 1,746.20 violent crimes per 100,000
  - 2018 data

## Trends

- Continued growth in enrollment
- Total international population has increased 22% since 2017 (13% from 2017 to 2018 and 7% from 2018 to 2019)
- Evolving definition of diversity efforts beyond race
- Growth in enrollment of Hispanic/Latino student population
- Increase in student activism
- City of Birmingham's enhanced interest in Birmingham students becoming college graduates (i.e. Birmingham Promise)
- Many academic units are pursuing partnerships with local businesses and industries in order to draw in resources
- Birmingham's population has reached a 30.5 percent attainment of a bachelor's degrees.
- World Games and national exposure via engagement with UAB Housing and Dining
- Birmingham was named as one of the most affordable cities for first-time homebuyers in the nation (Lending Tree, 2019) and 1 of the 10 most affordable markets for renters (Zillow, 2019).
- Birmingham is seventh among the 150 largest US metros for percent increase in millennial residents (ages 25-34).
- Downtown has been revitalized since 2015 at a cost of \$1.2 billion.

## Trends, continued

- No. 1 metro for health care jobs, according to Adobo
- One of the 18 most underrated cities in the U.S. - Conde Nast Traveler Magazine
- New Protective Life Stadium creates an opportunity for economic impact
- Burgeoning culinary community
- Non-smoking policy partnership between UAB and City of Birmingham
- Signature Core Curriculum will root students into the City of Birmingham via engagement opportunities

## Influences

- Goal to become a health promoting campus (First in United States)
- Desire to increase enrollment in all schools at the undergraduate and graduate levels
- Various academic units have services that duplicate the services offered through the Division of Student Affairs, which threatens its ability to serve all students.
- Greater effort to provide diversity education opportunities across campus
- Development of Campus Creed establishing a framework for university values

- 10,771 of UAB undergraduate students live off campus; 3,065 live on campus. From the Off-Campus Student Services 2019 off-campus student survey, 296/378 respondents live more than 3 miles from campus. Only 43/378 respondents say they commute to campus by walking or biking; all others drive.
- New mayor for the City of Birmingham
- One of UAB's mission pillars is community engagement
- JCCEO offers financial literacy to low-income families in Jefferson County
- United Way of Central Alabama offers "Financial Stability Partnerships" with more than 100 partners statewide to offer tax preparation, financial and housing education, etc.
- Birmingham's demographics
  - Black or African American: 70.52%
  - White: 25.29%
  - Two or more races: 1.57%
  - Other race: 1.45%
  - Asian: 0.93%
  - Native American: 0.22%
  - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 0.02%





- Birmingham Housing Market Statistics from Trulia.com:
  - Average Listing Price: \$195,275 (Trulia)
  - Median Rent Per Month: \$900
  - Price Per Sqft: \$113
  - Median Household Income: \$36,004
  - Homeowners: 62%
  - Single Residents: 38%
  - Median Age: 38
  - College Educated: 29%
  - Transportation: 99% people commute by car
- New developments such as the Baker's Row Apartments near Railroad Park (7-story, 207-unit apartment building for UAB students) and Ascend Apartments in Five Points
- Signature Core Curriculum with co-curricular component
  - Plans to partner with local organizations and entities to give student immersive out-of-classroom learning experiences tied to the history of the City of Birmingham
- Birmingham is the 12th largest banking center in the nation and third in the Southeast.
- Birmingham was voted the #1 Best City for Millennial Entrepreneurs (Thumbtack, 2015) based on friendliness of local tax laws, licensing rules, and the regulatory environment.
- 20,000 prospective employees graduate annually from Birmingham's region universities
- Cost of living is 85 percent of the national average
- Birmingham is a national leader in urban green spaces. Thousands of wooded acres for biking and hiking are within minutes of downtown in area parks.
- Birmingham's role in America's Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s placed the city at the center of the most significant domestic drama of the 20th The city's Civil Rights District is now designated a National Monument.

## Discussion

After a thorough, broad, and deep environmental scan of the state of Alabama and the UAB system, the following themes emerged consistently and repeatedly across all data sources:

The impact of Covid-19 on the experiences of students moving forward brings much uncertainty to the division's plan moving forward. It is imperative that the division implement a plan that accounts for the broad impacts that will certainly play a role in the development of programs, activities, and services moving forward.

The Birmingham Promise initiative stemming from the City of Birmingham presents an opportunity for retaining and graduating a group of students that could be a new segment of students on campus. The division plan should consider retention and graduation strategies that considers more students who are coming from schools who are less resourced.

Lastly, the continued growth of the institution presents some unique challenges and opportunities for the division. If growth continues, the physical infrastructure of campus will change along with the academic and co-curricular resources for students.





## State/UA System Committee

### Charge

The charge of each committee is to utilize multiple methods in order to systematically identify internal and external opportunities and threats to UAB and the communities we serve. The committee will identify challenges, influences and trends, using a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis.

### Method

The committee identified a comprehensive list of sources to research for the state and UA system environmental scan. In order to keep our focus on the state and system levels, two target audiences were identified for focus groups, including UAB Trailblazers and UAB Admission Counselors.

Benchmarking research included the UA System institutions, The University of Alabama and The University of Alabama at Huntsville. Additionally, online benchmarking research of state school's websites for Student Affairs divisions was conducted for several additional schools, as listed in the Data Sources Table. Schools were evaluated based on existence of a Division of Student Affairs or a comparable organization within their institution and availability of a Strategic Plan.

Benchmarking was also conducted for state professional networks and organizations including NASPA Alabama, the Alabama

Association for Higher Education Diversity Officers, disability, counseling, facilities, parent and family programs, and career services. Benchmarking data included gathering responses from institutions around their challenges, influences and trends and identifying themes across the state from these networks and organizations.

Interviews were conducted with key leadership in order to obtain their perspectives, ideas, and experiences in higher education within the state of Alabama and the UA System in regard to challenges, influences, and trends.

