

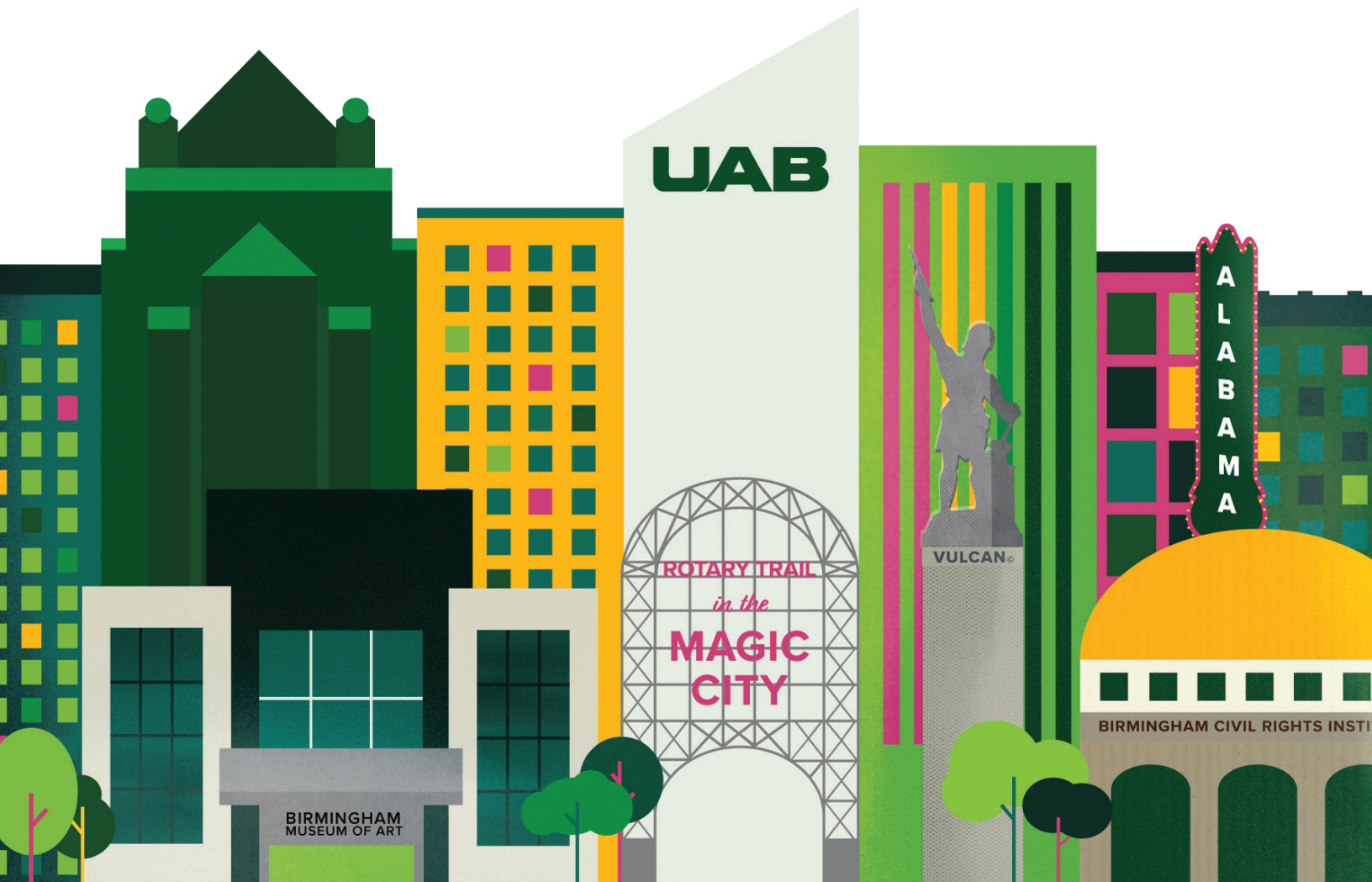


2025-2030 QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN

The City Is Our Classroom

SACSCOC On-Site Visit

April 7-10, 2025



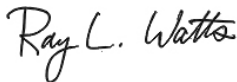
Letter from President Ray L. Watts and Provost Janet Woodruff-Borden

The University of Alabama at Birmingham's presence in the city of Birmingham is vital for the city's healthcare, education, research, economic growth, and community well-being. UAB educates nearly 21,000 students and is committed to developing a skilled workforce that benefits the local economy and prepares the next generation of leaders. UAB is home to one of the largest academic medical centers in the country and the UAB Health System provides top-tier access and quality for Birmingham residents. UAB conducts transformative research that improves health, quality of life, and economic development. This research drives innovation and attracts investment to the city. UAB is a significant economic driver in Birmingham, contributing to job creation and economic growth.

For years, UAB has actively engaged with the Birmingham community through dozens of community partnerships and community development initiatives. The University's strategic plan includes community engagement as one of its four pillars, and in recent years, UAB's academic enterprise has become increasingly involved in leveraging the relationships with our unique and historic city as part of the development and deployment of high-impact educational practices that contribute to student learning.

In recognition of the important role UAB holds in the city of Birmingham, and the powerful learning that can occur as students engage with their community, we have selected *The City Is Our Classroom* as the theme of the 2025-2030 Quality Enhancement Plan.

Through high-impact curricular and co-curricular practices that include community-based learning, research, and service opportunities, the Quality Enhancement Plan will help UAB students engage with their community. They will come to better understand the value of the University as a part of the city of Birmingham and will develop the skills to become engaged members and leaders of any community.



Ray L. Watts, M.D.
President



Janet Woodruff-Borden, Ph.D.
Senior Vice President and Provost



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Chapter 1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(Updated July 2025)

2025-2030 QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN

The City Is Our Classroom

In recognition of the important role UAB holds in the city of Birmingham, and the powerful learning that can occur as students engage with their community, UAB has selected *The City Is Our Classroom* as the theme of the 2025-2030 Quality Enhancement Plan.

The QEP topic was identified through a comprehensive development and evaluation process, arose out of institutional planning, and incorporated the input of a wide range of constituents. The university also considered institutional needs and the viability of the plan.

The QEP will focus on four primary goals. These goals create the framework for achieving the three student learning outcomes of *The City Is Our Classroom*.

- **Goal 1:** To expand student involvement in community-engaged learning opportunities through curricular and co-curricular activities.
- **Goal 2:** To encourage, increase, and assess meaningful student reflections regarding their involvement in community-engaged learning.
- **Goal 3:** To help students develop the skills to become engaged members and leaders of any community.
- **Goal 4:** To provide the infrastructure and resources for faculty and staff, students and community partners to engage in meaningful and mutually beneficial community-engaged learning experiences.

The QEP will focus on three specific and measurable student learning outcomes. The assessment of these learning outcomes provides metrics to evaluate student success as a result of *The City Is Our Classroom* QEP.

- **Student Learning Outcome #1:** Expanded student involvement in community-engaged learning opportunities.
- **Student Learning Outcome #2:** Increased student reflections on community-engaged learning experiences.
- **Student Learning Outcome #3:** Improved student skills in community engagement.

Assessment of the student learning outcomes will be reported through a QEP dashboard developed by the office of Institutional Effectiveness. The dashboard will provide real-time data on student engagement hours and the number of student reflections as recorded in BlazerPulse. It will also display the results of annual scoring sessions of student reflections related to community engagement skill development. Infrastructure and resources provided to faculty, staff, and community partners as well as the attitudes of community partners will be assessed annually to ensure that student learning outcomes can be achieved and advanced.

The City Is Our Classroom QEP is fully supported structurally and financially for success and sustainability. It is overseen by the QEP Director and Vice Provost for Innovative Teaching and Academic Engagement and will be supported, managed, and assessed through the Office of the Blazer Core Curriculum, the Office of Service Learning and Undergraduate Research, the Center for Teaching and Learning, and the Division of Student Affairs. Additionally, the QEP Advisory Council, including faculty, staff, community members, and students, will continue to provide feedback and review outcomes throughout implementation.



Chapter 2

GLOSSARY OF TERMS



Birmingham, Alabama: The city in which the University of Alabama at Birmingham is located. It is referred to in this document as Birmingham, or the city of Birmingham, and includes the surrounding communities of the Greater Birmingham Metropolitan area.

Blazer Core: The name of UAB's signature undergraduate general education curriculum.

City as Classroom Courses: Course offerings required of all students in the Blazer Core undergraduate curriculum. In the text, the phrases "City as Classroom" and "City as Classroom courses" appear without italics to distinguish the course offering from the broader QEP.

The City Is Our Classroom: The name of UAB's 2025 QEP. It refers to all the ways UAB will incorporate and assess curricular and co-curricular community-based activities as part of the QEP. In the narrative, *The City Is Our Classroom* appears in italics to distinguish it from the more narrowly defined City as Classroom courses.

Community: Community refers to the people and organizations external to the University that share characteristics such as geographical proximity, special interest, need, similar situation, or values. The words civic and community are often used synonymously in this document.

Community Engagement: Community engagement is the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial creation and exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2022).

Community-Engaged Learning: Community-engaged learning is a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities for reflection designed to achieve desired learning outcomes (Jacoby, 2015).

Community Partners: People and organizations in the community who have agreed to work with the University to pursue common goals.

Civic Life: The public life of the citizen concerned with the affairs of the community and nation as contrasted with private or personal life, which is devoted to the pursuit of private and personal interests.

Critical Reflection: Critical reflection is the practice of making meaning out of a purposeful combination of experiences and academic content. Critical reflection prompts students to analyze, reconsider, and question their experiences in relation to the complexity of issues and content knowledge. Critical reflection must be continuous, connected, challenging, and contextualized (Eyler, Giles, and Schmiede, 1996; Jacoby, 2015).

High-Impact Practices: High-impact practices (HIPs) are active learning practices that have been shown to be beneficial for college students resulting in increased rates of student retention and student engagement (Kuh, 2008).

Service-Learning Courses: A course-based educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity and reflect on the experience in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of personal values and civic responsibility.



Chapter 3

TOPIC SELECTION

UAB's 2025 Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) topic *The City Is Our Classroom* emerged from an ongoing, comprehensive planning and evaluation process that considered the University's goals and priorities, supported UAB's commitment to shared governance, and included the input of faculty, staff, and students. Our selected QEP topic reflects institutional planning efforts involving a broad range of constituents and a representative process that carefully considered both institutional needs and the plan's viability.

Topic Development

Development of the QEP topic began in 2022 as part of the University's strategic planning cycle. Through the strategical planning process, it became clear that the focus of the next QEP should be on elements of the new Blazer Core curriculum and the undergraduate experience.

In early 2023, the QEP Director met with the University's undergraduate general education curriculum committee (Blazer Core Committee) and charged them to use UAB's strategic plan to develop several possible QEP topics that provided opportunities for student success and learning within the context of undergraduate education. In monthly meetings during the summer of 2023, the committee developed four possible QEP topics.

Four Proposed QEP Topics

The four possible QEP topics were presented to the UAB community and were posted on the UAB QEP website. The QEP Director made numerous campus presentations and led discussions in meetings of the Council of Associate and Assistant Deans, the UAB Faculty Senate, the UAB Staff Council, and with UAB student leadership. Presentations included brief topic descriptions, potential student learning objectives, possible implementation strategies, and proposed assessment measures. The four topics were as follows:

Topic #1: The City Is Our Classroom

This topic encourages academic engagement, learning, and growth through community partnerships with academic courses. Students will demonstrate growth and learning in the areas of:

- Understanding of communities and cultures
- Connecting knowledge from one's discipline to civic life
- Participation in civic engagement activities
- Development of civic communication skills
- Reflection on civic participation
- Collaborative work across civic structures

The QEP would be implemented through Blazer Core City as Classroom courses, service-learning courses, and courses in individual majors that connect students to the community. Assessment would include the American Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) Civic Engagement VALUE Rubric.

Topic #2: Connections Across Disciplines

This topic establishes structures for curricular connections among undergraduate courses and encourages students to synthesize connections across academic disciplines. Students would demonstrate growth and learning by:

- Formulating connections among academic experiences
- Creating intellectual wholes out of multiple parts in facts, theories, and examples
- Adapting and applying skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations
- Communicating meaningfully
- Developing sense of self as a learner, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts

This QEP would develop a “trailhead program” in the Blazer Core that links three academic classes and cohorts of students in interdisciplinary learning activities and topics. This would also include cross-discipline and collaborative degree programs within selected majors. Assessments would utilize the AAC&U Integrative Learning VALUE Rubric.

Topic #3: The Whole Student

This QEP topic focuses on supporting overall student wellness—intellectual, social, physical, and emotional. Curricular and co-curricular opportunities are developed and leveraged to advance student learning and belonging. Students demonstrate growth and learning in the areas of:

- Taking initiative in expanding skills and knowledge as well as positive habits for self-care
- Making connections between student wellness and student success
- Reflecting on learning and growth in knowledge and maturity over time
- Leveraging campus and outside resources for intellectual, social, physical, and emotional support

Implementation of this QEP would occur throughout the students’ time at UAB. This would be accomplished through *First Year Experience* courses that introduce wellness into the curriculum from the first weeks of classes to additional core curriculum and major program courses that expand students’ knowledge of wellness and wellbeing. In addition to curricular work, co-curricular integration would be coordinated with several UAB offices—Second Year Experience, Student

Experience, and UAB Student Health and Wellness Center. Assessment would use the AAC&U Lifelong Learning VALUE Rubric, the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI), and the National Survey of Student Success (NSSE).

