



# University Ombudsperson

Position Prospectus

**UAB** THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

# The Opportunity

The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) welcomes inquiries, nominations, and applications for an experienced leader whose background demonstrates a commitment to UAB's values of Integrity, Respect, Diversity and Inclusiveness, Collaboration, Excellence and Achievement, Stewardship, and Accountability to serve as its next University Ombudsperson.

[The University's Ombudsperson \(Ombuds\)](#) serves as the designated dispute resolution practitioner for the university (not including UAB Medicine and UAB Hospital) acting as an independent, confidential, and impartial resource available to faculty, staff, and mentored graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows. UAB's Ombuds is not an advocate for any individual, unit, department, or the institution. Rather, the Ombuds serves as an advocate for [UAB's values](#) and fairness, and aids in identifying and providing information and answers to concerns and questions regarding university policies, processes, and resources; makes referrals to other appropriate resources; and offers guidance and facilitation in the resolution of concerns and critical conflict.

As a practitioner of dispute resolution, the Ombuds also serves as a primary resource to develop, guide and coordinate alternative dispute resolution (ADR) efforts throughout the university, and to educate and train others on ADR practices and facilitation skills. The Ombuds provides an invaluable resource to the university in increasing its collective understanding, development, and use of alternative resolution approaches and practices to conflict.

The University Ombudsperson works through both the [Office of the Provost](#) and [Office of Human Resources](#), reporting jointly to the Provost and CHRO. The Ombuds is independent in their work, maintains strict confidentiality to the extent feasible and lawful, and provides a service to the university that is committed to inclusion, fairness, and equity. The office of the Ombudsperson maintains confidential records and information with respect to services provided. While maintaining confidentiality of communications with inquirers, the Ombuds maintains direct lines of communication with university leadership, regularly reporting aggregated, de-identified data to ensure the university is generally informed of the Ombudsperson's work, to promote organizational growth through improvements to policies, systems, and services, and to identify important themes, patterns, or systemic issues of concern relevant to campus culture and climate. This role offers the opportunity to develop a more robust system of service and analysis in alignment with the institution's [strategic plan](#).

The University of Alabama has a footprint of over 100 square blocks/636 acres in downtown Birmingham – serving 12,913 university faculty and staff and 22,289 students. See <https://www.uab.edu/institutionaleffectiveness/data-library/facts-figures> for more statistical information.





# The University

The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) is part of the University of Alabama System. The University of Alabama System (System) is a major driver for economic, intellectual, and cultural growth for the people of the state and region. The System is composed of three of the most dynamic research universities in the South and a world-class medical center (The University of Alabama, The University of Alabama at Birmingham, The University of Alabama in Huntsville). The System has a \$10 billion annual impact, with \$6 billion in total revenue and 45,000-plus employees.

Since becoming an autonomous campus of the University of Alabama System in 1969, UAB has earned international recognition for its innovative academic programs in a range of disciplines, groundbreaking research and scholarship, and leading-edge patient care. UAB has helped build the future through new ideas and initiatives in the classroom, the laboratory, and in the studio and clinic. UAB is in a strong financial position with favorable enrollment trends, a growing research base, healthy financial margins, and modest debt. The total operating budget for the UAB Campus for FY21 was \$1,448,083,000. The total FY 21 State Appropriations were \$309,113,742, with \$37,955,804 allocated to the Hospital and \$15,247,393 being line items and earmarks for specific purposes. The state appropriation allocation has increased 13.6% or \$37 million since 2018. The state allocation increased for FY22 despite the impact of the pandemic. The university has an Aa2 rating from Moody's and an AA+ rating from S&P.

UAB has partnered with the University of Alabama System, the State of Alabama, and the Birmingham community in successful efforts to combat COVID-19 and its variants. At the same time, UAB has made record-breaking strides campus wide, despite the pandemic. UAB emerges from the challenging past two years more driven than ever to serve and succeed in all pillars of its mission: Education; Research, Innovation & Economic Development; Patient Care; and Community Engagement.

## SELECT RANKINGS & ACCOLADES

- UAB is ranked in the top 10% of higher education institutions worldwide for academic research and reputation in *U.S. News & World Report Best Global Universities 2022* America's Best Large Employer for 2021 – *Forbes*
- 16 UAB graduate programs ranked among the nation's top 25 for 2022, including the nation's number one Master's in Health Administration – *U.S. News & World Report - Best Graduate Schools*
- Innovation and Economic Prosperity University – *The Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU)*
- Best Employer for Diversity among colleges and universities in 2021 – *Forbes*
- Diversity Champion in 2021 (4<sup>th</sup> year in a row) – *INSIGHT Into Diversity*
- Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award (Fifth time since 2016) – *INSIGHT Into Diversity*



## Mission & Values

### Vision

One university inspiring and empowering the creation of knowledge that changes the world.

### Mission

UAB serves students, patients, the community and the global need for discovery, knowledge dissemination, education, creativity and the application of groundbreaking solutions. We are a leader among comprehensive public urban research universities with academic medical centers.

### Shared Values

**Integrity** – We act ethically and do what is right.

**Respect** – We treat others with courtesy and civility.

**Diversity and inclusiveness** – Everybody counts every day. We actively seek varied perspectives in our decision-making.

**Collaboration** – We trust each other and work cooperatively across disciplinary boundaries in the spirit of shared governance.

**Excellence and achievement** – We constantly innovate, solve problems and improve ourselves and others through learning.

**Stewardship** – Fiscal and environmental sustainability guide our decisions.

**Accountability** – We are answerable to each other and act with the best interests of the university in mind.

UAB's vision, mission and values provide a framework and common language for collaboration and strategic goals that will build on our strong foundation. UAB serves students and patients while recognizing they are also embedded in a vibrant community.

## Strategic Plan

UAB's vision, mission, and shared values provide the foundation for its strategic plan, [Forging the Future](#). Visit [www.uab.edu/didyouknow](http://www.uab.edu/didyouknow) to explore the many ways in which UAB is actively living out its mission, vision, and values every day.

*Forging the Future*, focuses on building collaborations across campus and with the community and key organizations, civic leaders, elected officials, and other stakeholders. The plan, encompassing years 2018–2028, focuses on top strategic priorities, builds on areas of excellence, and promotes innovation, entrepreneurship, and collaboration in all the university's efforts. Since the plan's inception, much has been accomplished, including an inventory of UAB's strengths, acknowledgment of the challenges facing them, and strategic investments in infrastructure and programs with the aim of moving UAB to the forefront of excellence. The plan outlines what sets UAB apart from other institutions, a situational analysis, and identification of peer institutions and defining their pillars. A signature program of *Forging the Future* is the UAB Grand Challenge, Live HealthSmart Alabama, launched in 2019. This ambitious project aims to elevate the state of Alabama out of the bottom 10 in national health rankings by 2030, through a comprehensive and community-based approach to make significant improvements in key health metrics over the next 10 years. *Forging the Future* also included the development and implementation of a Signature Core Curriculum—branded the Blazer Core—that is a unique, shared body of courses undergraduates take during their first two years focusing on developing socially conscious global leaders and citizens. .

## Academics

The university comprises 12 academic units (Schools of Business, Dentistry, Education, Engineering, Graduate School, Health Professions, Medicine, Nursing, Optometry and Public Health; Honors College; and the College of Arts and Sciences). UAB has had three consecutive years of overall enrollment exceeding 22,000, and in fall 2021 welcomed its largest-ever freshman class. UAB has been identified as a Diversity Champion by INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine in 2018, 2019 (one of 16), 2020 (one of 14), and 2021 (one of 16). These honors recognize UAB's diverse student population, with underrepresented groups making up [44.7 percent](#) of the student body. UAB was the first academic partner to support the Birmingham Promise scholarship in providing Birmingham City Schools graduates an opportunity to attend the university with a tuition scholarship match and additional academic support.

Academic programs at all levels — undergraduate through postdoctoral — are nationally recognized for exceptional research and service-learning opportunities. Undergraduate programs and the Honors College offer the type of hands-on, closely mentored research experiences found primarily at the graduate level in most universities. In the past few years, UAB has launched new programs in immunology, digital forensics, genetics and genomic sciences, bioinformatics, and cancer biology B.S. and neuro-engineering Ph.D. that are the first programs of their kind in the nation. *U.S. News & World Report 2022* “Best Graduate Schools” includes 16 UAB programs in the top 25 — including a Master of Science in Health Administration program that is ranked first nationally.

## Research

UAB's robust research enterprise continues the most successful era of extramural research funding in its history, with a 43% increase over the past five record-setting fiscal years (awards totaled \$648 million in FY21). Among public universities, UAB ranks 18th (top 4 percent) in federal R&D expenditures and 10th in NIH awards (top 3 percent, with all six of its health-related schools—Medicine, Public Health, Health Professions, Optometry, and Dentistry—in the top 10). UAB research encompasses a wide range of disciplines and emerging new fields, and spans the continents in scope: developing revolutionary treatments for the most devastating human diseases, from diabetes to cancer, to Alzheimer's disease; pioneering new materials for everything from stronger military gear to bio-coatings for cardiac stents; combating cybercrime perpetrated from computers around the globe in a one-of-a-kind cyber forensics center through collaborations with the FBI, Homeland Security and industry partners such as Facebook and Google; and making significant advances in climatology, marine biology and medicine in the far reaches of Antarctica. In 2019, UAB was selected as one of eight national Udall Centers of Excellence in Parkinson's Disease. UAB is among the first in the United States to offer clinical trials for treatment of patients with severe COVID-19 using nitric oxide.



As the leading public academic medical center in the Deep South, UAB took a lead role in the battle against COVID-19. Through January 2022, UAB Hospital had treated over 6,400 COVID-positive patients and vaccinated nearly 92% of its employees, 74% of on-campus students, and—working with Alabama Department of Public Health and other partners—more than 267,500 residents in all 67 counties of our Alabama. UAB's world-renowned infectious disease experts have continued to collaborate with local, state and federal agencies to deliver critical information to the community, state and media audiences worldwide, doing more than 130 live national TV appearances from UAB studio among hundreds of expert interviews. UAB set an example for the state with early, decisive action to flatten the curve and promote aggressive social distancing among its 22,000 students, 26,000 faculty and staff, and its patients from across Alabama. UAB experts in health informatics quickly developed an online symptom assessment and contact tracing tool that has been adopted by the Alabama Department of Public Health and is in use at dozens of universities and organizations nationwide. UAB is also on the front lines of public health and spearheading the development of possible therapeutics against COVID-19, including Remdesivir (originally developed under the guidance of the UAB-led Antiviral Drug Discovery and Development Center to treat MERS), which was considered one of the most promising treatments for the disease. Within three months of the beginning of the pandemic, UAB raised over \$1.5 million from local philanthropic sources to support 24 internal, high-impact projects developed by UAB faculty.

## Health Sciences & Medical Center

As a nationally and globally competitive academic medical center, UAB provides world-class patient care for the state and region—with more than 1.8 million clinical visits and \$ 78.4 million in charity care last year—and is committed to educating medical professionals and advancing medical science through research. UAB Health System (UABHS) consists of the UAB Hospital, University of Alabama Health Services Foundation, Triton Health Systems, the UAB Callahan Eye Hospital Authority, the Valley Foundation, the Health Care Authority for Baptist Health, Medical West Hospital Authority, L.V. Stabler Hospital, J. Paul Jones Hospital, Brian Whitfield Memorial Hospital, Cooper Green Mercy Health Services Authority, and many other managed hospitals. UABHS has developed a strategic alliance with Ascension St. Vincent's to increase access to high-quality, innovative medical care through multiple outlets and health programs. This alliance will address health disparities, mental and behavioral health, and diabetes. The Hospital also has strong ties with other governmental and private nonprofit institutions located within and adjacent to the UAB campus, including Veterans Affairs Medical Center and Children's of Alabama. A separate not-for-profit corporation, the UAB Health System directs and provides the coordination and management of the health care entities affiliated with UAB.

The flagship UAB Hospital is the largest in Alabama and 8<sup>th</sup> largest in the U.S., with 1,207 beds. It houses the state's only designated Level 1 adult trauma center and is the only Alabama hospital to be continually ranked in U.S. News & World Report "America's Best Hospitals." The O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center at UAB is the only NCI-designated center in Alabama and in a four-state region, and is a national leader in driving cancer research, treatment and training. In January 2022, UAB (which has performed the second-most kidney transplants in the history of medicine and the most for African Americans) successfully tested the world's first human preclinical model for transplanting genetically modified pig kidneys into humans—providing a peer-reviewed proof of concept for xenotransplantation and offering a pathway to a robust, sustainable supply of lifesaving organs.



## Innovation & Economic Impact

Driven by an intensely collaborative and entrepreneurial character, UAB is the economic engine of the region with a statewide economic impact exceeding \$7.15 billion annually. UAB is Alabama's largest single-site employer, with more than 26,000 faculty and staff, and supports more than 64,000 jobs statewide — one of every 31 Alabama jobs. UAB's decades-long partnership with its community and state has led to the economic, cultural and social renaissance of Birmingham — the state's largest metro area, with a population of 1.1 million — as the city has grown from a primarily steel-based economy to a thriving nexus of R&D, medicine, banking, and other service industries.

The UAB Harbert Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship is accelerating commercialization and training tomorrow's entrepreneurs, generating in FY21 more than \$5 million in revenue; 120 Intellectual Property (IP) disclosures; 19 U.S. patents; 49 licenses; three startup companies; \$852,000 in Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR)/ Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) expenditures. UAB continues collaborating with Southern Research, Innovation Depot, the City of Birmingham, Jefferson County Commission, Birmingham Business Alliance, the corporate community, and other partners to foster a robust technology-based economy for the region and state.

## Community Impact

The Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2020 highlighted the impact of UAB on society to build healthier communities, ranking first in the United States and seventh in the world for achieving good health and well-being



community outreach. Live HealthSmart Alabama, aims to improve the health outcomes in Alabama by 2030 by addressing changes in policies, neighborhoods, schools and workplaces. UAB partnered with the City of Birmingham to create a smoke-free Health District on Birmingham’s Southside. Lakeshore Foundation and UAB have collaborated on rehabilitative science research to improve the quality of life for individuals with physically disabling conditions. The Sparkman Center for Global Health works to alleviate health problems in less developed countries by increasing public health capacity, and UAB’s School of Nursing is designated as a Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (among 43 worldwide) for their sustained involvement in developing the global nursing workforce. The employee-led Benevolent Fund works with more than 140 local nonprofits and donated \$1.4 million in FY2021. UAB employees and students built six Habitat houses volunteering 15,800 hours. Blazer Pulse, a community service application, has logged over 60,000 hours of service with 90 community partners.

In December 2020, UAB became the first university to adopt the Okanagan Charter and to be recognized internationally as a Health Promoting University. UAB's work to promote bee conservation and growth was recognized by being named a Bee Campus USA by Bee City USA.

In 2019, UAB named Mona Fouad, M.D., director of the UAB Minority Health and Health Disparities Research Center — and her team’s “Healthy Alabama 2030: Live HealthSmart” project the winning proposal of the university’s first [Grand Challenge](#), a key component of [Forging the Future](#) — UAB’s strategic plan. As the winner, Fouad’s team received a three-year, \$2.7 million award from the university to fund the initial effort to address the state’s health rankings - 46th in obesity, 48th in diabetes, and 49th in high blood pressure, among other metrics.

## Arts

UAB also promotes the cultural and artistic vitality of its community and state. The Alys Stephens Center is Birmingham’s home for the performing arts, hosting the Alabama Symphony Orchestra, internationally renowned musicians, and performances by UAB’s departments of music and theater. The Alys Stephens Center also takes the arts into the community through its ArtPlay and Arts in Medicine — and is the anchor of UAB’s Cultural Arts Corridor, which includes the state-of-the-art Abroms-Engel Institute for Visual Arts.

## Facilities

The UAB campus comprises more than 100 continuous city blocks – a quarter of downtown Birmingham. The campus master plan focuses on enhancing growth management and innovative facilities to support the pillars of the strategic plan. An updated campus master plan received approval in April 2021. Recent projects include Honors Hall, the Collat School of Business, School of Nursing, University Hall, McMahon Hall and the Technology Innovation Center. Ongoing and upcoming projects include the Science and Engineering Complex, and the Altec/Styslinger Genomic Medicine & Data Sciences Building . UAB has invested more than \$375M in total construction over the past five years and anticipates completion of more than \$750M in total construction over the next five years.



## Athletics

UAB is a current member of Conference USA and moving to the American Athletic Conference. The university participates in Division I of the NCAA, sponsoring six men’s teams and 12 women’s teams. Blazer Football moved into the new Protective Stadium in 2021 and won the 2021 Independence Bowl, defeating the highest ranked opponent in program history (13<sup>th</sup> ranked BYU). New and upcoming athletic facilities include a Football Operation Center, Basketball Practice Facility, and a Baseball/Softball Clubhouse.



# The Location – Birmingham, Alabama

Located in the heart of the Southeast, Birmingham is a short drive from Atlanta, Nashville, New Orleans, Memphis, the Blue Ridge Mountains, and Gulf Coast beaches. Birmingham has been recognized as an “All-American City” by the National Civic League, as one of the top 10 American cities to live and work, one of the top 10 entrepreneurial and job growth hot spots in America and Conde Nast Traveler’s pick for one of 22 Best Places to Go in 2022.

Downtown Birmingham has enjoyed a revitalization in recent years, with the development of Railroad Park — an award-winning urban park — and its adjacent Regions Field, home to the minor league Birmingham Barons — an award-winning stadium. The park and stadium projects have kickstarted major growth in surrounding districts, including craft breweries, boutique shops, restaurants, loft and apartment buildings, innovative workspaces, and hotels. Birmingham’s airport, Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport, was completely renovated in 2013. Because of this platform, and because of its sports history, Birmingham was selected to serve as the host city of the 2022 World Games. [UAB played a major role](#) in coordinating the spectacular event – providing athletic venues and hosting 3,600 athletes from more than 100 countries.

Birmingham is also a renowned culinary destination, with one of its signature restaurants recently winning two James Beard Foundation awards and many other restaurants named as finalists. Food critics across the country have discovered Birmingham’s food scene and consistently rank it as one of the best food cities in America.

There are a host of attractions only a short walk from UAB’s campus, the Birmingham Civil Rights District National Monument, composed of sites such as Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, Kelly Ingram Park and the Civil Rights Institute — a major destination for visitors from around the world. Birmingham’s cultural scene is thriving, with museums, numerous galleries, music and arts festivals, theaters and live music venues, a professional ballet company, a professional opera company, a School of Fine Arts, the Jazz Hall of Fame, the recently restored historic Lyric and Alabama theaters, and UAB’s Alys Stephens Performing Arts Center is the home of the Alabama Symphony Orchestra.

Birmingham is in proximity to many state and national parks, lakes, urban greenspaces, and hiking and biking trails. The city has more green space per capita than any other major city in the United States. [Explore Birmingham online.](#)

Recent Rankings for Birmingham Include:

- No. 1 employer in the state (Forbes, 2022) – UAB
- No. 1 employer for diversity among colleges and universities (Forbes 2021) – UAB
- No. 1 city in the country where your paycheck goes the furthest (Trulia, 2018)
- No. 2 up-and-coming tech hotspots (Livability, 2018)
- No. 3 in economic growth potential (Business Facilities, 2019)
- No. 3 for new business climate (Business Facilities, 2019)
- No. 4 best employer for diversity in America (Forbes, 2021)
- No. 4 best cities for job seekers (Thrillist, 2019)
- No. 7 city with the fastest-growing income (Smart Asset, 2017)
- No. 8 most affordable city to live and work (Business Student, 2019)
- Top 10 up-and-coming foodie city (Trip Advisor, 2018)





# The Role

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## University Ombudsperson

### Summary

To serve as a neutral and impartial dispute resolution practitioner at UAB for faculty and staff, mentored graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows. To provide confidential, impartial, and informal assistance to faculty and staff, mentored graduate student and postdoctoral fellows. To act as a source of information and referral. To aid in answering questions and assisting in the facilitation of resolutions of concerns. To facilitate productive communication aimed at assisting to resolve such issues before they become formal grievances.

### Key Duties & Responsibilities

- Provides a respectful, impartial and confidential source for faculty and staff and other service recipients to discuss work related concerns.
- Assists with clarifying issues, identifying goals, and developing as well as considering available options for understanding and resolution.
- Provides coaching as needed with regard to effective oral and written communication.
- Informs employees of existing policies and procedures.
- Makes appropriate recommendations to review and revise practices in order to address recurring problems.
- Works collaboratively with other offices and personnel whose responsibilities include policy development, analysis, and interpretation.
- Refers faculty and staff to other services at UAB as appropriate.
- Develops and conducts training and information sessions for the faculty, staff and mentored graduate students about the Office's role in University conflict resolution.
- Assists in resolving interpersonal conflicts.
- Facilitates confidential conversations between and among faculty and staff and other service recipients, as well as administrators and other supervisors involved in conflict situations when all parties agree.
- Educates faculty and staff and other service recipients about the Office's confidentiality, neutrality and availability.
- Facilitates one-on-one and group conversations as may be requested by faculty and staff members and other service recipients for constructive dialogue.
- Attends all meetings of Faculty Senate, Faculty Senate Policies and Procedures Committee, Staff Council, Human Resources Partners, and other meetings as necessary to be knowledgeable about current University matters of importance to faculty and staff and other service recipients, and to express views of faculty and staff and other service recipients as appropriate.
- Provides regular reports to University leadership regarding the number of consultations and types of issues addressed to identify systematic issues and trends.
- Maintains protocol and a webpage for the Office.
- Performs other duties as assigned.



## QUALIFICATIONS

### Minimum Requirements

Master's degree in a related field and five (5) years of related experience working with people of diverse backgrounds and cultures in conflict resolution OR Bachelor's degree in a related field and seven (7) years of related experience working with individuals of diverse backgrounds and cultures in conflict resolution is required. Relevant experience in higher education, knowledge of its structure, policies, and practices is preferred. An advanced degree combined with relevant dispute resolution training or ombudsman experience is also preferred, including experience as a counselor or mediator. Work experience may NOT substitute for education requirement.

### Licenses / Certifications / Registrations

Certified Organizational Ombudsman Practitioners preferred

### Supervisory Responsibilities

No supervisory responsibility

### Budget Responsibilities

No fiscal responsibility

### Knowledge / Skills / Abilities

- Problem-solving skills
- Ability to organize, analyze and report data
- Ability to present information to individuals and groups of varying sizes and hierarchical levels
- Ability to act independently
- Ability to work as part of a team
- Ability to maintain confidentiality with sensitive information
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills

### Disclaimer

Please Note: The duties and responsibilities described are not a comprehensive list and additional tasks may be assigned to the employee as necessitated by business demands. This job description does not constitute a contract of employment or otherwise limit UAB's employment-at-will rights at any time. Employees are expected to comply with all UAB policies and procedures during their employment.



# Nominations & Applications

LeadExec is partnering with The University of Alabama at Birmingham in this national search. For inquiries, nominations, applications, and confidential conversations, please contact:

Lisa J. Marks, Founder & CEO  
Leyla Kayi, Senior Search Consultant  
413.335.6936  
[ombudsperson@leadexec.com](mailto:ombudsperson@leadexec.com)

This position is open until filled but only applications received by **Thursday, September 15, 2022**, can be assured full consideration. Applications should include a detailed letter of interest and a current curriculum vitae/resume.

LeadExec is a respected expert in retained executive search and organizational development. We identify and engage leaders who make an impact and transform organizations.



*UAB is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer committed to fostering a diverse, equitable, and family-friendly environment in which all faculty and staff can excel and achieve work/life balance irrespective of, race, national origin, age, genetic or family medical history, gender, faith, gender identity and expression as well as sexual orientation. UAB also encourages applications from individuals with disabilities and veterans.*

