

# ***BUILDING THE PRIDE***

## **University of North Alabama STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-2019**



*Ensuring quality higher education is one of the most important things we can do for future generations.*

**Ron Lewis, Former Congressman**

## INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The University of North Alabama continues to build upon its legacy as a public, four-year institution of higher education by advancing its mission of teaching, research and service. As we begin a new planning cycle, the opportunity for the University of North Alabama to “*build the pride*” has never been better. We are entering a very exciting time of transition in the life of the University with new opportunities emerging in every aspect of campus life, including the construction of a new academic and student commons building, a new science building, the development of new academic programs, the creation of a university success center and first-year student initiatives, the addition of new residence halls, the expansion of out-of-class experiences and services, and the transition of our athletic program to Division I.

While the University moves to adapt and take advantage of the opportunities presented, it must also be mindful of related challenges, both internal and external to the institution. Higher education in the United States at all levels – community colleges through research universities, both public and private – is facing a host of challenges and issues that threaten the fundamental assumptions upon which we have operated for more than a century. These include: a changing financial model that limits access and challenges the vitality and sustainability of colleges and universities; the changing international economic landscape; containing costs and rethinking the business of higher education; accountability and quality assurance; significant changes in the demographics, cognitive styles, and aspirations of 21<sup>st</sup> century learners; student persistence and employability; dynamic, rapid, and complex changes in the environment for higher education; and competition from other institutions of higher education including for-profit providers and ever-expanding on-line educational opportunities.

The ability of the University of North Alabama to effectively build upon its past successes and accomplishments in the wake of the opportunities and challenges before it depends in part on the development of a strategic plan to guide the work of the University over the next five years.

*The University of North Alabama is driven by our mission . . .*

As a student-centered, regional, state-assisted institution of higher education, the University of North Alabama pursues its mission of engaging in teaching, research, and service in order to provide educational opportunities for students, an environment for discovery and creative accomplishment, and a variety of outreach activities meeting the professional, civic, social, cultural, and economic development needs of our region in the context of a global community.

*Drawn forward by our vision of the future . . .*

Engaging to learn; inquiring to discover; collaborating to empower; and inspiring to lead in a global community.

*And rooted in a set of core values where members of the university community cultivate a culture that . . .*

- Values students and the student learning experience both inside and outside the classroom.
- Adheres to personal academic and intellectual integrity.
- Embraces and promotes an inclusive environment that welcomes all cultural backgrounds, personal characteristics, and life situations represented in this community.
- Values an environment for the free expression of ideas, opinions, thoughts, and differences in people.
- Respects the rights, dignity, and property of all.

*Guided by its mission, the University of North Alabama's 2014-2019 Strategic Plan is committed to strengthening its foundation of excellence....*

The University of North Alabama will continue to strive for the highest levels of excellence in everything we aspire to do including teaching and learning, scholarship and student development, athletics and advancement, service and university operations, and enrollment and retention. The 2014-2019 Strategic Plan is rooted in a commitment to Foundations of Excellence that will drive our efforts and help transform the institution over the next five years. The Foundations of Excellence target five significant institutional goals that will position the University to realize the fullness of its vision.

## **FOUNDATION OF EXCELLENCE 1: Build and Maintain a Student-Centered University**

The University of North Alabama is a student-centered university where optimal learning experiences and services lead to student success. Students are the center of our focus. All efforts are focused toward student academic success, persistence, graduation, and career development.

### **Pathways to this goal include but are not limited to:**

- Develop and implement comprehensive university enrollment plans that include recruitment and retention efforts within all UNA units.
- Construction and modernization of facilities that support quality in academic and student life.
- Construction of new on-campus residence halls and to enhance the student residential experience.
- Expansion of the services and programs that enhance student career planning and development.
- Creation of a University Success Center that consolidates academic services in one location.
- Integration of student engagement services into one location central to campus.
- Retention and expansion of the ROTC program.
- Expansion of support services to assist military and veteran students.

