



2025-2030 QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN

# The City Is Our Classroom

SACSCOC On-Site Visit

April 7-10, 2025



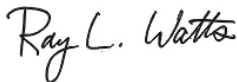
## Letter from President Ray L. Watts and Provost Janet Woodruff-Borden

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.

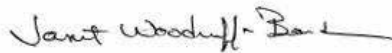
For years, UAB has actively engaged with the Birmingham community through dozens of community partnerships and community development initiatives. The University's strategic plan includes community engagement as one of its four pillars, and in recent years, UAB's academic enterprise has become increasingly 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



# Table of Contents

<b>5</b>	Chapter One	<b>Executive Summary</b>
<b>8</b>	Chapter Two	<b>Glossary of Terms</b>
<b>11</b>	Chapter Three	<b>Topic Selection</b>
<b>19</b>	Chapter Four	<b>Literature Review</b>
<b>23</b>	Chapter Five	<b>Learning Outcomes</b>
<b>25</b>	Chapter Six	<b>Implementation Strategies</b>
<b>35</b>	Chapter Seven	<b>Structure and Resources</b>
<b>41</b>	Chapter Eight	<b>Assessment and Timeline</b>
<b>56</b>	Chapter Nine	<b>References</b>



<b>59</b>	Appendix A	<b>QEP Topic Selection Campus Survey, Response Data, and Comments</b>
<b>72</b>	Appendix B	<b>Survey of Community Partner Satisfaction</b>
<b>74</b>	Appendix C	<b>QEP Advisory Council Members</b>
<b>76</b>	Appendix D	<b>UAB Community Partners</b>

Chapter 1

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

## 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 six student learning outcomes of *The City Is Our Classroom*.

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

Students will demonstrate growth and learning in the areas of:

- Understanding their community and its cultures
- Being able to connect knowledge from various academic disciplines to civic life
- Participating in civic engagement activities
- Developing civic communication skills
- Reflecting on civic participation
- Working collaboratively across civic structures

Assessment of *The City Is Our Classroom* will occur at two levels. City as Classroom courses and other QEP-related courses in the Blazer Core Curriculum will be assessed every three years by an interdisciplinary group of faculty evaluators. Other curricular and co-curricular activities, such as QEP-related major courses, community-engaged research, and service activities will be evaluated through data streams including student participation, completion, success, and direct assessments of experiential learning activities.

*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 Office 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:

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

- o Formulating connections among academic experiences
- o Creating intellectual wholes out of multiple parts in facts, theories, and examples
- o Adapting and applying skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations
- o Communicating meaningfully
- o 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:

- o Taking initiative in expanding skills and knowledge as well as positive habits for self-care
- o Making connections between student wellness and student success
- o Reflecting on learning and growth in knowledge and maturity over time
- o 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:

- o Developing curiosity that explores academic topics leading to rich awareness of lesser-known information
- o Connecting academic subject areas with workforce needs and opportunities
- o Engaging in experiential learning that informs career decision making
- o Taking initiative in expanding skills and knowledge leading to post-graduation employment
- o 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.



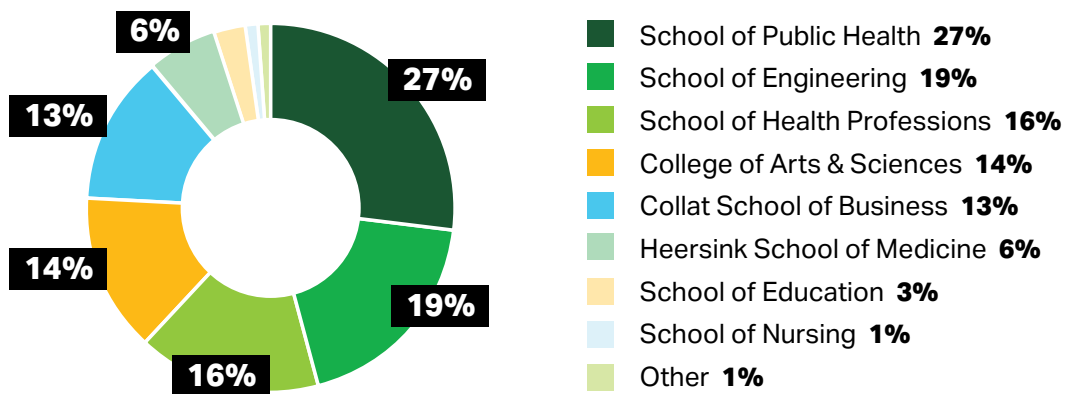


Figure 1. Faculty Engagement with the QEP Survey by School

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.

