



# AUBURN

## Qualitative Brand Study and Brand Attribute Testing

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July 14, 2023

# RHB

GREATER RELEVANCE

# THANK YOU

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RHB thanks Auburn University for the warm welcome with every interaction, the support of Auburn stakeholders as we conducted this research, and time spent with research participants who shared eloquent and clear-eyed assessments of your brand.

Special thanks to Chief Communications Officer Richard Campbell and Creative Director Bridget Wyke, whose passion for the research had us looking forward excitedly to every weekly check-in.

The time we spent with members of the Auburn University community and those who know the University in other ways reinforced our own perception that Auburn is a remarkable institution that truly owns distinctive attributes.

It has been our privilege to support Auburn's ambitions with this work. As Auburn enters a new era with President Christopher B. Roberts, we can only say, War Eagle!





## GREATER RELEVANCE

Founded in 1991, RHB is a higher education consultancy that has guided more than 300 institutions in achieving enrollment, reputation and revenue goals and enhancing organizational capability.

We inspire colleges and universities toward greater relevance and, in turn, stronger constituent relationships—before, during and after college.

ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT ■ EXECUTIVE COUNSEL ■ INSTITUTIONAL MARKETING ■ SLATE AND RELATED TECHNOLOGY





GREATER RELEVANCE



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# COHERENCE

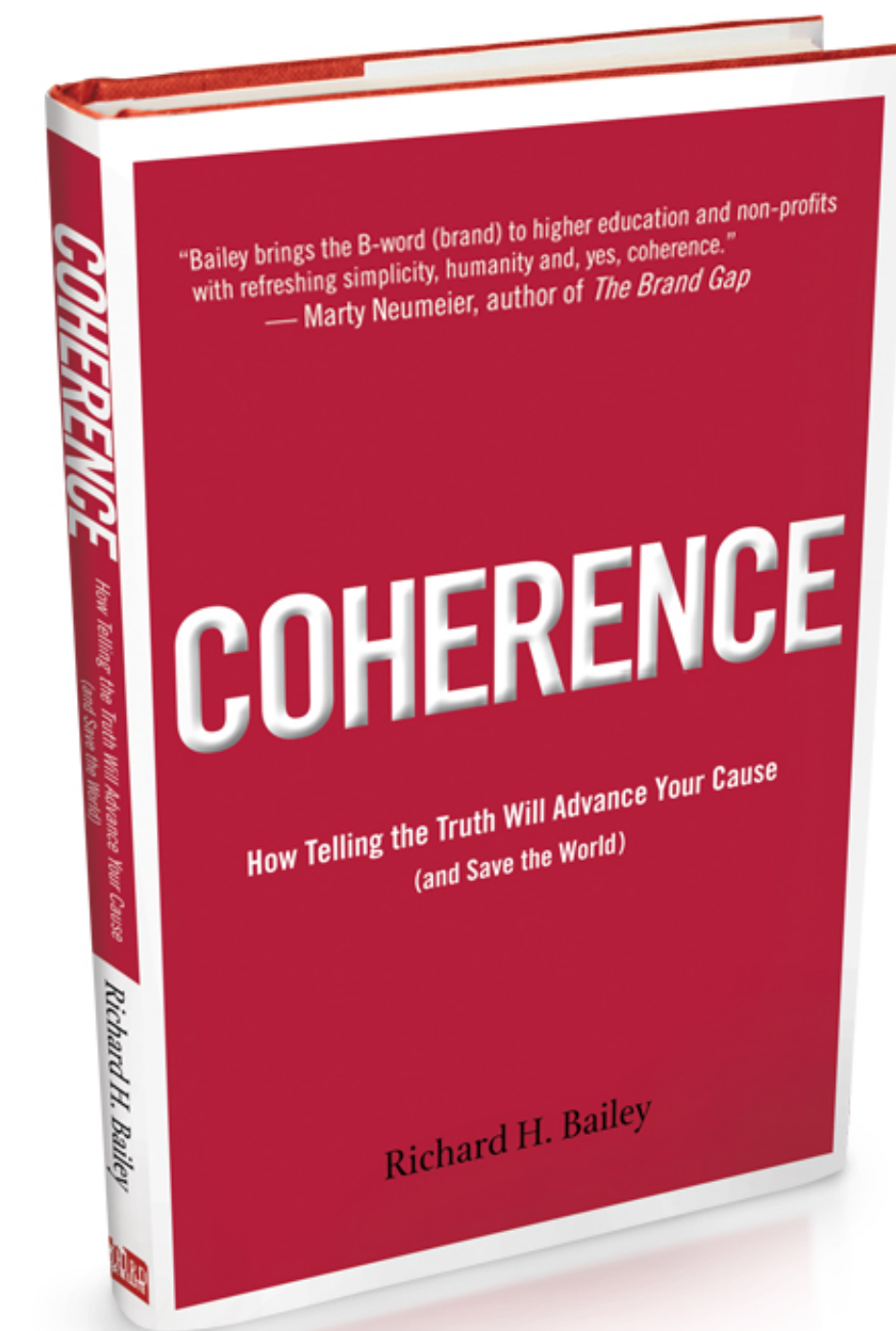
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Coherence is the discipline of ensuring a transparent connection between constituent expectation (brand) and authentic user experience.

