Welcome	
PR/Award Number: **P031A190185**	Reporting Period: **10/1/2024 to 09/30/2025**
Grantee Name: **Auburn University Montgomery**	Program Officer: **Yolande Badarou (Yolande.Badarou@ed.gov)**

Grant Identification

Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions (84.031N, 84.031R, 84.031W, 84.031V), Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (84.031L, 84.382B), Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions (84.031S), Hispanic-Serving STEM and Articulation (84.031C), Master's Degree Programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (84.382G), Master's Degree Programs at Predominantly Black Institutions (84.382D), Minority Science and Engineering Improvement (84.120A), Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions (84.031X, 84.382C), Predominantly Black Institutions (84.031P, 84.382A), Promoting Postbaccalaureate Opportunities for Hispanic Americans (84.031M), Strengthening Historically Black Colleges and Universities (84.031B, 84.031E), Strengthening Historically Black Graduate Institutions (84.031K), Strengthening Institutions (84.031A, 84.031F), and Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities (84.031T, 84.031D)

General Information

PR Award Number:	P031A190185	OPEID:	00831000	Unit ID:	100830
Program:			Title III - Part A Strengthening Institutions		
Grantee Name (Institution Name):			Auburn University Montgomery		
Project Title:			Enhancing Persistence through Early Engagement, Experiential Learning, and Campus Connection		
Address 1:			7440 East Drive		
Address 2: (Optional)					
City:			Montgomery		
State:	ALABAMA	**Zip:**	36117	**Zip + 4:**	
Institution Type/Control:	4-year Private			**Grant Type:**	Individual Development Grant

Project Director

First Name:	Mrinal	**Last Name:**	Varma
Title		Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor	
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Additional Contact Person Information

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Grant and Report Information

Reporting Period Start:	10/1/2024	**Reporting Period End:**	09/30/2025
Year Grant was	10/01/2019	**Scheduled End Year:**	09/30/2024

Awarded:

Total Expected Duration of Grant (years):	5	**Year X/(from prior):**	6/5

Section 1
Section 1: Executive Summary
All questions are limited to 1500 characters or less (approximately 250 words) unless otherwise stated. Keep in mind that all questions, unless otherwise stated, pertain to the reporting period indicated above.

A. Is this a no cost extension year?

☑ **Yes**   ☐ **No**

B. Was this reporting period the final period of performance for this grant? (No performance occurred after September 30) *

☑ **Yes**   ☐ **No**

* If the answer is yes, Section 6 will be made available for institutions submitting their Final Performance Report.

1. The goals of Titles III, V, and VII grants are to strengthen an institution's capacity to serve low-income and minority students. Use the following questions to summarize how your grant is enabling your institution to fulfill the legislative intent of the Titles III, V, or VII program during the most recently completed grant performance period.

1a. Summarize the impact your institution's Titles III, V, or VII grant has had on enrollment this year.

2018 Fall enrollment total: 5211
2019 Fall enrollment total: 5188
2020 Fall enrollment total: 5212
2021 Fall enrollment total: 5073
2022 Fall enrollment total: 5112
2023 Fall enrollment total: 5190
2024 Fall enrollment total: 5219
2025 Fall enrollment total: 5103

Enrollment data provided by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) indicates a decrease of 116 students from year five to year six. While domestic student enrollment is on the rise, we have had a recent decline in international student enrollment. The Office of Admissions continues to implement initiatives, including dual enrollment partnerships with local school systems and expanding on-campus recruiting events. The Experiential Education and Engagement Center supports and participates in these activities to showcase experiential opportunities and resources available to AUM students.

1b. Summarize the impact your institution's Titles III, V, or VII grant has had on graduation rates this year.

2018 - 2019 (FA 12 cohort) IPEDS 6-year graduation rate: 34%
2019 – 2020 (FA 13 cohort) IPEDS 6-year graduation rate: 34%
2020 – 2021 (FA 14 cohort) IPEDS 6-year graduation rate: 30%
2021 – 2022 (FA 15 cohort) IPEDS 6-year graduation rate: 36%
2022 - 2023 (FA 16 cohort) IPEDS 6-year graduation rate: 36%
2023 – 2024 (FA 17 cohort) IPEDS 6-year graduation rate: 36%
2024 - 2025 (FA 18 cohort) IPEDS 6-year graduation rate: 35%

Although we experienced a slight decrease (0.01%) in 6-year graduation rates during year six, we increased the number of graduates by 17% (222) over year five. Additionally, the Provost has continued to support upperclassmen through scholarships for participation in undergraduate research and internships by awarding 58 scholarships for a total of $23,997. The Provost also funded a total of 27 undergraduate mini-grants totaling $65,894.

1c. Summarize the impact your institution's Titles III, V, or VII grant has had on student persistence/retention this year.

Fall 2018 – Fall 2019 IPEDS first year retention rate: 60%
Fall 2019 – Fall 2020 IPEDS first year retention rate: 70%
Fall 2020 – Fall 2021 IPEDS first year retention rate: 63%
Fall 2021 – Fall 2022 IPEDS first year retention rate: 70%
Fall 2022 – Fall 2023 IPEDS first year retention rate: 66%
Fall 2023 – Fall 2024 IPEDS first year retention rate: 68%
Fall 2024 - Fall 2025 IPEDS first-year retention rate: 71%

Retention for first-time full-time students increased 3.0% during year five - the highest we've experienced since

the inception of the grant. While short of our target of 74%, the upward trend is promising. Furthermore, 61% of AUM students who participated in experiential learning were retained compared to 53% who did not participate.

1d. Summarize the impact your institution's Titles III, V, or VII grant has had on fiscal stability this year.

During year six, we were able to achieve six of our eight grant objectives and made positive progress towards two of our eight grant objectives. We saw increases in: student participation in experiential learning opportunities – including undergraduate research; peer mentors; faculty engagement in professional development sessions; retention; persistence; and the number of faculty and staff who have been trained to utilize our data reporting system. These achievements are all indicators of the positive impact this grant has had on our ability to institutionalize experiential education at AUM leading to improved outcomes for students.