Statewide reports reviewed and discussed included the First Destination Survey, the Student Clearinghouse, and all data related to enrollment trends for Alabama.

During committee meetings, group members presented their findings and through group discussion, themes were identified that emerged from the multiple data sources.

### Results

The committee identified several clear themes (which follow) from the focus groups, interviews, benchmarking, and data sources.

## Challenges

- The decrease in population of high school students (future college students) has numerous significant implications.
  - Increased competition for students among universities
  - Risk for decrease in state appropriations: a decrease in the population in the state may result in less spending in the state, which means less money for education
- Alabama has a shortage of qualified, skilled people for the workforce
  - Alabama workforce demonstrates lack of career development in soft-skills; individuals may be able to obtain a job, they are losing jobs based on skills that would be referred to as “soft skills” (not industry-specific skills)
- Negative impact on the economy, also impacts why Alabama is not attractive to outside organizations
- Alabama is not intrinsically attractive to those outside the state/nation. Alabama is not attracting people to our state. Several themes emerged that may provide reasons for this:
  - Economy is suffering, in part to the under-developed workforce, which impacts the economy
  - Alabama is “lagging behind” in the broad definition of diversity and providing a place where people want to move
- Across the state of Alabama, institutions are consistently reporting the demand for mental health services for students continues to increase each year
  - Space is a challenge
  - Shortage of adequate staffing
  - Increase in severity, crisis, suicidality of students
- The increase of the attractiveness of 2-year and on-the-job training has increased & creates competition for 4-year institutions, forcing 4-year institutions to reconsider offerings outside the traditional undergraduate degree.
- Increasing costs of education and socioeconomic impacts on students with diverse backgrounds
- Across the state of Alabama, institutions are consistently reporting a continued increase of students with disabilities seeking services; meeting increased demand for test proctoring and faculty needs creating challenges to meet the needs for those providing services





## Trends

- Increase in 2-year institution transfers to UAB from within the state
- Increase in Hispanic population overall in the state
- Increased utilization of counseling services at state institutions
- Enrollment is increasing at UAB
- Online enrollment is increasing at UAB and other institutions
- Online offerings allow individuals with some college credits to complete degrees in a non-traditional format
- Diversity and inclusion efforts provide an educational opportunity regarding first amendment understanding/protections
  - Institutions are providing a space to learn, experience others, and not looking to silence opposing positions
- Students seem to lack an overall ability to manage and cope with stress
- Steadily increasing numbers of students with disabilities registering for services

## Influences

- UA System in-state tuition freeze
- Online enrollment of out of state students; impact on state
- Population decrease for college-age Alabama residents
- Opportunity for 2-year and on-the-job training, certificates, and other credentialing may offer opportunity for 4-year institutions to remain attractive and relevant
- Institutions in the state of Alabama have university diversity offices and their own strategic plans



## Discussion

After a thorough, broad, and deep environmental scan of the state of Alabama and the UAB system, the following themes emerged consistently and repeatedly across all data sources:

1. The decrease in the high school population in Alabama is going to directly impact higher education in the state of Alabama resulting in increased competition for students, and a risk of decreased state appropriations because the impact this decreasing population will have on spending and the Alabama economy.
2. The Alabama workforce has a significant influence on institutions of higher education and the following factors are considerations as we develop a plan to impact our students' success
  - a. The increase of individuals seeking 2-year and on-the-job continuing education is already resulting in UAB focusing efforts on certificate programs and other non-degree educational options; this changes the student demographics on campus
  - b. To maintain a strong economy, Alabama must have a skilled and healthy workforce. As the largest employer in the state of Alabama and a significant economic force in the state, UAB must develop students who can be successful in employment post-graduation
  - c. What role does UAB have in helping raise the attractability of Alabama to those outside the state of Alabama, including recruiting students, families, domestic and international employees?
3. Colleges across the state are concerned about mental health and wellbeing of students.
  - a. State colleges and universities are all reporting increased utilization and demand for mental health resources.
  - b. Institutions are also all reporting that they are struggling to keep up with the demand and to provide the personnel and physical space to provide these services.
  - c. The number of students who are registering with Disability Support Services offices continues to increase each year, including the number of students with mental health and psychiatric concerns.
  - d. Students seem to lack an overall ability to manage and cope with stress

# National/International Committee

## Charge

The charge of each committee is to utilize multiple methods in order to systematically identify internal and external opportunities and threats to UAB and the communities we serve. The committee will identify trends, using a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis.

## Method

Using a mixed-method approach to data collection, the committee implemented several research methods: surveys, interviews, and focus group to systemically identify national and international challenges, influences, or trends that may affect higher education over the next five years.

Surveys were distributed to three participant groups: senior-level Student Affairs administrators at UAB peer institutions, notable Student Affairs practitioners from across the country, and focus group participants. All surveys consisted of one multiple-select question and one to two open-ended questions. The multiple-select question asked respondents to identify the top three items that they feel are most likely to impact Higher Education, Student Affairs, and students over the next five years. Open-ended questions allowed survey participants to share additional information in an open text format.

The committee conducted several interviews with UAB administrators, UAB Student Affairs staff, community partners, and external UAB Higher Education practitioners to gather data about challenges, influences, or trends that may affect higher education on a national or international level over the next five years. In total, members of the committee conducted 14 interviews.

A focus group was held with international students to capture their experiences and views as a student attending college in a country that differs from their home country. Participants were recruited by outreaching to students who served as employees of the UAB University Recreation Center and International Mentors in the Office of Student Multicultural Diversity Programs. Of the eight students invited to participate in the focus group, six choose to do so. Participants were asked a series of eight open-ended questions.