Coherence is aligning what we deliver with what we say we deliver.

Coherence engages constituents in shaping a meaningful experience that meets their needs.

Coherence is telling the truth.

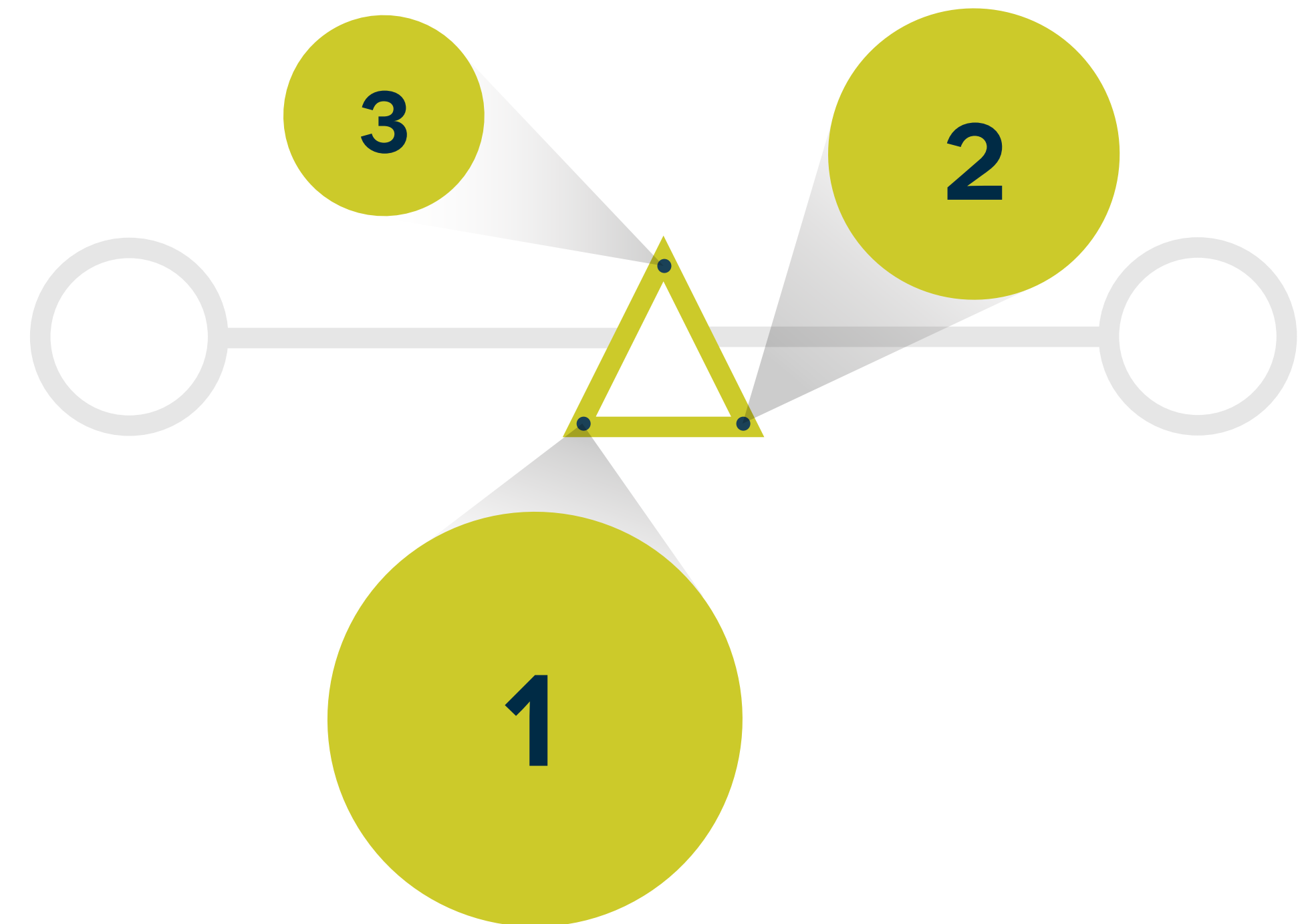


# AUBURN + RHB

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Coherence exists when the answers to three foundational questions are in alignment:

- 1. Experience**  
What is true about Auburn?
- 2. Expression (Message)**  
What does Auburn says is true about itself?
- 3. Expectation (Brand)**  
What do others say and believe to be true about Auburn?