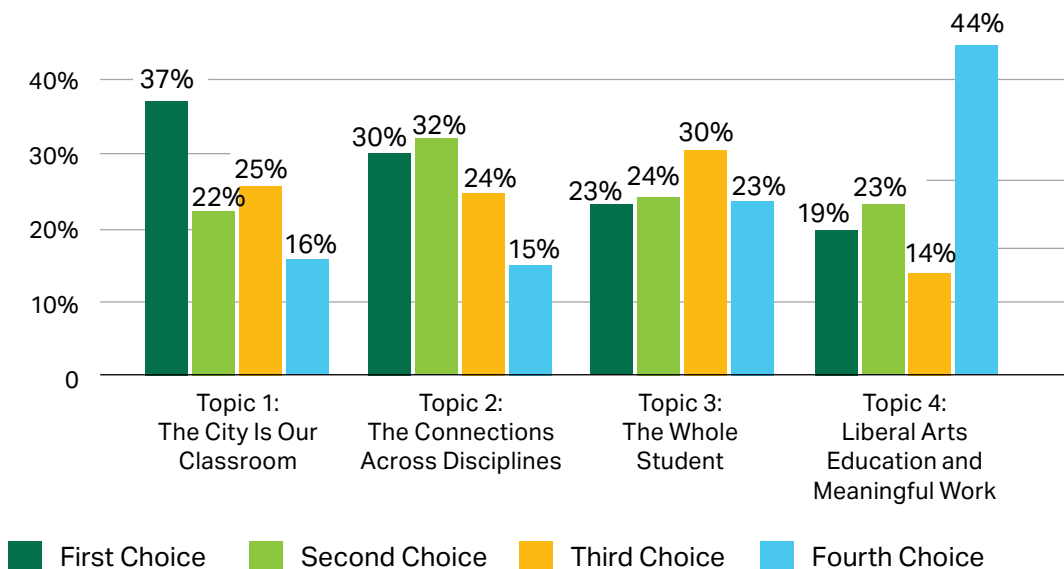


Figure 2. QEP Topic Rankings by Percentage

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.**
  - o 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.
  - o Activity 3.2. Provide co-curricular opportunities that support the academic mission of the University and enrich the student experience.
  - o 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*.**
  - o Activity 1.1. Increase the proportion of students engaging in community activities.
  - o 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.**
  - o Activity 2.1. Elevate and reward community engagement activity, research and scholarship throughout UAB for faculty and staff.
  - o 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.**
  - o Activity 4.1. Align internal resources to enable action.
  - o Activity 4.2. Identify and secure ongoing external support.
  - o 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**



*The City Is Our Classroom* 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 six student learning outcomes of *The City Is Our Classroom*.

### ***The City Is Our Classroom* Goals**

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

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

Students will demonstrate growth and learning in the areas of:

- Understanding their community and its cultures
- Being able to connect knowledge from various academic disciplines to civic life
- Participating in civic engagement activities
- Developing civic communication skills
- Reflecting on civic participation
- Working collaboratively across civic structures

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.

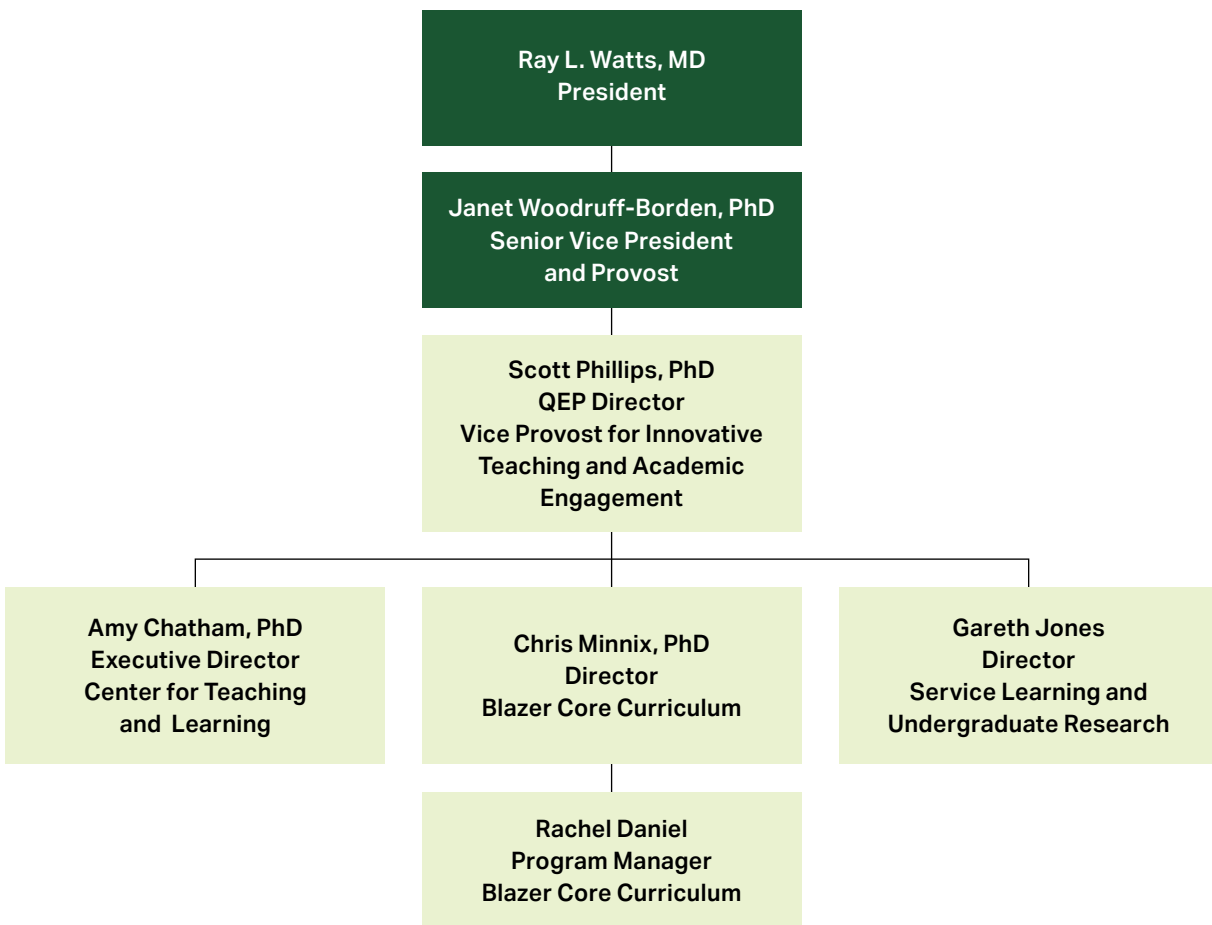


Figure 3. QEP Organizational Leadership Chart

### **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	\$40,000.00	\$40,000.00	\$40,000.00	\$40,000.00	\$40,000.00	\$40,000.00
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	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
Fellowships & Working Grps	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
<b>TOTAL ANNUAL BUDGET</b>	<b>\$242,219.09</b>	<b>\$245,765.66</b>	<b>\$249,418.63</b>	<b>\$253,181.19</b>	<b>\$257,056.63</b>	<b>\$261,048.33</b>