Topic #4: Liberal Arts Education and Meaningful Work

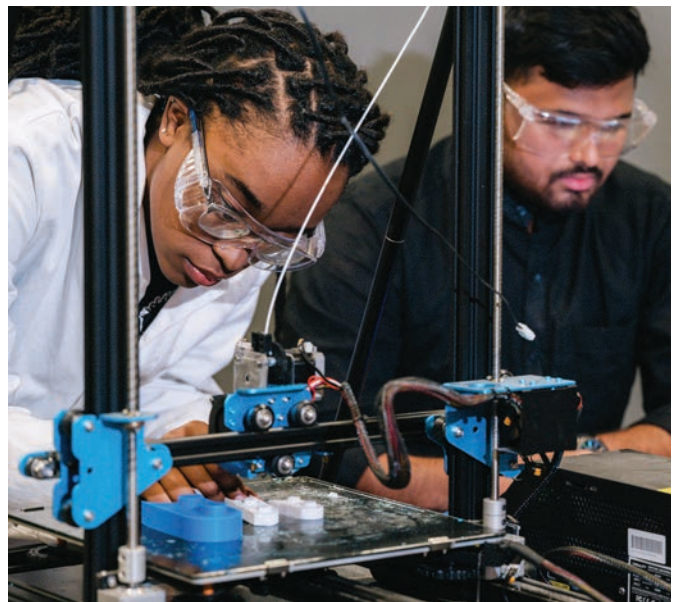
This QEP focuses on the development of key 21st century competencies that connect liberal arts education to student futures, linking careers and community engagement to positive impacts on the lives and wellbeing of others. Students would demonstrate growth and learning in the areas of:

- Developing curiosity that explores academic topics leading to rich awareness of lesser-known information
- Connecting academic subject areas with workforce needs and opportunities
- Engaging in experiential learning that informs career decision making
- Taking initiative in expanding skills and knowledge leading to post-graduation employment
- Reflecting on learning and growth in knowledge and maturity over time and effectively demonstrating this to future employers

Implementation of this QEP topic would occur through First Year Experience and City as Classroom courses of the Blazer Core. The UAB Career Center would also play an important role in implementation. Assessments would include the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Student Survey and the AAC&U Foundations for Lifelong VALUE Rubric.

QEP Topic Selection

After the topics had been presented university-wide, faculty, staff, and students provided feedback via an online survey during September and October 2023 (see Appendix A). The survey was completed by 314 participants, including 158 (54%) faculty, 77 (26%) staff members, and 79 (27%) students. Respondents included faculty from each of UAB's schools and colleges at every rank and appointment level, staff representing numerous campus offices, and students at the graduate and undergraduate levels.



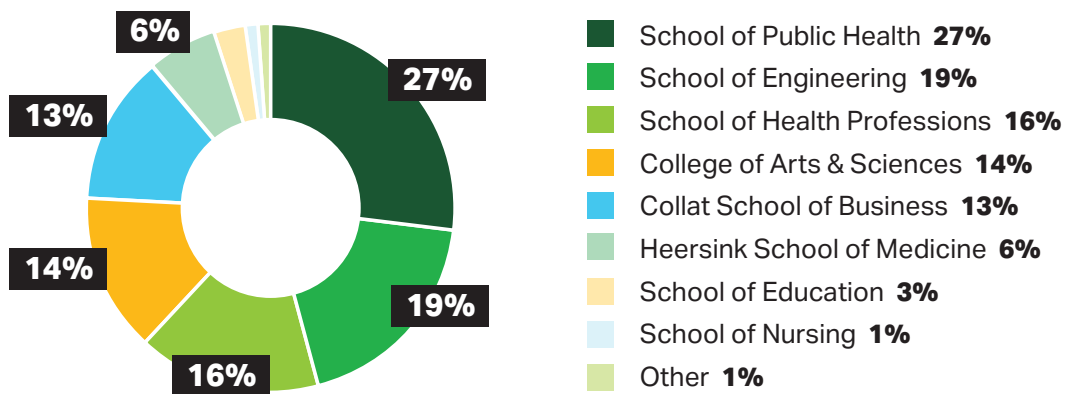


Figure 1. Faculty Engagement with the QEP Survey by School

A review of the data revealed that survey respondents considered all four topics viable options. Each topic was ranked as “first choice” by some survey respondents. However, a clear order of topic preference emerged in the data as respondents selected *Topic #1: The City Is Our Classroom* most often as their first choice (37%). *Topic #2: Connections Across Disciplines* was selected second (30%), *Topic #3: The Whole Student* was selected third (23%), and *Topic #4: Liberal Arts Education and Meaningful Work* was selected last (19%).

Additional data analysis revealed that *The City Is Our Classroom* was the clear first choice for faculty, staff, and students.

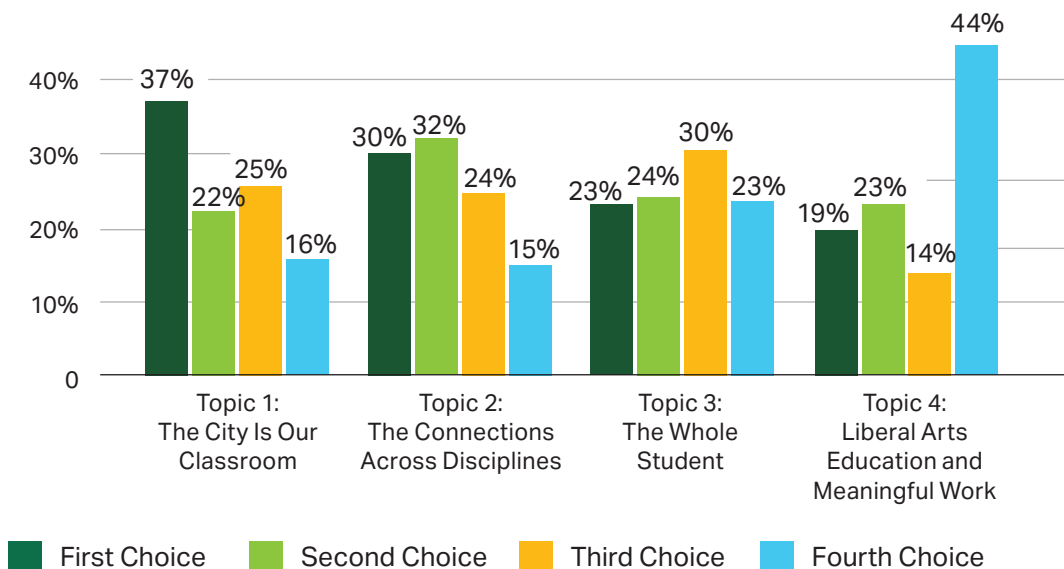


Figure 2. QEP Topic Rankings by Percentage

In November 2023, the QEP Director sent the survey data with analysis to the President and Provost to allow them to make the final QEP topic decision.

Relationship of *The City Is Our Classroom* to UAB Vision and Mission

UAB's vision is to be a world-class research university and academic health system committed to understanding and improving the human experience. UAB's mission is to enrich society and improve health and wellbeing through transformational educational experiences, groundbreaking research, innovation and entrepreneurship, community engagement, and world-class patient care while serving our UAB, local, and global communities.

With *The City Is Our Classroom* as the QEP, UAB will prepare graduates to become active citizens and leaders by engaging in their community in meaningful and mutually beneficial ways. This will in turn benefit the communities in which they are employed and serve. *The City Is Our Classroom* will allow UAB to better achieve the institutional vision and mission.

It was essential to link the selected QEP topic to the UAB Strategic Plan, *Forging Ahead*. Key elements of the strategic plan that relate directly to the QEP topic are captured in the plan's Education and Community Engagement Pillars.

Education Pillar:

- **Strategic Objective 3: Provide innovative and experiential curriculum and co-curricular experiences through "Blazer Core" that place community and connection at the heart of education.**
 - ▶ Activity 3.1. Provide a coherent, intellectually stimulating and community-connected undergraduate curriculum (Blazer Core and majors) to address 21st century needs/skills that is delivered through high-impact teaching and experiential learning practices.
 - ▶ Activity 3.2. Provide co-curricular opportunities that support the academic mission of the University and enrich the student experience.
 - ▶ Activity 3.3. Provide world-class graduate and professional programs that prepare future leaders in academic research, public service, creative entrepreneurship and professional practice.

Community Engagement Pillar:

- **Strategic Objective 1: Enhance the climate for *student community engagement*.**
 - ▶ Activity 1.1. Increase the proportion of students engaging in community activities.
 - ▶ Activity 1.2. Increase the number of community engagement service hours completed by graduating students.

- **Strategic Objective 2: Enhance the climate for faculty and staff community engagement.**
 - ▶ Activity 2.1. Elevate and reward community engagement activity, research and scholarship throughout UAB for faculty and staff.
 - ▶ Activity 2.2. Formalize the value of community engagement in faculty and staff roles and responsibilities in recruitment, evaluation, nomination and promotion procedures.

- **Strategic Objective 4: Support and maintain the UAB Grand Challenge program, "Live HealthSmart Alabama," and its goals to improve the health of all Alabamians and serve as a model for the United States and beyond.**
 - ▶ Activity 4.1. Align internal resources to enable action.
 - ▶ Activity 4.2. Identify and secure ongoing external support.
 - ▶ Activity 4.3. Expand inclusive processes for participation within UAB and the collaborating communities.

The City Is Our Classroom QEP topic aligns with UAB's vision and mission. The focus on community engagement and high-impact practices aims to improve student learning and success by engaging students in meaningful community activities and preparing them to be active citizens and leaders. The initiative supports UAB's goals of providing a transformative education, conducting groundbreaking research, and enhancing community engagement.

Official Announcement of the QEP Topic by the President

On December 7, 2023, President Ray L. Watts addressed the University community with a message that stated:

UAB Community,

Every ten years, as part of UAB's ongoing reaffirmation of accreditation, the University develops a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). This plan is an integral component of the accreditation process and is derived from our ongoing comprehensive planning and evaluation efforts. It also reflects and affirms our commitment to enhancing overall institutional quality and effectiveness by focusing on an area that we as an institution consider important to improving student learning outcomes and student success.

*After careful review and reflection on what UAB is and what it can become, Provost Benoit and I have selected *The City Is Our Classroom* as the university's next QEP topic.*

This topic incorporates both the Education and Community Engagement Pillars of the University's strategic plans Forging the Future and Forging Ahead. The plan will provide additional structure and strategic support for programs that teach students to become engaged citizens and leaders while participating in their community in meaningful and mutually beneficial ways. Implementation of the plan will involve undergraduate students in UAB's Blazer Core Curriculum, and students in all UAB schools and colleges in service learning, honors, and major courses that connect them to the community. Selecting The City Is Our Classroom as the next QEP topic also underscores the value we see in our place as a part of the City of Birmingham and its history, resources, and people.

In making this announcement, we wish to thank the QEP Advisory Council, the UAB Faculty Senate and UAB Staff Council, and the many faculty, staff, and students who participated in developing, refining, and providing feedback on possible QEP topics. All who participated are to be commended for engaging in a process that considered University's goals and priorities, weighed opportunities for improving student outcomes and successes, and supported UAB's commitment to shared governance.

Click [here](#) to learn more about the development and implementation of UAB's next QEP, The City Is Our Classroom.

*Sincerely,
Ray L. Watts, President
University of Alabama at Birmingham*

Conclusion

UAB's QEP topic, *The City Is Our Classroom*, was identified through a comprehensive planning and evaluation process as described herein and selected by UAB's President and Provost. The topic arose out of institutional planning processes involving a wide range of constituents. The topic selection was determined through a representative process that considered institutional needs and the viability of the plan. *The City Is Our Classroom* integrates the Education and Community Engagement Pillars of the University's 2024-2028 strategic plan, *Forging Ahead*. Through high-impact curricular and co-curricular practices such as community-based learning, research, and service opportunities, undergraduate students will engage with their community, study its rich history, and develop a sense of "home" through their coursework and co-curricular activities. Students will also better understand the value of the University in its context as a part of the city of Birmingham—its history, resources, and people.

Chapter 4

LITERATURE REVIEW

The City Is Our Classroom will engage students with the Birmingham community and beyond through curricular and co-curricular experiences. Inspired by the Education and Community Engagement pillars of UAB's 2024-2028 Strategic Plan, *Forging Ahead*, this QEP builds capacity to create, expand, and assess UAB programs and initiatives, especially those that utilize high-impact practices such as service-learning and community-based research, to create a culture of community-engaged learning that leads to measurable benefits for both UAB's students and the wider Birmingham community.

Community-Engaged Learning

Community-engaged learning happens when universities authentically collaborate with the community in which they are situated, rather than remaining "place-based institutions" removed from the context of that surrounding community (Brennan, & Cochrane, 2019). The city of Birmingham, Alabama, provides a rich environment for students to engage actively with civic education, social responsibility, citizenship, and service, while developing the soft skills, critical thinking acumen, and cultural awareness necessary to contribute to modern democracy.

Community engagement has long been woven into the fabric of UAB. From our honors program's early adoption of City as Text pedagogies with founding Director Ada Long to the genesis of UAB's Office of Service Learning and Undergraduate Research in 2012 as a hub and facilitator for the growing culture of service learning at UAB. The "B" in UAB represents Birmingham and as a university in Birmingham, of Birmingham, and for Birmingham, UAB takes this responsibility seriously. Like Live HealthSmart Alabama and UAB's world class health system, this QEP strengthens and further articulates that commitment.

Relevant Literature on Community-Based Learning and Other High-Impact Practices

The literature demonstrates the proven effectiveness of selected high-impact practices in the context of community-based learning. It also highlights how UAB can leverage those practices in ways that create mutual benefits for the University and the greater Birmingham area. It further illuminates ways to strengthen students' practical understanding of how their education plays a role in this community and others, empowering them to become community-engaged citizens and alumni.