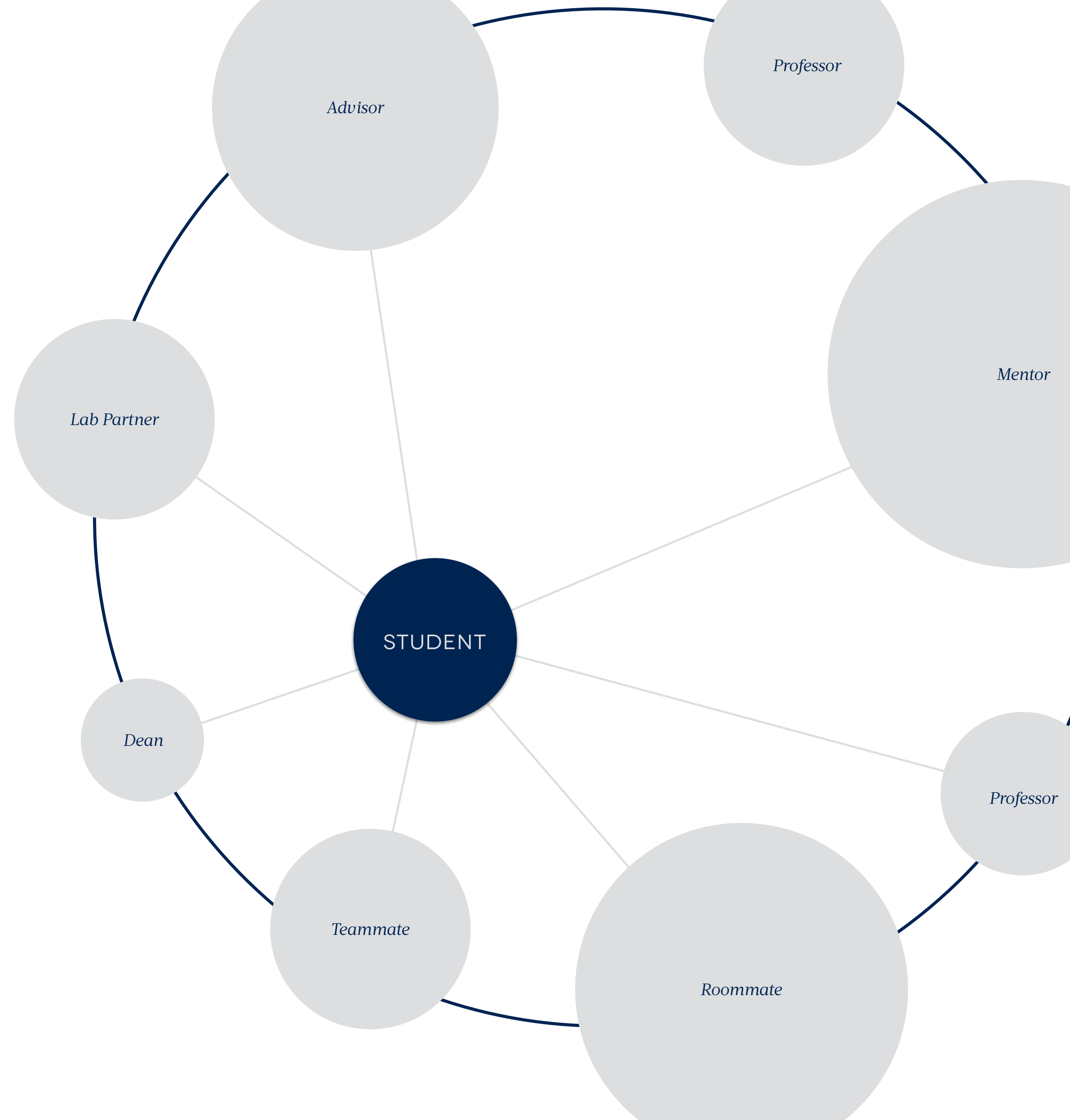
# AUBURN + RHB

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## Understanding the Experience

*Circles of Influence* allowed us to converse closely with members of the Auburn University community and to hear about the Auburn experience in their own words.

This methodology—the inverse of a focus group—explored the relationships and experiences that characterize life on campus.



