

AUBURN ACHIEVE

— BRIGHT IDEA —

The **BRIGHT IDEA** grant opportunity is designed to provide units, from any level of the institution, with analytical support and initial funding to implement a data-informed project or intervention strategy. Each project should be aimed at elevating the Auburn University student experience and enabling educational programs, departments, colleges, and support units to be more strategic in preparing students for post-Auburn careers. More specifically, a **BRIGHT IDEA** proposal should focus specifically on achieving an overall goal of increasing student first destination outcome success.

UNIVERSITY INITIATIVE

Auburn University's next Quality Enhancement Plan ([QEP](#)), will take advantage of the unique differences that exist across academic departments, colleges, and offices by allowing campus engagement and first destination outcome data to inform unit-specific improvement strategies.

In direct alignment with Auburn University's 2019-2024 Strategic Plan, a key aim of the QEP is to ensure that our students are highly sought by industry, government, non-profits, and academia. Therefore, Auburn University has specified a broad institutional goal to guide activities connected to the QEP.

Institutional Goal: 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.

To achieve this goal, Auburn University is:

- Using first destination outcome data to inform outreach (Advisors, Career Coaches, Colleges, Alumni Affairs, etc.) to recent graduates
- Creating an "Insight Lab," staffed by educational researchers, that can analyze student data and communicate findings to the appropriate internal audience(s).
 - Achievement Framework
 - Implement a two-way support model whereby analysts seek areas for improvement through novel exploration of available data AND an open request for proposals whereby units across campus seek support.

First Destination Outcome Data and the Insight Lab

First Destination Outcomes are captured in a graduation course, [Achieve the Creed](#), which sets five pre-graduation expectations (described below) for students in their final term at Auburn. This data, especially that of the Campus Engagement and Experience Survey and the First Destination Survey, is vital to the success of **BRIGHT IDEA** projects and is used to baseline and assess post-graduation outcomes.



Creed to Career:
early post-graduation
outcome check

SCORE

General Education
skill/knowledge
assessment.



Diploma
Application



Campus Engagement
& Experience Survey:
at-graduation survey
of experiential
learning engagement



First Destination
Survey: at-graduation
survey of post-
graduation plans



AUBURN ACHIEVE

— BRIGHT IDEA —

In addition to data collected within Achieve the Creed, **BRIGHT IDEA** projects rely on quantitative (Banner, Course-level, etc.) and qualitative (student and faculty provided comments/feedback, advisory/applied organization feedback, etc.) data to inform and guide improvement strategies.

Auburn University has formed the Insight Lab, an applied education research lab, to analyze Auburn University's data, and seek opportunities to improve post-graduation outcomes. This Insight Lab employs educational research analysts that conduct applied research to help the campus community better understand student achievement and career success.

Achievement Framework

Career success is not achieved when a student has earned a degree. Rather, career success is a combination of having relevant knowledge and skills, as well as an ability to reflect on and communicate knowledge, skills, and abilities to others.

Students already cultivate many employable skills throughout their time at Auburn. However, many students might not be fully aware of the potential competitive advantage of these skills. An important component of improving first destination outcomes is ensuring students can articulate how their co/curricular activities have given them the skills and abilities to succeed in a prospective organization or graduate school. Articulation is an important factor in leveraging students' current and future experiences—ultimately ensuring a holistic education in line with the Auburn Creed. This emphasis on articulation contributed to the development of the Achievement Framework. Acknowledging the multifaceted nature of successful student placement, the QEP Taskforce expressed Career Success through an Achievement Framework. That is,

$$\text{Achievement} = (\text{Academics} + \text{Activities})^{\text{Articulation}}$$

"Articulation" is small, but it is powerful. Quite literally, we believe that student achievement is powered by a student's ability to effectively express their learning and experiences both in and beyond the classroom (academics and activities, respectively). This means providing students with high quality curricular experiences, engaging students in activities that support their learning, and teaching them how to articulate their knowledge/skills and experience to future employers and graduate schools. A central aim of an achievement framework, therefore, is producing students that are ready to apply for and be selected for careers in their chosen fields (both professional and educational). Progress can be gauged by one or more of the following objectives:

Success Outcome 1 (Quantity): Increase first destination outcome success for students graduating from Auburn.