Table 1. QEP Annual Budget

Chapter 8

# **ASSESSMENT AND TIMELINE**

## Summary

The following assessment plan outlines direct and indirect assessment measures utilized to document student success throughout the QEP. Direct assessment of City as Classroom courses in the Blazer Core Curriculum began in 2024, and one year of data is provided here. The Blazer Core Curriculum Office has aligned this general education assessment with the QEP. In addition to direct assessment, a robust program for capturing student participation and success data from the activities discussed in the previous section of the report is outlined.

## Assessment Plan Overview

Assessment of the QEP, *The City is Our Classroom* entails assessment at two distinct levels of UAB's undergraduate curriculum. The first is UAB's general education program, the Blazer Core Curriculum, which is assessed directly by an interdisciplinary scoring group on a three-year cycle. The second consists of courses within the UAB's undergraduate majors, minors, and certificate programs that have been identified as QEP courses, and which are assessed through a variety of data streams including indirect assessments of student participation, completion, and success in QEP activities, and some direct assessment of student reflective writing or other experiential learning activities in QEP classes. The plan is broken into three stages to accommodate the development of these assessment measures across these two levels.

## QEP Assessment Learning Outcomes

The student learning outcomes below have been selected for the QEP. Direct assessment of these outcomes in Blazer Core Curriculum classes and targeted undergraduate classes in majors, minors, and certificate programs will be conducted by aligning these outcomes with specific AAC&U VALUE Rubrics. Students will demonstrate growth and learning in the areas of:

- Understanding their community and its cultures
- Connecting knowledge from their various academic disciplines to civic life
- Participating in civic engagement activities
- Developing civic communication skills
- Reflecting on civic participation
- Working collaboratively across civic structures

Two initial alignment tables can be found below. The first table outlines alignments between the QEP objectives and specific AAC&U VALUE Rubrics. The second outlines alignments with Blazer Core Curriculum Learning Outcomes for City as Classroom Courses.

<b>QEP Outcome</b>	<b>AAC&amp;U VALUE Rubrics</b>	<b>Sample Activities and/or Assignments</b>
Understanding their community and its cultures	Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Global Learning Foundations and Skills for Lifelong Learning	Attending cultural sites and reflecting on their experience Community research projects Service-learning projects
Being able to connect knowledge from their various academic disciplines to civic life	Integrative Learning Civic Engagement Creative Thinking Foundations and Skills for Lifelong Learning	Community publishing projects Service-Learning projects Client-based projects for community organizations or non-profits
Participating in civic engagement activities	Civic Engagement Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Global Learning Ethical Reasoning	Day of service activities and reflections Service-learning projects with local civic groups Community Service Projects Into the Streets Day of Service Blazers on Break
Developing civic communication skills	Written Communication Civic Engagement Integrative Learning Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Teamwork	Community publishing projects Presentations for community groups Client-based communication/media projects for local communities or organizations Reflections from community dialogue sessions
Reflecting on civic participation	Foundations and Skills for Lifelong Learning Civic Engagement Integrative Learning	Reflective essays Digital portfolios
Working collaboratively across civic structures	Civic Engagement Integrative Learning Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Teamwork	Reflective essays Digital portfolios

**Table 2. QEP Learning Outcomes Alignment with AAC&U VALUE Rubrics**

<b>City as Classroom Courses Outcome</b>	<b>QEP Aligned Outcome *Note: some outcomes are represented twice</b>
CC (1) Develop and utilize effective processes of disciplinary and interdisciplinary inquiry for community or local research	Understanding their community and its cultures
CC (2) Effectively apply strategies for ethically conducting research in the city, including strategies for ethical reciprocity and representation	Being able to connect knowledge from their various academic disciplines to civic life  Developing civic communication skills
CC (3) Critically reflect on students' own social, cultural, and ethical relationships to the diverse communities in the city	Understanding their community and its cultures  Reflecting on civic participation
CC (4) Demonstrate processes of collaboration and responsibility that create mutually beneficial relationships with community members and partners who are part of students' research or service	Working collaboratively across civic structures
CC (5) Engage in meaningful service, undergraduate research, or other experiential learning opportunities and meaningfully reflect on knowledge gained from the experience	Participating in civic engagement activities  Being able to connect knowledge from their various academic disciplines to civic life

**Table 3: Blazer Core Curriculum Outcomes Aligned with QEP Outcomes**



### **Plan Phases**

In order to provide efficient and sustainable growth the QEP assessment plan is broken into three distinct phases:

1. Phase One: Blazer Core Curriculum City as Classroom Course Assessment: direct assessment for this stage began in the Summer of 2024 and one year of data is reported below.
2. Phase Two: Curricular Mapping and Participation Data Capture: Beginning in Fall of 2025, this project will result in a curricular map of all courses and co-curricular experiences with demonstrated connections to the QEP and the implementation of reporting systems for the key strands of data outlined below.
3. Phase Three: Expansion of Direct Scoring to Major, Minor, and Certificate Courses Employing Student Reflection: Beginning in Fall of 2026, the QEP will seek to expand the use of student reflection on experiential learning and other QEP activities. A sustainable, centralized system for submitting, sampling, and assessing these reflections will be initiated.

