UAB School of Public Health
Strategic Plan 2024-2028
Forging Ahead

Vision: Our vision is to make meaningful and lasting change in the public's health by being among the top tier schools of public health.

Mission: Our mission is to educate future generations of outstanding public health professionals, conduct impactful research, and partner with the communities of Birmingham, the state of Alabama, the Deep South, and beyond to improve health and wellbeing.

Values: UAB Shared Values: We CARE

- **C**ollaborate: Work as a team for the greater good.

- **A**ct with integrity: Be accountable and always do the right thing.

- **R**espect all: Champion diversity and opportunities for all, with civility.

- **E**xcel: Innovate and strive for excellence in everything we do.

Education Pillar (A)

Strategic Goal A: Attract and support outstanding students who will learn, grow, excel, and contribute to the mission of the school.

Strategic Goal A Priority Areas:

1. Implement a comprehensive student services framework.
2. Improve instructional quality by providing instructors with mentorship and training.
3. Align the curricula with the needs and direction of public health.

Strategic Goal A Key Performance Indicators:

1. Yield: percentage of students admitted who ultimately enroll.
2. Student reported satisfaction and preparation with instruction, advising, and preparation for the workforce.
3. Participation by instructors in teaching focused professional development opportunities.
4. Percentage of preceptors, employers, and alumni reporting that graduates are prepared for the workforce.

Action Steps and Responsibilities, by Priority Area:

STRATEGIC PRIORITY A1	Implement a comprehensive student services framework.

ACTION STEP: Establish training and resources to support program directors in the delivery of student services.

- **Responsible**: Office of Student and Academic Services, in coordination with department chairs and faculty program directors
- **Resources needed**: Support from SOPH Communications Team; UAB Graduate School materials and personnel
- **Timeline for action**: Fall 2025, delivery of first series of workshops with revised timing and delivery from director feedback
- **Tracking implementation:** Semesterly report to executive committee

STRATEGIC PRIORITY A2:	Improve instructional quality by providing instructors with mentorship and training.

ACTION STEP: Implement a standardized onboarding program for new instructors to support instructional quality and course development. The onboarding program would include a voluntary peer teaching evaluation program, eventually expanded to all instructors.

- **Responsible**: Office of Student and Academic Services, departmental chairs and faculty program directors, with feedback and participation by UDOC and EPC
- **Resources needed**: Staff support to arrange and organize the program; time and materials for training for peer evaluators; collaboration with the Center for Teaching and Learning; department chair and faculty program director encouragement of faculty participation in all aspects of the program (mentee, mentor, trainers, reviewers, etc.)
- **Timeline for action**: Fall 2025 implementation of onboarding program for new cohort of faculty members

STRATEGIC PRIORITY A3:	Align the curricula with the needs and direction of public health.

ACTION STEP: Regularly evaluate curricula to ensure inclusion of current knowledge, research, and practice, and alignment with the direction of the profession.

- **Responsible**: Office of Student and Academic Services (exit survey, community engagement council, employer survey) synthesis of data and report creation; Alumni Affairs Office (alumni survey); faculty program directors: present at the Community Engagement Council meeting
- **Resources needed**: Aligned surveillance system (student exit survey items, annual alumni survey, employer survey, and community engagement council feedback); time allocation for faculty and staff involved in the review process; funding for potential external reviewers or consultants
- **Timeline for action**: Develop complete review process and associated surveillance system by SP 2025; pilot the process in SU 2025 (in time for SU2025 Community Engagement Council meeting); full implementation FA Fall 2026; feedback cycle should consider academic program development timelines
- **Tracking implementation:** Bi-annual reports to the EC and EPC upon the completion of a review cycle; reporting to accreditation bodies as required

Research Pillar (B)

Strategic Goal B: Create and disseminate new and impactful knowledge to improve the public's health through a growing and diverse research portfolio.

Strategic Goal B: Priority Areas

1. Recruit faculty, staff, students, and trainees whose passion, expertise, and experience contribute to the research mission of the school.
2. Develop and retain research faculty and staff through training, mentorship, and support.
3. Invest in the resources required to design and conduct innovative and impactful extramurally funded projects.
4. Cultivate interdisciplinary research by leveraging university-wide and other strategic initiatives, resources, and investments.
5. Support dissemination of ongoing work and findings to academic venues (e.g. conferences, journals), classrooms, practitioners, and the public.