A focus group was held with SGA leadership in order to gather feedback and insight specific to student leadership across various academic areas for the undergraduate population. The UAB SGA allowed representatives from the Student Affairs Strategic Planning Team to attend their monthly meeting and spend thirty minutes talking to students, asking questions, and inviting feedback. Leaders from the SGA were present, and the majority of Senators were present as a quorum was met. An introduction was provided to the focus group which addressed the purpose of the focus group, a review of the departments within Student Affairs, the current Student Affairs Strategic Plan and the process of developing a Strategic Plan for the next five years. Students were asked a series of eight open-ended questions. Feedback was collected by the Student Affairs facilitators.

Once data from all sources was collected, members of the committee identified key themes that emerged from the multiple sources.

## Results

The committee identified several clear themes from the focus groups, interviews, benchmarking, and data sources noted on the following sections.

## Challenges

- Current Political Climate
  - Social and political environment continues to be a challenge for international recruitment leading to a decrease in international student enrollment.
  - Title IX regulations and rollback on policy guidelines and anti-discrimination laws.
- College Student Health and General Wellness
  - Increased number of students reporting mental health concerns. Mental health and related issues such as stress, anxiety, and depression rank at the top of health concerns on campuses, as rates of suicide and withdrawal from school have increased. Anxiety continues to be the number one presenting concern.
  - Mental health demand and utilization of services on college campuses have been increasing steadily and quickly each year.
  - Educating students on what is fact versus what might be construed in a way that is used to market products. Examples of this may be Instagram influencers who push products as “weight loss magic” without any research to back it up.
  - Increased number of college-age students presenting signs of food and housing insecurities.
- Impact of the 2008 Recession
- Recruitment/Enrollment
  - Increased competition for prospective students at four-year schools as well as two-year trade schools
  - Decline in available number of college-age students. Expected decrease in enrollment institutions across the country.
- Student Loan Debt/Affordability
  - Student debt is at an all-time high. Students and parents will likely demand transparency regarding affordability of an education.
    - Increased need in scholarships
    - Increased need in funding assistance





## Trends

- College Student Health and General Wellness
  - Development of prevention and education efforts that can help students learn resiliency, coping skills, self-care, and how to address problems or concerns.
  - Increase number of faculty and staff presenting signs of mental distress
- Activism
  - Student expectations and need for safe and supportive environments in which they can safely voice their beliefs, opinions, and concerns.

## Influences

- Increase in the number for students that are choosing to attend schools based on expected job placement after graduation.
- Increase in competition to recruit students in general as well as for online programs



## Discussion

The National/International Committee coordinated and executed an extensive environmental scan that utilized multiple approaches to collect and analyze data on the national and international level. Focus groups, surveying, interviewing, as well as research collection/analysis was utilized by the committee to identify the most consistent themes through our process. Many of the same challenges, influences, and trends consistently presented, which support the reliability of the data and conclusions found in this report. The following themes emerged consistently and repeatedly across all data sources:

- The impact of the 2008 recession, resulting in the decline of college-age students available to attend college. During this time, it is expected that we will see a drop-in student enrollment across the country, increase competition for students from colleges and universities, an increase in university closures, and an increase in students choosing to attend 4-year institutions.
- College student mental health continues to be a top concern for faculty, staff, and students. Anxiety is the top presenting concern among college students, followed by depression, and relationship problems. Development of prevention strategies that promote emotional well-being, with the goal of reducing suicide and substance abuse, continues to be a top priority for Student Affairs practitioners.
- Specific focus was aimed to assess the international student population at UAB. Current UAB international students, administrators at UAB as well as Student Affairs professionals across the country, consistently identified the following as the “top” issues facing our current and potential international students: employment opportunities, safety (travel, on-campus identity), online student needs, affordability (meeting academic and basic needs).
- College student loan debt among all college students continues to be a consistent challenge. In recent years, the average cost to attend a public four-year institution has more than tripled. Discussions among college administrators include the need to increase scholarships and funding assistance.
- Student activism continues to be a leading concern and discussion topic at colleges and universities across the nation. Student activist efforts continue to demand administrative accountability around issues of equity and inclusion on campus. These movements demand engagement and support from administrators to honor the students’ experiences and efforts as well as to respect institutional commitments to advance equity and inclusion.



# Data Collection & Curation

## Charge

The Data Collection and Curation Committee is responsible for aggregating data into a format for review, identifying trends inherent in the data, areas of distinction, opportunities and needs within the division for the purpose of the development of strategic priorities.

## Method

The interdisciplinary committee, representing nine areas within the Division of Student Affairs, reviewed institutional, divisional, and departmental data collected since 2016. Extensive assessment resources were reviewed to identify challenges, influences, and trends within the data. The review revealed perceptions and outcomes related to student engagement, removal of barriers, impact on the student experience, supporting students through the services offered within the Division of Student Affairs, and future focus for the division. A stakeholder survey was conducted for campus collaborators to identify challenges, influences, and trends, based on findings from the data review. Student focus groups were also conducted to identify student perspectives and preferences.



The following Challenges, Influences, and Trends emerged from the review of the existing data, surveys, and focus groups with students:

### Challenges:

- Campus safety
- Improving four year and six year graduation rates
- Mitigating barriers to student success
- Mental Health support
- Systematically measuring the impact of student involvement on retention and graduation
- Staying responsive to changing student needs during Five-Year Strategic Plan cycle
- Effective partnerships with university constituents and external stakeholders
- Understanding of shared campus responsibility of emotional, physical, and mental well-being
- Minimizing impact of academic stress on student success (resilience/engagement)
- Robust/Interactive online services – after hours, commuter, non-traditional
- Academic support role in student success outside Division of Student Affairs
- Faculty role in student engagement and retention

### Influences:

- Legal and political impact of higher education
- Demand for access to services, information, and support through technology
- State and Federal immigration policies on international enrollment and retention
- Core curriculum on-ramp/Birmingham as classroom
- Enrollment targets impact on scaling services for additional students