One of the designed outcomes indicated on our Logic Model in the Title III grant application was to increase course-based experiential learning opportunities. During year six, 29% (78) more courses than year five included experiential learning components. This correlates with the increase in faculty participation in professional development sessions geared toward incorporating these high-impact practices into their curriculum.

Students enrolled in core courses and those with typically higher DFW rates with peer mentors had lower DFW rates than those enrolled in courses without peer mentors. Examples include BIOL 2110 (0% vs. 19%), PSYC 1000 (12% vs. 19%), ENGL 1020 (9% vs. 39%), and MATH 0050 (0% vs. 13%). AUM is committed to continue to provide peer mentor support to students within these courses and anticipates continued success.

2. Based on the goals set forth in your comprehensive development plan and/or grant application, summarize the major milestones reached during this grant performance period.

Note: The totals provided in this final APR include data reported in our first three quarterly reports. The final quarter ended in the middle of fall semester 2025.

Academic Goals
APG1: Increase student engagement with the university
The total number of students engaging in experiential education increased 59% (4,623) over year five (2,912), surpassing our goal of 3,519.
Participation in undergraduate research increased by 181% from year five (368) to year six (1,034). 112 students made undergraduate research presentations at a variety of conferences and events.
Community Engagement and service-learning have continued to be a priority at AUM, and support provided by the grant helped us engage 2,046 students.

APG2: Establish strong retention and persistence rates for first-year and first-generation students.
The first-year freshmen retention rate increased by 3% and is the highest it has been in over six years. At 71%, we have surpassed the national retention rate of 68.2 (National Student Clearing House, 2024).

Persistence rates from 2nd to 3rd year and 3rd to 4th year at AUM have steadily increased over the span of the grant and are currently 92% and 91% respectively.

Fiscal Stability Goal
FSG1: Improve financial stability by providing infrastructure to increase student engagement and retention, leading to an increase in the number of students ultimately graduating.
As indicated in Q1b, 17% more students graduated from AUM in year six (1564) than in year five (1342).

3. Identify any highlights that occurred during this performance period. Identify areas where technical assistance is needed to meet goals and objectives.

As the Covid pandemic occurred within five months of the start of our grant, programming, processes, and outcomes were impacted. Therefore, we requested and were approved for a sixth-year, no-cost extension in order to implement the CDP to its full potential and meet our objectives. Some of the highlights from year six include:

Continuing to build and support the infrastructure to offer community engagement opportunities, including Healthy Kids, the Rural History and Ecology Research Institute, the AUM Speech and Hearing Clinic, and the Greater East Alabama Regional Science and Engineering Fair, led to the application process for the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification. We were notified two months after the end of the grant that we received the recognition. AUM is one of only five universities in Alabama to earn the 2026 designation, which recognizes an institution's demonstrated commitment to community engagement.

Expanding the reach of peer mentors by developing the Peer Wellness Ambassadors (PWA) program, a lifeline for students dealing with the everyday stressors of college life. PWA support students living on and off campus by engaging them with a variety of resources.

Providing additional support for students with disabilities via Genio Notes, for providing students accessible note-taking and study tools in and out of the classroom. This technology has helped provide access to experiential learning opportunities to students with disabilities.

4. Has your institution's project(s) contributed to evidence-based (a) research, (b) knowledge, (c) practice, and/or (d) policy over the past year?

☑ **Yes**   ☐ **No**

If so, how? Use quantifiable measures where possible. These contributions can include those disseminated in a variety of formats, including presentations, publications, program development, and recommendations for policy changes due to the project.

Publications

Beziat, T.L.R., Grilliot, M., Breitman, M.F., and Ward, C. (Accepted). Attention, Encoding, Retrieval- OH MY! CourseSource. https://qubeshub.org/community/groups/coursesource/

Breitman, M.F., Grilliot, M., Beziat, T.L.R., and Ward, C. (2025). Training that expands developmental networks increases college success of peer-mentors. Chronicles of Mentoring and Coaching. V9: 3. doi.org/10.62935/s2405p

Stallings, L., & Cobb, A. (2024). Forming Civic Virtue through an Honors Seminar Focused on Local Civil Rights History. Honors in Practice, 20, 231-240.

Presentations

Bark, T. 2025. Using Coursework as a Means for Encouraging Community Involvement and Improvement. Out of the Box Teaching and Learning Workshop, Montgomery, AL.

Ghodke, N. 2025. Community Projects: Design Solutions for Urban Connection. Out of the Box Teaching and Learning Workshop, Montgomery, AL.

Sehar, N.*, Pettaway, C.*, McCraken, E.*, Beziat, T., Grilliot, M., Breitman, F., & Ward, C. 2025. Flight School, utilizing peer-mentors to make class awesome. April 2025, Montgomery, AL.

Stein, C., & Cuba, N. 2025. Teaching Ecological Legacies: Civil Rights,Civic Virtue, and the Ecology of the AUM Forest. Out of the Box Teaching and Learning Workshop, Montgomery, AL.

Thomas, T. 2025. Building Civic-Minded Instructional Leadership through Community-Engaged Research. Out of the Box Teaching and Learning Workshop, Montgomery, AL.

* Indicates student presenters.

5. If your institution has experienced any unexpected outcomes because of this project, which affect, for better or worse, its capacity to fulfill the goals of the legislation, identify them here. Additionally, describe any challenges that you have had during the reporting period. Include, if applicable, your institution's plans to address these challenges.

One unexpected challenge has been a significant decrease in international student enrollment. As a result, we are implementing a plan targeting in-state transfer students.

6. Under the competition for which your grant application was funded, did you respond to any Education Department evidence standards?

☑ **Yes**   ☐ **No**

    6a. Which Education Department evidence standard was required?

        ☑ **Tier 4: Demonstrates a Rationale (Logic Model)**

☐ **Tier 3: Promising Evidence**

☐ **Tier 2: Moderate Evidence**

☐ **Tier 1: Strong Evidence**

6b. Please cite the study/studies you included in your application to address the evidence standard. What specifically was the evidence-based intervention you proposed to implement in your funded application?

