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The **BRIGHT IDEA** rolling seed 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** project 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](https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2020/01/Quality-Enhancement-Plan-1.pdf)), 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, which sets four 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, will be vital to the success of **BRIGHT IDEA** projects and used to baseline and assess first destination outcomes.

In addition to data collected within the course, **BRIGHT IDEA** projects will 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 an educational research lab to analyze Auburn University’s data, and seeking opportunities to improve first destination career outcomes. This Insight Lab will employ educational research analysts that will 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,

**Achievement** = (**Academics + Activities**)**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.

**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.

**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 University data shows there are certain sub-populations of students that stand to benefit most from the objectives of the **BRIGHT IDEA** seed grant opportunity. Equity gaps (or disparate opportunities and outcome) exist for students from low-income backgrounds. This is especially true for students who also have other underrepresented identities, such as race, gender, and first-generation status.

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 projects on equity gaps to achieving first destination career outcome success.

# **BRIGHT IDEA** SEED GRANT INFORMATION

Awards will be determined on a rolling basis. In 2023, grant information sessions will take place during the month of March.

*\*\*\*In 2022,* ***BRIGHT IDEA*** *projects will be implemented first come, first serve. The analysts can reasonably work on 20-25 projects per year. Funding is available to support data-informed interventions (see funding section below). A budget will be determined after the onset of the project and should be aligned with findings. The* ***BRIGHT IDEA*** *Seed Grant is managed by OAI. The selection timeline is described below.\*\*\**

## PROJECT TIMELINE

1. *Unit Submits 500-800-word brief project proposal with a statement of support from leadership to the Office of Academic Insight at assess1@auburn.edu.*
2. *The project summary is shared with the Insight Lab, the QEP Advisory Council Representative, and the Community of Practice to generate ideas, make suggestions, and identify potential campus collaborators.*
3. *Feedback is distributed to project submitters.*
4. *Unit meets with OAI for initial logistics consultation to finalize a research agenda, identify needed resources, and form a timeline for analyses and subsequent project check-ins.*
5. *Analytic support from the Insight Lab begins.*
6. *Additional meetings with OAI and campus partners held as needed to discuss analytic results, identify intervention strategies, check-in timeline, and budget considerations.*
7. *Intervention strategy is finalized, budget is collaboratively drafted.*
8. *Budget proposal is submitted for approval.*
9. *Bright Idea Project is initiated! The Office of Academic Insight checks in as scheduled throughout implementation.*

## ELIGIBILITY

Any unit (any level) may submit a **BRIGHT IDEA** project proposal. Submissions may be prepared by any faculty or staff member and should include a brief letter or statement of support from a supervisor or unit leader. ***Specifically, if a project is being submitted by an academic program or department, then the Department Head/Chair should provide a brief letter indicating their support for the project. If a project is being submitted by representatives of an academic college, then the individual should include a brief letter from an Associate Dean or representative from the Dean’s office.***

## 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.

The Insight Lab can support **20 - 25 projects** per year. Though proposals are submitted on a rolling bases, projects will be supported in order of receipt and should Insight Lab capacity be low, project start date may be delayed. 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](http://auburn.edu/academic/provost/academic-insight/academic_data_collection.php) to determine the most appropriate objectives for intervention. For access, consider reaching out to the Office of Academic Insight.

## FUNDING

Budget will be determined in collaboration with members of the Community of Practice and the Office of Academic Insight. Units will provide a detailed budget for the project with justifications for all expenditures no later than six months after project start date. 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. All funds should be used within one year of budget approval (exceptions apply to projects that will be implemented over multiple years).

*Projects may require little funding (<$1000) or more funding (>$10,000) and* ***units should consider how funding will continue to reap returns without continued spending****. For example, funding a graduate assistant to create a resource that will be used over time or develop course materials or funding a pilot that will be used to demonstrate value to your department or college for additional/continuing funding are appropriate use of funds.*

Permitted Use of Funds:

* Consulting and travel expenses to bring recognized disciplinary assessment experts in 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

Throughout the intervention development process, plans for assessing the impact will be formed. All units receiving a **BRIGHT IDEA** Seed Grant will be expected to participate in digital poster presentation/showcase that will be hosted annually (starting in 2023). Publishing results of your **BRIGHT IDEA** seed grant project is encouraged.

# APPLICATION PROCEDURE

1. Consider attending an information session or scheduling a meeting with a representative from the Office of Academic Insight (OAI).
2. Submit proposal and statement of support to the Office of Academic Insight at assess1@auburn.edu.
3. Feedback and review provided to unit within 2 months of submitting the proposal.
4. Initial planning meeting with OAI.

Submit **a single PDF document** including all the following. Each project 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. A brief project proposal of 800 words or less (for more information review list below and reference the preference section earlier in this document).
	+ 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 how the Insight Lab can collaborate with you to produce a data-informed intervention aimed at improving graduating students’ career success.
		- Explain how the project may benefit your unit
		- Indicate how faculty/staff will be involved (be as specific as possible)
		- Indicate the specific course(s) or tools that will be involved (if relevant)
		- Specify a desired timeline. Of note, the timeline should begin and conclude within a single calendar year. (Exceptions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis).
	+ Discuss how the program plans to collaborate with OAI (REQUIRED)
* Statement of support from Department Head or Chair, Associate Dean/Dean, Unit leader and/or Primary Supervisor

# APPLICATION COVER PAGE



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

# APPENDIX

##  Advisory Council

* Amy Wright, Chair, College of Agriculture, Continuing\*
* Brendan Higgins, College of Agriculture (2022, 2022-23)
* Tom Leathem, College of Architecture, Design & Construction (2022, 2022-23)
* Brian Vansant, Harbert College of Business (2022, 2022-23)
* Margaret Flores, Ginn College of Education (2022, 2022-23)
* Robbie Barnes, College of Engineering (2022, 2022-23)
* Todd Franks, College of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences (2022, 2022-23)
* David Martin, College of Human Sciences (2022, 2022-23)
* Tom Lockhart, College of Liberal Arts (2022, 2022-23)\*
* Kelley Noll, College of Nursing (2022, 2022-23)
* Murali Dhanasekaran, College of Pharmacy (2022, 2022-23)
* Robert Boyd, College of Science and Mathematics (2022, 2022-23)
* Kelley Steury, College of Veterinary Medicine (2022, 2022-23)

## Community of Practice

* Erica Stallings, Career Discovery and Success - Chair
* Asim Ali, Biggio Center
* Chris Basgier, University Writing
* Tonika Boyd, Inclusion and Diversity
* Mariel Goble, International Programs
* Abby Langham, Student Affairs
* Jaime Miller, Academic Support
* JuWan Robinson, Inclusion and Diversity
* Rachel Whitman Rotch, Academic Insight
* Charlie Wilder, Academic Insight