- Excellent reputation among prospective students, families and community
- Student-centered programs and services connecting students through engagement and services
- Collaborative and supportive relationships with student leadership
- Responsive to feedback from students, faculty, staff and external stakeholders
- Accessibility
- Development of Social Justice competency
- Signature Core Curriculum

### Trends:

- Increase in individualized services to meet unique needs/remove barriers
- Data-driven planning and programming
- Online enrollment growth
- Supporting students through enhanced technology/online services
- Increase in student participation of programs and services
- Embracing and celebrating our diverse campus
- Financial resource constraints and allocation of funding
- Retention strategy development
- Rising occurrence and complexity of student mental health needs/support
- Ability to remain current with student technology trends
- Changing student demographics and ability to forecast into programs and services
- Potential rising cost of attendance
- Student Onboarding, Expectation Guidance, Sense of Belonging
- Leveraging unique UAB student attributes to provide unique and distinct best practices



## Discussion

The Data Collection Committee has identified these fundamental questions and critical challenges:

### **The role of the Division of Student Affairs in student success:**

- Resources to support student college experience/sense of belonging and to develop students holistically
- Meeting student needs beyond academics
- Student advocacy at the highest level
- Additional first generation and transfer student support
- Student financial literacy support
- Connecting students to resources and services
- Focusing on students' resilience

### **Academic Affairs/Student Affairs partnership to enhance student success:**

- Continued and strategic partnership
- Extracurricular/developing more high impact practices like service learning/experiential learning
- Intentional collaboration with high impact practices
- Continued integration of student affairs, academic advising, and faculty to create a more holistic community for students
- Campus-wide peer mentoring training and development
- Creative integration of student affairs into the classroom discussion/activities

### **Student Engagement, Involvement, and Success:**

- Program attendance, organization involvement, and relationships with faculty, staff, and peers have impact on student sense of belonging
- Student define success as getting good grades, obtaining a degree, preparing for after college, developing relationships, and learning new skill. They identified connections, involvement, and student programs and services as contributors to student success
- Students would like to have:
  - Safe spaces and inclusive campus community
  - More opportunities to connect with students with similar interests and diverse others
  - Weekend programming
  - More support for Fraternity & Sorority life- we have diverse community
  - Programs for graduate students
  - Programs for transfer students
  - Focus more on out of state students



# Strategic Priorities





# Strategic Priorities



*With our Strategic Priorities as our guide, goals and objectives were created by all Student Affairs departments. Our goals provide focused stewardship and a pathway of service that contributes to student success.*

## WELLBEING

We create supportive, sustainable campus environments in which students thrive and flourish. We promote holistic mental and physical health, addressing issues of resilience, access to nutritious food, health care, physical activity, personal development, social connection and active citizenship.

## INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

While recognizing and embracing UAB's distinctive history and location, we create and sustain an inclusive community that recognizes and celebrates our diversity. We create brave, safe spaces for success, meaningful connections and welcoming environments intentionally designed to meet the needs of all its members.



## **ENGAGEMENT & LEARNING**

We are committed to student success and create learning opportunities and pathways for student involvement beyond the classroom. Students apply and practice classroom learning through active participation in co-curricular experiences that help them attain their personal, professional, and academic goals.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

We promote active commitment to our communities by contributing knowledge, relationships, partnerships and expertise for the enrichment of society.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL ENHANCEMENT**

We are committed to providing a robust, responsive organization that is representative of and meets the needs of our students. We optimize the human, financial, and operational resources in key functional and student support areas to fully develop the Division's capacity for positively shaping the student experience and professional experience of our staff.

# Strategic Objectives

## WELLBEING

We create supportive, sustainable campus environments in which students thrive and flourish. We promote holistic mental and physical health, addressing issues of resilience, access to nutritious food, health care, physical activity, personal development, social connection and active citizenship.

### Objectives:

- **Promote behaviors that enhance holistic health and safety**
- **Encourage awareness and impact of behavior on the greater environment**

## INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

While recognizing and embracing UAB's distinctive history and location, we create and sustain an inclusive community that recognizes and celebrates our diversity. We create brave, safe spaces for success, meaningful connections and welcoming environments intentionally designed to meet the needs of all its members.

### Objectives:

- **Cultivate and demonstrate a culture of inclusion and social justice through education/training, programming initiatives, dialogue opportunities, leadership development and socially just policies, guidelines, and processes**
- **Highlight and celebrate a welcoming, supportive and affirming community**
- **Create brave and safe spaces for self-discovery, learning and action**

## ENGAGEMENT & LEARNING

We are committed to student success and create learning opportunities and pathways for student involvement beyond the classroom. Students apply and practice classroom learning through active participation in co-curricular experiences that help them attain their personal, professional, and academic goals.

### Objectives:

- **Foster student engagement by providing multiple means of access and opportunity**
- **Promote student growth and self-discovery**
- **Provide competency development to enhance leadership and career readiness**

## ORGANIZATIONAL ENHANCEMENT

We are committed to providing a robust, responsive organization that is representative of and meets the needs of our students. We optimize the human, financial, and operational resources in key functional and student support areas to fully develop the Division's capacity for positively shaping the student experience and professional experience of our staff.

### Objectives:

- **Demonstrate efficient and appropriate use of resources in support of student success**
- **Recruit and retain the best and most-qualified professionals**
- **Create and explore new revenue sources and opportunities to achieve the Student Affairs vision and mission**
- **Create a culture of staff professional development and skill enhancement**
- **Utilize assessment to inform decision making**

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We promote active commitment to our communities by contributing knowledge, relationships, partnerships and expertise for the enrichment of society.