Bradberry, L. and De Maio, J. (2019). "Learning by Doing: The Long-Term Impact of Experiential Learning Programs on Student Success," Journal of Political Science Education, 15(1) 94-111.

Ehrich, L., Hansford, B., Tennent, L. "Formal Mentoring Programs in Education and Other Professions: A Review of the Literature." Education Administration Quarterly, 40(4), 518- 540.

Tinto, V. (1993). Leaving college: Rethinking the causes of student attrition, (2nd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Expanded professional development to faculty, staff, and students related to experiential learning and undergraduate research, including utilizing free career-based resources to better prepare students for internships and careers after graduation. This included Certified Peer Educator (CPE) Train-the-Trainer Course and LeaderShape Institute. We targeted faculty and staff who had yet to participate in training or workshops. Since 2019, 91% of faculty and staff have participated in professional development focused on experiential learning and trained to use our data reporting system.

Implemented CareerSpots, an interactive, online guide, that helps prepare students for work-based experiential learning, such as internships and field experiences.

Increased engagement with community partners by holding an annual Service Learning Expo and awarding our first Community Engagement Partner Recognition to the City of Montgomery's Office of Economic and Community Engagement in spring 2025.

6c. Are you implementing the evidence-based intervention as planned?

☑ **Yes**   ☐ **No**

6e. Describe any findings and/or information relevant to the intervention for this grant performance reporting period.

Students who participated in experiential education, such as community engagement and service-learning, had a higher average GPA (3.37) compared to those who did not participate (2.89).

First-time first-generation freshmen who participated in experiential educational opportunities were retained at a higher rate (60%) compared to those who did not participate (57%).

Peer mentors embedded within core courses and those with typically higher DFW rates served 3,344 mentees during year six. This is an increase of 18% over year five (2,831). 82% of mentees indicated that their peer mentor played a role in their academic success in the course; 92% reported that their mentor was actively involved in course discussions, reviews, and in Canvas; and 81% strongly agreed with the statement that their peer mentor offered support in the course.

6f. If Demonstrates a Rationale was selected in response to question 6a, please attach a copy of your original Logic Model.

Title_III_Grant_Logic_Model.pdf

7. Have you conducted any formative evaluation related to your grant?

☑ **Yes**   ☐ **No**

7a. If yes, summarize the results of the formative evaluation.

Peer Mentor Evaluations: The EEEC met with and distributed surveys to mentors to monitor the effectiveness of the program and receive input from participants. Their responses indicated a desire to improve as peer mentors

to serve mentees more effectively.

Questions and responses included:

How can the Experiential Education and Engagement Center better support you in your role?
--"It would be helpful if I could communicate regularly with other peer mentors, in the major/department I'm peer mentoring in. The tips on how they approach students would be helpful."

What can their faculty members do to provide additional support?
--"Make sure Peer Mentors have access to any required class materials."

Are there trainings, resources, and professional development we could implement to strengthen their effectiveness as peer mentors?
--"I wish we could meet more often so we can ask questions and hear feedback from other Peer Mentors."
--"I need help talking to students and knowing what to say to them."

7b. Have the results of the formative evaluation yielded any improvements in your projects and/or campus?

As a result of feedback, the following improvements to the peer mentor program were made:

Major-specific peer mentor support groups were established. We developed a database with contact information and shared that with peer mentors. They formed groups and met regularly to share successes and challenges.

Working with faculty, AUM's Office of Distance Education, and the Library, the EEEC ensured that mentors have access to digital and hard copy versions of textbooks at no cost to Peer Mentors. We found that some textbooks through RedShelf were causing an issue for some mentors.

The EEEC added biweekly Zoom and face-to-face drop-in sessions, so peer mentors could ask questions and connect with other Peer Mentors on campus. We also implemented a mentor meetup so they had a chance to network.

8. Was a project evaluation, assessment, or any other research related to the project conducted?

☑ **Yes**   ☐ **No**

8a. If yes, which of the following conducted the evaluation/assessment/research? Check all that apply.

☑ **A project evaluator hired specifically to evaluate or assess the project**

☐ **An office in your organization that routinely conducts evaluations or assessment**

☐ **A combination of external project evaluator and internal project evaluator**

☐ **Other researcher funded by the grant**

☐ **Other researcher not funded by the grant**

8b. If yes, please summarize your results.

AUM successfully implemented the grant as proposed, which led to substantial growth in experiential education, community engagement, and high-impact practices, contributing to improved student retention and persistence rates. These outcomes align squarely with the core mission of the Title III program.

EEEC: Became a highly visible and centralized hub for experiential learning, faculty development, and student engagement, supported by enhanced communication, data tracking, and media outreach.

Undergraduate Research Growth: Significant expansion of faculty-led student research, supported by ongoing internal funding.

> 87% of student researchers presented posters off campus
> 37% contributed to manuscripts for professional journals
> 91% reported improved data analysis skills

Faculty and Staff Development: Increased faculty participation in high-impact practices, which reinforced a culture of engagement.

Peer Mentor (PM) Program: Demonstrated strong outcomes for both mentors and students.
    94% of PMs improved communication skills.
    82% of mentees credited PM with contributing to academic success.

Student Outcomes (NSSE 2024)
    First-Year Students: Scored significantly higher than comparison institutions in several categories, including participation in high-impact practices (72% vs. 52–58%).

    Seniors: Outperformed comparators in interactions with faculty and other students, service learning, and campus support.

9. Please attach any evaluation results including formative evaluations, summative evaluations, journal articles, presentations, and publications relating to your grant projects. These documents may provide greater detail of your results, or items that you would like to highlight.

Forming_Civic_Virtue_throughan_Honors_Seminar_Focusedon_Local.pdf

CDS_Title_III_Grant_Fall_2025_Report.pdf

2026_Final_Evaluation_Report_of_Title_III_Auburn_University_Montgomery.pdf

Section 2: Institutional Profile

Institutional Measures (GPRA indicators):

The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) is a statute that requires all Federal agencies to manage their endeavors and corresponding results. Each agency states what it intends to accomplish, identifies the resources required, and periodically reports its progress to Congress. It is expected GPRA indicators will contribute to improvements in accountability for the expenditures of public funds, improve congressional decision-making through more objective information on the effectiveness of Federal programs, and promote a new government focus on results, service delivery, and customer satisfaction. As of 2017, the GPRA indicators for Title III, Title V, and Title VII grants within the Higher Education Act (HEA) are (1) Enrollment, (2) Retention, (3) Graduation, and (4) Fiscal Stability.

