THE UA STRATEGIC PLAN: 
Advancing the Flagship

PREFACE

The University of Alabama is steeped in tradition. Founded in 1831, it is the state’s oldest and largest public university. It carries a proud heritage, built on the foundations of academic excellence, student and faculty accomplishment, athletic achievement and alumni pride.

After a decade of unprecedented growth, The University of Alabama is now the fastest growing flagship in the nation. As enrollment has risen from 23,878 in 2006 to 37,100 in 2015, so have the challenges associated with offering the infrastructure needed to accommodate the growing needs of our students and faculty. Twelve new residence halls, 88 total facilities and 577 acres of land have been added in the last 10 years, and an ambitious campus master plan is being implemented.

The University has made great strides to advance its academic quality and national reputation. More than one-third of UA’s entering freshmen now score a 30 or higher on the ACT, and the average entering GPA has increased to 3.66. With more than 600 National Merit Scholars enrolled each year, The University of Alabama is consistently ranked in the top 50 universities by U.S. News & World Report, and several of its academic programs are ranked among the best in the nation.

Throughout all of this progress, the University’s commitment to the state has remained steadfast. UA enrolls more in-state students than any other college or university in Alabama, enrolling 17,222 and graduating 4,385 Alabamians in 2015. With more than 121,000 alumni living within state boundaries, UA has a large footprint at home while continuing to welcome students from all 50 states and 77 countries.

The University’s enduring legacies – its alumni, discoveries and partnerships – will continue to shape the world in ways that can only be imagined. The University’s new strategic plan will energize Alabama’s flagship by investing in its continued success and propelling it to new heights.

OUR PROCESS

The president initiated the planning process in Fall 2015, directing the provost and a 15-member Strategic Planning Council to take the lead in developing a five-year strategic plan for the University.

The Strategic Planning Council operated under the following charge from the president:

*For any great excursion, there are always two key questions: where are we? And secondly, where are we going? There are some things we know about where we are. We are a national flagship university, and we will continue to move forward in a manner that reflects and strengthens that position and responsibility. We have exceptionally dedicated faculty, staff and students. We have alumni and supporters who are committed partners. We have data that we can look through to give us more information on our current longitude and latitude; whether they be in discovery, teaching or engagement terms. And, it is important to note that while we have made great progress, we find ourselves still driven toward achieving a new and higher destination.*

*So, the second question is the work at hand: where are we going? I would ask that this indeed be a great excursion – a life-changing excursion for all of us, a once-in-a-lifetime challenge. It’s okay to be risk takers; we should dream, and dream big. We should establish the tenets that will ensure our place*
as a national flagship university, a national research university, an institution of prominence among universities over the coming years; and we will move to work together in achieving these goals.

Strategic planning is by nature an inclusive activity. The Council invited broad input to this important process by asking approximately 100,000 students, faculty, staff, retirees, parents, alumni, donors, community members and other interested parties to participate via survey responses, emails and listening sessions. They were asked to share their ideas and suggestions about the following:

- Current impressions of The University of Alabama
- Visions for the University by the year 2021
- Areas in which the University should focus its investments

The Strategic Planning Council met weekly throughout the spring and summer semesters to discuss suggestions from all sources and to consider the traditional and emerging values of the institution and its communities. This strategic plan’s themes, goals and strategies reflect the insights of UA’s many and valued constituents.

**OUR MISSION**

The University of Alabama will advance the intellectual and social condition of the people of the state, the nation and the world through the creation, translation and dissemination of knowledge with an emphasis on quality programs in the areas of teaching, research and service.

**OUR VISION**

The University of Alabama will be known as the university of choice for the best and brightest students in Alabama, and all students who seek exceptional educational opportunities. The University of Alabama will be a student-centered research university and an academic community united in its commitment to enhance the quality of life for all Alabamians and the citizens of the nation and the world.