### **Phase One: City as Classroom Course Assessment**

Phase One follows the Blazer Core Assessment Plan, outlined in section 8.2b of UAB's SACSCOC Compliance Certification Report. This plan assesses all the Blazer Core City as Classroom outcomes every three years, with most, if not all, City as Classroom courses assessed every four years. This plan, and one year of direct assessment data, are outlined below.

### **Blazer Core General Education Course Assessment**

The Blazer Core Curriculum has a commitment to quality general education assessment that yields actionable data and supports a continuous cycle of improvement. The Blazer Core Assessment Process reflects the fundamental

principles below and seeks to align its practices with the best practices in an outcomes-based assessment.

- Assessment processes will align the shared outcomes of the Blazer Core Curriculum with the AAC&U VALUE Rubrics, which will be used for general education assessment.
- Assessment of general education courses is designed and supported by interdisciplinary groups of faculty and staff teaching in the core curriculum. Blazer Core Assessment Working Group, a dedicated, interdisciplinary faculty and staff team focused on excellence in general education, supports this collaborative effort.
- To build a broader culture of assessment, interdisciplinary groups of scorers for direct assessment will be recruited each year to conduct direct assessment on a representative sample of student work from three to four areas of the Blazer Core Curriculum.
- Assessment will focus on embedded assignments in Blazer Core courses that clearly and specifically align with the Blazer Core's shared learning outcomes.
- Assessment findings will be shared with a variety of campus stakeholders, including the University's administration and college and school leadership. Disaggregated data will be shared with department chairs to promote continuous improvement at the level of individual courses.
- Assessment of student learning will be used to improve the local culture of teaching and learning in general education, in addition to documenting student progress.
- Assessment of student learning will be transparent and collaborative with schools, colleges, and their departments, investing faculty in the process.
- Faculty will have opportunities for professional development in assessment and support for taking part in the process of assessment.
- Assessment processes will build on outstanding models of general education assessment taking place on campus and provide resources for assessment practices that need revision.

Assessment of student learning in UAB's Blazer Core is led by faculty, draws on authentic, embedded assignments in general education courses, and supports local improvement of instruction. This assessment process provides direct assessment of student learning for each of the Blazer Core learning outcomes each academic year.

The assessment plan for the Blazer Core Curriculum ensures that all student learning outcomes for the Blazer Core will be assessed on a three-year cycle. The table below represents the Blazer Core curriculum assessment timeline for AY 2023-2026.

AY 2022-2023	AY 2023-2024	AY 2024- 2025	AY 2025-2026	Start of New Cycle
<b>PLANNING</b>				
FYE Freshman Writing City as Classroom	History and Meaning Creative Arts Reasoning Communicating in the Modern World	Humans and Their Societies  Quantitative Literacy  Scientific Inquiry	FYE Freshman Writing City as Classroom	History and Meaning Creative Arts Reasoning Communicating in the Modern World
<b>DIRECT ASSESSMENT</b>				
	FYE Freshman Writing City as Classroom	History and Meaning Creative Arts Reasoning Communicating in the Modern World	Humans and Their Societies  Quantitative Literacy  Scientific Inquiry	FYE Freshman Writing City as Classroom
<b>REPORTING, ACTION-PLAN INITIATED</b>				
		FYE Freshman Writing City as Classroom	History and Meaning Creative Arts Reasoning Communicating in the Modern World	Humans and Their Societies  Quantitative Literacy  Scientific Inquiry

Table 4. Assessment Timeline for Blazer Core Curriculum: Assessment Cycle 1 AY 2023-2026

### Overview of Assessment Cycle

When submitting a course for inclusion in the Blazer Core Curriculum, a department chooses specific learning outcomes from the Blazer Core to assess for the course. These outcomes are publicized on the course syllabus, and Department Chairs and faculty work in conjunction with the Blazer Core Curriculum Office to designate specific, course-embedded assignments that will be used for assessment.

Assessment data for each Blazer Core Curriculum outcome is reported each year. Individual courses in the Blazer Core are assessed on a three-year cycle, depending upon the number of courses that are included in a specific area of the core or that are aligned with a specific learning outcome. Data are collected from courses taught by a variety of instructors (tenured faculty, tenure-track faculty, non-tenure earning full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, and graduate teaching associates) because each of these instructor ranks teaches in the core curriculum. While signature assignments

and assessments will vary by discipline, all departments, faculty, and students participate in the same assessment process to provide an overarching assessment of student progress across the various learning outcomes of the Blazer Core Curriculum.

### **Blazer Core City as Classroom Assessment Results: One Year of Data from AY 2023-24**

The academic year 2023-2024 saw the debut of the Blazer Core's signature City as Classroom courses. Twenty-five sections of *City as Classroom* courses were taught by 11 departments across five different colleges and schools. Of these courses, five courses were sampled based on their alignment with the VALUE Rubrics aligned with this area of the Core.

**Planning:** The Blazer Core Assessment working group assisted in planning by reviewing and helping select AAC&U VALUE Rubrics aligned with the City as Classroom area. The Blazer Core Director reached out to department chairs and targeted college or school leadership for assistance in contacting instructors who taught City as Classroom courses. Through conversations with faculty, a set of classes were selected that utilized assignments aligning with two VALUE Rubrics: Foundations for Lifelong Learning and Critical Thinking.