2A Institutional Measures (GPRA Indicators)

Complete the following table up through the current Reporting Period. Your "Total Fall Enrollment" and "Fall to Fall Retention %" should come from the Fall Census Data.

Grant Year Collection Year	Pre-Grant (2018-19)	Year 1 (2019-20)	Year 2 (2020-21)	Year 3 (2021-22)	Year 4 (2022-23)	Year 5 (2023-24)	Year 6 (2023-24)
Total Fall Enrollment	5,211	5,188	5,212	5,073	5,190	5,219	5,103
Fall-to-Fall Retention %	60	70	63	70	66	68	71
100% Time to Graduation Rate	10	9	10	13	15	14	23
150% Time to Graduation Rate	34	34	30	36	36	36	35

This section uses definitions based on the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System definitions. IPEDS Definitions may be found at https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/public/glossaryhttps://surveys.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/public/glossary

Fall Enrollment: This is an annual component of IPEDS that collects data on the number of students enrolled in the fall at postsecondary institutions. Students reported are those enrolled in courses creditable toward a degree or other recognized postsecondary credential; students enrolled in courses that are part of a vocational or occupational program, including those enrolled in off-campus or extension centers; and high school students taking regular college courses for credit.

Graduation Rate: This rate is calculated as the total number of completers within 100% and 150% of normal time divided by the revised adjusted cohort.

Retention Rate: A measure of the rate at which students persist in their educational program at an institution, expressed as a percentage. For four-year institutions, this is the percentage of first-time bachelors (or equivalent) degree-seeking undergraduates from the previous fall who are again enrolled in the current fall. For all other institutions this is the percentage of first-time degree/certificate-seeking students from the previous fall who either re-enrolled or successfully completed their program by the current fall.

2B Institutional Leadership

1. Have there been changes in institutional leadership (presidents, vice-presidents, provosts, etc.)?

☐ **Yes**   ☑ **No**

2. Have there been changes in grant leadership (project director, activity director, etc.)?

☐ **Yes**   ☑ **No**

2C Accreditation

1. Which is your institution's primary accrediting agency? [Please check only one]

☐ **Middle States Commission on Higher Education**

☐ **New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education**

☐ **The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools**

☐ **Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities**

☑ **Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges**

☐ **Western Association of Schools and Colleges Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges**

☐ **Western Association of Schools and Colleges Senior College and University Commission**

☐ **Other (please specify)**

Accreditation Changes

1. Has the accreditation of your institution changed since you began the project (e.g., status changes or the addition of new programs)? (Include guidance around accreditation changes in user manual and FAQs).

☐ **Yes**   ☑ **No**

2D Audit

1. Institutions that expend $750,000 in federal funds in one fiscal year must complete an audit for that year that complies with OMB Circular A-133. Were you required to complete an audit that complies with OMB Circular A-133?

☐ **Yes**   ☑ **No**

2E Endowment

1. Are grant funds from this award being used for an endowment activity?

☐ **Yes**   ☑ **No**

2. Do you have an endowment activity on a previous award that has not matured?

☐ **Yes**   ☑ **No**

If yes to any of the above questions, you will be required to complete the FY 2026 Endowment Financial Report (OMB 1840-0564) by the deadline. The report is available on the EFRS tab in this system.

Section 3: Grant Project Status and Budget

3A Project Objectives

1. What is the expected long-term impact of the grant project on the institution?

The expected long-term impacts of the grant on the University include the following:

1. To make Auburn University at Montgomery an institution of choice.
2. To improve the University's financial stability by providing infrastructure to increase student engagement and retention, leading to an increase in the number of students ultimately graduating.

3B Grant Activities

Number of Program Allowable Activities Addressed by This Grant: 2

Grant Activity 1/2

Activity Name:

High Impact Practices

Activity Description:

Develop High Impact Practices that connect students to campus, including undergraduate research, internships, service learning, and peer mentoring.

Objective 1/7

Objective Description:
Increase the number of students participating in experiential learning opportunities.

Objective Status: Completed

Performance Measure 1/1

Performance Measure Description:

The number of students participating in experiential learning activities. Measured by count of students.

4,623 undergraduate students participated in experiential learning during the 2024-2025 academic year, exceeding our target by 31% (3,519). Experiential learning activities were tracked through surveys, course offerings, university mini-grants, informal interviews, and sign-in sheets. These activities represent both course-based experiential learning and activities completed outside of required coursework.

Measure Type:	**Date Measured:**	**Frequency Measured:**
Project	10/01/2025	Semester

Data Type: ● **Raw Number**
　　　　　　 ○ **Ratio**

Target	Actual
3519.00	4623.00

Objective 2/7

Objective Description:
Increase the number of students participating in undergraduate research opportunities.

Objective Status: Completed

Performance Measure 1/1

Performance Measure Description:

The number of students participating in faculty-led undergraduate research opportunities. Count of students.

1,034 students participating in undergraduate research were reported during the 2024-2025 academic year. This is a 181% increase over year five (368).

Measure Type:	**Date Measured:**	**Frequency Measured:**
Project	10/01/2025	Semester

Data Type: ● Raw Number
○ Ratio

Target	Actual
931.00	1034.00

Objective 3/7

Objective Description:

Expand the presence of peer mentors within University Success Course. Due to the success of embedded peer mentors within the University Success course and the need to provide support to undergraduate students in other courses, we expanded peer mentors in introductory courses and courses with higher DFW rates. Towards the end of year four, we also expanded support for peer tutors, engagement ambassadors, and mentors for first-year students.

Objective Status: Completed

Performance Measure 1/1

Performance Measure Description:

The number of peer mentors within the University Success course, expanded to include the number of peer mentors in other core and introductory courses and those with higher DFW rates.