### Objectives:

- **Foster collaboration that promotes learning and service**
- **Create opportunities that engage and support students' development for active citizenship**
- **Expand access to community engagement resources (i.e. involvement with the Grand Challenge community, strategies to develop leadership through service, and opportunities to engage in ongoing service)**
- **Establish a culture of civic responsibility**

# Goals & Implementation

## *Creating Transformational Experiences for Students*

### **GOAL 1: WELLBEING**

We create supportive, sustainable campus environments in which students thrive and flourish. We promote holistic mental and physical health, addressing issues of resilience, access to nutritious food, health care, physical activity, personal development, social connection and active citizenship.

#### **1.1 Promote behaviors that enhance holistic health and safety.**

- 1.1.1. Launch and coordinate the UAB Coalition for Basic Needs in order to increase awareness of college basic needs issues on UAB's campus, cultivate a strong institutional network of key stakeholders seeking to address basic needs insecurities, and support office in the development and implementation of strategies to promote student success through reduction and elimination of basic needs insecurities. *Student Conduct & Outreach*
- 1.1.2. By Spring 2021, develop and launch a communications campaign that will promote UAB Student Affairs and its programs and services as a leader in providing holistic support for students during this pandemic. *Marketing & Communications*
- 1.1.3. The Office of Student Involvement & Leadership will develop strategies to promote holistic wellbeing of students by emphasizing 1) respect for self and others, 2) harmony between responsibilities and social connections, and 3) self-advocacy and resiliency. *Student Involvement & Leadership*
- 1.1.4. Develop and support a culture of community health and safety through the implementation and enforcement of COVID compliance policies, protocols, and procedures by March 2021. *Student Housing & Residence Life*
- 1.1.5. Develop and implement phased strategic plan for integrating the Collegiate Recovery Community programs, services, staff, and budget into the Student Counseling Services departmental functions. *Student Counseling Services*



- 1.1.6. Promote holistic mental and physical health for the UAB community through specific programming initiatives. *University Recreation*
- 1.1.7. Optimize COVID-19 Response. *Student Health*
- 1.1.8. Implement influenza vaccine requirement for UAB Campus. *Student Health*
- 1.1.9. Expand Green Zone Training. *Veterans Services*
- 1.1.10. Develop and Assess a Virtual/Online Take Back the Night. *Wellness Promotion*
- 1.1.11. Assess University Compliance for the Safe and Drug Free Schools Act by Completing the Biennial Review Report (August 1, 2018 - July 31, 2020). *Wellness Promotion*

## **1.2 Encourage awareness and impact of behavior on the greater environment**

- 1.2.1. Through quality service provision, Disability Support Services will foster independent, self-determined students in order to increase student retention and achievement. *Disability Support Services*
- 1.2.2. By April 2021 Campus Dining will have implemented additional strategies in collaboration with the HSC Blazer Kitchen to support fighting Food Insecurity issues within the student body. Through increasing new annual opportunities for students and Dining to support awareness by creating a launch pad of purpose-fueled experiences leveraging the power of our business to generate impact within the community. *Campus Dining*
- 1.2.3. The Office of Parent & Family Services will collaborate with the Title IX Office and Wellness Promotion during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 academic year to create a guide designed to assist family members in having tough conversations around the topics of sexual assault and consent, to be distributed in Summer 2021 at new student orientations. *Parent & Family Services/Title IX*



## GOAL 2: INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

While recognizing and embracing UAB's location and history, we create and sustain an inclusive community that recognizes and celebrates our diversity. We create brave, safe spaces for success, meaningful connections and welcoming environments intentionally designed to meet the needs of all its members.

### **2.1 Cultivate and demonstrate a culture of inclusion and social justice through education/training, programming initiatives, dialogue opportunities, leadership development and socially just policies, guidelines, and processes**

- 2.1.1. To address food insecurity needs on campus, address access to nutritious food, and remove barriers impacting students' abilities to meet their academic and personal goals, develop and implement strategies to provide students access to readily available, nutritious food resources through Blazer Kitchen at Hill Student Center. *Student Conduct & Outreach*
- 2.1.2. The Office of Student Involvement & Leadership will build inclusive communities within councils and student organizations by providing opportunities for students to develop and understand their own identities, how identities contribute to the larger community, and how they can create inclusive spaces and programs by understanding identities and perspectives that are different from their own. *Student Involvement & Leadership*
- 2.1.3. Create virtual/remote learning experiences, in collaboration with instructors and student organization, focused on self-awareness, identity development, and inter/interpersonal understanding of systems of oppression and privilege. *Student Multicultural & Diversity Programs*
- 2.1.4. Disability Support Services will promote awareness of disability through education and programming to help the UAB community reframe disability as part of diversity. *Disability Support Services*
- 2.1.5. By March 2021, develop a Title IX Taskforce consisting of 20 campus representative who will be responsible for providing advice to the Title IX Team on a range of issues, such campus culture, training and educational programming, as well as complaint and disciplinary process. *Title IX*



2.1.6. To support staff of all backgrounds in feeling included and welcomed in a healthcare environment. *Student Health*

## **2.2 Highlight and celebrate a welcoming, supportive and affirming community**

2.2.1. By spring 2021, ensure that all marketing materials and student stories reflect, celebrate and is assessable to the diverse and inclusive communities of UAB.

*Marketing & Communications*

## **2.3 Create brave and safe spaces for self-discovery, learning and action**

2.3.1. Replicate and pivot in-person programs to use virtual interfaces in an effort to increase online engagement and ensure programs are accessible to online learners, students with disabilities, and commuters. *Student Multicultural & Diversity Programs*



## GOAL 3: ENGAGEMENT AND LEARNING

We are committed to student success and create learning opportunities and pathways for student involvement beyond the classroom. Students apply and practice classroom learning through active participation in co-curricular experiences that help them attain their personal, professional, and academic goals. Through transformational educational experiences, students begin a journey of self-discovery that leads to identifying purpose.