The term "high-impact practices" (HIPs) has been embedded in the vocabulary of higher education for over two decades, but it describes educational practices older than the term itself (Finley & McNair, 2013). All HIPs incorporate "applied, hands-on, integrative, and often collaborative learning experiences" (Kuh et al., 2017). Studies show that the use of one to multiple HIPs improves learning outcomes in the areas

of personal and social responsibility, problem solving skills, content acquisition, research skills, writing ability, mathematical analysis, and critical thinking (Chittum, Enke, & Finley, 2022). Through HIPs, including service-learning and community-based research, this QEP capitalizes on the existing UAB culture of community service and involvement by foregrounding the reciprocal relationship between UAB's students and Birmingham's citizens.

HIPs succeed because they center the "real world" and empower students to engage with it in a meaningful way. In UAB's QEP, learning moves out of the theoretical and into the practical because the most effective learning happens with "combinations of thought and action, reflection and practice, theory and application" (Jacoby, 1996). When students do what they have only passively learned about, such as developing a project, conducting an interview, surveying ethical issues within populations, and analyzing data they have collected themselves, they are more invested in the process (Strand, 2000). In addition to improving essential academic skills, HIPs give students the opportunity to develop the soft skills necessary to translate their academic work to the world beyond the borders of their campus. In a world increasingly wary of higher education, it is more important than ever that students develop these essential skills, including respectful engagement with community members, fostering equitable partnerships, practicing cultural humility, and broadening their understanding of what constitutes impactful work (Costigan, 2020; Barry et al., 2018). Not only are students learning to engage the public in their process, but they are also learning to collaborate across traditional academic silos. Students who experience interdisciplinary partnerships before graduation will be better able to integrate into a diverse workforce in any field, collect and analyze data from varied sources, interpret results, and manage projects effectively (Chittum, Enke, & Finley, 2022).

HIP participation is associated with gains in academic abilities and career skills, higher levels of college satisfaction, more successful job searches, and greater likelihood of employment in the arts and humanities. (Miller, Martin, & Frenette, 2022). For 2023, across all disciplines, UAB averaged 66.44% of graduates employed within six months of graduation. In 2021, 77.18% of graduates were employed in the state of Alabama.

The place-based community engagement of many HIPs provides a powerful way to creatively connect campus and community to foster positive social transformation for both. Place-based community engagement is a powerful process for attaining more positive and enduring results in a university's local community as well as stimulating wider engagement by campus constituencies. Drawing upon the concept of collective impact and using data-driven decision making, place-based initiatives build long-term partnerships based upon a shared vision. Done thoughtfully, these

place-based initiatives have attained impressive results. (Yamamura & Koth, 2018). By working with local communities and better understanding their needs, the university is better able to address those needs directly, both in terms of ongoing initiatives as well as in the training students receive. HIPs help us create the graduates that our community wants to hire, and because they have previous experience doing practical work within those communities, the transition from student to contributing citizen is a more seamless one.

HIPs and Underserved Populations

Engagement in HIPs has a positive effect on traditionally underserved populations (defined in the study as first-generation, minority, transfer, and low-income students), especially in general education, practical competence, and personal and social development. (Finley & McNair, 2013). In fall 2024, UAB's undergraduate student population totaled 13,057, including 1,098 transfer students and 6,968 identifying as part of a cultural minority. Roughly 23% of these students are first generation. Further, HIPs like service learning closely align with values held by today's students, including tolerance, networking, collaboration, and developing a sense of responsibility (Seemiller & Grace, 2015; Turner, 2015; Gardner, Ronzio, & Snelling, 2018; Eyler et al., 2001). Students want to be challenged to learn through "real life" experiences, as well as to be involved in initiatives that lead to social change. (Seemiller & Grace, 2015; Irwin, 2016; Gardner, Ronzio, & Snelling, 2018; Vallone et al. 2016; Hunt, Bonham, & Jones, 2011). *The City Is Our Classroom* QEP is uniquely poised to address the values and desires present in UAB's student population, as it provides a platform for meaningful engagement and practical experience with the community.

Benefits to the Community

Much of the published literature focuses on benefits to students, with relatively little attention paid to the benefits to community partners (Hunt, Bonham, & Jones, 2011). However, studies have shown that community partners express satisfaction with student engagement and participation as well as enhanced relations with universities because of service-learning arrangements (Eyler et al., 2001). In a recent UAB community partner satisfaction survey, 137 community partners were surveyed about their partnership with UAB (see Appendix B). Eighty-eight percent of respondents agreed that their partnership with UAB was beneficial to their organization. Additionally, 90% of community partners who worked with UAB faculty to develop service-learning courses agreed that their partnership was beneficial. *The City Is Our Classroom* seeks to expand UAB's longitudinal relationships with existing partners and to encourage the development of new, strong and sustainable alliances. The QEP redoubles UAB's intention to build truly reciprocal relationships with the city of Birmingham and broader community.

Chapter 5

**LEARNING OUTCOMES
AND ASSESSMENT**



The City Is Our Classroom QEP seeks to help students better understand the City of Birmingham and its history, to help them make connections between their community and their courses of study, to encourage them to participate in civic life, to communicate effectively with the community, and to work collaboratively across community structures. To accomplish this, the QEP will focus on four primary goals.

These goals create the framework for achieving the three student learning outcomes of *The City Is Our Classroom*.

- **Goal 1:** To expand student involvement in community-engaged learning opportunities through curricular and co-curricular activities.
- **Goal 2:** To encourage, increase, and assess meaningful student reflections regarding their involvement in community-engaged learning.
- **Goal 3:** To help students develop the skills to become engaged members and leaders of any community.
- **Goal 4:** To provide the infrastructure and resources for faculty and staff, students and community partners to engage in meaningful and mutually beneficial community-engaged learning experiences.

The QEP will focus on three specific and measurable student learning outcomes. The assessment of these learning outcomes provides metrics to evaluate student success resulting from *The City Is Our Classroom* QEP.

- **Student Learning Outcome #1:** Expanded student involvement in community-engaged learning opportunities.
- **Student Learning Outcome #2:** Increased student reflections on community-engaged learning experiences.
- **Student Learning Outcome #3:** Improved student skills in community engagement including:
 - ▶ understanding their community
 - ▶ connecting knowledge from their disciplines to the community
 - ▶ communicating with the community
 - ▶ collaborating with the community

Student Learning Outcome Selection, Baseline Data, Targets, and Assessment

SLO#1: Expanded Student Involvement

As the university considered the valuable learning that can take place as students engage in meaningful ways in their community and the topic of the QEP was being developed, student participation in the community was considered an initial and important indicator of success. University students can become highly focused on their academic and social pursuits and find themselves unwittingly bound within the confines of the university and isolated from the broader community in which the university resides. If students don't have opportunities to engage with their community and its people and challenges in meaningful ways, they may miss out on learning the importance of their place as citizens of a community.

Baseline Data:

Data on student participation in the community is recorded using an online interface called "BlazerPulse." When students work with the community as part of a Service-learning or City as Classroom course, or when they volunteer in the community as part of a UAB-sponsored or student organization event they are encouraged to record the activity's impact, including the type of activity, and the hours serving the community, using the BlazerPulse interface. For the purposes of the QEP, the amount of student community-engaged activity will be quantified in the total number of unique students who participate, and the total number of participation hours recorded.

A review of the past five years of data in BlazerPulse revealed a significant drop during the pandemic in the number of total hours spent in community participation and in the number of unique students recording impacts. However, after the pandemic, student engagement in the community has seen an upward trend, returning after two years to pre-pandemic levels, and then continuing to increase during the 2023-2024 academic year.

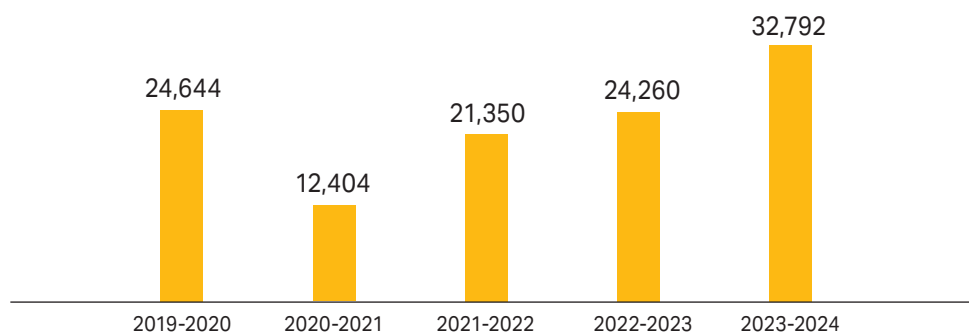


Figure 3. Student Community Engagement Hours Recorded in BlazerPulse by Academic Year

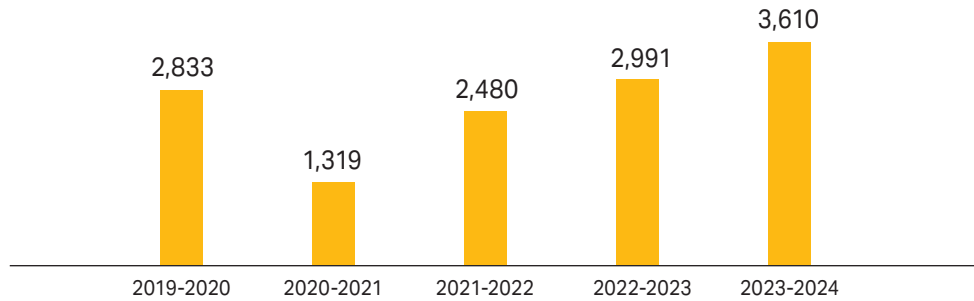


Figure 4. Unique Students Participating in Community Engagement by Academic Year

The number of hours each student spent in the community averages between 8.11 and 9.40 hours in each of the five years.

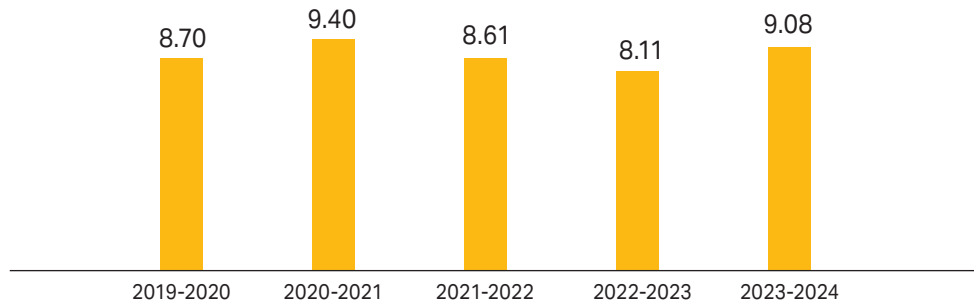


Figure 5. Student Community Engagement Average Hours per Student by Academic Year

Target:

As the university develops and delivers the activities and programs outlined in *The City Is Our Classroom* QEP, it expects to see an increase in the total number of unique students engaging with the community, and an increase in the average number of hours each student participates. As a result, total hours spent by students in community engagement are expected to increase at an even higher rate. Increased community engagement will lead to more opportunities for students to develop the skills necessary to become engaged members and leaders of their communities. UAB has identified the following targets for Student Learning Outcome #1.

- Number of unique students engaging with community to increase by 5% per year.
- Number of student engagement hours recorded in BlazerPulse to increase by 5% per year.

Assessment:

The amount of student involvement will be assessed as student community engagement activities are recorded in BlazerPulse. These will be presented in the QEP dashboard in real time. Parameters will include total number of unique students and total number of participation hours. Data will regularly be monitored and tracked by the QEP Advisory Council to determine the success of QEP initiatives in increasing student involvement and to consider adjustments to the plan. Progress will be reported annually to the university community.

SLO #2: Increased Student Reflections

It is well-established that including written reflections as part of educational activities is a best practice for increasing and solidifying student learning. One hallmark of service-learning courses, for example, is the consistent use of written reflections in the learning process. Reflections can then be scored and graded individually and in aggregate as a means of documenting student learning and growth. But not all community engagement activities at UAB incorporate reflections as part of the learning process. *The City Is Our Classroom QEP* focuses primarily on City as Classroom courses, service-learning courses, and co-curricular activities to provide increased community engagement opportunities for UAB students. Students participating in these courses and co-curricular activities will be encouraged to consistently record written reflections in BlazerPulse.

Baseline Data:

Baseline data on the number of recorded student reflections was collected from the BlazerPulse interface. A review of the data revealed that while the number of unique students participating and total hours of community engagement have steadily increased since the pandemic, reflections have not followed a similar trajectory. Total numbers of reflections rebounded after the pandemic but have remained mostly flat since that time.

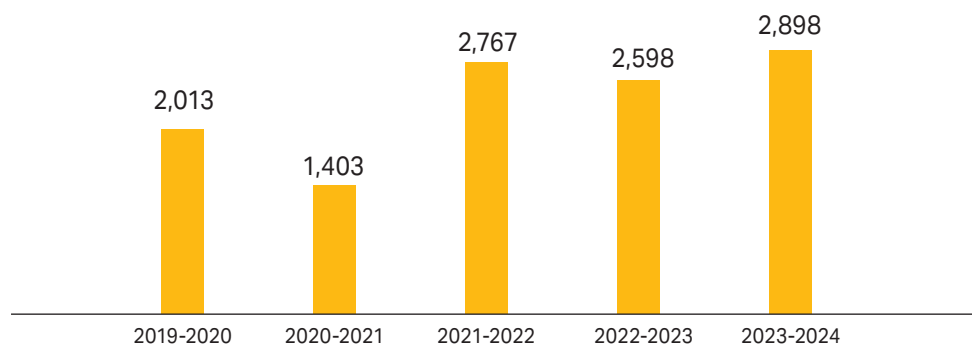


Figure 6. Total Student Reflections Recorded in BlazerPulse by Academic Year

Additional analysis of the data indicates that while the average number of different community engagement activities each student participated in is around three, the average number of reflections recorded by each student is around one and that average has decreased in the past three years.