Measure Type:	**Date Measured:**	**Frequency Measured:**
Project	10/01/2025	Semester

Data Type: ● Raw Number
○ Ratio

Target	Actual
208.00	296.00

Objective 4/7

Objective Description:
Faculty Development

Increase number of faculty participating in professional development focused on experiential learning and undergraduate research.

Objective Status: Completed

Performance Measure 1/1

Performance Measure Description:

The number of faculty participating in professional development focused on experiential learning and undergraduate research.

91% of active full-time faculty members participated in professional development on experiential learning or undergraduate research during the 2024-2025 academic year. This is a 15% increase over year five.

Measure Type:	**Date Measured:**	**Frequency Measured:**
Project	10/01/2025	Semester

Data Type: ○ Raw Number
● Ratio

Target	Actual
189.00 /	206.00 /

227	227
83%	**91%**

Objective 5/7

Objective Description:

Increase retention rates for first-time, full-time freshman.

Objective Status: Not Achieved

Performance Measure 1/1

Performance Measure Description:

Retention rate for first-time full-time freshmen during 2024-2025 academic year.

The retention rate for first-time freshmen during the 2024-2025 academic year is 71%, falling 3% short of our goal. However, this is a 3% increase over year five and exceeds the national four-year college retention rate of 68.2%, a goal in our Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP).

Measure Type:	**Date Measured:**	**Frequency Measured:**
Project	10/01/2025	Annual

Data Type: ◯ **Raw Number** ● **Ratio**

Target	Actual
306.00	295.00
/	/
413	413
74%	**71%**

Objective 6/7

Objective Description:

Persistence
Increase persistence rates: 2nd - 3rd year and 3rd - 4th year.

Objective Status: Completed

Performance Measure 1/2

Performance Measure Description:

Persistence rate of 2022 first-time full-time freshmen from 2nd year to 3rd year.

Our baseline data for Fall 2018 2nd to 3rd year persistence was 53%. Our goal was to increase that percentage by at least 1% annually, so our 92% significantly exceeds our goal of 58%, and is a 3% increase over year five.

Measure Type:	**Date Measured:**	**Frequency Measured:**
Project	10/01/2025	Annual

Data Type: ◯ **Raw Number** ● **Ratio**

Target	Actual
156.00	247.00
/	/
268	268
58%	**92%**

Performance Measure 2/2

Performance Measure Description:

Persistence rate of 2022 first-time full-time freshmen from 3rd year to 4th year.

Our baseline data for Fall 2018 3rd to 4th year persistence was 53%. Our goal was to increase that percentage by at least 1% annually, so our 91% significantly exceeds our goal of 58%, and is a 4% increase over year five.

Measure Type: **Date Measured:**   **Frequency Measured:**

Project   10/01/2025   Annual

Data Type: ◯ **Raw Number**

● **Ratio**

Target	Actual
156.00	244.00
/	/
268	268
58%	**91%**

Objective 7/7

Objective Description:

Increase graduation rates. Data collected and analyzed by AUM Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

Objective Status: Not Achieved

Performance Measure 1/1

Performance Measure Description:

The 6th year graduation rate of 2018 cohort.

While we fell short of our target by 4%, we increased the number of graduates by 17% (222) over year five

Measure Type: **Date Measured:**   **Frequency Measured:**

Project   10/01/2025   Annual

Data Type: ◯ **Raw Number**

● **Ratio**

Target	Actual
244.00	221.00
/	/
625	625
39%	**35%**

Grant Activity 2/2

Activity Name:

Student Data Tracking

Activity Description:

Close the loop in student data tracking, management, and interpretation. Develop a dashboard that allows faculty to see the impact of experiential learning activities on student retention and persistence.

Objective 1/1

Objective Description:

Increase faculty and staff access to timely student information.

Objective Status: Completed

Performance Measure 1/1

Performance Measure Description:

Percent of faculty and staff who have been trained.

76% of faculty and staff have been trained on accessing engagement and persistence data. This exceeds our target by 16%. During year six, training was targeted at faculty and staff who had yet to participate in previous trainings.

Measure Type:

Project

Date Measured:

10/01/2025

Frequency Measured:

Annual

Data Type: ◯ **Raw Number**

⬤ **Ratio**

Target	Actual
343.00 / 572 **60%**	433.00 / 572 **76%**

3C Budget Status Report

Enter your budget. If you click the "changes" box, a text field will display within that section for you to enter a line item budget narrative explaining the changes

The budget and expenditure table (below) accepts dollar amounts for the following line-item categories: Personnel, Student Personnel, Fringe Benefits, Travel, Equipment, Supplies, Contractual, Construction, Other, Endowment (if allowed), Scholarships (if allowed), and Student Stipends (if allowed).

The budget and expenditure table allows reporting by the above categories for the following seven columns:

- Carryover Balance from Previous Year
- Approved Budget
- Total Budget
- Expenditures
- Non-Federal Expenditures
- Carryover Balance (Will show the percentage and the actual number)
- Next Year's Actual Budget
- Changes (Y/N)

Changes by Line Item
Grantees checking the "Changes" box in the Budget and Expenditure Table can provide a narrative discussing relevant details on the corresponding line item. All major budgetary changes must receive approval from the Department.