Strategic Goal B Key Performance Indicators:

1. Total extramural funding
   a. Increase total research dollars awarded by 4 percentage points each year.
   b. Improve ranking for NIH research funding among schools of public health by one rank each year.
   c. Improve ranking for NIH research funding among public schools of public health by one rank each year until we achieve top 10.
2. Number of faculty submissions and awards
   a. Increase the percentage of full-time faculty who are PI on any extramurally-funded award by 5 percentage points each year until a threshold of >=80% is met.
   b. Increase the percentage of full-time faculty who are Contact PI on NIH awards by 2.5 percentage points each year until a threshold of >=30% is met.
   c. Increase the percentage of full-time faculty submitting at least one new grant each year as PI or UAB Sub-Award PI until a threshold of >=50% is met.
   d. Increase the percentage of full-time faculty submitting at least one new NIH grant as Contact PI or UAB Sub-Award PI of a major NIH subcontract until a threshold of >=40% is met.
3. Number of doctoral student submissions and awards

a. Increase the number of doctoral students submitting individual fellowship grants by one student each year.

b. Increase the number of doctoral students supported by individual fellowship grants by one student each year.

4. Number of peer reviewed publications

a. Increase the number of any peer-reviewed publications by 5 percentage points each year.

b. Increase the number of peer-reviewed high impact publications by 5 percentage points each year.

c. Increase the number of first- and senior-authored peer-reviewed high impact publications by 5 percentage points each year.

Action Steps and Responsibilities, by Priority Area:

STRATEGIC PRIORITY B1	Recruit faculty, staff, students, and trainees whose passion, expertise, and experience contribute to the research mission of the school.

ACTION STEP: Develop and implement a plan for strategic research faculty recruitment.

- **Responsible:** Office of the Dean and departments, Department Chairs, and Research Advisory Committee (includes Department Vice Chairs of Research)
- **Resources needed:** Recruitment budget, competitive salary offers, identification of high-priority research areas, identification of primary mentor/mentoring teams
- **Timeline to act:** Annually at the end of the fiscal year
- **How will implementation be tracked**: Document and review faculty hiring plan and monthly faculty lists

STRATEGIC PRIORITY B2:	Develop and retain research faculty and staff through training, mentorship, and support.

ACTION STEP: Provide and evaluate a quarterly workshop series focused on early career faculty (or those seeking a new pathway into research) to promote collaboration and support with grant submissions and award management.

- **Responsible:** Office of Research and Research Advisory Committee (includes Department Vice Chairs of Research)

- **Resources needed:** Office of Research staffing and budget line item represented for events
- **Timeline to act:** Quarterly
- **How will implementation be tracked**: Document and review workshop RSVPs, attendance lists, and post-event surveys

STRATEGIC PRIORITY B3:	Invest in the resources required to design and conduct innovative and impactful extramurally funded projects.

ACTION STEP: Provide and evaluate a comprehensive research incentive plan for faculty.

- **Responsible:** Office of the Dean, Office of Finance and Administration, and Office of Research
- **Resources needed:** Budget line item, processes to determine eligibility (effort reports, faculty reporting links via website), Office of Research staffing
- **Timeline to act:** Annually
- **How will implementation be tracked**: Document and review progress on the number of faculty receiving a research incentive, overall, and by incentive type, reporting total increase and decrease in dollars spent on incentives from year to year

STRATEGIC PRIORITY B4:	Cultivate interdisciplinary research by leveraging university-wide and other strategic initiatives, resources, and investments.

ACTION STEP: Identify faculty members eligible for career development and research training opportunities and provide them with the resources needed to engage in these activities.

- **Responsible:** Office of the Dean, Office of Research, Department Chairs, and Research Advisory Committee (includes Department Vice Chairs of Research)
- **Resources needed:** Budget line item to provide full or partial scholarships
- **Timeline to act:** Annually
- **How will implementation be tracked**: Document and review progress on the number of faculty participating in grant writing intensive programs (e.g. GRIT) and other training opportunities (e.g. CCTS Training Academy)

STRATEGIC PRIORITY B5:	Support dissemination of ongoing work and findings to academic venues (e.g. conferences, journals), classrooms, practitioners, and the public.

ACTION STEP: Develop and implement a communications plan to disseminate faculty, staff, and student research achievements.

- **Responsible:** Office of the Dean's Communications Team, Office of Research, Department Chairs, and Research Advisory Committee (includes Department Vice Chairs of Research)
- **Resources needed:** Office of the Dean and research staffing
- **Timeline to act:** Continuous
- **How will implementation be tracked**: Communicate achievements in the Friday Dean's Email (weekly), Research Rambler (monthly), and State of Research (annually) and display grant submissions and awards on the research board and media screens (monthly)

Practice Pillar (C)

Strategic Goal C: Cultivate and strengthen mutually beneficial opportunities to engage public health practice.

Strategic Goal C Priority Areas:

1. Increase engagement with public health practice partners.
2. Expand the integration of practice in our educational and research endeavors.
3. Foster internship and practicum opportunities to meet the needs of SOPH students and community.
4. Strengthen partnerships with public health practice agencies and organizations by providing continuing education and technical assistance.

Strategic Goal C Key Performance Indicators:

1. Opportunities for and participation in networking events:
   a. Track the number of faculty, staff, students, and practice partners that participate in networking and collaborative events.
2. Public health practitioners involved in guest lectures or course deliveries:
   a. Track the number of public health practitioners involved in presenting lectures, webinars, courses in the SOPH.
3. Internship and practicum opportunities available to SOPH students:
   a. Increase the variety and types of applied practice experiences completed by SOPH students by degree type, modality, industry type of hosting organization, and geographic location of host organization.

Action Steps and Responsibilities, by Priority Area:

STRATEGIC PRIORITY C1	**Increase engagement with public health practice partners.**

ACTION STEP: Foster collaborative opportunities: organize events that encourage collaboration between faculty, staff, and external public health organizations.

- **Responsible:** Associate and Assistant Deans for Public Health Practice, department chairs
- **Resources needed:** Additional funding as part of current OPHP budget
- **Timeline to act:** Identify potential opportunities by January 31, 2025; begin planning of new opportunities for pilot in Fall 2025

- **How will implementation be tracked**: Implementation will be tracked via OPHP Teams, biweekly OPHP meetings and associate and assistant dean meetings, and one-on-one meetings between associate dean and the staff member(s) responsible for coordination of event

STRATEGIC PRIORITY C2:	Expand the integration of practice in our educational and research endeavors.

ACTION STEP: Establish steering committee made up of SOPH faculty, staff and students to guide the expansion of practice in educational and research endeavors in the SOPH.

- **Responsible:** Associate and assistant deans for Public Health Practice
- **Resources needed:** Resources to hold steering committee meeting are minimal and part of OPHP budget, however resources may be needed to implement suggestions of the committee
- **Timeline to act:** Call for nomination of both faculty and student members by departmental chairs: September 2024; identify and secure members of committee: October 2024; convene first meeting in November/December 2024
- **How will implementation be tracked**: Monthly meetings between Associate Dean for Public Health Practice and Dean of the SOPH, biweekly meetings between the Associate and Assistant Deans for Public Health Practice, Practice Steering Committee minutes

STRATEGIC PRIORITY C3:	Foster internship and practicum opportunities to meet needs of SOPH students and community.

ACTION STEP: Connect with UAB SOPH alumni to identify APE opportunities: OPHP to collaborate with Office of Alumni and Development to establish mechanism to conduct targeted solicitations internship opportunities from UAB SOPH alumni.

- **Responsible:** Associate and Assistant Deans for Public Health Practice and SOPH Alumni Affairs
- **Resources needed:** Resources a part of OPHP and Department of Alumni and Development budget
- **Timeline to act:** Associate Dean for Public Health Practice with reach out to UAB SOPH Director of Development to set up initial meeting by October 2024, draft outreach plan by January 2025

- **How will implementation be tracked**: Implementation will be tracked through OPHP Microsoft Teams channel, biweekly meetings between Associate and Assistant Deans for Public Health Practice, and Associate Dean and Dean monthly meetings

STRATEGIC PRIORITY C4:	**Strengthen partnerships with public health practice agencies and organizations by providing continuing education and technical assistance.**

ACTION STEP: Strengthen Academic Health Department (AHD) connections with JCDH: Implement a formal AHD agreement with JCDH and establish AHD coordinator position.

- **Responsible:** Dean of the SOPH, Associate and Assistant Deans for Public Health Practice and Practice Steering Committee
- **Resources needed:** Agreement of JCDH. Funding for 50% FTE staff member to serve as AHD coordinator added to OPHP budget
- **Timeline to act:** Dependent on JCDH, but expect to have an AHD Coordinator and AHD goals, objectives, and work plan in place by 2025
- **How will implementation be tracked**: Monthly meetings between SOPH Dean and Associate Dean for Public Health Practice and Practice Steering Committee minutes

Organizational Health Foundation (D)

Strategic Goal D: Develop and sustain initiatives to make the School an inclusive and welcoming place.

Strategic Goal D Priority Areas:

1. Ensure all employees have professional development resources available to maximize opportunities for career advancement.
2. Promote effective exchange and transparency in School communication.
3. Foster effective onboarding, cross-training, and succession planning for all employees.
4. Practice organizational financial health and sustainability

Strategic Goal D Key Performance Indicators:

1. Managerial training series
2. Individual development plans (IDPs)
3. Financial health and sustainability metrics

Action Steps and Responsibilities, by Priority Area:

STRATEGIC PRIORITY D1	**Ensure all employees have professional development resources available to maximize opportunities for career advancement.**

ACTION STEP: Foster Collaborative Training by offering quarterly events to strengthen managerial skills, foster employee development, and promote the development of PIs, Chairs, Deans, Program Directors, and other leaders. Proposed topics include: employee performance management, communication skills, organizational and personal finance, navigating hiring at UAB, synergies with other SOPH strategic pillars will be leveraged to maximize outreach and the number of events.

- **Responsible:** The Associate Dean for Access and Engagement, Executive Director of Administrative Operations, and the Human Resource Partner Manager will serve as the organizational steering committee though others may be invited to join
- **Resources needed:** Time from steering committee and responsible parties to plan curriculum for training, training spaces, potential funding for trainers and subject matter experts if non-UAB trainers are used
- **Timeline to act:** Fall 2024: develop organizational steering committee; review training topics and resources; Spring 2025: launch training series

- **How will implementation be tracked**: Formal evaluation of each training event will be done using Qualtrics for all attendees. Additionally, 10 individuals will be invited to participate in overall evaluation of the program to examine pre-fall 2024/ post-summer 2025 program self-efficacy with managerial skills. This group of individuals will convene as a focus group at the end of the year to provide input for the following year in terms of managerial curriculum. Development of the training series will be tracked with an annual series electronic brochure. Implementation of each event will be supported and tracked by the Offices of Access and Engagement and Finance and Administration.

ACTION STEP: Provide Individual Development Planning: promote the opportunity for all faculty and staff to complete formal Individual Development Plans (IDPs).

- **Responsible:** Department Chairs, Executive Director of Administrative Operations, Human Resource Partner Manager, unit leaders and administrators, supervisors
- **Resources needed:** Training on UAB Perform to better utilize the goals section and a motivational interview sheet to assist managers in guiding IDP conversations
- **Timeline to act:** For faculty, IDPs will be included as a part of FAR process in 1Q2025; for staff, IDPs will be included as a part of UAB Performance Management System in 3Q25
- **How will implementation be tracked**: IDPs should be discussed in Faculty FAR meetings and annual staff performance reviews; discussions should be documented in FARs or the UAB Performance Management System

STRATEGIC PRIORITY D2:	Promote effective exchange and transparency in School communication.

ACTION STEP: Create a repository for Onboarding Resources; provide a central SharePoint site for organization of onboarding resources.

- **Responsible:** Executive Director of Administrative Operations, Human Resource Partner Manager, department chairs
- **Resources needed:** Development of SharePoint site
- **Timeline to act:** Fall 2024: develop and organize content for SharePoint site; Spring 2025: build, communicate, and launch SharePoint site
- **How will implementation be tracked**: Existence of SharePoint site

STRATEGIC PRIORITY D3:	Foster effective on-boarding, cross-training, and succession planning for all employees.

ACTION STEP: Create connections for new employees: encourage direct supervisors to serve as or assign new employees with a "SOPH Sidekick" (i.e. workplace buddy) to facilitate day-to-day adjustments and social integration.

- **Responsible:** Jasmine Searcy (Dean's Office) will present plan to Staff Council for consideration. Program will be implemented with support from Staff Council, Associate Dean for Access and Engagement, Human Resource Partner Manager, department and center administrators
- **Resources needed:** Description of the expectations of the sidekick role
- **Timeline to act:** Launch program Fall 2024
- **How will implementation be tracked**: SOPH Sidekick assignments will be tracked by the Human Resource Partner Manager in collaboration with department and center administrators

STRATEGIC PRIORITY D4:	Practice organizational financial health and sustainability.

ACTION STEP: Develop and Report Financial and Resource Management metrics

- **Responsible:** Dean, Executive Director of Administrative Operations, Director of Development, department chairs
- **Resources needed:** Time through working meetings to explore metrics, measurement period(s), and venue/mode for reporting
- **Timeline to act:** Convene working meetings to develop metrics to be presented at April 2025 Steering Committee meeting for vetting
- **How will implementation be tracked**: Metric calculations and reporting will be tracked by the Executive Director of Administrative Operations, departmental administrators and grant administrators

External Relations and Collaboration (E)

Strategic Goal E: Build and sustain mutually beneficial relationships beyond the School.

Strategic Goal E Priority Areas:

1. Build and sustain relationships beyond the School of Public Health increasing community, organization, and event partnerships.
2. Elevate culture of philanthropy by informing SOPH faculty and staff of development best practices.
3. Increase affinity for the school among SOPH alumni.
4. Develop and communicate a distinct identity to bring visibility to the School's impact and accomplishments.

Strategic Goal E Key Performance Indicators:

1. Faculty, staff, and student involvement in organizations and events external to the School of Public Health
2. Philanthropic gifts to the School of Public Health
3. Exposure of research, academics, and practice

Action Steps and Responsibilities, by Priority Area:

STRATEGIC PRIORITY E1	Build and sustain relationships beyond the School of Public Health, increasing community, organizational, and event partnerships.

ACTION STEP: Survey faculty and staff regarding community-level partnerships or involvement external to the School of Public Health.

- **Responsible:** Office of the Dean and Office of Public Health Practice
- **Resources needed:** Staff person time and resources to assist OPHP with increasing participation in annual survey
- **Timeline to act:** Spring 2025 - TBD
- **How will implementation be tracked:** Review by Dean's Office staff and OPHP for completion and participation, share annually with leadership in the SOPH and UAB
- **How will implementation be tracked**: Review by Dean's Office staff and OPHP for entirety and participation, sharing annually with leadership in the SOPH and UAB

ACTION STEP: Collect data provided by students regarding community-level partnerships or involvement external to the School of Public Health.

- **Responsible:** Office of the President, BlazerPulse; Office of the Dean
- **Resources needed:** Staff person time and resources to solicit information from the UAB President's Office and to organize the requests and responses
- **Timeline for Action:** Spring 2025 - TBD
- **Tracking Implementation:** Review by Dean's staff for totality and participation. Share annually with leadership in the SOPH and UAB

STRATEGIC PRIORITY E2:	Elevate culture of philanthropy by informing SOPH faculty and staff of development best practices.

ACTION STEP: Implement annual development-focused training opportunity for at least 30% of faculty and staff by 2029 to offer best practice strategies for identifying new donors and stewarding gifts at the departmental level.

- **Responsible:** Office of Alumni and Development
- **Resources needed**: Events budget, keynote speakers from UAB Advancement and external organizations, marketing materials from SOPH Communications Team
- **Timeline for Action**: Fall 2024 - Spring 2028
- **Tracking Implementation:** Office of Alumni and Development to track attendance and report annually via UAB Advancement SOPH Annual Report

STRATEGIC PRIORITY E3:	Increase affinity for the School among SOPH Alumni.

ACTION STEP: Implement annual alumni engagement event for online students with in-person and virtual attendance options with the number of in-person attendees increasing year over year.

- **Responsible:** Office of Alumni and Development
- **Resources needed:** Events budget, faculty and staff volunteers, marketing materials from SOPH Communications Team
- **Timeline to act:** Fall 2024 - Spring 2028
- **How will implementation be tracked**: Office of Alumni and Development to track attendance in CRM and report annually via UAB Advancement SOPH Annual Report

STRATEGIC PRIORITY E4:	Develop and communicate a distinct identity to bring visibility to the School's impact and accomplishments.

ACTION STEP: Launch strategic external marketing and communications.

- **Responsible:** SOPH Communications Team and a creative agency, either external freelance or UAB's in-house agency, MC Solutions
- **Resources needed:** Finances, research of current market of higher education and public health programs
- **Timeline to act:** Spring 2025 - Spring 2026, continuing as determined by success of first campaign(s)
- **How will implementation be tracked**: Analytics provided by agency