### 3.1. Foster student engagement by providing multiple means of access and opportunity

- 3.1.1. The Office of Student Involvement & Leadership will utilize technology and other strategies to foster students' self-discovery and exposure to diverse perspectives by expanding opportunities for student learning and development based on principles of active learning. *Student Involvement & Leadership*
- 3.1.2. Based on a random sample of off-campus students with 384 respondents, 39% (151 off-campus students) self-reported involvement in a Registered Student Organization (RSO). Off-campus student involvement in RSOs will increase by 6% (totaling 45%) by the implementation of the next survey in Fall 2020, consistent with the 6% involvement increase from 2018 to 2019 (33% to 39%). *Off Campus Student Services*
- 3.1.3. By spring 2021, launch a student-led digital platform to promote and support community conversations among UAB students as well as give them a voice for feedback and an opportunity to directly engage with staff and resources resulting in improved satisfaction of their UAB experience. *Marketing & Communication*
- 3.1.4. Create multi-campus student media network to promote collaboration among system campuses and provide additional avenues for student work. *Student Media*
- 3.1.5. Collaborate with UAB Writing Center and the Vulcan Materials Academic Success Center to develop virtual engagement strategies to support student academic success. *Student Housing & Residence Life*

3.1.6. For AY21 we will have partnered with Second Year Experience to increase student meal plan capture rates from first-to-second year and second-to-third year meal plan participants by 5%. Through collaboration on four key annual dining promotions to increase meal plan participation and quantitative value for dining services as well as meal plan usage. *Campus Dining*

### **3.2. Promote student growth and self-discovery**

3.2.1. To provide increased opportunities for growth and self-discovery as a result of participation in the student conduct process, (a) review/revise current sanction options, (b) develop/implement new sanction options, and (c) develop/implement learning outcomes for identified standard sanctions. *Student Conduct & Outreach*

3.2.2. To adequately promote and assess student engagement and learning, develop and implement a comprehensive, transparent assessment plan for the office, including (a) development and implementation of office mission, vision, and values statement; (b) development and implementation of function mission statements and learning outcomes; and (c) development and implementation of assessment tools to measure engagement, learning, and growth as a result of experiences. *Student Conduct & Outreach*

3.2.3. To assist with the retention strategy at UAB, develop additional programming within the first four weeks of fall and spring semesters and during financial deadline timeframes to provide in-the-moment resources and programs for off-campus students. Increase current retention rates of off-campus students (The on-campus retention rate from Fall 2019 to Spring 2020 is 95.4%, while the off-campus retention rate is 92.8%. The on-campus retention rate from Fall 2018 to Fall 2019 is 84.3%, while the off-campus retention rate is 79.6%. At this time, we are awaiting Fall 2019 to Fall 2020 retention data). *Off Campus Student Services*

3.2.4. In partnership with eLearning, create an online Blazers Bounce Back resiliency canvas course that teaches the 4Rs of Resiliency. This course will launch in the Fall of 2020. *Student Counseling Services*

3.2.5. Increase Student Veterans Association participation by 10%. *Veterans Services*

### 3.3. Provide competency development to enhance leadership and career readiness

- 3.3.1. During AY21 (May 1, 2020 to April 30, 2021), connect 544 (2% increase from AY19) (non-unique) employers with 3,614 (2% increase from AY19) (non-unique) students, averaging 6.6 student interactions per employer, achieving increased student-employer connections. *UAB Career Center*
- 3.3.2. The Career Education Team will capitalize on momentum and scale services through enhancements to the UAB Career Center Canvas course including creation of two (2) new modules and integration into at least ten (10) academic courses, expansion of the UAB Career Influencer Network to reach at least one hundred and fifty (150) faculty and staff members, the launch of structured group appointments focusing on four (4) targeted content areas, and redesign of two (2) academic career course offerings to guide the Blazer community forward to lifelong career success. *UAB Career Center*
- 3.3.3. Transition mentor training efforts into a peer coaching model in an effort to develop peer leadership programs focused on the retention and graduation rates of participants. *Student Multicultural & Diversity Programs*
- 3.3.4. In an effort to develop a prominent student leadership development program, the Hill Student Center Operations will create and pilot a leadership cohort that provides transformational learning experiences meant to promote success in personal, professional, and academic goals in accordance with CAS standards and NACE Career Readiness Competencies. *Hill Student Center*
- 3.3.5. Enhance the Student Media careers exploration program to inform and empower students to pursue desired career paths. *Student Media*
- 3.3.6. Enhance the educational experiences for student participants and employees. *University Recreation*
- 3.3.7. Beginning Spring of 2021, increase student sub-populations' (residential/cohort-based/etc.) preparedness to engage in difficult conversations about sexual activity and relationships through design and implementing at least one re-occurring ~2hr immersive learning activity for UAB students, which will be offered at least once per semester in collaboration with the Counseling Program in the College of Education. *Title IX*

## GOAL 4: ORGANIZATIONAL ENHANCEMENT

We are committed to providing a robust, responsive organization that is representative of and meets the needs of our students. We optimize the human, financial, and operational resources in key functional and student support areas to fully develop the Division's capacity for positively shaping the student experience and professional experience of our staff.

### 4.1. Demonstrate efficient and appropriate use of resources in support of student success

- 4.1.1. Increase off-campus housing resources for students by continuing to develop relationships with apartment complexes and property management companies. Companies who advertise on the Off-Campus Housing Website will increase from 21 companies to 27 companies, consistent with the 6-company increase from 2019-2020. *Off Campus Student Services*
- 4.1.2. Develop strategies to enhance existing human, financial, and operational resources in order to meet professional development needs and develop quality student programs and services. *Student Involvement & Leadership*
- 4.1.3. As the leading destination for campus events, Hill Student Center will develop an enhanced reservation platform which streamlines the client experience and improves department efficiency through increased utilization of the online reservation system. *Hill Student Center*
- 4.1.4. By Spring 2021, establish a student engagement arm of Marketing & Communications (to include a student marketing council, street team, interns, etc.) that will provide regular feedback, collect data and lead initiatives that will inform and strengthen the effectiveness of our practice of marketing to UAB students. *Marketing & Communications*
- 4.1.5. Develop student-created digital publications to provide students opportunity to demonstrate classroom learning while increasing overall student reach. *Student Media*
- 4.1.6. Following a recommendation of the External Review Committee, enhance department process functionalities by upgrading to Mercury 4. *Student Housing & Residence Life*