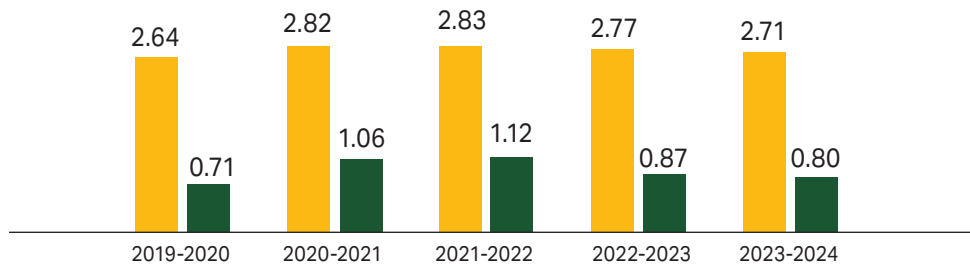


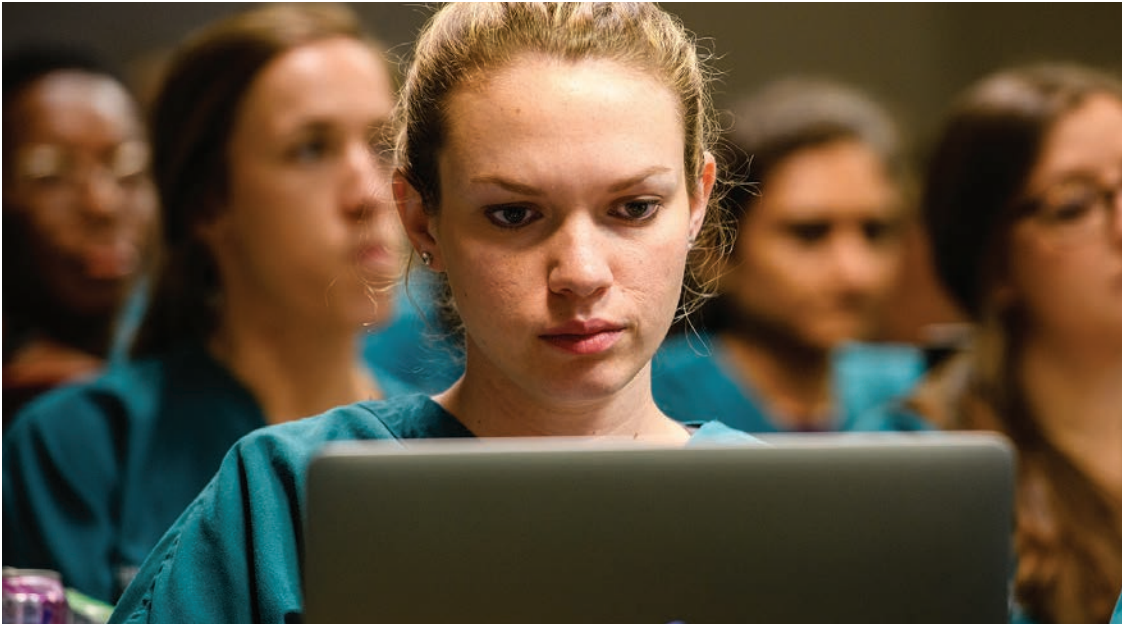
Figure 7. Average Number of Community Engagement Activities and Reflections per Student by Academic Year

Currently the recording of reflections in BlazerPulse is inconsistent across various academic and co-curricular activities. While professors in some City as Classroom and service-learning courses consistently require their students to record reflections in BlazerPulse, others may require students to submit reflections as course assignments or may not require reflections at all. The same inconsistency can be seen across co-curricular activities where students participating in some community engagement activities are encouraged to record reflections, while others are not. The fourth goal of *The City Is Our Classroom* QEP is to provide the infrastructure and resources for faculty and staff, students and community partners to engage in meaningful and mutually beneficial community-engaged learning experiences. An important part of this infrastructure will be to train faculty and student affairs staff on the need for students to record reflections of their community engagement experiences in BlazerPulse.

Target:

The university community will encourage students to record at least one meaningful reflection in BlazerPulse for each community engagement activity in which they participate. As this is implemented, the University expects to see a significant increase in the number of student reflections recorded in BlazerPulse. An increase in the number of student reflections will lead to increased opportunities to document learning and evaluate the development of community engagement skills. UAB has identified the following targets for Student Learning Outcome #2.

- Number of reflections recorded in BlazerPulse to increase by 10% per year.
- Number of reflections recorded per student to approach the number of community engagement activities per student within two years and remain at that level throughout the remainder of the QEP and beyond.



Assessment:

The number of student reflections will be assessed as they are entered in BlazerPulse and total numbers will be presented in the QEP dashboard in real time. Data will regularly be monitored and tracked by the QEP Advisory Council to determine the success of QEP initiatives in increasing the use of student reflections and the consistency of entering them in BlazerPulse. The QEPAC will consider and suggest adjustments to the plan as needed. Progress will be reported annually to the university community.

SLO #3: Improved Community Engagement Skills

The QEP's third goal is to help students develop the skills to become engaged members and leaders of any community. In developing *The City Is Our Classroom* QEP, it was important to identify the specific skills that would help students achieve this goal. The AAC&U Civic Engagement Rubric (Appendix C) was used as a template to identify specific skills that could be measured and improved. Understanding, connecting, communicating, and collaborating were four skills that were deemed valuable, specific, and measurable. Furthermore, it was determined that there was a strong potential for faculty to teach and students to develop and improve these skills as they participated in the activities of *The City Is Our Classroom* QEP.

Baseline Data:

Past student reflections were analyzed to develop baseline data on student skill development. Analysis of the 11,679 student reflections recorded using BlazerPulse

between Fall 2018 and Summer 2024 was conducted to determine if skill development could be baselined or tracked from past reflections. The analysis led to inconclusive data on skill development but revealed important information regarding ways to qualify past student reflections. When recording their community engagement experience in BlazerPulse, students were presented with a text box and the reflection prompt: "Review, reflection, and feedback." Analysis of a sample of 2,898 reflections entered during the 2023-2024 academic year revealed that reflections could be qualified in three categories: activity description, activity reaction, and basic reflection.

Forty-nine percent of the reflections were activity descriptions. In these cases, students simply recorded what the activity was or where it was located. Reflections such as "triage volunteer", "black business expo", "Blazer Kitchen", and "walked dogs" were common in this kind of reflection. In some cases, the reflections were lengthier but still only contained basic information about the experience. For example, "I worked with a local girls basketball team for their fall tournament. I was able to run drills with them, run the time clock, and help their coach when she needed me." In 18% of the reflections, students recorded their reaction to the activity. Responses such as "fun!", "Wonderful", "it was cool", or "I had a great time" were typical of this kind of response. Thirty-three percent of student responses could be considered basic reflections. In these responses students shared something they learned or described the impact of their experience. Examples included "It was a great experience, and I gained insight to a new organization that raises support for family's that struggle with anything that pertains to the Children's Hospital", and "I really like helping people and I was so glad I volunteered at blazer kitchen because I helped many people shop for food at no cost". While these basic reflections went beyond simple activity descriptions or reactions, they shed little light on skill development, especially as defined by the student learning objectives of the QEP.

The great variance in the quality of student responses may have been related to several contributing factors. The vague nature of the BlazerPulse reflection prompt likely contributed significantly to the quality of the responses. Additionally, specific guidance, or the lack thereof, from teachers and those leading community engagement activities seems to have had an impact on the quality of student reflections.

While the analysis of past reflections recorded in BlazerPulse did not establish a baseline for student progress on community engagement skills, as defined by the QEP, the analysis led QEP leaders to determine that changes could be made to the BlazerPulse reflection prompts allowing for future tracking of community engagement skills. To bolster support for this approach, QEP leadership considered a community engagement activity, "Blazers on Break" in which UAB students were given clear

guidance and asked to respond to specific reflection prompts. Student learning outcomes identified for the activity included examining beliefs, communicating in civic contexts, and developing civic identity. After participating in “Blazers on Break” students completed reflections in response to the following specific reflection prompts:

1. What did you learn about the community today?
2. What values, opinions, or beliefs have changed as a result of your experience today?
3. Because of today’s experience, I am...

The Division of Student Affairs collected the reflections and coded them to determine progress towards their learning objectives. The following were key findings from the analysis of student reflections.

- 84% of participants expressed a strengthened civic identity, discovering their own potential as leaders and community advocates.
- 74% of participants reported a shift in their understanding of political, environmental, or social issues specific to the community in which they volunteered.
- 68% of participants shared examples of active listening and adapting ideas based on conversations with local leaders and nonprofit partners.

This example demonstrated that creating specific reflection prompts and giving students clear direction on responding to those prompts produced student reflections that could be analyzed for the development of skills specific to the QEP student learning outcomes.

Target:

As students engage with the community and their reflections are analyzed for community engagement skill development, the University expects to see a significant increase in the development of community engagement skills. UAB has identified the following targets for Student Learning Outcome #3.

- Increased understanding of their community.
- Increased skill in connecting knowledge from their disciplines to the community.
- Increased skill in communicating with the community.
- Increased skill in collaborating with the community.

Assessment:

To assess the development of community engagement skills, a specific prompt will be included for all QEP-related community engagement activities that asks students to reflect on the specific skills they have developed. The following prompt will be used:



Please describe how this activity benefited or helped you develop your community engagement skills. For example, how did this activity:

- *impact your understanding of the Birmingham community?*
- *provide ways for you to connect your major area of study with the community?*
- *impact your ability to communicate with people in the community?*
- *impact your ability to collaborate with people in the community?*

Each year, select faculty members will participate in assessment sessions to review student reflections and code them to track community engagement skill development. The QEP leadership modified the AAC&U Civic Engagement VALUE Rubric (Appendix C) and developed the Community Engagement Rubric (Appendix D) specific to the QEP-identified skills for use in coding. Data will regularly be monitored and tracked by the QEP Advisory Council to determine the success of QEP initiatives in helping students develop the four identified community engagement skills. The QEPAC will consider and suggest adjustments to the plan as needed. Progress will be reported annually to the university community.

Chapter 6

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

In developing *The City Is Our Classroom*, UAB's QEP Advisory Council worked with leadership, faculty, staff, students, and community members to identify ways students could be engaged in the learning process as they interact with the city and community. The identified engagement activities are designed to help students achieve the QEP's student learning outcomes and are focused on three areas: Curricular Strategies, Co-Curricular Strategies, and Collaborations with the city of Birmingham.

Curricular Strategies:

Blazer Core City as Classroom Courses

The Blazer Core is UAB's undergraduate general education curriculum. The curriculum, designed and developed through a process of shared governance from 2017-2022, was implemented in the 2023 fall semester. The curriculum is like many general education curricula but features several signature elements that were developed to align with UAB's strategic plan and the faculty's vision for what UAB students should both learn and become. The Blazer Core curriculum is described as:

"As a centerpiece of undergraduate education at UAB, the Blazer Core is designed to prepare students for success as lifelong learners who are poised to succeed in their future study and become leaders in their future careers and communities. Through an emphasis on high-impact educational practices including undergraduate research, cutting-edge writing and digital composing skills, community-research and service learning, and collaborative inquiry, the Blazer Core empowers students to blaze new trails in research, civic engagement, and the 21st century workplace. Blazer Core is, quite simply, where students become Blazers, the innovative, capable, global citizens who blaze new trails and use knowledge to change the world."

One signature aspect of the Blazer Core was the development of City as Classroom courses. Every student is required to take one of these courses. These three-credit-hour courses are offered by departments across many academic disciplines. Faculty immerse students in learning experiences that enable them to see the role of knowledge in addressing the challenges and opportunities of our city. City as Classroom courses are described in the Blazer Core curriculum guide as "places where knowledge and community meet."

A few examples of current City as Classroom courses (and their home disciplines) include:

- The Sustainable South (Biology, Environmental Sciences, Public Health)
- Birmingham and the Industrial Revolution (History)
- The Health of Birmingham (Public Health, Nursing, Social Work)

- Human Rights in the City (Political Science)
- The New South in a Global Context (International Studies, Business)
- Learning in Birmingham (Education)
- Smart Cities (Engineering, Physics)
- Writing Alabama (English)
- The Local Arts (Music, Art, Theater)
- Crime and Punishment in Alabama (Criminal Justice)

To help students achieve the learning outcomes of the QEP, UAB's signature City as Classroom courses in the Blazer Core curriculum are a natural fit. City as Classroom courses are only one part of the QEP plan, but the idea of expanding upon them offered the seed that led to the fully developed QEP.

The QEP will provide support for Blazer Core City as Classroom courses in several meaningful ways. These include:

- Providing seed funding in the form of course development grants to support faculty as they develop and implement City as Classroom courses
- Leveraging the Blazer Core Office and the Center for Teaching and Learning to provide professional development and guidance to faculty developing City as Classroom courses
- Developing a "Digital Passport" (see details below) for students that better enables faculty to send them into the community
- Incorporating QEP assessments into the ongoing City as Classroom assessments to better measure and understand the impact of this course on student learning and success

Service-Learning Courses

Service-learning courses engage students in community service activities in the context of educational learning objectives. In service-learning courses, students work with a UAB community partner that is directly connected to their academic course's objectives. Students reflect on their learning experiences with community partners through reflection papers, discussions, and other assignments. They culminate the learning experience through projects and presentations within the class and in appropriate public settings such as UAB's Undergraduate Service-Learning and Research Expo.