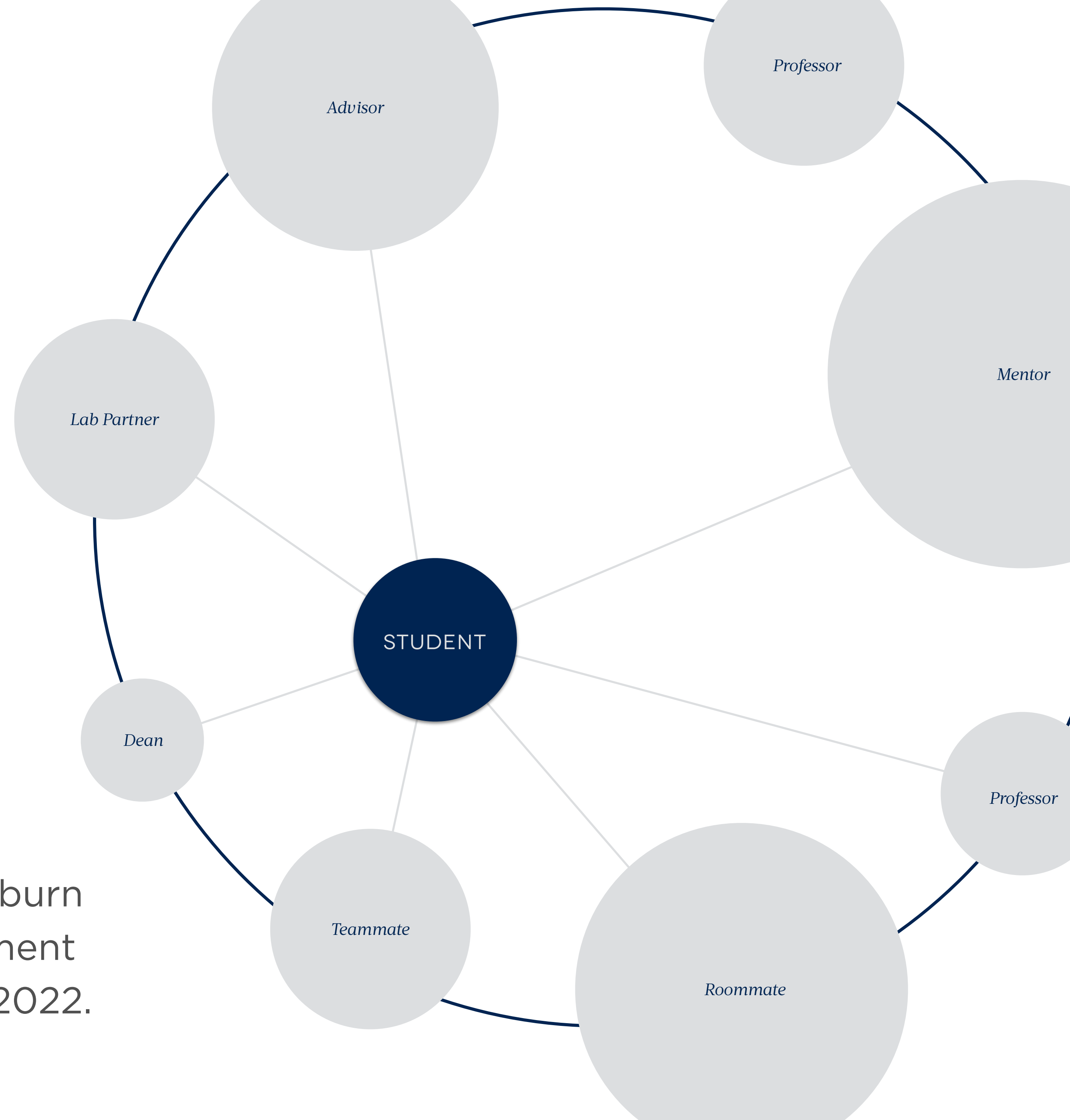
# AUBURN + RHB

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## Understanding the Experience

Because discussion flows from the pivotal student's introductions and can follow any line of inquiry from academics to diversity to a favorite Auburn tradition, each Circle takes on its own distinctive character, revealing a perspective on Auburn that is at once individual and universal.

RHB completed seven *Circles* for the Auburn University Office of Enrollment Management from December 2021 through February 2022.





# AUBURN + RHB

## Translating Experience Into Expression

### THE FAMILY THAT PLAYS TOGETHER STAYS TOGETHER

The Auburn Family is here to support you and provide you with every opportunity to realize your full potential. We're also here to make sure you have as much fun as possible along the way. For example, you might:

**Develop your leadership skills through one of our more than 550 student organizations.** Over 20,000 Auburn students are involved outside of the classroom, participating in everything from Auburn Off-Road Club to Women in Science to the Auburn Marching Band.

**Roll Toomer's Corner.** After a big victory, you'll join tens of thousands of your fellow Auburn Family members in a tradition dating back to 1962.

**Witness the flight of the golden eagle.** The golden eagle is the soaring symbol of the Auburn spirit. Before each home football game, Aurea takes flight in Jordan-Hare Stadium. ESPN named our eagle flight the SEC's best pre-game tradition.

**Greet your friends with "War Eagle!"** Auburn's infamous battle cry is also a universal greeting among all Auburn fans and alumni.

**Run into Aubie on campus.** Aubie, our loveable mascot, is a 10-time UCA National Champion (the most of any mascot), and the first to be inducted to the Mascot Hall of Fame.



**INVOLVEMENT IS THE CULTURE AT AUBURN**  
Leizl Torres, Senior  