- 4.1.7. Develop a plan, along with relevant procedures and supporting documents, for embedding distance counseling services into regular operations of SCS services. *Student Counseling Services*
- 4.1.8. Design and implement a financial recovery plan to change the financial trajectory of SHS. *Student Health Services*
- 4.1.9. Adapt Services to Virtual Format for Fall 2020. *Veterans Services*
- 4.1.10. Complete Internal CAS Review for Health Promotion Services. *Wellness Promotion*



## **4.2. Recruit and retain the best and most qualified professionals**

### **4.3. Create and explore new revenue sources and opportunities to achieve the Student Affairs vision and mission.**

- 4.3.1. The Office of Parent & Family Services will raise \$25,000 during the 2020-2021 year. To reach this goal the Office of Parent & Family Services will institute multiple programs including fundraisers, a virtual 5k, a sponsorship program and Office of Annual Giving and Development. *Parent & Family Services*
- 4.3.2. Utilize student-powered creative services agency to develop student learning while increasing services and revenue. *Student Media*

### **4.4. Create a culture of staff professional development and skill enhancement**

- 4.4.1. As a premiere Student Center, and in alignment with CAS standards, Hill Student Center will develop a comprehensive library of emergency action plans (EAPs) and will facilitate knowledge acquisition to occupants, staff and students through educational modules and training exercises. *Hill Student Center*
- 4.4.2. Disability Support Services will effectively articulate, educate, and ensure an understanding of institutional compliance responsibilities with regards to federal and state mandates. *Disability Support Services*
- 4.4.3. By April 2021 we will have a Dining-led Quality-Information Technology (QIT) Supervisor to oversee the launch of new innovations in community outreach, dining offer updates, pop-up dining programs and social media measures. We will strive to continue to promote Diversity and inclusion in all promotions and opportunities within Dining Services. *Campus Dining*
- 4.4.4. Develop deeper, richer learning opportunities for students, residents and fellows from multiple departments across campus and the UAB Health System, while also maintaining excellent access to clinical appointments. *Student Health Services*

## 4.5. Utilize assessment to inform decision making

- 4.5.1. Create an interactive career outcome, employment destinations, experiential learning outcomes dashboard using historically First Destination Survey (FDS) information. *UAB Career Center*
- 4.5.2. Following a recommendation of the External Review Committee, establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to improve and strengthen the partnership with Campus Maintenance to improve the communication, repair and operations work. *Student Housing & Residence Life*
- 4.5.3. Following a recommendation of the External Review Committee, develop an Information Technology support staff position to support and enhance department technology needs, services, and resources. *Student Housing & Residence Life*
- 4.5.4. To effectively facilitate equal access to students with disabilities, Disability Support Services will conduct regular review of the eligibility process for determining and accessing reasonable accommodations. *Disability Support Services*
- 4.5.5. Gather data to learn about the different intact groups we are serving both as participants and employees as we build to have an inclusive community meet the needs of our students. *University Recreation*



# GOAL 5: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We promote active commitment to our communities by contributing knowledge, relationships, partnerships and expertise for the enrichment of society.

## 5.1. Foster collaboration that promotes learning and service

5.1.1. By spring 2021, launch a student-led digital platform to promote and support community conversations among UAB students as well as give them a voice for feedback and an opportunity to directly engage with staff and resources resulting in improved satisfaction of their UAB experience. *Marketing & Communications*

## 5.2. Create opportunities that engage and support students' development for active citizenship

5.2.1. The office will expand its online programming and resource to ensure family members can continue to stay connected to both UAB and their student. During the fall 2020 semester the Office of Parent & Family Services will offer no less than two programs monthly for family engagement, these programs will be a combination of interactive and passive programming. *Parent & Family Services*

5.2.2. Based on a random sample of off-campus students with 380 respondents, 47% (180 off-campus students) self-reported feeling either extremely (12%) or moderately (35%) connected to campus. Off-campus students' feelings of connectedness to campus will increase by 5% (totaling 50%) by the implementation of the next survey in Fall 2020, consistent with the 5% involvement increase from 2018 to 2019 (42% to 47%). *Off Campus Student Services*

## 5.3. Expand access to community engagement resources (i.e. involvement with the Grand Challenge community, strategies to develop leadership through service, and opportunities to engage in ongoing service)

5.3.1. The Office of Student Involvement & Leadership will develop strategies that foster mutually beneficial partnerships with community-based organizations to engage students in responsible and purposeful actions. *Student Involvement & Leadership*

## 5.4. Establish a culture of civic responsibility



**“ Research on college student development shows that the time and energy students devote to educationally purposeful activities is the single best predictor of their learning and personal development. ”**

(Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005; Pace, 1980)

# Strategic Plan Assessment

Research on college student development shows that the time and energy students devote to educationally purposeful activities is the single best predictor of their learning and personal development. Therefore, we must assess student learning outside of the classroom to see if we have accomplished our strategic vision of creating transformational student experiences for students. To assist us in the way forward, each department within the Division of Student Affairs has adopted their respective unit's Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS Standards) to guide their operation, programs, and services. CAS Standards serve as guidelines to measure our success according to effective industry practices. These standards have advanced student learning and development outcomes through the identification of specific content domains, which summarize elements of the co-curricular experience and typically result from students' engagement with the programs and services offered through the Division of Student Affairs.