Key to the success of service-learning courses is the support of UAB's Office of Service Learning and Undergraduate Research, which helps faculty as they develop, teach, and assess these courses. The office also ensures that service-learning



courses adhere to educational best practices in service learning. High quality service-learning courses have certain fundamentals:

- Relevant service with a community partner
- Mutually beneficial community-campus partnerships
- Structured student reflections throughout the course
- Public dissemination of the service-learning experience

While UAB already has an effective Office of Service Learning and Undergraduate Research and a service-learning course designation, *The City Is Our Classroom* will provide additional support for service-learning courses in several important ways. These include:

- Identifying courses that are incorporating some service-learning elements and encouraging them to seek service-learning designations
- Promoting the benefits of service-learning courses among students by encouraging them to earn service-learning flags as part of the Blazer Core and taking additional service-learning courses in their major and minor courses of study
- Leveraging the Office of Service Learning and Undergraduate Research and the Center for Teaching and Learning to provide professional development and guidance to faculty developing service-learning courses
- Incorporating the learning objectives of *The City Is Our Classroom* in service-learning courses and course assessment

- Working with colleges and schools to increase the number of service-learning course designations
- Expanding the Office of Service Learning and Undergraduate Research's Community Partner site to include additional partnerships to their lists that are forged as *The City Is Our Classroom* progresses

Co-Curricular Strategies

Co-Curricular Learning

Students often gain important knowledge and skills while participating in university-sponsored activities that are beyond the curriculum of the university classroom. These co-curricular activities provide a hands-on mechanism to accomplish educational purposes and complement the academic curriculum. Co-curricular activities can include providing community service, attending workshops and training events, participating in collegiate and intramural athletics, attending arts and cultural activities, and joining clubs.

Co-curricular learning often leads to skill development, including intellectual, physical, social, and emotional skills as well as opportunities to explore and prepare for further education and careers and create professional connections. Co-curricular offerings can lead to an enhanced campus culture and promote individual wellbeing.

Community Service

The UAB Office of Student Affairs offers multiple community-engaged service programs. These student-led programs encourage volunteerism in the community while also helping students gain leadership skills. Two examples of student-led civic engagement organizations are the Leadership & Service Council and Serve205. Each event hosted by these two groups includes a written or an oral reflection component. In addition to these organizations, there are more than 100 student groups with targeted community causes at the heart of each organizations' purpose. All UAB students are eligible to participate in events hosted by these organizations. Students log participation and record reflections using BlazerPulse, the official University platform for all community engagement and service activities.

In addition to student-led organizations, the UAB Office of Student Involvement and Leadership hosts three signature service events each year. These include Into the Streets, MLK's Beloved Community and Blazers on Break.

Into the Streets is a bi-annual program sponsored by the Leadership & Service Council designed to connect UAB students, faculty, and staff to the Birmingham community through a day of service. Each fall and spring semester, UAB students,

faculty, and staff come together to help the University accomplish its mission of encouraging partnerships that improve education, health, economic prosperity and quality of life.

Sponsored by the Leadership & Service Council, MLK's Beloved Community honors the memory and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Hosted on Dr. King's birthday, a federally celebrated holiday and day of service, this event provides an opportunity for UAB students to join forces with Birmingham citizens to empower and strengthen our community, moving us closer to Dr. King's global vision of a "Beloved Community."



Students interested in exploring social issues through first-hand service and reflection are invited to apply for Blazers on Break, UAB's alternative spring break program. Hosted during the academic spring break, Blazers on Break is an immersive, week-long experience designed to provide students an opportunity to engage in direct service. Blazers on Break trips are focused on a sustainable development goal. Students learn the context of the goal through the support of faculty/staff trip facilitators during the Blazers on Break orientation and pre-trip roundtable discussions. This intentional time of learning allows each volunteer to better understand the root cause, challenge themselves to think critically about the goal, and take meaningful action.

The City Is Our Classroom QEP offers a unique opportunity for the University to encourage, measure, and assess student community engagement opportunities offered through these student-led groups and the Office of Student Affairs in unprecedented ways. These include:

- Encouraging more widespread adoption of the student use of BlazerPulse for recording volunteer service and community engagement hours
- Training and encouraging student reflections recorded in BlazerPulse for all service activities
- Leveraging the Office of Student Affairs and the Center for Teaching and Learning to provide professional development and guidance to faculty and students on the use of BlazerPulse for both hour-tracking and reflection recording
- Accessing data and student reflections in BlazerPulse to assess participation and progress on achieving *City as Classroom* student learning objectives

Collaborations with the City of Birmingham

In addition to curricular and co-curricular activities, *The City Is Our Classroom* QEP will focus on helping students participate in four impactful collaborations between UAB and the city of Birmingham. These include Live HealthSmart Alabama, the David Mathews Center for Civic Life, the Birmingham Immersive Community Empowerment Program, and the Birmingham Academy of Civic Engagement. Additionally, the QEP will develop a city of Birmingham digital passport to enable UAB students to participate more fully in the history, arts, and culture that is unique to and germane to understanding our community.

Live HealthSmart Alabama

In April 2019, the UAB Minority Health & Health Equity Research Center won UAB's inaugural Grand Challenge for Live HealthSmart Alabama (LHSA) whose mission is to forge and leverage partnerships among neighborhood stakeholders, business leaders, nonprofits, state and local agencies, and UAB faculty and staff in creating a comprehensive initiative to make good health easier to achieve.



LHSA helps make connections and provides logistical and management support to help enact community priorities. LHSA works with communities to make policy, systems, and environment changes to promote physical activity, good nutrition, education, and prevention/wellness. The overall goal is to make good health, simple.

The objectives and activities of LHSA are well-aligned with UAB's strategic plans in numerous ways. The LHSA goals around education and community engagement are particularly relevant to the QEP. They include:

- Education: Developing socially conscious citizens and engaging students, faculty, and staff in experiential learning including service-learning projects, research projects, volunteer efforts, and internships
- Community Engagement: Engaging with the community in meaningful and mutually beneficial collaborations that contribute to the public good with the goal of improved quality of life

LHSA features a "1,000 Volunteers" program in which students, faculty, and staff volunteer in the community for clean-up days, mobile market stops, nutrition education, mobile wellness events, and lifestyle education. To date, over 990 hours of community service have been contributed by over 350 students, faculty, and staff.

David Mathews Center

The David Mathews Center for Civic Life is a statewide organization whose vision is to strengthen Alabama's civic life by increasing active citizenship, community collaboration, and effective decision making. The Mathews Center works toward achieving this vision through collaborative programs with individuals and organizations.

The David Mathews Center offers the Jean O'Connor Snyder Internship Program (JOIP), which provides immersive civic learning opportunities for college students to research deliberative practices and asset-based approaches for working with Alabamians in community-based projects. The Mathews Center administers the JOIP, in partnership with faculty mentors from UAB who can request funding for immersive civic experiences designed for their students.

Birmingham Immersive Community Empowerment Program

The Birmingham Immersive Community Empowerment Program (BICEP) is a collaboration between the UAB Institute for Human Rights, and David Mathews Center, the Lakeshore Foundation, the Offender Alumni Association, American Civil Liberties Union of Alabama Women's Rights Program, and the Alabama Interfaith Refugee Partnership.

BICEP offers UAB undergraduate students the opportunity to engage in immersive civic learning and capacity-building endeavors for underrepresented and underserved communities in Alabama by engaging in a two-semester paid internship in one of these organizations. In addition to working at these community organizations, students enroll in the course *Professional Internship in Human Rights* to gain new skills, reflect, and network with other students interested in human rights topics while working in the non-profit sector. The internship is open to all undergraduate students at UAB.

The Birmingham Academy of Civic Engagement

The Academy of Civic Engagement (ACE) is an initiative of the city of Birmingham Mayor's office with the central goal of getting residents directly involved and engaged with their local municipal government. It aims to bring citizens together for a deeper understanding of how the city works for them, and how they can plug into a variety of opportunities. ACE's goal is to prepare residents to go out into their communities to act, serve, and lead.

Due to the strong connection between the University and the city, Birmingham's Mayor's Office has agreed to welcome applications from UAB students to participate in ACE. Participants attend weekly sessions led by various city department heads where they are granted access to the inner workings of municipal government and provided the opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogue about the city's strategic initiatives.

The City Is Our Classroom QEP will encourage increased student community engagement through these specific collaborations with the city of Birmingham in the following ways:

- Encouraging student participation in the "1,000 Volunteer" and other programs of Live HealthSmart Alabama
- Encouraging the use of BlazerPulse for recording volunteer service and community engagement hours
- Training and encouraging student reflections recorded in BlazerPulse for all service activities
- Leveraging the Office of Student Affairs to work with colleges and schools to nominate students to participate in the David Mathews and BICEP internship programs and ACE Academy
- Collecting and assessing reflections from those participating in such programs
- Accessing data and student reflections in BlazerPulse to assess participation and progress on achieving City as Classroom student learning objectives

City of Birmingham Digital Passport

As faculty seek to incorporate community engagement in City as Classroom and service-learning courses, and as student groups seek to volunteer in the community, it can be challenging to access activities within the city. Following the launch of the Blazer Core, faculty and students provided feedback expressing some difficulty gaining access to cultural sites without funding. They also expressed challenges with transportation and accessibility.

To support *The City Is Our Classroom* QEP, the Blazer Core Office and the QEP Advisory Council proposed the development of a Birmingham Digital Passport. Incorporated into the UAB app, the mobile passport would give students free access to a variety of key cultural sites, transportation passes, and information and resources for accessibility.

The goal is for a prototype of the digital passport to launch in Fall of 2025. Potential partners for the passport may include the following:

- Birmingham Civil Rights Institute
- Sloss Furnaces
- Vulcan Park and Museum
- Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame
- Alabama Theatre
- Birmingham Museum of Art
- McWane Science Center
- Southern Museum of Flight
- Samuel Ullman Museum
- Alabama Sports Hall of Fame



Chapter 7

**STRUCTURE
AND RESOURCES**

Structure

Administration of *The City Is Our Classroom* QEP is overseen by the President and Provost and is under the direction of the Vice Provost for Innovative Teaching and Academic Engagement as shown below in Figure 3. The program is led by the QEP Director and the Office of the Blazer Core Curriculum. It will be implemented and assessed primarily through the cooperation of the Blazer Core Curriculum Office, the Center for Teaching and Learning, and the Office Service Learning and Undergraduate Research. Additional support for volunteer and co-curricular programs will be provided through the Office of Student Affairs and other university programs and offices. The QEP Advisory Council, comprised of faculty, staff, community members, and students will continue to provide feedback, assess progress, and review outcomes. This structure of University-wide representation and involvement in *The City Is Our Classroom* has been established to ensure success and sustainability of the QEP.

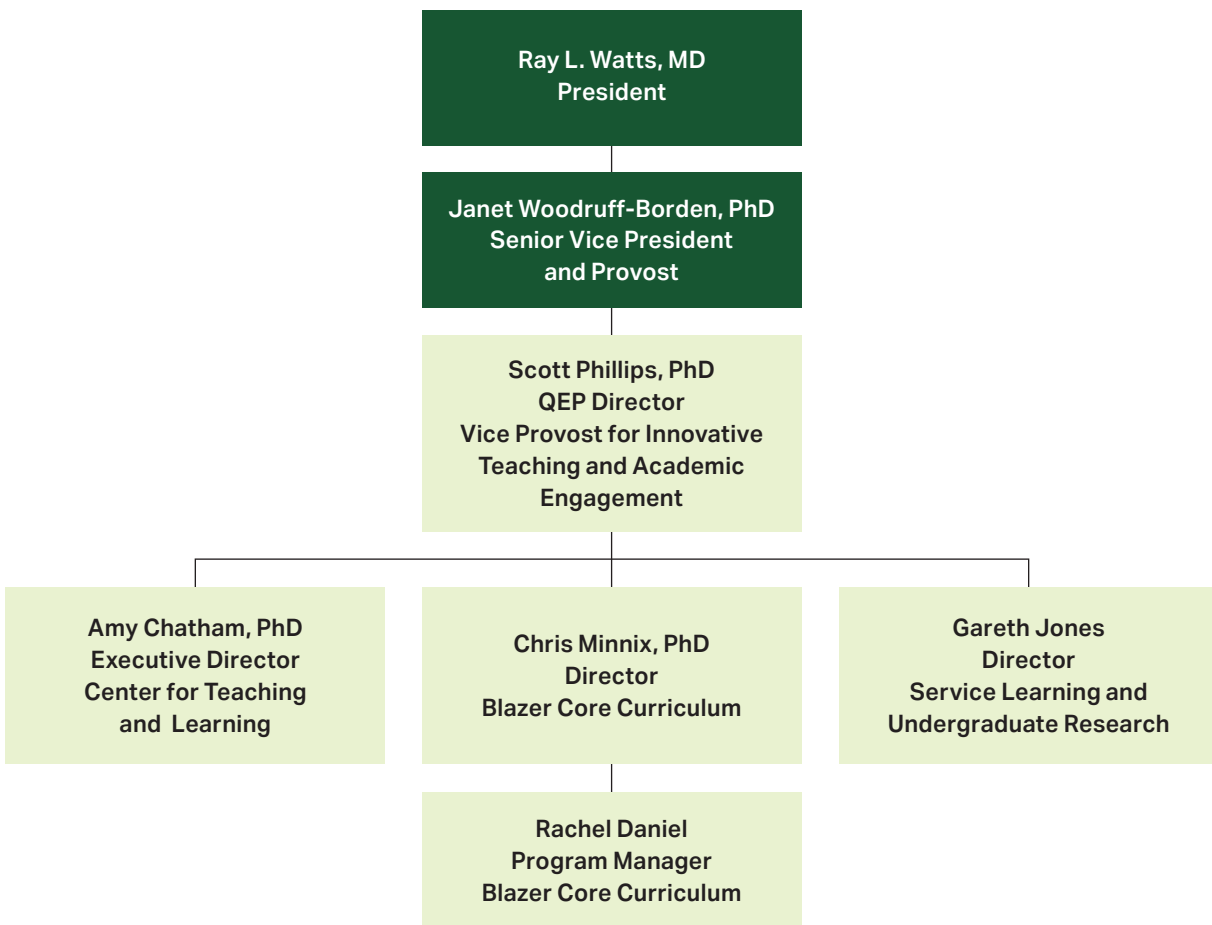


Figure 8. QEP Organizational Leadership Chart

QEP Director

Vice Provost Scott L. Phillips, Ph.D. serves as QEP Director. A portion of Phillips' salary and effort is dedicated to leadership of the QEP (see resources section below). He also serves as Vice Provost of Innovative Teaching and Academic Engagement and holds a faculty appointment as tenured Associate Professor of Music.