Budget and Expenditure Table

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	
Budget Category	Carryover Balance (Previous Year)	Actual Budget	Total Budget (B+C)	Expenditure	Non-Federal Expenditure	Carryover Balance (Current Year)(D-E)	Carryover Percentage (G/D as %)	Next Year's Actual Budget*	Changes
Personnel	54,750.72	0.00	54,750.72	0.00	21,962.39	54,750.72	100.00	0.00	☐
Student Personnel	409,114.73	0.00	409,114.73	390,316.26	0.00	18,798.47	4.59	0.00	☐
Fringe Benefits	-3,106.99	0.00	-3,106.99	0.00	6,379.08	-3,106.99	100.00	0.00	☐
Travel	7,349.45	0.00	7,349.45	0.00	0.00	7,349.45	100.00	0.00	☐
Equipment	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	☐
Supplies	166,943.02	0.00	166,943.02	132,324.34	0.00	34,618.68	20.74	0.00	☐
Contractual	61,350.66	0.00	61,350.66	0.00	0.00	61,350.66	100.00	0.00	☐
Construction	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	☐
Endowment	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	☐
Other	-202.60	0.00	-202.60	40,147.69	0.00	-40,350.29	19,916.23	0.00	☐
Total Direct Costs	696,198.99	0.00	696,198.99	562,788.29	28,341.47	133,410.70		0.00	
Indirect Costs	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	☐
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	
	Carryover Balance		Total Budget	Expenditure	Non-Federal	Carryover Balance	Carryover Percentage	Next Year's	Changes

Budget Category	(Previous Year)	Actual Budget	(B+C)		Expenditure	(Current Year)(D-E)	(G/D as %)	Actual Budget*
Total	$696,198.99	$0.00	$696,198.99	$562,788.29	$28,341.47	$133,410.70		$0.00

*Not applicable in final (or extension) performance report.

3D Summary Budget Narrative

Please explain budget changes, as needed, particularly the use of funds from cost savings, carryover funds and other expanded authorities changes to your budget. Provide an explanation if you are NOT expending funds at the expected rate. Describe any significant changes to your budget resulting from modifications of Grant activities.

1. Did you have any unexpended funds at the end of the performance period?

☑ **Yes**   ☐ **No**

If yes, explain why, provide the amount, and indicate how you plan to use the unexpended funds (carryover) in the next budget period.

The amount is $133,410.70. Despite our best projections for our sixth-year, no-cost extention, we overestimated the amount we could spend.

Because we're at the end of the sixth-year, no-cost extension year, we will not spend the unexpended funds.

2. Do you anticipate any changes in your budget for the next performance period that will require prior approval from the Department (as designated by EDGAR, 34 CFR 74.25 and 80.30, as applicable).

☑ **No**   ☐ **Yes**

3. Do you wish to make any changes in the grant's activities for the next performance period?

☐ **Yes**   ☑ **No**

4. Is this a cooperative arrangement grant?

☑ **No**   ☐ **Yes**

5. Many grantees include community partners, other institutions of higher education, and secondary schools in their work. Complete the table below (if applicable) with information related to any partners you are working with.

Partner Name: City of Montgomery Economic & Community Development Division

Description of Partner's Role:

We have continued to take students monthly to serve at the Shady Street Park & Trailhead. We have continued to connectstudents, faculty, and staff to serve with the new trailhead expansion project. We extended the memorandum of agreement for three more years.

5a. Did their role change?:

☑ **No**   ☐ **Yes**

What impact has this had on your ability to achieve approved project objectives/activities?

Partner Name: Dream Court

Description of Partner's Role:

AUM has been named one of 26 schools nationwide selected as finalists for the 2026 NCAA Division II Award of Excellence. The award recognizes initiatives that exemplify the Division II philosophy of community engagement, service, and student-athlete leadership. AUM earned recognition for its partnership with TOPSoccer and Dream Court, an initiative supporting adaptive sports opportunities for youth with physical and intellectual disabilities. More than 45 AUM student-athletes volunteered over 500 hours, assisting with soccer and tennis activities that fostered inclusion, confidence, and meaningful engagement within the Montgomery community. Finalists for the Award of Excellence were selected by a committee of athletics administrators and the Division II Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC). SAAC members will also select the top three honorees, which will be announced later this month during the Division II business session at the 2026 NCAA Convention in Washington, D.C.

5a. Did their role change?:

☑ **No**   ☐ **Yes**

What impact has this had on your ability to achieve approved project objectives/activities?

Partner Name: Heart of Alabama Food Bank

Description of Partner's Role:

Heart of Alabama Food Bank continues to provide volunteer opportunities for AUM students and also partners with AUM's Food Pantry.

5a. Did their role change?:

☑ **No**   ☐ **Yes**

What impact has this had on your ability to achieve approved project objectives/activities?

6. Have you met your goals and objectives as outlined in your approved activities for this performance period?

☐ **No**   ☐ **Yes**   ☑ **Partially**

If "no" or "partially" please explain:

We didn't meet Objective 1.5 about retention. Our goal was 74% and we just missed at 71%. Although we didn't meet the goal we had set, we have surpassed the national retention rate of 68.2% for four-year public universities as reported by the National Student Clearinghouse.

We didn't meet Objective 1.7 about graduation rates. While we fell short of our target of 39% by 4%, we increased the number of graduates by 17% (222) over year five.

Section 4: LAAs

LAAs

Grant Activity	LAAs	Total Dollars Spent
Grant Activity 1: Develop High Impact Practices that connect students to campus, including undergraduate research, internships, service learning, and peer mentoring.	**LAAs:** • Support of faculty exchanges, faculty development, and faculty fellowships to assist in attaining advanced degrees in the field of instruction of the faculty. **Dollars Spent: $13,743.77** • Development and improvement of academic programs. **Dollars Spent: $81,513.71** • Purchase of library books, periodicals, and other educational materials, including telecommunications program material. **Dollars Spent: $2,885.00** • Tutoring, counseling, and student service programs designed to improve academic success, including innovative, customized, instruction courses designed to help retain students and move the students rapidly into core courses and through program completion, which may include remedial education and English language instruction. **Dollars Spent: $464,645.81**	$562,788.29
Grant Activity 2: Close the loop in student data tracking, management, and interpretation. Develop a dashboard that allows faculty to see the impact of experiential learning activities on student retention and persistence.	**LAAs:**	$0.00
Total Dollars Spent on All Activities		**$562,788.29**

Section 5 : Institutionalization

1. What are your institution's plans to institutionalize or assume the costs of one or more of the activities funded by this grant? How are you using data to inform institutionalization?

AUM is committed to continued funding of the Center's staff and activities.

We've used data over the past years of the grant to refine our priorities. We have learned that peer mentor programming and tutoring impact student retention and success.

1a. Complete the fields below detailing your plans to institutionalize the identified activity.

We recognize that data related to institutionalization may not be available during the current reporting period. Please contact your Program Officer if you have questions about completing this section.