**OUR CORE VALUES**

The University of Alabama is committed to:

- Undergraduate education that produces socially-conscious, ethical and well-rounded leaders who are grounded in their subject matter and capable of controlling their own destinies.
- Graduate education that is deeply vested in subject matter knowledge, professional content, research skills and creative activity.
- Public outreach and service that is held in the highest regard and fosters impactful public engagement to enhance the quality of life for the citizens of Alabama, the nation and the world.
- Campus life that embodies collaboration, collegiality, respect and a culture of inclusivity.

**OUR GOALS**

The goals identified are pillars of the plan. They are designed to be high-level in nature and are built on the assumption that campus units will base their planning efforts on this overarching strategic plan. Some of the strategies necessary to facilitate the University’s plan are college and department based, while others are University-wide initiatives.

These goals were created with critical success factors in mind so the plan:

- Embraces the dreams of our campus.
- Is high-level and consistent with a dynamic university committed to accelerating its accomplishments.
• Ensures the vitality inherent in attracting the best and brightest scholars.
• Reflects a focus on moving our research, creative activities and performance achievements forward in a substantial way.
• Prepares our students for the globally connected world they will be a part of as they graduate and effect change in the world.
• Provides an unmatched teaching and learning experience for all students.
• Instills a comprehensive view of equity, inclusion and diversity for our campus.

Goal #1

Provide a premier undergraduate and graduate education that offers a global perspective and is characterized by outstanding teaching, high-quality scholarship and distinctive curricular and co-curricular programs.

Objectives:

• Develop a comprehensive enrollment management plan that serves as a foundation for quality undergraduate education.
• Increase the quality and number of graduate students to develop the next generation of scholars and to support the University’s research, scholarship and creative activity.
• Provide support services that ensure a premier academic experience for all our students.
• Expand transformational education experiences through community service, global outreach and innovative study-abroad opportunities.
• Enhance co-curricular activities that encourage collaboration among students, faculty, staff and the community.
• Promote an educational environment that values contributions from all levels of teaching faculty.

Goal #2

Increase the University’s productivity and innovation in research, scholarship and creative activities that impact economic and societal development.

Objectives:

• Leverage the University’s unique, emerging strengths to create a strong culture and opportunities for cross-disciplinary research, scholarship, innovation and creative activities that have economic and societal impact, and which contribute to the University’s teaching and service mission.
• Invest in infrastructure that promotes a thriving research and economic development enterprise.
• Develop a multi-level, continuous improvement process that facilitates research, scholarship and creative accomplishments.
• Establish a regular dialog among the administration, faculty, staff and students that creates a climate of shared understanding and addresses opportunities for and barriers to productivity, scholarship and creative activity.
• Cultivate, support, sponsor and conduct community-engaged research that enriches our teaching, research and service missions and enhances the University’s designation by Carnegie as a community-engaged institution.
Goal #3

Enrich our learning and work environment by providing an accepting, inclusive community that attracts and supports a diverse faculty, staff and student body.

Objectives:

• Establish a position for an equity, inclusion and diversity officer that is responsible for the organizational oversight and assessment of plans, programs and activities that enhance equity, inclusion and diversity.
• Enhance the recruitment, hiring and retention of diverse faculty, staff and administrators.
• Strengthen the recruitment, matriculation, retention and graduation of diverse students.
• Expand diversity and inclusiveness education and training.
• Provide structural resources, policies, practices and oversight that foster transparency in all campus groups and ensure diverse and inclusive participation.

Goal #4

Provide opportunities and resources that facilitate work-life balance and enhance the recruitment and retention of outstanding faculty and staff.

Objectives:

• Establish a Work-Life Center that encourages a family-friendly workplace by supporting a healthy work-life balance.
• Implement employment initiatives that keep UA nationally competitive while ensuring consistency, equity and inclusion.
• Establish clear channels of communication for all University employees that encourage cross-departmental collaboration and consistency.

This strategic plan is a living document that will serve as our roadmap to proactively prepare for the future. It will help us prioritize our efforts as good ideas emerge and opportunities arise. We will continually assess and adjust the plan, and articulate its outcomes and impact.

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