1. a: Students will be academically prepared to pursue continuing and professional education.

- Measured by the percent of students that are successfully enrolled in continuing/professional education at-graduation and within six-months of graduation.
- Measured via self-report survey embedded in Creed to Succeed (C2S).

1. b: Students will be prepared for their first destination employment opportunity.

- Measured by the percent of students that are successfully employed (full-time, part-time, military, volunteer) at-graduation and within six-months of graduation.
- Measured via self-report survey embedded in C2S.

Success Outcome 2 (Quality): Increase first destination outcome quality for students graduating from Auburn.

2. a: Students will be satisfied with their first destination outcome.

- Measured via self-report survey with questions about: Location satisfaction, compensation, work culture, balance, etc.

2. b: Students will place into high quality careers.

- Measured by an increase in one of the following: Alignment to major, multiple offers of employment/continuing education opportunities, employer/organization, offers of assistantship, etc.

Learning Outcome: Students will be able to explain the relevance of their academic and co-curricular experiences



AUBURN ACHIEVE

— BRIGHT IDEA —

Auburn University data shows there are certain groups of students that stand to benefit most from the objectives of the **BRIGHT IDEA** seed grant opportunity.

Therefore, a **BRIGHT IDEA** project should focus specifically on achieving an overall goal of increasing student first destination outcome success through one or more elements of the Achievement Framework. Though not required, units may choose to focus their proposals on gaps in achievement.

BRIGHT IDEA SEED GRANT REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Awards will be determined on a rolling basis. However, to be considered for funding in FY2026, all abstracts should be submitted before the end of the fall 2025 semester.

Selection Timeline

1. Unit Submits 200-word abstract to representative to member of the Insight Lab.
2. Community of Practice, Advisory Council and Insight Lab provide feedback and comments provided within one month of abstract submission.
3. Opportunity for reflection, which may include a meeting with members of the Insight Lab, Community of Practice and/or Advisory Council.
4. Unit submits full project plans to Insight Lab.
5. Unit meets with Insight Lab for consultation and to further develop implementation plans, to include budget and assessment.

Eligibility

Any unit (any level) may submit a **BRIGHT IDEA** seed grant proposal. Submissions may be prepared by any faculty or staff member but must include a letter of support from the Department Head/Chair, Dean, Supervisor, which indicates how the project is aligned to efforts to enhance student achievement as defined by the QEP.

Preference

The Strongest proposals will

- Identify a project leader and co-leader.
- Identify a team of staff/faculty that will be involved with the project.
- Identify one or more of the specific QEP objectives to research.
- Provide evidence of a specific area in which students are not meeting achievement expectations, aligned to the specific QEP objective and/or the Achievement Framework.
- Identify specific sub-populations of students that will be most impacted by the grant and address gaps in opportunities and/or outcomes discovered in the data.
- Identify an assessment plan utilizing institutional and department data.
- Identify sources of matching dollars or funds.
- Include student or other similar testimonies.

Preference will be given to units that can demonstrate a truly collaborative effort with various faculty or staff involved in the project. It is recommended that units have explored and utilize [university outcome data](#) to determine the most appropriate objectives for intervention. For access, consider reaching out to the Office of Academic Insight.



AUBURN ACHIEVE

— BRIGHT IDEA —

Funding

Budget will be determined after consultation with the Office of Academic Insight. Units will provide a detailed budget for the project with justifications for all expenditures. The Insight Lab will provide a template for the grant budget during the development phase of the project. The budget should list any other sources of funds currently available, and any other applications made for funds for the project. Once received, the Office of Academic Insight will review and fund or request edits/partially fund. *Projects may require little funding (<\$1000) or more funding (>\$10,000).