CAS Learning Outcome domains include:

- Knowledge acquisition, construction, integration and application;
- Cognitive complexity;
- Intrapersonal development;
- Interpersonal competence;
- Humanitarianism and civic engagement; and
- Practical competence



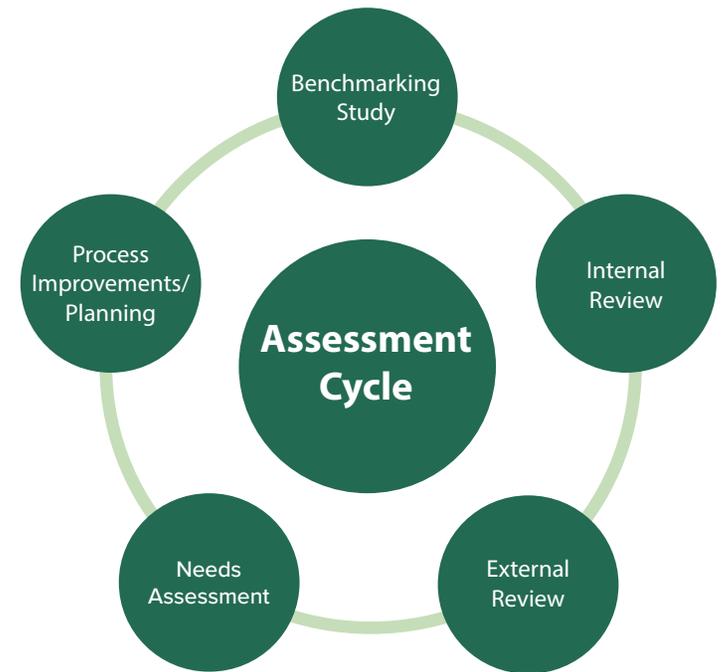
# “Improvement-oriented institutions rely on systematic information to make good decisions...”

- Kuh, G. D., Kinzie, J., Schuh, J. H., Whitt, E. J., & Associates. (2005). *Student success in college: Creating conditions that matter*. Jossey-Bass.

Utilizing these standards, the comprehensive strategic plan assessment presented herein, addresses each of these domains to varying degrees through the student experience and departments within the division. Our daily contact with students provides the primary basis for assessment of these learning and development imperatives. Each department will undergo a five – year assessment cycle, following specific guidelines for each cycle.

- Needs Assessment
- Benchmarking study
- Internal review
- External review
- Process improvement and planning

Annually, the Division of Student Affairs departments develop goals that align with strategic priorities, objectives and values of the division. Departments infuse CAS learning outcomes within their goals, share progress related to the strategic plan as well as communicate changes and improvements based on assessment data. Our core values of Accountability and Excellence drive our assessment work.



Our overarching intention with assessment is to:

- Demonstrate the value of our work in the Division of Student Affairs in transforming the student experience
- Track the progress toward achieving our strategic priorities and evaluate program effectiveness
- Examine impacts of student affairs programs and services on student success, i.e. retention, graduation, career ready competencies, and preparation for life after graduation
- Infuse the latest research within higher education and student affairs to understand and respond to student needs and issues
- Serve as a resource to the campus community to enhance student experience and learning
- Align resources and practices utilizing assessment data.

# Acknowledgements

*Special thanks to the Strategic Planning Committee and subcommittees who served the Division with their commitment to countless research.*

## **UAB/Birmingham Environmental Scan**

**Co-chairs Chris Jones & Marie Sutton**

Valerie Dubose, Disability Support Services

Jeremiah Johnson, Hill Student Center

Chelsey Jordan, Veterans Services

Jenna Robie, Disability Support Services

Seneca Wilson, University Recreation

Brandon Wright, The UAB Career Center

## **Alabama/UA System Environmental Scan**

**Co-chairs Phillip Bivens & Angela Stowe**

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Rhys Finch, Student Media

Meredith Kahl, Parent and Family Services

Kasey Robinson, Title IX

Adam Roderick, The UAB Career Center

Andrew Sparks, Disability Support Services

## **National/International Environmental Scan**

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Cortney Johnson, Student Multicultural Diversity Programs

Paton Joyner, University Recreation

Henry Knejfl, University Recreation

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## **Data Collection & Curation**

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Courtney Champion, Disability Support Services

Jennifer Griffin, Student Involvement and Leadership

Rebecca Harkless, Student Multicultural and Diversity Programs

Aydrian Miles, Student Health Services

Walter Stewart, Veteran Services

Trevor Sutton, Student Housing and Residence Life

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**“As UAB Student Affairs embarks upon our next Strategic Plan, it is important to recognize the time, effort and dedication of so many professionals throughout the Division who provided insight and contributions to our way forward. Over the last five years, UAB Student Affairs built a Division for the 21st century student, based on their needs and future aspirations. The 2020-2026 Strategic Plan pushes us further to use a nimble lens in providing services, opportunities and experiences. A special thanks to Patricia Martinez for her steadfast work in Chairing this initiative and our Subcommittee Chairs for their diligence and tenacity: Phillip Bivens, Marc Booker, Brian Johnson, Chris Jones, Allison Solomon, Angela Stowe, Marie Sutton and Yanmei Zhang.”**

**John R. Jones III, PhD | Vice President for Student Affairs**



This is the  
***Blazer  
Way***

I hold ***MYSELF accountable***  
to represent our **UNIQUE** community  
with ***honor*** and ***integrity***.  
We cherish ***diversity***,  
**EMBRACE** and **CELEBRATE ALL**.  
We cultivate progress,  
**STRIVE** for ***excellence***  
through **INNOVATION** and ***service***.  
We champion ***scholarship*** to  
**TRANSFORM** learners into **LEADERS**.  
We believe ***anything is possible***  
and **PURSUE *knowledge*** that  
***enriches*** the **WORLD**.  
**WE REMAIN EVER *faithful***,  
ever ***loyal***,  
to these ***shared*** **BELIEFS**.

***I am a UAB Blazer.***



The University of Alabama at Birmingham

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