City as Classroom Student Learning Outcome	Lifelong Learning VALUE Rubric Alignment	Course- Specific Outcomes
CC (1) Develop and utilize effective processes of disciplinary and interdisciplinary inquiry for community or local research.	Curiosity Initiative	CHHS 141; HY 200; PSC 267
CC (2) Effectively apply strategies for ethically conducting research in the city, including strategies for ethical reciprocity and representation.	Transfer	HY 200
CC (3) Critically reflect on students' own social, cultural, and ethical relationships to the diverse communities in the city.	Reflection	CHHS 141; HY 200; PSC 267; AC 264
CC (4) Demonstrate processes of collaboration and responsibility that create mutually beneficial relationships with community members and partners who are part of students' research or service.	Independence Transfer	CHHS 141
CC (5) Engage in meaningful service, undergraduate research, or other experiential learning opportunities and meaningfully reflect on knowledge gained from the experience.	Reflection Independence	CHHS 141; PSC 267; AC 264

**Table 5. Assessment Timeline for Blazer Core Curriculum: Assessment Cycle 1 AY 2023-2026**

In addition to the "Foundations for Lifelong Learning VALUE Rubric," the "Critical Thinking" VALUE Rubric was utilized to score a sample of 25 short research papers in Psychology 197, a City as Classroom Course focusing on community service.

City as Classroom Student Learning Outcome	Critical Thinking VALUE Rubric Alignment
CC (1) Develop and utilize effective processes of disciplinary and interdisciplinary inquiry for community or local research.	Explanation of Issues  Evidence
CC (2) Effectively apply strategies for ethically conducting research in the city, including strategies for ethical reciprocity and representation.	Influence of Context and Assumptions
CC (3) Critically reflect on students' own social, cultural, and ethical relationships to the diverse communities in the city.	Student's Position
CC (4) Demonstrate processes of collaboration and responsibility that create mutually beneficial relationships with community members and partners who are part of students' research or service.	Student's Position
CC (5) Engage in meaningful service, undergraduate research, or other experiential learning opportunities and meaningfully reflect on knowledge gained from the experience.	Influence of Context and Assumptions  Conclusions

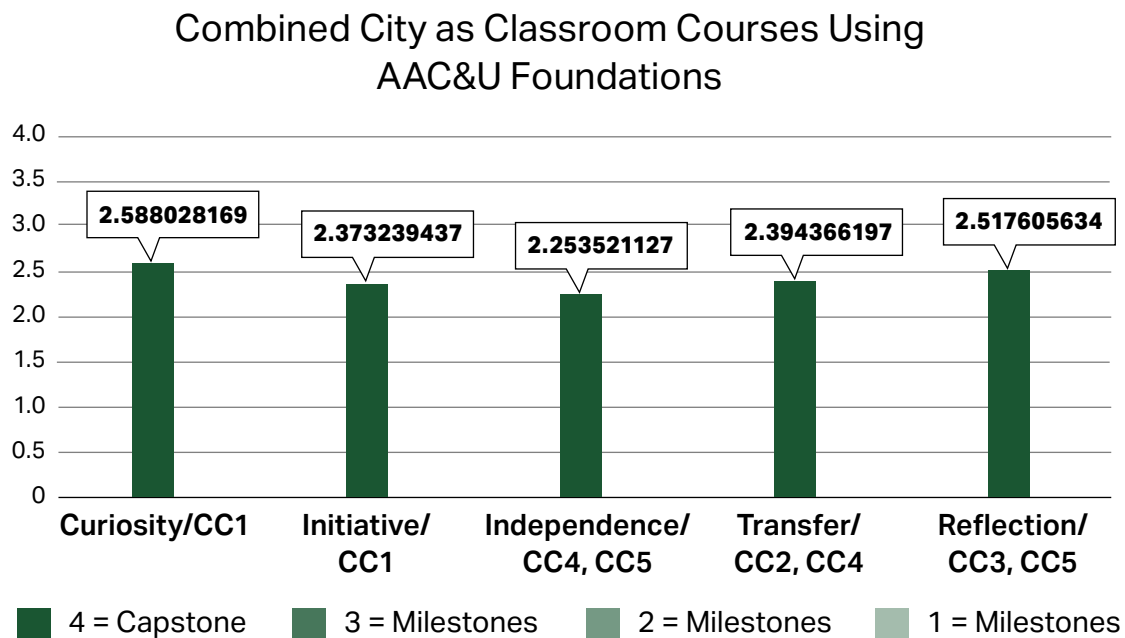
**Table 6. City as Classroom Outcomes and Critical Thinking Rubric Alignment**

**Sample Selection:** Following assignment selection, a randomized sample of student projects from classes was created from student rosters using the method described above. Student samples were reviewed and prepared following the process described above. Because City as Classroom courses were a new core requirement, some

sections had low enrollment, resulting in very small samples. Total enrollment for the five courses selected was 457 students. From this enrollment a random sample of 169 student projects was selected. Thirteen of these samples were identified as unusable, resulting in a final sample of 156 student projects, slightly below 95% confidence based on enrollment (94%).

**Scoring:** Scorers were recruited through targeted outreach to both college and school leadership and department chairs in the same manner described above. A group of 11 scorers made up of faculty from 10 different departments and five schools or colleges was assembled to score the City as Classroom sample.

