



Inaugural Dean, School of Leadership and Policy

Position Description

Position Summary

The University of Alabama (UA) seeks a bold, innovative, and visionary leader with an outstanding record of scholarship, leadership, and/or policy engagement to serve as the inaugural Dean of its [School of Leadership and Policy](#). Recently approved by the Board of Trustees, the new School will offer both undergraduate and graduate degrees with a mission to be a nationally recognized institution for education in leadership and public policy, building on the Capstone's history of educating effective civic leaders and policymakers who are helping shape the state of Alabama and beyond.

Detailed Position Information

Reporting to the Provost, the inaugural Dean of the School of Leadership and Policy will develop a vision and mission for the School, create an organizational structure, appoint a robust faculty across various ranks, hire key administrative and support staff, and provide leadership on planning, curricular, research, and budgetary decisions. The inaugural Dean is expected to deeply engage with campus and civic leaders, business and industry partners, and local, state, and federal partners to advance the goals of the new School and UA.

Through a dynamic blend of evidence-based education and real-world experiential training, the new School will cultivate a pipeline of leaders and public servants and prepare them to lead with innovation and impact at the local, state, and federal level. The interdisciplinary curriculum of the School of Leadership and Policy will equip students with the knowledge and skills to participate effectively in civic life and government, with a strong understanding of the foundational principles that shape American institutions, the Constitution, laws, and public discourse. Students will be exposed to multiple viewpoints and engage directly with public institutions, nonprofit organizations, and private-sector partners through internships, policy labs, and community-based projects—ensuring that they graduate with the expertise and insight needed to address complex challenges with tangible and creative solutions.

Specific goals for the Dean will include:

- Execute the School's goals and create energy and enthusiasm for the mission with stakeholders including students, faculty, staff, civic leaders, business and industry partners, local, state, and federal partners, donors, and the Tuscaloosa and Alabama communities.
- Establish, articulate, and implement the School's first strategic plan.
- Recruit, hire, mentor, and evaluate core and affiliated faculty and staff, including direct supervisory responsibilities.
- Foster a collaborative and innovative culture of excellence in teaching, research, and service.
- Oversee budget planning and fiscal management and allocate resources to support academic quality and student success.
- Facilitate effective internal and external communication with UA leadership, faculty, students, partners, alumni, and community stakeholders.
- Oversee student recruitment, retention, and success efforts.

- Design and implement an innovative curriculum that integrates theoretical foundations and analytic skills with practical application.
- Build and sustain a robust network of support for the School, including an engaged advisory board comprised of distinguished leaders from the public and private sectors.
- Establish aggressive private fundraising goals for the School and serve as its primary fundraiser to meet those goals.
- Implement program evaluation and assessment mechanisms required for University accreditation.
- Cultivate partnerships in the public and private sectors – including local, state, and federal government, nonprofits and NGOs, and business and industry – to support the School’s curriculum and student internship and employment opportunities.
- Support faculty and student scholarship and seek external funding to facilitate these activities where appropriate.
- Represent the School at relevant state and national conferences and meetings to advance its visibility and reputation.

Priorities for the School include:

- **Educational Excellence:** Provide a curriculum that combines strong theoretical foundations, rigorous methodological training, and applied skills in public policy and organizational leadership.
- **Leadership Development:** Equip students with the skills, knowledge, and ethical grounding necessary for leadership roles in public service.
- **Service and Impact:** Establish strong partnerships with local, state, and federal entities to promote civic engagement and public service.
- **Economic Development:** Contribute to the state’s economic growth by training leaders to address challenges facing Alabama, the southeast region, and the nation.

Minimum Qualifications

The successful candidate must possess a terminal degree in a relevant discipline. An acceptable terminal degree may include Ph.D., J.D., M.P.P., or M.P.A. among others, depending on the discipline. The successful candidate must also have a significant body of high-impact scholarship and/or a distinguished record of exceptional leadership in private, public-interest, or governmental sectors, sufficient to qualify for appointment at the rank of full professor in the School.

About The University of Alabama

The University of Alabama – part of the University of Alabama System – is located in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, which Travel + Leisure designated one of the 25 Best College Towns and Cities in the U.S. As one of the nation’s premier universities, UA offers bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees in nearly 200 fields of study. With more than 1,000 acres of a tree-lined academic core campus and more than 300 state-of-the-art facilities, UA has been ranked among the most beautiful and most impressive college campuses in the South, in the state of Alabama, and in the nation.

UA is among the nation’s fastest-growing flagship universities. The University set a new enrollment record for fall 2025 welcoming 42,359 students. The freshman class boasts a record 362 National Merit Scholars, reinforcing the University’s status in the state and nation as a destination for high-achieving students from across the country. With students from every Alabama county, all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and 99 countries, UA is educating and graduating more students than any college in the state, awarding more than 9,500 degrees over the past year.

The Carnegie Foundation lists The University of Alabama as an R1 institution, placing it among the top doctoral research universities in the United States. UA's world-class faculty, staff and students are leading the way to develop new technologies, advance scientific discovery, and harness the power of creative thought. Faculty members work closely with students, and many involve students at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels in basic and applied research. The University employs more than 2,100 faculty and over 5,400 staff, with 39 current faculty having received the NSF CAREER Award, one of the nation's most prestigious recognitions of top-performing young scientists. In 2025, UA was again listed among the National Academy of Inventors' Top 100 U.S. Universities Granted U.S. Utility Patents. Forbes magazine has named UA as one of America's Best-In-State Employers and Best Employers for New Graduates. Further information about the University of Alabama is available [here](#).

Application Process

The Dean Search Committee invites nominations and applications (a letter of interest, curriculum vitae, and the names and contact information of five or more references) to be submitted to the search firm assisting the University of Alabama. References will not be contacted without prior knowledge and approval of candidates. Confidential review of materials will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. For best consideration, it is preferred that all nominations and applications be submitted by **Friday, March 27, 2026**.

Laurie Wilder, President
Porsha Williams, Vice President and Managing Director, Higher Education
Jacob Anderson, Senior Principal
Jack McGrew, Associate
Parker Executive Search
Five Concourse Parkway, Suite 2875 Atlanta, GA 30328
(678) 775-4564

lwilder@parkersearch.com || pwilliams@parkersearch.com || janderson@parkersearch.com ||
jmcgrew@parkersearch.com

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