## **FOUNDATION OF EXCELLENCE 2: Build an Enriched Academic Experience**

The University of North Alabama is proud of the commitment to quality embedded within the academic experience. The faculty and academic support personnel embrace excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service, all targeted toward the creation of an academic environment where inquiry and discovery are highly valued.

### **Pathways to this goal include, but are not limited to:**

- Creation of a campus-wide initiative focused on quality in pedagogy and student learning.
- Creation and expansion of academic partnerships that produce new learning opportunities for UNA students and for residents of the Shoals.
- Creation and enhancement of degree offerings to meet changing student needs and career aspirations.
- Establishment of a comprehensive program of integrative health.

- Extension of efforts to increase number of discipline-based accreditations as a measure of academic quality.

### **FOUNDATION OF EXCELLENCE 3: Enhance Programs that Distinguish the University**

The University of North Alabama is committed to adding programs that distinguish the University in the State and region. Efforts include: new and expanded academic initiatives that foster inquiry and a sense of discovery; additional international partnerships and programs that connect UNA to the global community; and transformative activities within student development and student life.

#### **Pathways to this goal include but are not limited to:**

- Creation of a model comprehensive integrative health community initiative that serves the wellness needs of the campus and the region.
- Creation and/or expansion of unique academic programs
- Expansion of the mission of the athletic program to the Division I level
- Expansion of the university footprint to be Division I in academic and student life efforts.
- Implementation of a comprehensive fund raising campaign.
- Expansion of the university's international education efforts to become a national leader in globalization efforts.
- Implementation of the university's Quality Enhancement Plan, which focuses on building student success through discovery.

### **FOUNDATION OF EXCELLENCE 4: Promote an Inclusive Campus Environment**

UNA intentionally creates, embraces, and promotes an inclusive campus environment that welcomes and celebrates similarities and differences. Respect and commitment to inclusion is promoted and expected by encouraging mutual open discourse and expression of viewpoints, values, and belief systems that create a welcoming and affirming campus community. Diverse ideas are welcomed, shared, and celebrated.

#### **Pathways to this goal includes but are not limited to:**

- Expansion of our efforts to recruit and retain a diverse and inclusive student-body, faculty, staff and administration.
- Expansion and enhancement of diversity programs and services.
- Expansion of international programs and increased emphasis on international student recruitment.

## **FOUNDATION OF EXCELLENCE 5: Support Regional Development and Outreach**

The University of North Alabama serves the surrounding communities as an intellectual center and strives to maintain a strong relationship with these communities by working collaboratively, disseminating information, providing intellectual, social, civic, and cultural experiences, and providing assistance and consultation to businesses and schools. The University is a strong economic force in the community.

### **Pathways to this goal include but are not limited to:**

- Creation of new partnerships with community colleges throughout the region to provide access to UNA services and programs.
- Expansion of opportunities for university faculty and staff to be a first choice educational resource for local business and agencies.
- Expansion of opportunities for local communities to participate in campus programs, cultural activities, and educational programs.
- Expansion of opportunities to partner with area school districts on new initiatives that serve the needs of the district and the university.

The entire University of North Alabama community has a shared responsibility to “Build the Pride” . . .

It is the responsibility of every member of the UNA community to ensure the successful implementation of the University’s 2014-2019 strategic plan.

***“Vision is just imagination  
if you aren’t prepared to act.”***

*Anonymous*

A strategic plan is only as good as its implementation and execution. Unfortunately, many plans fail on this account. As a result, the University must be intentional and transparent in the implementation and monitoring of the five Foundations of Excellence set forth in this plan. Each unit of the campus must embrace some or all of the goals and be diligent in finding ways to incorporate them into their annual planning efforts and reports. They must report their results and take the corrective actions necessary to ensure that the plan is relevant and responsive to the challenging environment in which the university operates.

A critical part of the success of this effort will be the annual review and report of the university’s strategic plan and the contributions of the units to the plan. The Strategic Planning and Budget Study Committee, at the direction of the President, will provide oversight of this important function. The Committee will disseminate to the campus an annual review of the 2014-2019 strategic plan.