The decision that UAB's QEP Director is not a full-time position is a strategic one. During the 2005 and 2015 QEP's, the University learned that the five-year term of a QEP director presented challenges in establishing consistent leadership. Hiring a full-time QEP director who could garner the necessary respect of faculty while also having sufficient institutional leadership experience and connections, but whose job carried an "expiration date" proved problematic. During the first three years of the 2015 QEP, two different directors were hired but each took other positions before the QEP was completed. This led to challenges in sustaining focus and momentum. As a result, UAB leadership modified the QEP director role to be part of the assignment of an experienced administrator or faculty member.

Phillips has served as UAB's QEP Director since 2018 and during that time shepherded the final years of UAB's 2015-2020 QEP *Learning in a Team Environment* and prepared its fifth-year impact report. He has led the development and will oversee implementation of the 2025-2030 QEP *The City Is Our Classroom*.

Office of Innovative Teaching and Academic Engagement

The QEP Director is assisted by the Executive Assistant of the Innovative Teaching and Academic Engagement (ITAE) Office for clerical and logistical support. The QEP Director also has access to the expertise and partnership of the academic support units that comprise the ITAE office, including the Center for Teaching and Learning, the University Writing Center, and the offices of the Blazer Core Curriculum, National and International Fellowships and Scholarships, and Service Learning and Undergraduate Research.

Office of the Blazer Core Curriculum

The central focus of *The City Is Our Classroom* is undergraduate education. The Office of the Blazer Core Curriculum general education program plays a key role in the leadership, implementation, and assessment of the QEP. Director Christopher Minnix, Ph.D. has led the office since 2020 and oversaw the launch of the Blazer Core as well as the development of the first City as Classroom courses. He is assisted by a program manager, Rachel Daniel, and a portion of their salaries and efforts are dedicated to work on the QEP (see resources section below).



Student Consultants on University Teaching

The Student Consultants on University Teaching (SCOUTs) program hires and trains students who work with faculty to provide their perspective on core teaching. SCOUTs conduct classroom observations, provide student insights on course materials and assessments, and conduct focus groups with students about their experience in courses. During the five-year QEP, SCOUTs will be funded to support *The City Is Our Classroom* initiatives (see resources section below) specifically by working with teachers and students in City as Classroom and service-learning courses.

Office of Service Learning and Undergraduate Research

The Office of Service Learning and Undergraduate Research connects students, faculty, and community nonprofit partners to enrich student academic learning, to promote civic engagement, and to strengthen and support local and global communities. Key activities of *The City Is Our Classroom* include the advancement and assessment of service-learning experiences and undergraduate community-based research in general education and major courses. The QEP budget does not directly fund the office, but QEP-funded teacher and course development grants will support these activities.

The Center for Teaching and Learning

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) provides UAB faculty with professional and teaching support programs that encourage teaching effectiveness and innovation on campus. The CTL was initially expanded and supported as part of the 2015 QEP and has developed significantly over the past ten years, having provided thousands of hours of teacher development to hundreds of teachers across all UAB's colleges and schools. The CTL now includes the offices of Teaching and Learning,



Learning Technologies, and Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning and is widely considered by UAB faculty, staff, and leadership to be the source of teaching support and innovation on campus. As excellent teaching is critical to the effective delivery of high-impact practices, the CTL is fully committed to supporting *The City Is Our Classroom* through teacher development workshops and departmental and school trainings.

Division of Student Affairs

The Division of Student Affairs creates programs, initiatives, opportunities and environments that support and contribute to student success through active learning, the removal of barriers, and the establishment of spaces for community engagement. The division's strategic plan includes the following priorities: wellbeing, inclusive community, engagement and learning, organizational enhancement and community engagement. The division has been a primary partner in the development of the QEP and is committed to achieving the student learning outcomes of *The City Is Our Classroom*.

QEP Advisory Council

In previous QEP's and in other academic and co-curricular endeavors, the University has recognized that an active advisory council is key to success. A QEP Advisory Council (QEPAC) has been actively engaged in *The City Is Our Classroom* since 2022. The QEPAC assisted in the topic selection process and helped to develop and write the QEP plan. The QEPAC will continue to be engaged throughout implementation and assessment of *The City Is Our Classroom*. Members of the council include QEP leadership, faculty, staff, students, and community members. See Appendix C for membership of the QEPAC.

Community Partners

The success of *The City Is Our Classroom* depends in great measure on partnerships with the people and organizations in the City of Birmingham and the surrounding

communities. UAB has worked tirelessly to develop these relationships through education, healthcare, and service. UAB's educational community partners work with faculty and students to achieve their goals in ways that are mutually beneficial. UAB enjoys partnerships with community organizations focused on overcoming hunger and poverty, quality education, gender equality, affordable and clean energy, industry and infrastructure, production and consumption, and sustainability. See Appendix D for a more detailed list of community partners. *The City Is Our Classroom* QEP will leverage these existing partnerships and seek to significantly expand partnerships with community organizations. Additionally, the QEP will provide new infrastructure for assessing student learning that occurs while engaged with the community and for evaluating the satisfaction and experiences of our partners.

Resources

To achieve the goals, implement the activities, and assess progress on student learning objectives of *The City Is Our Classroom*, UAB has allocated approximately \$250,000 annually to support the QEP and its ongoing administration. Funding is allocated through the Office of the Provost and administered through the Office of the Blazer Core Curriculum. Unit-based projects will be offered on a matching basis with the department, school, or college. The established five-year budget for implementation of *The City Is Our Classroom* is shown in Table 1.

QEP Annual Budget FY 2024-2029						
CATEGORY	YEAR 0	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5
QEP Director	\$37,625.00	\$38,753.75	\$39,916.36	\$41,113.85	\$42,347.27	\$43,617.69
Blazer Core Director	\$55,588.25	\$57,255.90	\$58,973.57	\$60,742.78	\$62,565.07	\$64,442.02
Program Manager	\$25,005.84	\$25,756.02	\$26,528.70	\$27,324.56	\$28,144.29	\$28,988.62
SCOUTs	\$7,000.00	\$7,000.00	\$7,000.00	\$7,000.00	\$7,000.00	\$7,000.00
Assessment	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00
City as Classroom Courses	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00
Unit Based Projects	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00
Equipment and Technology	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
Travel & Conference	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
Branding and Marketing	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00
Fellowships & Working Grps	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
TOTAL ANNUAL BUDGET	\$242,219.09	\$245,765.66	\$249,418.63	\$253,181.19	\$257,056.63	\$261,048.33

Table 1. QEP Annual Budget



Chapter 8

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2025 QEP Topics Campus Survey

Appendix A

QEP Topic Selection Campus Survey, Response Data, and Comments

■ 2025 QEP Topics Campus Survey

Thank you for providing feedback in selecting the final topic for UAB's 2025 QEP. For more information about the QEP and UAB's affirmation of accreditation process, please click [HERE](#). Please consider the four proposed topics and indicate which ones are the most relevant, impactful, and achievable in improving UAB student learning outcomes and/or student success.

According to SACSCOC, an effective QEP topic:

- Reflects and affirms a commitment to enhance overall institutional quality and effectiveness.
- Focuses on an issue that the institution considers important to improving student learning outcomes and/or student success.
- Has broad-based support of institutional constituencies.

Your responses will remain anonymous unless you choose to share your name.

■ Your Role

What is your role in the UAB community.

Please check all that apply. I am a:

☐

Faculty Member

☐

Staff Member

☐

Student

What is your school or college? _____

What is your faculty appointment/rank? _____

Please enter the name of your office or department. _____

What degree are you pursuing? _____

■ Instructions

Please provide feedback on the four proposed QEP topics. Consider if the QEP would be relevant, impactful, and achievable in improving UAB's student learning outcomes and/or student success.

The four proposed QEP topics are:

Topic 1: The City Is Our Classroom

Topic 2: Connections Across Disciplines

Topic 3: The Whole Student

Topic 4: Liberal Arts Education and Meaningful Work

Please proceed to learn more about, and to evaluate and rank each topic. Details of each topic will be provided in the survey, or you can [CLICK HERE](#) see details about each topic in a separate window on the QEP website.

TOPIC 1: The City Is Our Classroom

Description:

- This QEP encourages academic engagement, learning and growth through community partnerships with academic courses.

Learning Objectives:

- Students will demonstrate growth and learning in the areas of:
 - ▶ Understanding of communities and cultures
 - ▶ Connecting knowledge from one's discipline to civic life
 - ▶ Participation in civic engagement activities
 - ▶ Development of civic communication skills
 - ▶ Reflection on civic participation
 - ▶ Collaborative work across civic structures

Implementation:

- The QEP would be implemented through City as Classroom courses of the Blazer Core, service-learning courses, and courses in individual majors that connect students to the community.

Assessment:

- AACU Civic Engagement VALUE Rubric

This QEP is relevant to UAB and its goals and mission.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

This QEP will have a positive impact on UAB student learning outcomes and/or student success.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Implementation and assessment of progress on this QEP are achievable.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Please provide any other feedback about Topic 1: The City Is Our Classroom.

TOPIC 2: Connections Across Disciplines

Description:

- This QEP encourages students to synthesize connections across academic disciplines and establish structures for curricular connections among undergraduate courses.

Learning Objectives:

- Students will demonstrate growth and learning in the areas of:
 - ▶ Formulating connections among academic experiences
 - ▶ Creating intellectual wholes out of multiple parts in facts, theories, and examples
 - ▶ Making connections across disciplines and perspectives
 - ▶ Adapting and applying skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations
 - ▶ Communication that enhances meaning
 - ▶ Developing sense of self as a learner, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts

Implementation:

- The QEP would be implemented through the trailhead program of the Blazer Core that links three academic classes and cohorts of students in interdisciplinary learning activities and topics. Would also include cross-discipline and collaborative degree programs within selected majors.

Assessment:

- AACU Integrative Learning VALUE Rubric

This QEP is relevant to UAB and its goals and mission.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

This QEP will have a positive impact on UAB student learning outcomes and/or student success.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Implementation and assessment of progress on this QEP are achievable.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Please provide any other feedback about Topic 2: Connections Across Disciplines.

TOPIC 3: The Whole Student

Description:

- This QEP focuses on supporting overall student wellness, including intellectual, social, physical, and emotional realms. Curricular and co-curricular opportunities would be developed and leveraged to advance student learning and belonging.

Learning Objectives:

- Students will demonstrate growth and learning in the areas of:
 - ▶ Taking initiative in expanding skills and knowledge as well as positive habits for self-care
 - ▶ Making connections between student wellness and student success
 - ▶ Reflecting on learning and growth in knowledge and maturity over time
 - ▶ Leveraging campus and outside resources for intellectual, social, physical, and emotional support

Implementation:

- The QEP would be implemented throughout the students' time at the University. This would be accomplished through *First Year Experience* courses of the Blazer Core as well as additional core curriculum and major program courses that expand students' knowledge of wellness and wellbeing. In addition to curricular work, co-curricular integration will be coordinated with the office of Second Year and Final Year Experience programs and the offices of Student Health and Wellbeing and Student Experience.

Assessment:

- AACU Lifelong Learning VALUE Rubric
- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
- Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI)

This QEP is relevant to UAB and its goals and mission.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

This QEP will have a positive impact on UAB student learning outcomes and/or student success.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Implementation and assessment of progress on this QEP are achievable.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Please provide any other feedback about Topic 3. The Whole Student

TOPIC 4: Liberal Arts Education and Meaningful Work

Description:

- This QEP helps students develop key 21st century competencies that connect their liberal arts education to their futures, linking careers and community engagement to positive impacts on the lives and wellbeing of others.

Learning Objectives:

- Students will demonstrate growth and learning in the areas of:
 - ▶ Developing curiosity that explores academic topics leading to rich awareness of lesser- known information
 - ▶ Connecting academic subject areas with workforce needs and opportunities
 - ▶ Engaging in experiential learning that informs career decision making
 - ▶ Taking initiative in expanding skills and knowledge leading to post-graduation employment
 - ▶ Reflecting on learning and growth in knowledge and maturity over time and effectively demonstrating this to future employers

Implementation:

- The QEP would be implemented through *First Year Experience* and City as Classroom courses of the Blazer Core. Additionally, service learning and capstone courses within each major, as well the UAB Career Center would play an important role in implementation.