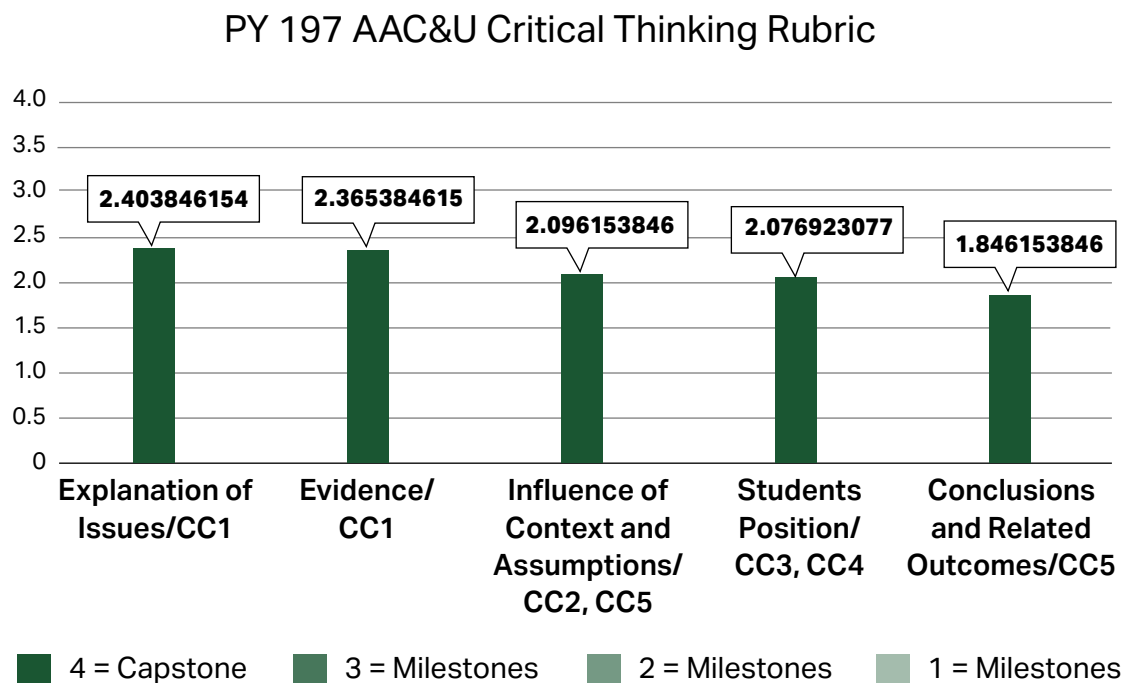
Following a full-day norming session during which scorers calibrated the “Foundations for Lifelong Learning” and the “Critical Thinking” VALUE Rubrics, scorers read and rated student work independently. Each student assignment was independently read by two different scorers. During each transition from one class to another, and at the start of each day, scorers took part in a norming session to recalibrate.



**Figure 4. Student Scores for City as Classroom Courses Assessed with Foundations for Lifelong Learning Rubric**

**Analysis and Results:** Following the collection of all scoring data, data was checked, compiled, and analyzed in the manner described above. Student performance across City as Classroom courses for both AAC&U VALUE Rubrics utilized are summarized in the table below. Scores across classes evaluated using the AAC&U

Foundations for Lifelong Learning VALUE Rubric illustrate a strong degree of student competence in the areas outlined. Scores across these courses were in the Milestone 2 range, indicating student competence in "Reflection," "Curiosity," "Independence," and "Transfer." Analysis of individual courses revealed that "Independence" was consistently scored lowest, though still firmly within the Milestone 2 level. At the same time, interrater reliability analysis showed that this category received the lowest confidence level of all categories scored (32% Absolute Agreement; 83% Agreement within 1 Level). This potentially points to an opportunity for signature assignment development to promote tighter alignment with the VALUE rubric, as this area of the core had the most significant assignment variation among courses assessed in this cycle. With *The City Is Our Classroom* as UAB's Quality Enhancement Program, the Blazer Core will use this data to create professional development resources for curricular development.



**Figure 5. Student Scores for City as Classroom Courses Assessed with Critical Thinking Rubric**

Analysis of PY 197 samples focused on a sample of short, researched papers on a significant social issue. Both the assignment and the Critical Thinking VALUE Rubric were clearly aligned in the areas of "Explanation of Issues," "Evidence," "Student's Position," and "Influence of Context and Assumptions." Students scored in the Milestones 2 level across all categories other than "Conclusions." Agreement among

readers for this area was consistent with all other areas and within the 75% target established (88.4% within 1 level).

### **Action Planning Process**

With the recent conclusion of the assessment scoring sessions for AY 2023-2024 in July of 2024, the Blazer Core Curriculum Office is currently preparing short reports for departments that report assessment results and provide some disaggregated data that can be useful for local discussions of curricula and assessment in departments. Reports will be provided in the summer of 2025. Upon receipt of the report, departments are asked to schedule an action-planning meeting with the Blazer Core Curriculum Director to develop action plans for curricular development and future assessment.

Following this meeting departments will work to submit a short formal action-plan for curricular development and assessment to the Blazer Core Office. These plans will be used both to plan for future assessment of the courses and to define measurable goals for curricular development.

### **Phase Two: Curricular Mapping and Data Capture Development**

Beginning in Fall of 2025, the QEP will initiate two key initiatives for assessment of courses participating in the QEP.

- (1) **Campus Scan and Curricular Mapping:** Using the outcomes of the QEP listed below, a team of faculty and staff will work to create a curricular map of all courses aligned with the QEP outcomes and activities and the specific high-impact practices that are taking place within the classes. Curricular mapping will take place through surveys of school, college, and departmental leadership, and analysis of course descriptions.

#### **This common data set will be used for the following purposes:**

- a. Documenting the number of QEP aligned/serving courses across the undergraduate curriculum
- b. Documenting the impact of co-curricular learning experiences on students
- c. Tracking the number of high-impact practices that support the objectives of the QEP
- d. Tracking the number of community sites and partners engaged for experiential learning
- e. Developing targeted faculty professional development workshops around the QEP



- f. Identifying strategic opportunities for seed funding for City as Classroom activities
  - g. Media coverage of outstanding QEP courses that models best practices and attracts faculty and students to the QEP
  - h. Identifying opportunities for increased collaboration with the city of Birmingham and with UAB's existing partnerships stemming from the UAB Grand Challenge, including Live HealthSmart Alabama
  - i. Creating and initiating a development plan for the QEP Digital Passport
- (2) **Establishing Sustainable Data Capture:** By focusing on the activities outlined earlier in this report, including the QEP Digital Passport, Service Learning 101 and Undergraduate Research 101 completion, student participation in City as Classroom classes, student participation in co-curricular activities, and course data, the QEP will develop a digital dashboard that allows for sustainable data capture and reporting.