Grant Activity	Details
1. High Impact Practices	

Develop High Impact Practices that connect students to campus, including undergraduate research, internships, service...

LAA #1: Support of faculty exchanges, faculty development, and faculty fellowships to assist in attaining advanced degrees in the field of instruction of the faculty.

1a.

Approved Expenditures

Support of faculty exchanges, faculty development, and faculty fellowships to assist in attaining advanced degrees in the field of instruction of the faculty.

1a: Funding was used for professional develoment materials and speakers. Funding was also used for professional development of EEEC staff.

1b.

Institutionalization Plan

The institution supports professional dvelopment in a variety of ways, including internal programs run by our Faculty Development Institute and funding for professional travel from the Provost and Staff Council.

Total Financial Cost ($)

13743.77

LAA #2: Development and improvement of academic programs.

1a.

Approved Expenditures

Development and improvement of academic programs.

Funding was used for critical technologies (CourseDog, CRM Advise, Genio Notes, CareerSpots, and TechSmith). Funding was used for Undergraduate Research materials and poster printing. Expenditures supported peer mentors and students involved in experiential education experiences such as undergraduate research and service learing.

1b.

Institutionalization Plan

The university is committed to a transition of EEEC activities and expences to the AUM budget, including the funds to support experiential learning and critical technologies that support student retention.

Total Financial Cost ($)

81513.71

LAA #3: Purchase of library books, periodicals, and other educational materials, including telecommunications program material.

1a.

Approved Expenditures

1b.

Institutionalization Plan

Purchase of library books, periodicals, and other educational materials, including telecommunications program material.

Resources were purchased to help prepare pre-nursing and allied health programs for entry into their professional programs.

AUM's Warhawk Academic Success Center is committed to support students in a variety of ways, including continued support of pre-nursing and allied health majors.

Total Financial Cost ($)

2885.00

LAA #4: Tutoring, counseling, and student service programs designed to improve academic success, including innovative, customized, instruction courses designed to help retain students and move the students rapidly into core courses and through program completion, which may include remedial education and English language instruction.

1a.

Approved Expenditures

Tutoring, counseling, and student service programs designed to improve academic success, including innovative, customized, instruction courses designed to help retain students and move the students rapidly into core courses and through program completion, which may include remedial education and English language instruction.

Expenditures paid for peer mentors, tutors, other student workers in student success programs, and related costs.

1b.

Institutionalization Plan

The university is committed to a transition of EEEC activities and expenses to the AUM budget, including students working in student success programs.

Total Financial Cost ($)

464645.81

2. Student Data Tracking

Close the loop in student data tracking, management, and interpretation. Develop a dashboard that allows faculty to see th...

! You must enter at least one LAA for this Activity in Section 4 in order to continue with your Performance Report !

1c. In the space provided below please list any considerable challenges, successes, or failures regarding the institutionalization of one or more activities.

AUM has already assumed full responsibility for the personnel costs of the EEEC and is committed to a transition of the Center's activities to the university budget.

AUM has also provided $89,891 in year six for undergraduate research and creative activity efforts (mini-grants and scholarships). AUM has committed to continue to provide support moving forward. This includes student travel and costs associated with presenting research at conferences as well as tuition assistance for approved undergraduate research-based courses for students enrolled.

Since the inception of the grant, monies have been allocated and spent by AUM on supplies for peer mentors, food and refreshments for training and other activities and events, swag and promotional items, including t-shirts, to promote the center and its activities.

EEEC collaborations have resulted in shared funding for experiential education activities and professional development. Collaborators include AUM's Faculty Development Institute, Project iUSE, and the Templeton-funded Civil Rights to Civic Virtue project.

2. How has the grant facilitated or contributed to bringing additional resources to your institution, for example, new Federal, State, or local dollars that can be attributed partly to your grant activities? Please explain.

The EEEC director was part of a campus team who developed a TRIO Student Support Services proposal.

An AUM team was funded for a project ($49,180) focused on student character and success by the Wake Forest's Educating Character Initiative. EEEC has collaborated with this team on professional development activities for faculty and staff.

Section 6: Final Performance Report

Accomplishments

List your accomplishments for the grant project period and indicate how these accomplishments assist in the fulfillment of your grant project's objective(s), outcome(s), and/or indicator(s).

#	Accomplishment or Impact	Relevance to Objective, Outcome, and/or Indicator
1	Objective AP1.1: Increase student engagement as measured by the responses to the NSSE questions regarding academic and intellectual experiences to match the responses of similar Carnegie-class institutions by Fall 2024. Outcome: •AUM's first-year students scored significantly higher than other Alabama institutions and the Carnegie Class in reflective and integrative learning •AUM's first-year students scored significantly higher than all three comparison cohorts in effective teaching practices (Alabama Institutions, Southeast Publics, and the Carnegie Class). •AUM's first-year students perform at or above average in all four NSSE Engagement Indicators except for Quantitative Reasoning, where we closed the gap from comparison institutions by 2% from 2022.	Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) Academic Program Goal APG1: Increase student engagement with the university.
2	Objective AP1.2: Increase student engagement as measured by the responses to the NSSE questions regarding enriching educational experiences to match the responses of similar Carnegie-class institutions by Fall 2024. Outcome: •AUM first-year students performed significantly better than the three comparison cohorts in service-learning. 72% - AUM 55% - Alabama Institutions 52% Southeast Public 52% Carnegie Class	Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) Academic Program Goal APG1: Increase student engagement with the university.
3	Objective AP2.2: Increase the annual 2nd to 3rd year persistence rate for first-year students students by 10% by Fall 2024 Outcome: We increased the 2nd to 3rd year persistence rate for first-year students by 40%.	Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) Academic Program Goal APG2: Establish strong retention and persistence rates for first-year and first-generation students.
4	Objective AP2.3: Increase the annual 3rd to 4th year retention rate for first-year students students by 7% by Fall 2024. Outcome: We increased the 3rd to 4th year persistence rate for first-year students by 47%	Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) Academic Program Goal APG2: Establish strong retention and persistence rates for first-year and first-generation students.

Challenges and Developments

Provide any challenges to the completion of your project or any positive developments outside of the project's original intent that you experienced during this grant project. For any challenges, provide the corrective actions you took to address these issues. If you did not attain any approved objectives, outcome(s), and/or indicator(s), provide an explanation in the Corrective Actions column.

#	Challenge or Development	Corrective Action or Project Change

1	Challenge: Meeting objectives due to impacts of COVID	Requested and received a 6th year, no-cost extension. Met 6 of 8 objectives.
2	Objective 1.5: Retention Rates, not attained	Expand peer mentor support for students and professional development for faculty and staff.
3	Objective 1.7: Graduation Rates, not attained	Expand peer mentor support for students and professional development for faculty and staff.
4	Positive Development: Carnegie Community Engagement Classification	AUM has been recognized with the prestigious 2026 Carnegie Community Engagement Classification (CE), awarded by the American Council on Education and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. AUM is one of only five universities in Alabama to hold the designation, which recognizes an institution's demonstrated commitment to community engagement.

Award Funding and Expenditures

Original Amount Awarded	Supplement Amount Awarded (if any)	Federal Funds Expended	Unexpended Federal Funds ($)	Unexpended Federal Funds (%)
2166939.00	0.00	2033528.30	133410.70	6.16

Evidence

1. What results were achieved, if any, that are specifically associated with your grant project's implementation of the evidence-based component(s) that were submitted?

Utilizing our Logic Model to guide our project design, AUM:
  Established and staffed the Experiential Education and Engagement Center
  Implemented and expanded peer support programming
  Developed a system to track experiential learning activities
  Created a database of experiential learning opportunities
  Expanded professional development focused on experiential learning
  Increased course-based experiential learning opportunities
  Acquired and utilized critical technologies to enable more students to participate in experiential learning
  Made new and strengthened existing connections with community partners to improve internship, undergraduate research, and community engagement opportunities

As a result, we observed:
  An increase in the number of students participating in experiential learning
  An increase in the number of students participating in undergraduate research
  An increase in the number of peer mentors supporting students in core courses, including those with typically higher DFW rates
  An increase in faculty participating in professional development focused on experiential learning
  An increase in faculty and staff access to timely student information

These outcomes led to:
  Increased retention rates: Although we fell short of our goal, the grant allowed us to reach the highest retention rate in the six years of the grant (71%).
  Increased persistence rates (2nd to 3rd year and 3rd to 4th year): We surpassed our goals, achieving 92% and 91% respectively.

As indicated in the title of our grant, "Enhancing Persistence through Early Engagement, Experiential Learning, and Campus Connections," the evidence of our project activities reveals a successful grant implementation. We look forward to continued success, as we continue to grow and expand these high-impact practices.

2. Did the results lead to achieving the relevant outcome(s) during the grant project period?

☑ **Yes**   ☐ **No**

Project Reflections

3. Provide recommendations or advice that others may use to improve their performance in implementing similar projects.

Invest early in planning and stakeholder buy-in. Engaging faculty, advisors, and administrators at the outset helped ensure alignment with institutional priorities and increased adoption of project activities.

Use data continuously, not just for reporting. Regular review of participation and outcome data supported timely adjustments and improved overall project effectiveness.

Provide ongoing professional development. Repeated training opportunities—not one-time sessions—were critical to building staff capacity and sustaining implementation fidelity.

Plan for sustainability from the beginning. Identifying which activities could be absorbed into existing structures helped ensure long-term impact beyond the grant period.

4. Based on your grant implementation efforts, how is the project changing institutional practices (e.g., at the classroom or institutional level)?

At the classroom level, the project encouraged more intentional use of evidence-based instructional and support strategies, particularly for improving outcomes for first-year and first-generation students.

At the programmatic level, the project strengthened collaboration among academic departments, student services, and institutional research to better coordinate support efforts.

At the institutional level, data-informed decision-making has become more embedded in practice, with increased use of assessment results to guide curriculum design, advising, and student support services.

The project has also contributed to a broader culture of participation in experiential learning and continuous improvement emphasizing evaluation, reflection, and responsiveness to student needs.

5. What specific actions have you taken to sustain or institutionalize any positive impacts from this project?

Key project activities and responsibilities have been embedded into existing roles and departments.

Project tools, materials, and processes have been incorporated into standard operating procedures, including onboarding and training resources.

Ongoing professional development related to the project's focus areas has been integrated into institutional training schedules.

AUM and the EEEC have committed to continuing data collection and review practices introduced through the project to monitor outcomes and inform future improvements.

6. Do you have any other thoughts that you would like to share regarding your grant project?

The Title III grant played a critical role in building institutional capacity to better serve our students and advance equity-focused practices. While some outcomes will continue to emerge over time, the project has laid a strong foundation for sustainable improvement through strengthened systems, skills, and partnerships. Lessons learned through implementation will inform future grant proposals and institutional initiatives, ensuring that the impact of this project extends beyond its funding period. Overall, the project has demonstrated the value of aligning evidence-based practices with institutional priorities to achieve meaningful and lasting change.

Certification

You do NOT need to send a signed certification form to ED or upload a signed certification form.

1. Reporting Period
10/1/2024 to 09/30/2025

2. PR Award Number
P031A190185

3. Project Title
Enhancing Persistence through Early Engagement, Experiential Learning, and Campus Connection

4. Recipient Information
Name: Auburn University Montgomery
Address: 7440 East Drive , , Montgomery , ALABAMA 36117

5. Contact Information
Name: Mrinal Varma
Title: Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor
Phone: (334)-244-3600 Ext:
Email: varma@aum.edu

6. Authorized Representative
(The Institution's President or someone with the institutional authority to sign off on federally sponsored agreements) **To the best of my knowledge and belief, all data in this performance report are true and correct.**

Name	Email
Lynn Stallings	lstallin@aum.edu

Phone	Date
(334)-244-3357	01/26/2026

Report Submitted

This report was submitted by **Lynn Stallings** on **01/26/2026**.

If you have additional questions, or need to make changes, please contact the Help Desk or your Program Officer.