

AUBURNACHIEVE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AUBURNACHIEVE focuses on enhancing career outcome success for students completing degrees at Auburn University. The plan includes two institutional goals. The first goal is to “*use a data-informed approach to elevate the Auburn University student experience and enable educational programs, departments, colleges, and support units to be more strategic in preparing students for post-Auburn careers.*” The second goal is to “*introduce students to career readiness competencies and early career planning tools.*” In setting these goals, Auburn University (“the University”) hopes to increase achievement across three objectives: 1) Increase first destination outcome success, 2) Increase first destination outcome quality, and 3) Enhance our students’ ability to explain the relevance of their academic and co-curricular experiences. In direct alignment with Goal 1 of the University’s Strategic Plan, a key aim of AUBURNACHIEVE is to ensure that students are highly sought by industry, government, non-profits, and academia because of their elevated academic and co-curricular experiences at the University. Indeed, the Strategic Plan is accompanied by specific key performance indicators (KPIs) directed at first destination outcomes and a robust data collection infrastructure. Guided by an expressed interest that the QEP be derived from the Strategic Plan, the University convened a QEP Task Force (the Task Force) in 2020 to explore ways in which the QEP could align with these goals. The Task Force confirmed that the QEP would focus on improving career outcomes, and they provided three recommendations that would ultimately shape the QEP.

- 1) Interventions should be deployed at the academic unit level and should be flexible and customizable to reflect both the challenges and opportunities that exist at local levels across the campus community.

AUBURNACHIEVE is therefore guided by an Achievement Framework. That is, achievement is the culmination of learning that takes place in the classroom, participation in activities outside of the classroom, and the students’ ability to articulate knowledge, skills, and experiences to relevant audiences.

$$\text{ACHIEVEMENT} = (\text{ACADEMICS} + \text{ACTIVITIES})^{\text{ARTICULATION}}$$

- 2) Auburn University should establish a support infrastructure to leverage and deploy the rich data Auburn collects from graduating seniors.

Thus, the University formed an applied educational research lab, the Insight Lab, which is responsible for asking relevant questions about student achievement, helping the campus community prioritize their efforts to areas in which there are the greatest success gaps, analyzing institutional data, and supporting the identification of strategies for improvement. The Insight Lab is charged with working with an Advisory Council (faculty) and Community of Practice (support unit leaders).

- 3) Create opportunities for collaborative partnerships with local academic units, to foster a culture of data-informed decision making.

This ultimately led to the Bright Idea seed grant program, designed to provide units with analytical support and initial funding to implement data-informed projects aimed at one or more of the AUBURNACHIEVE objectives. With the structural support described and the Achievement Framework to guide programming, the true aim of the QEP is to support data-informed interventions enabling the campus community to be strategic in how they try to enhance student learning and student experiences and support students as they prepare for post-Auburn careers. The University has provided significant resources to support the successful implementation of AUBURNACHIEVE, including physical, human, and financial resources. A comprehensive assessment plan will provide data to allow the University to track progress toward achieving the AUBURNACHIEVE objectives, both quantitatively and qualitatively, and provide formative information to guide improvement efforts.

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