**This dashboard will be used for the following purposes:**

- a. Documenting the number of students visiting specific cultural and historic sites in Birmingham for experiential learning
- b. Documenting the number of course flags (microcredentials assigned to core courses) earned in City as Classroom courses, with a specific focus on the following flags: Civic Engagement; Global/Multicultural Perspectives; Service Learning, Community-Based Learning

- c. Documenting the number of hours served by students with community partners in activities like service learning and co-curricular learning
- d. Documenting the number of students trained to conduct research and service learning in the city, through completion of Service Learning 101 and Undergraduate Research 101
- e. Documenting the impact of student service on key UAB community initiatives, such as the Sustainable Development Goal currently served by Blazers on Break before and after the rollout of the QEP
- f. Documenting the number of internships connected to QEP initiatives
- g. Providing real-time, reportable data on student participation in QEP activities

### **Phase Three: Expansion of Direct and Indirect Assessment of QEP Courses in the Major**

Beginning in the Fall of 2026, the QEP Office will begin the expansion of direct and indirect assessment measures in QEP courses. Following the curricular mapping and the building of a robust data dashboard, the QEP will draw upon the following sources of data to develop additional insight into student performance, student experience, and faculty and staff experience.

- (1) Expanding the use of student reflection throughout QEP classes. This will be done by leveraging our student engagement platform BlazerPulse, which offers students the opportunity to easily track their service and other hours and to upload reflections on their experiences. This will be accomplished by embedding reflective assignments within QEP courses in the major and integrating student use of Blazer Pulse both within QEP courses and throughout students' undergraduate curricula, beginning in *First Year Experience* courses. Faculty teaching QEP courses will be asked to develop criteria for "signature" reflective assignments that align with QEP outcomes. This outcomes approach will define similar learning goals and a range of acceptable genres, with a focus on striking a balance between instructor freedom and efficient assessment. An interdisciplinary QEP Scoring Group will come together to design and implement direct scoring of student reflection using aligned AAC&U VALUE Rubrics.
- (2) Leveraging the use of faculty reflection through open-ended surveys that invite their reflection on the process of teaching a QEP course and their plans for future development
- (3) Expanding faculty development and support through partnerships with the CTL and the Blazer Core Curriculum
- (4) Initiating a strategic seed funding initiative to support QEP courses,

activities, and sustainable community partnerships

- (5) Developing and initiating a student exit survey that tracks students' attitudes towards the QEP and their lifelong learning and civic engagement

### **Ensuring a Continuous Cycle of Improvement**

The data-driven approach outlined above is designed to provide opportunities for benchmarking performance that can lead to a robust cycle of continuous improvement. There are several key features of this model that make it effective, while also keeping it achievable within the given resources.

- (1) Centralization of assessment in the QEP Office and the Office of the Blazer Core Curriculum removes many logistical and implementation burdens from schools, departments, and faculty. In addition, both the QEP and the Blazer Core Curriculum are housed within the same unit, which is supervised by the Vice Provost of Innovative Teaching and Academic Engagement. This centralization allows for departmental, faculty, and student participation without placing the burden for organization and funding on any of these groups.
- (2) Utilization of a diverse set of assessments employs direct, indirect, and programmatic assessment measures that will create both a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of faculty and student success and perception of the QEP.
- (3) Alignment with ongoing, successful Assessment Initiatives and Tools: direct assessment in phase three of this plan will develop out of the direct assessment conducted in Blazer Core Curriculum courses. This provides not only a model, but also a shared set of assessment tools, as each utilize the AAC&U VALUE Rubrics.
- (4) Structural Capability for Continuous Growth: the curricular mapping, data capture, and direct and indirect assessment tools developed in this plan can be developed so that the work of individual students can be profiled across their entire undergraduate career. The same data capture and reporting platforms utilized in this plan can be used for longitudinal analysis.

Ultimately, the assessment plan outlined here provides a structure and builds the tools for assessment for this and future QEPs, expanding UAB's work towards a continuous cycle of improvement by expanding the institution's assessment culture and infrastructure.

Chapter 9

# **REFERENCES**

Barry, M.M., Clarke, A.M., Morreale, S.E. & Field, C. A. (2018), A Review of the Evidence on the Effects of Community-based Programs on Young People's Social and Emotional Skills Development. *Adolescent Research Review* 3, 13–27. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40894-017-0055-2>

Braid, B. & Long, A. (2010). *Place as text: Approaches to active learning*. National Collegiate Honors Council. NCHC Monograph Series. Lincoln.

Brennan, J., & Cochrane, A. (2019). *Universities: in, of, and beyond their cities*. *Oxford Review of Education*, 45(2), 188-203.

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement for Teaching. (2022). *The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching elective classification for community engagement: 2024 first time documentation guide to the application*. <https://carnegieelectiveclassifications.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/2024-Community-Engagement-First-Time-Classification-Guide-5.10.2022.pdf>

Chittum, J. R., Enke, K. A. E., Finley, A. P. (2022). *The effects of community-based engagement in higher education*. Association of American Colleges and Universities. Retrieved from <https://www.aacu.org/research/the-effects-of-community-based-engagement-in-higher-education>

Costigan, C. L. (2020). Adopting community-based research principles to enhance student learning. *Canadian Psychology / Psychologie Canadienne*, 61(2), 111–117.

Eyler, J., Giles, D. E., & Schmiede, A. (1996). *A practitioner's guide to reflection in service-learning: Student voices and reflections*. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University.

Eyler, J.S., Giles, D.E., Stenson, C.M., & Gray, C.J. (2001). *At a glance: What we know about the effects of service-learning on college students, faculty, institutions and communities, 1993-2000*. Vanderbilt University.

Finley, A. & McNair, T. (2013). *Assessing underserved students' engagement in high-impact practice*. Association of American Colleges and Universities. <https://www.aacu.org/publication/assessing-underserved-students-engagement-in-high-impact-practices>

Gardner, J., Ronzio, C., & Snelling, A. (2018). Transformational Learning in Undergraduate Public Health Education: Course Design for Generation Z. *Pedagogy in Health Promotion*, 4(2), 95-100.

Hunt, J., Bonham, C., & Jones, L. (2011). Understanding the goals of service learning and community-based medical education: A systematic review. *Academic Medicine*, 86, 246-251.

Irwin, J. (2016). Advancing health promotion pedagogy: A multi-step, applied health promotion classroom project. *Creative Education*, 7, 845-851.

Jacoby, B. (2015). *Service-learning essentials: Questions, answers, and lessons learned*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Jacoby, B. (1996). *Service-Learning in Higher Education: Concepts and Practices*. The Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series. Jossey-Bass Publishers, 350 Sansome St., San Francisco, CA 94104.

Kuh, G. D. (2008). High-impact educational practices: What they are, who has access to them, and why they matter. Association of American Colleges and Universities. <https://www.aacu.org/publication/high-impact-educational-practices-what-they-are-who-has-access-to-them-and-why-they-matter>

Long, A. & Braid, B. (2014). *Writing on your feet: Reflective practices in city as text*. National Collegiate Honors Council, NCHC Monograph Series. Lincoln.

Miller, A. L., Martin, N. D., & Frenette, A. (2022). Unpacking high-impact practices in the arts: Predictors of college, career, and community engagement outcomes. *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society*, DOI: 10.1080/10632921.2022.2029786.

Seemiller, C., & Grace, M. (2015). Generation Z goes to college. Retrieved from <http://www.myilibrary.com/?ID=884671>

Strand, K. J. (2000). Community-based research as pedagogy. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 7(1).

Turner, A. (2015). Generation Z: Technology and social interest. *Journal of Individual Psychology*, 71, 103-113.

Vallone, D., Smith, A., Kenney, T., Greenberg, M., Hair, E., Cantrell, J., Rath, J., & Koval, R. (2016). Agents of social change: A model for targeting and engaging generation Z across platforms. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 56, 414-425.

Yamamura, E. K. & Koth, K. (2018). *Place-based community engagement in higher education: A strategy to transform universities and communities*. Routledge: NY.  
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

--	--	--	--

**Topic 2:** Connections Across Disciplines

--	--	--	--

**Topic 3:** The Whole Student

--	--	--	--

**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**

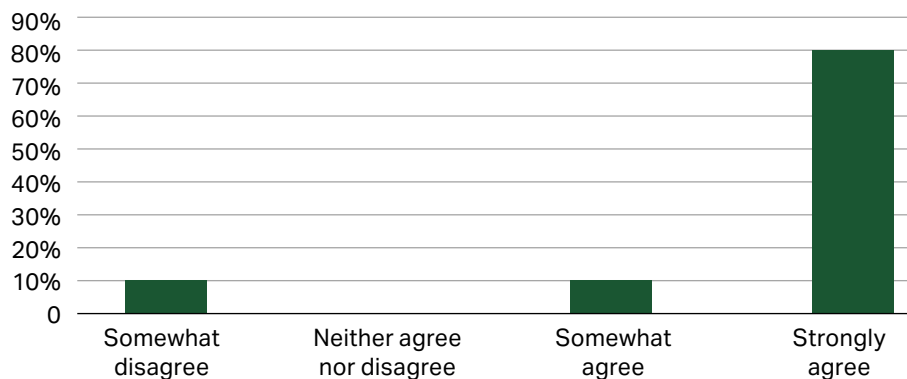
### UAB Community Partner Satisfaction Survey

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:

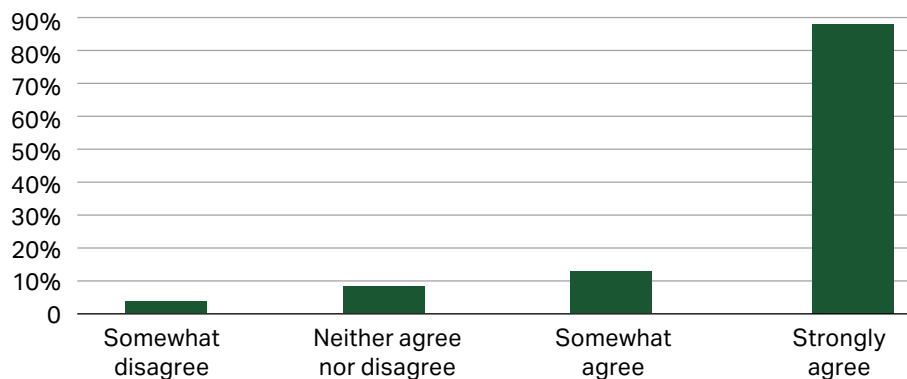
- Would you agree that participating in service-learning partnerships was beneficial to your organization?
- Would you agree that your organization's partnership with UAB is beneficial?

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

# **QEP Advisory Council Members**

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

## Appendix D

# **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**