Assessment:

- National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE)
- Student Survey AACU Foundations for Lifelong VALUE Rubric

This QEP is relevant to UAB and its goals and mission.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

This QEP will have a positive impact on UAB student learning outcomes and/or student success.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Implementation and assessment of progress on this QEP are achievable.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Please provide any other feedback about Topic 4: Liberal Arts Education and Meaningful Work.



Please provide a ranking for each of the four QEP topics.
You may rank more than one topic as your first choice.

RANK TOPICS

1	2	3	4

Topic 1: The City Is Our Classroom

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Topic 2: Connections Across Disciplines

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Topic 3: The Whole Student

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Topic 4: Liberal Arts Education and Meaningful Work

Thank you.

Your feedback is an important part of the QEP topic selection process.

- To learn more about UAB's 2025 QEP and reaffirmation process, go to the UAB QEP website.



Perceived QEP Success Ratings by Topic

Topic 1A - Topic 1: The City Is Our Classroom

Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	Responses	Sum
This QEP is relevant to UAB and its goals and mission.	0.00	10.00	7.77	2.42	5.87	219	1702.00
This QEP will have a positive impact on UAB student learning outcomes and/or student success.	0.00	10.00	7.51	2.50	6.25	219	1645.00
Implementation and assessment of progress on this QEP are achievable.	0.00	10.00	7.17	2.52	6.37	219	1571.00

Topic 2A - Topic 2: Connections Across Disciplines

Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	Responses	Sum
This QEP is relevant to UAB and its goals and mission.	0.00	10.00	7.85	2.09	4.36	210	1648.00
This QEP will have a positive impact on UAB student learning outcomes and/or student success.	0.00	10.00	7.73	2.18	4.75	210	1624.00
Implementation and assessment of progress on this QEP are achievable.	0.00	10.00	7.15	2.43	5.88	210	1502.00

Perceived QEP Success Ratings by Topic

Topic 3A - Topic 3: The Whole Student

Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	Responses	Sum
This QEP is relevant to UAB and its goals and mission.	0.00	10.00	7.51	2.32	5.38	207	1555.00
This QEP will have a positive impact on UAB student learning outcomes and/or student success.	0.00	10.00	7.51	2.47	6.09	207	1555.00
Implementation and assessment of progress on this QEP are achievable.	0.00	10.00	6.92	2.55	6.49	207	1432.00

Topic 4A - Topic 4: Liberal Arts Education and Meaningful Work

Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	Responses	Sum
This QEP is relevant to UAB and its goals and mission.	1.00	10.00	7.41	2.21	4.90	207	1534.00
This QEP will have a positive impact on UAB student learning outcomes and/or student success.	1.00	10.00	7.40	2.29	5.26	207	1532.00
Implementation and assessment of progress on this QEP are achievable.	1.00	10.00	7.14	2.40	5.74	207	1477.00

Survey Participant Comments

Topic 1B - Please provide any other feedback about Topic 1: **The City Is Our Classroom.**

If students were required to go to off-campus locations to more actively participate in their community, would transportation be provided for students who do not have access to a car?

excellent

Broke students have zero interest in paying more to be on campus

students might not find the value and think it is just "one more thing" to do - busy work... depending on the major -then it might work well... but not all majors should be part of this

What I like most is that you will be evaluating the impact of the students' experiences and gaining an understanding of whether it is in fact accomplishing what you are setting out to do.

I love that this builds on one of the aspects of our current Blazer Core. I can see all departments and offices/units getting involved

Falls in line with many current projects, classes, etc. at UAB.

Not a good plan. It would be easy for some departments, iffy for others, and impossible to do anything meaningful for yet others. Yet all departments would be pressured to do something, no matter how meritorious. Everything from workload to educational value would vary sharply across campus.

Town and Gown activities are laudable, but time intensive and difficult to navigate. Opportunities with HealthSmart, the AIDS clinic and other entities, such as the Jones Valley Farm, Cooperative Extension and various support groups abound, but will require dedicated effort and personnel

The project fits in with the larger 'Grand Challenge' and '100 Neighborhood' initiatives. With that said, it may not be relevant to a majority of students.

Survey Participant Comments

This item seems like it is dependant on community partners. In my experience, the quality and commitment of community partners is highly variable and beyond the control of the faculty member. Because of this, I feel like this will be difficult to implement and the students will not receive the same experiences.

This will be an exciting opportunity for students

If we choose this one, we will need to provide ample resources to our community partners. We will also need to offer multiple modes of transportation for students (e.g., uber gift cards, vans, buses), especially for students with mobility issues.

This seems to have a limited reach at this time as not all core courses have been developed. How will this be broadened to reach students after completion of the core courses?

Birmingham has a rich history of Civil Rights activity, music, and cultural experiences shared by diverse populations. City as Classroom should prove engaging and impactful for our students.

Rural areas? Will distant rural students have opportunities? Perhaps instead of "Cities" it could be "Communities"

There is a finite limit on the number of students that can actively engage with the community and assuming that every student would be able to do so (at some level) seems fantastical. Also, implementing the QEP via the QEP topic seems like circular logic. What are the actual ways that the QEP will be implemented?

Worried this loses track of UAB's place as a global university that thinks about the world and the country AS WELL AS the local community and city.

based on my experience service learning courses are key to students learning and success

The focus on civic values and engagement seems critically important - and far too often not apparent in our current national leadership and society

Appendix B

Survey of Community Partner Satisfaction

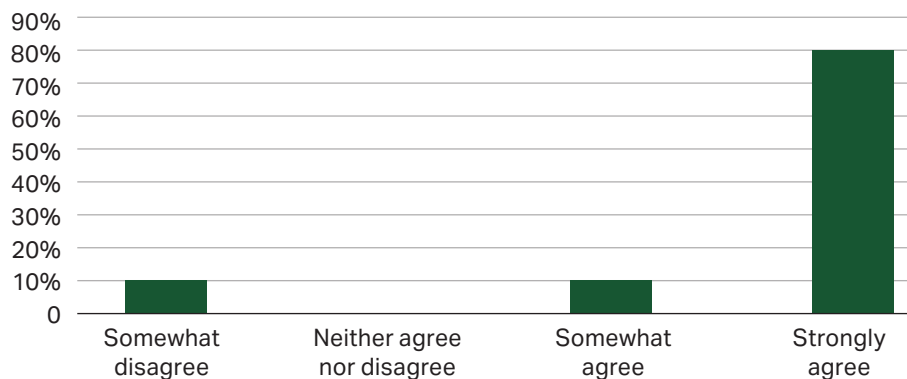
UAB Community Partner Satisfaction Survey

The UAB Office of Service Learning and Undergraduate Research conducted a survey of 139 community partners in Fall 2024 to assess partner satisfaction. The survey received 37 responses for a 28% response rate. While response rates were relatively small, chi square analysis of <0.05 revealed that responses were statistically significant. Two key results relevant to the QEP included responses to the following questions:

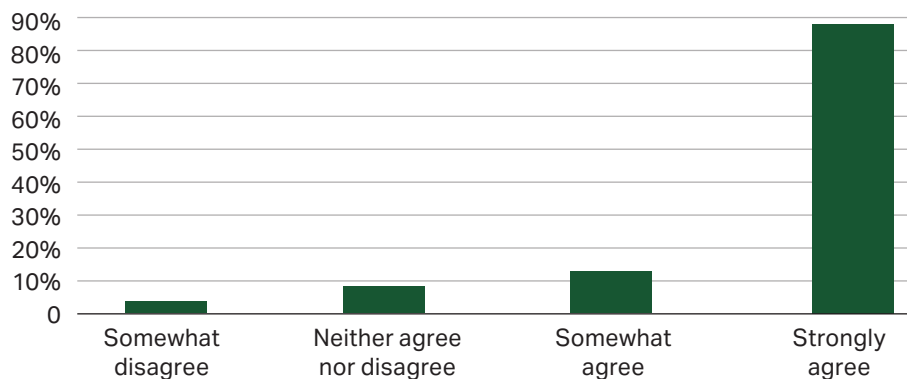
- Would you agree that participating in service-learning partnerships was beneficial to your organization?
- Would you agree that your organization's partnership with UAB is beneficial?

The following figures display responses by survey respondents.

Would you agree that participating in service-learning partnerships was beneficial to your organization?



Would you agree that your organization's partnership with UAB is beneficial?



Appendix C

Civic Engagement VALUE Rubric

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT VALUE RUBRIC

For more information, please contact value@aacu.org

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

	Capstone 4	Milestones 3 2		Benchmark 1
Diversity of Communities and Cultures	Demonstrates evidence of adjustment in own attitudes and beliefs because of working within and learning from diversity of communities and cultures. Promotes others' engagement with diversity.	Reflects on how own attitudes and beliefs are different from those of other cultures and communities. Exhibits curiosity about what can be learned from diversity of communities and cultures.	Has awareness that own attitudes and beliefs are different from those of other cultures and communities. Exhibits little curiosity about what can be learned from diversity of communities and cultures.	Expresses attitudes and beliefs as an individual, from a one-sided view. Is indifferent or resistant to what can be learned from diversity of communities and cultures.
Analysis of Knowledge	Connects and extends knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from one's own academic study/field/discipline to civic engagement and to one's own participation in civic life, politics, and government.	Analyzes knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from one's own academic study/field/discipline making relevant connections to civic engagement and to one's own participation in civic life, politics, and government.	Begins to connect knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from one's own academic study/field/discipline to civic engagement and to one's own participation in civic life, politics, and government.	Begins to identify knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from one's own academic study/field/discipline that is relevant to civic engagement and to one's own participation in civic life, politics, and government.
Civic Identity and Commitment	Provides evidence of experience in civic-engagement activities and describes what she/he has learned about her or himself as it relates to a reinforced and clarified sense of civic identity and continued commitment to public action.	Provides evidence of experience in civic-engagement activities and describes what she/he has learned about her or himself as it relates to a growing sense of civic identity and commitment.	Evidence suggests involvement in civic-engagement activities is generated from expectations or course requirements rather than from a sense of civic identity.	Provides little evidence of her/his experience in civic-engagement activities and does not connect experiences to civic identity.
Civic Communication	Tailors communication strategies to effectively express, listen, and adapt to others to establish relationships to further civic action.	Effectively communicates in civic context, showing ability to do all of the following: express, listen, and adapt ideas and messages based on others' perspectives.	Communicates in civic context, showing ability to do more than one of the following: express, listen, and adapt ideas and messages based on others' perspectives.	Communicates in civic context, showing ability to do one of the following: express, listen, and adapt ideas and messages based on others' perspectives.
Civic Action and Reflection	Demonstrates independent experience and shows <i>initiative in team leadership</i> of complex or multiple civic engagement activities, accompanied by reflective insights or analysis about the aims and accomplishments of one's actions.	Demonstrates independent experience and <i>team leadership</i> of civic action, with reflective insights or analysis about the aims and accomplishments of one's actions.	Has clearly <i>participated</i> in civically focused actions and begins to reflect or describe how these actions may benefit individual(s) or communities.	Has <i>experimented</i> with some civic activities but shows little internalized understanding of their aims or effects and little commitment to future action.
Civic Action and Reflection	Demonstrates ability and commitment to <i>collaboratively work across and within</i> community contexts and structures <i>to achieve a civic aim</i> .	Demonstrates ability and commitment to work actively <i>within</i> community contexts and structures <i>to achieve a civic aim</i> .	Demonstrates experience identifying intentional ways to <i>participate in</i> civic contexts and structures.	Experiments with civic contexts and structures, <i>tries out a few to see what fits</i> .

Appendix D

Community Engagement Rubric

UAB's The City Is Our Classroom QEP

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RUBRIC

Adapted from the AAC&U Civic Engagement Rubric for the University of Alabama at Birmingham

Student Community Engagement Skills	Capstone 4	Milestones		Benchmark* 1
		3	2	
Understanding Their Community	Demonstrates evidence of development and evolution in own attitudes and beliefs because of working within and learning from diversity of communities and cultures.	Reflects on how own attitudes and beliefs are different from those of other cultures and communities. Exhibits curiosity about what can be learned from diversity of communities and cultures.	Has awareness that own attitudes and beliefs are different from those of other cultures and communities. Exhibits little curiosity about what can be learned from diversity of communities and cultures.	Expresses attitudes and beliefs as an individual, from a one-sided view. Is indifferent or resistant to what can be learned from diversity of communities and cultures.
Connecting Knowledge from Their Discipline to the Community	Connects and extends knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from one's own academic study/field/ discipline to community engagement and to one's own participation in the community.	Analyzes knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from one's own academic study/field/ discipline making relevant connections to community engagement and to one's own participation in the community.	Begins to connect knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from one's own academic study/field/discipline to community engagement and to one's own participation in the community.	Begins to identify knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from one's own academic study/ field/discipline that is relevant to community engagement and to one's own participation in the community.
Communicating with Their Community	Tailors communication strategies to effectively express, listen, and adapt to others to establish relationships and to further community engagement activity.	Effectively communicates in the community context, showing ability to do all of the following: express, listen, and adapt ideas and messages based on others' perspectives.	Communicates in the community context, showing ability to do more than one of the following: express, listen, and adapt ideas and messages based on others' perspectives.	Communicates in the community context, showing ability to do one of the following: express, listen, and adapt ideas and messages based on others' perspectives.
Collaborating with Their Community	Demonstrates ability and commitment to work collaboratively across and within community contexts and structures to achieve specific aims.	Demonstrates ability and commitment to work actively within community contexts and structures to achieve specific aims.	Demonstrates experience identifying intentional ways to participate in community contexts and structures.	Experiments with participation in community structures.

**Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to work that does not meet benchmark-level performance.*

Appendix E

**QEP Advisory Council
2024-2025**

QEP ADVISORY COUNCIL 2024-2025		
NAME	ROLE/DISCIPLINE	ACADEMIC UNIT/ ORGANIZATION
Amy D. Carr, PhD	Community Health and Human Services Program	School of Education/Human Sciences
Katie Corvey, DrPH	Health Policy and Organization	School of Public Health
David Dada	Director of Governmental Relations	Office of Senior VP Finance/ Administration
Cristin Gavin, PhD	Neurobiology	Heersink School of Medicine
Giorgia Ellard	Community Representative	AmeriCorps VISTA Program
Dr. Samantha Giordano-Mooga, PhD	Biomedical Sciences Program	School of Health Professions
Kristin Harper	Community Representative	Railroad Park
Aimee Holland, DNP	Graduate Clinical Education	School of Nursing
Maria Hopkins, PhD	Psychology	College of Arts and Sciences
Gareth Jones	Service Learning/Undergraduate Research	Office of Service Learning/ Undergrad. Research
Chris Minnix, PhD	Blazer Core Curriculum	Blazer Core Curriculum
Scott Phillips, PhD	QEP Director	Vice Provost of Innovative Teaching and Academic Engagement
Lourdes Sanchez-Lopez, PhD	World Languages and Literatures	College of Arts and Sciences
Teresa Shufflebarger	Chief Admin Officer, LHSA	Live HealthSmart Alabama
Andrew Sullivan	Civil/Const./Environmental Engineering	School of Engineering
Mary Wallace, PhD	Student Experience	Office of Asst. VP Student Experience
Stephanie Yates, PhD	Accounting and Finance	Collat School of Business

Appendix F

UAB Community Partners

1917 Clinic

The largest HIV healthcare unit in AL

A.G. Gaston Boys & Girls Club

A Friend of Mind

Empowers youth to combat mental illness

AIDS Alabama Inc.

Provides culturally sensitive, LGBTQ-friendly services to Alabamians with AIDS

aKidz

Provides psychosocial services for at-risk youth

AL Citizens for Constitutional Reform

Is dedicated to helping Alabamians draft a new state constitution

Alabama Environmental Council

Increases awareness of environmental issues throughout the state

Alabama Kidney Foundation

Serves kidney patients of Alabama through financial assistance, education and support services

Alabama Possible

Equips students to be college-ready

Alabama Rivers Alliance

Protects and restores all of Alabama's water resources

Alabama Goodwill Industries

Employs individuals with barriers to employment to operate thrift stores

Alabama Head Injury Foundation

Increases public awareness of traumatic brain injury (TBI)

Alabama Policy Institute

Implements public policy that honors the principles of free markets

Alabama Wildlife Center

Protects, preserves, and conserves Alabama's native avian species

Aletheia House

Provides low-cost substance abuse/HIV treatment

American Baseball Foundation

Educates elementary-age youth through sports-based academics

American Cancer Society

Supports people with cancer and their families

American Heart Association

Works to save and improve lives of those who face urgent health crises

American Red Cross Birmingham Area

Americorps VISTA

Helps communities with volunteerism across the country

Angel's Hope

Offers various outreach programs within the pediatric cancer community

ARC of Central Alabama

Serves people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their families

ARC of Shelby County

Empowers individuals with developmental disabilities and delays and their families

Bama Kids, INC

Provides activities that promote life skills to prevent substance abuse

Bell Center for Early Intervention Prog.

Provides quality early intervention services in a center-based program

Better Basics

Delivers reading and math instruction and resources to empower the educationally vulnerable in Birmingham City Schools

Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Greater Birmingham

Birmingham AIDS Outreach
Alabama's first AIDS Service Organization

Birmingham Board of Special Education

Enables a student with a disability to access and progress in the general curriculum

Birmingham Botanical Gardens

Birmingham Civil Rights Institute
Promotes a comprehensive understanding civil rights developments in Birmingham

Birmingham Education Foundation

Supports efforts to increase the students who are on the path to academic excellence

Birmingham Holocaust Education Center

Educates about the history and lessons of the Holocaust

Birmingham Jewish Foundation

Support endeavors that enrich Jewish life, support Israel, help all people in need, and build a better Birmingham

Birmingham Museum of Art

Birmingham Public Library

Birmingham Zoo

Birmingham VA Medical Center

Black Warrior Riverkeeper

Protect and restores the Black Warrior River and its tributaries

Blazer Kitchen

Provides healthy food, resources, and referrals to UAB members and their families

Books to Prisons

Sends free books to incarcerated individuals

Boy Scouts of America, Greater Alabama

Boys & Girls Club of Central Alabama

Breakthrough Birmingham

Helps high-achieving and highly motivated underrepresented students to achieve post-secondary success

Cahaba Riverkeeper

Defends the ecological integrity of the Cahaba River and its watershed

Cahaba Valley Health Care

Provides dental and vision services for people in financial need

Camp Fire USA Central Alabama Council

Focuses on leadership development in today's youth

Camp Fletcher

Connects young people to their peers, their schools, and their families to become leaders in their communities

CASA of Shelby County

Trains volunteers to go through the court process with children who have been abused

Catholic Family Services

Provides counseling, family, and wellness services center that provides various wellness services

Changes Comes with Action

Provides various acts of service to the homeless community

Childcare Resources

Makes it possible for children to have quality childcare and education

Children's Aid Society

Provides a safe and loving home for children

Children's Hospital of Alabama

Children's Harbor Family Center

Provides unique, no-cost services offered at both Children's of Alabama in Birmingham and at the Lake Martin retreat facility

Christian Service Mission

Exists to connect resources with needs through relational partnerships to help communities thrive

Collat Jewish Family Services of Birmingham

Serves individuals, especially older adults, and families at every stage of life

Cool Green Trees

Mitigates climate change by planting trees

Coosa Riverkeeper

Has a mission to protect, promote, and restore the Coosa River

Community Care

Development Network

Helps to heal the whole family through their community-based programs.

Community Food Bank of Central Alabama

Feeds the hungry by working with over 230 Partner Agencies

Community Grief Support

Counsels bereaved adults

Community of Hope Health Clinic

Serves Shelby County, Alabama residents who are at or below 20% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines

Conversations to Remember

Connects seniors, including those with cognitive decline, with college students

Crisis Center

Serves the personal crisis or mental health needs of those, primarily in Central Alabama

Crime Stoppers of Metro Alabama, Inc.

Disability Rights and Resources
Empowers those with disabilities to reach their independent living goals

Eagle Solar and Light

Identifies the best technical and financial options for solar energy for businesses of all sizes

Easter Seals of the Birmingham Area

Episcopal Place

Provides affordable housing and independent living for seniors and adults with disabilities

ESG Foundation "Special Camps"

Provides camping experiences for individuals with special needs

Exceptional Foundation

Serves individuals with special needs

ExpectCare Hospice

Is a faith-based organization that provides hospice care

Family Connection

Supports youth who need emergency shelter

Family Court of Jefferson County

Fellowship House, Inc.

Provides a substance abuse disorder recovery

Firehouse Shelter

Provides Birmingham men experiencing homelessness a nurturing environment

Food For Our Journey

Utilizes a food truck to deliver food

Freshwater Land Trust

Conserves and cares for environmentally significant land and water throughout Central Alabama

Furniture Bank

Specializes in the pickup, storage, and delivery of donated furniture, appliances, and other household goods

Galleria Woods Senior Living Community

Gasp

Is a non-profit healthy air advocate

Gateway

Is Birmingham's first and oldest health and human services agency

Girl Scouts of North-Central Alabama

Girls Incorporated of Central Alabama

Inspires all girls to be strong, smart, and bold

Girls on the Run

Serves young girls of Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair and Talladega Counties with fun, evidence-based running programs

Girls Rock Bham

Fosters a solid foundation for young girls to grow confidently thru developing musical skills

Glenwood Autism & Behavioral Health

Provides services to children, adolescents, and adults with autism and other behavioral health needs

Grace House Ministries

Provides stable, Christian homes to Alabama girls in foster care

Grace Klein Community

Educational and charitable nonprofit dedicated to providing relief to the underprivileged

Greater Birmingham Arts Education Collaborative

Focuses on increasing student access to quality arts education

Greater Birmingham Humane Society

Greater Birmingham Ministries

Provides emergency services for people in need and engages the poor and the non-poor in systemic change efforts

Growing Kings

Serves underserved male youth through systemic and targeted enrichment, research, and advocacy

Hand in Paw

Provides animal-assisted therapy

Hands on Birmingham Inc.

Provides volunteers to individuals and groups

Healing Words

Highlands United Methodist Church

Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama

Advocates for economic equality and social justice for Latino families in central Alabama

Impact Alabama

Provides children's vision health services, and competitive debate opportunities for Birmingham-area high school students

IMPACT Family Counseling

Provides low-cost professional counseling

InToto Creative Arts

Provides opportunities for artistic expression, for people affected by economic hardship

Jefferson County Health Department**Jimmie Hale Mission**

Helps adults directly affected by homelessness, addiction, or unhealthy living

Jones Valley Teaching Farm

Is a community farm that reaches students, teachers, and community members

Junior Achievement of Greater Bham**Kids First Awareness**

Is an after-school program for at-risk children and bridge of HOPE adult outreach

Lakeshore Foundation

Provides opportunities for physical activity, sports, recreation, advocacy, policy and research for those with physical disabilities

Legacy YMCA (Bessemer Location)**Legal Aid Society of Birmingham****Levite Jewish Community Center**

A family-oriented recreational and educational facility that is open to the entire community

Lovelady Center

Provides women with, shelter, food, clothing, life skills and spiritual guidance

M-POWER Ministries

Addresses the needs of those stuck in generational poverty.

Magic City Harvest

Collects perishable and non-perishable food from 30 feeding agencies

Magic Moments

Grants non-medical magic moments to children

Mason Music Studios

Provides music education

McWane Science Center

Is a state-of-the-art STEM museum

Mitchell's Place

Provides services for children and families affected by autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities

Moss Rock Preserve**New Rising Star Community Support**

Supports initiatives for seniors

Next Level Sports Camps**Oak Tree Ministries**

Supports those effected by generational trauma and poverty

Oasis Counseling

Provides exceptional, professional mental health care to vulnerable women, children, and families

One Roof

Focuses on connecting individuals and families to appropriate resources related to their housing and service needs.

Operation HOPE

Addresses economic inequality for underserved individuals and small businesses

Pathways

Is the oldest agency that serves women and children experiencing homelessness.

P.E.E.R., Inc.

Provides resources for healthy living, learning, and working in east Birmingham

Poor of Jesus Christ Alabama

Serves the poor and the Church of Franciscan Catholic community

Positive Maturity

Serves as the first senior assistance organizations established in Jefferson County

Preschool Partners

Provides school readiness to 2 – 4-year-olds and weekly life skills classes for their parents

Priority Veteran

Serves U.S. military veterans and their families

Project HOPE

Supports youth who need emergency shelter

Railroad Park

Is a 19-acre greenspace in the heart of Birmingham

Red Barn

Provides horses for low-income children with disabilities to ride

Red Mountain Park

Ronald McDonald House

Provides a “home-away-from-home” for families and their children who are receiving medical treatment

SafeHouse of Shelby County

Provides advocacy and support for domestic violence and sexual assault victims

SaveFirst - Impact Alabama

Offers multiple sites for taxpayers to schedule tax preparation appointments.

Shelby County Children’s

Advocacy Center

Promotes emotional and physical healing of child abuse victims

Sickle Cell Disease Association of Central Alabama

Serves those in Central & East Alabama counties

Smile-A-Mile

Provides year-round programming for children with cancer and their families

SouthernCare New Beacon

Provides hospice care

STAIR - Start the Adventure in Reading

Provides volunteer reading tutors

Sozo Trading Company

Operates an upscale thrift store

The Alabama Virtual Library Council

Provides access to free, safe, reliable, and ad-free online information

The Color Project Ensley

Uses public art, gardens, light, and sound to address community issues

The Community Kitchens of Birmingham

Provides nutritious meals to the unhoused, underserved, and underrepresented

The Literacy Council

Supports adults literacy education

The Salvation Army Birmingham Area Command

The Southern Center for Broadening Participation in STEM

Makes STEM equitably and culturally inclusive to youths in the Birmingham area

Technology Education and Literacy in Schools (TEALS)

Partners with nonprofits to broaden participation in computer science education in schools

Travelers Aid Society of Birmingham

Partners with the United Way and Travelers Aid International to help displaced individuals

**Triumph Youth and Adult
Community Development**

Serves as the outreach arm of Triumph Church

Turkey Creek Nature Preserve

UAB Center for AIDS Research (CFAR)
Research center that combats HIV across the state

UAB Institute for Arts in Medicine

Transforms the care environment through creative arts experiences for patients, families, and staff

UAB Medicine Volunteer Services

Accepts volunteers of many ages to help make a difference in the lives of patients, guests, and staff

United Ability

Provides services connecting people with disabilities to their communities

**United Community Centers Inc.
(The Riley Center)**

Provides comprehensive services to fulfill the need for earlier diagnosis and effective intervention

**United Way of Central Alabama
Urban Ministry**

Works with the residents of West End to build a thriving community

Vulcan Park and Museum

Houses the treasures of the story of Birmingham's iron ore mining and steel production

Woodlawn Foundation

Facilitates the transformation and revitalization of the Woodlawn community in Birmingham

Workshops Empowerment, Inc.

Trains people in Avondale who live with disabilities and other barriers to employment

YMCA/YWCA of Greater Birmingham

Young Professionals of Birmingham

Facilitates networking opportunities, community outreach programs, and social events for young professionals.

Youth Serve

Promotes youth volunteerism and leadership for youth ages 13-18 in Birmingham



The City Is Our Classroom

2025-2030

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN