



April 17, 2025

At Auburn University at Montgomery, we believe a strong commitment to community engagement is fundamental to our mission as an institution of higher learning. In my role as Chancellor, I see community engagement as deeply embedded in AUM's identity, enriching our teaching, research, and co-curricular activities.

One of the highest priorities of my leadership of AUM is to serve the River Region, both as an individual and as an institution. As an individual, I have been involved in a variety of local nonprofits, including service as president of the board of Child Protect and service on the boards of Alabama Shakespeare Festival, the YMCA of Greater Montgomery, and the Youth Leadership Development Program. For me, modeling the importance of community engagement as I advocate for our institution's engagement with the community is vital.

I believe universities must engage with their communities for the benefit of our students, the citizens we serve, our community, and the institution itself. Whether through service-learning experiences, faculty-led community-based research, or some of our student-driven initiatives, our goals include responsiveness to community needs and the development of students into engaged and responsible citizens. The importance of community engagement is reflected in AUM's history, vision, mission, and strategic plans.

Founded in 1967 to meet the need of Alabama's capital city for educational opportunities for undergraduates and professionals interested in career advancement, AUM continues to be responsive to the needs of our community. Recently, we have established academic programs based on community needs, including a bachelor's degree in Social Work, master's degrees in Artificial Intelligence and Speech and Language Pathology, and an Ed.D. in Instructional Systems & Learning Sciences.

Because the Maxwell and Gunter Air Force bases are the largest employers in the metropolitan area and because our region includes nine nearby military installations and commands, our support of military families is a priority. In 2019, AUM established the Veterans' Military Resource Center. Staffed by an Associate Director and a Military Admissions Associate, it is a one-stop shop for veterans and military-affiliated students. AUM also has two dedicated staff members for support related to financial aid for veterans and military dependents.

To ensure that community engagement is institutionalized and sustainable, we have established dedicated infrastructure and embedded community engagement into our strategic plan. Our Experiential Education and Engagement Center serves as a hub for coordinating initiatives, supporting faculty, and fostering student participation. Further, our institutional policies support faculty incentives and student opportunities to sustain meaningful involvement. Our partnerships with local businesses, nonprofits, and government agencies should be reciprocal relationships, enhancing both the education of our students and the health of our region.

AUM's vision includes our aspiration to be "recognized as an integral community partner and a resource for the enrichment and economic development of the Southeast region and beyond." Now more than ever, institutions of higher education have a responsibility to connect with and serve our local, national, and global communities in meaningful ways.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carl A. Stockton", followed by a long, horizontal, stylized flourish.

Carl A. Stockton, Chancellor
Auburn University at Montgomery