Permitted Use of Funds:

- Consulting and travel expenses to bring recognized disciplinary assessment experts to Auburn University to conduct workshops are fundable.
- Travel expenses to participate in off-campus conferences (workshops or other programs), which promote excellent assessment and improvement of learning, are fundable.
- Assessment instruments, such as, standardized tests, assessment software, video equipment, and other supplies that may be used to effectively assess student learning are fundable.
- Faculty retreats focused on assessment are fundable.
- Supporting undergraduate/graduate student labor related to assessment of student performance is fundable.
- Supporting student engagement activities (internships, etc.) is fundable.
- Faculty salaries (including summer term, release/buy-out, and extra compensation) are fundable.

Additional Resources Available

Awardees will have dedicated analytical support from the Office of Academic Insight to complete their project and seed grant funding (as determined). Awardees can expect the Office of Academic Insight to provide data, analysis, and reporting support. Periodic check-ins with Insight Lab researchers expected.

Disclosure of Other Sources of Funds

All applications for funds from other sources for the proposed project or travel must also be disclosed.

Final Reporting and Dissemination

All units receiving a **BRIGHT IDEA** Seed Grant will be expected to participate in a digital poster presentation at the annual Elevated Education Exchange. Publishing results of your **BRIGHT IDEA** seed grant project is encouraged and the funding source should be acknowledged in any news, publication or other marketing materials.



AUBURN ACHIEVE

— BRIGHT IDEA —

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

- 1) Consider scheduling a meeting with a representative from the Office of Academic Insight (OAI).
- 2) Submit abstract to a representative on the QEP Advisory Council.

Submit an abstract (200 words or less) briefly describing the project. Tell us who you are and how the Insight Lab can collaborate with you to produce a data-informed intervention aimed at improving graduating students' career success.

- 3) Feedback and review provided to unit within 1 month of submitting the abstract.
- 4) Submit full proposal.

Submit a single PDF document including all the following. Each proposal must meet the following guidelines or will not be considered.

- Application Form/Cover Page (provided with this RFP). Sign, scan and attach to PDF.
- An abstract of 200 words or less of the proposed project.
- A narrative description of the proposed project (no longer than five (5) pages).
 - Provide a brief introduction to the unit (e.g., number of faculty/staff, students, unit identity)
 - State the objectives of the proposed project in terms of its contributions to student achievement and alignment with Auburn University's QEP.
 - Describe the project.
 - Explain how the project will benefit your unit.
 - Indicate how unit faculty/staff will be involved, indicating faculty/staff names and roles
 - Indicate the specific course(s) or tools that will be involved.
 - Discuss how the program plans to collaborate with the OAI (REQUIRED)
- Letter of support from Department Head or Chair, Associate Dean/Dean, Unit leader and/or Primary Supervisor

Timeline

Describe the timeline and procedures the unit will use to achieve the project objectives. Of note, the timeline should begin and conclude within a single calendar year. (Exceptions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis).

Assessment and Dissemination of Effectiveness

Please discuss the objective(s) that you seek to improve through the **BRIGHT IDEA** Seed Grant project. Reflect on how the work could impact student achievement. Discuss any ways in which you plan to disseminate the results of the project.



AUBURN ACHIEVE

— BRIGHT IDEA —

APPLICATION



Date:

Program/Unit Name:

Project Leader/Point of Contact:

Campus Address:

Office Phone:

Email Address: @auburn.edu

Co-leader(s):

Project Title: (100 characters or less)

Intended Project Start/End:

Signatures:

Project Leader:

Co-Leaders, If applicable:

Department Head or Chair





Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based upon:

1. Alignment with one or more of the QEP Objectives
2. Collaborative efforts of various people/units
3. Demonstrated willingness to actively collaborate with OAI and other support units
4. Appropriate Timeline
5. Impact