Hometown: Homewood, AL  
Major: Applied Mathematics, Actuarial Science  
Activities: COSAM Leader, Supplemental Instruction Peer Mentor and Supervisor  
Real-world experience: Part-time actuarial assistant at Protective Life in Birmingham, Alabama, where she will be transitioning to full-time after graduation

### THE AUBURN ADVANTAGE IS REAL

When you leave Auburn, you will be prepared to push the world forward in whatever career path you choose.

With nationally ranked programs in every area of study, 100% job placement in fields such as architecture and forestry, nearly 100% pass rates on licensing exams in careers like pharmacy and nursing, and 30% higher medical school acceptance rates, Auburn will serve as a springboard for greater things.



**"YOU WILL NEVER REGRET TAKING A LEAP OUTSIDE OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE."**

It was daunting for me to leave Georgia but attending Auburn has been the best decision of my life. This is not a school you attend for four years and then go on your way. Auburn invites you into a lifetime membership and a family that lasts long after your college years are over."

**Caroline Keim, Senior**  
Hometown: Atlanta, GA  
Major: Public Relations  
Activities: Camp War Eagle Counselor, Miss Auburn, Omicron Delta Kappa Honor Society  
Future plans: After graduation, Caroline hopes to pursue a career in sports public relations through the National Football League.

**COMPANIES RECRUITING AT AUBURN:** Apple, AT&T, BMW, Coca-Cola, CIA, Delta, Exxon Mobil, GE, Honda, Lockheed Martin, NASA, Procter & Gamble, Ralph Lauren, Target, Wells Fargo



# AUBURN + RHB

Translating Experience Into Expression





# Research Design

RHB

## RESEARCH PURPOSES

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RHB performed this research on behalf of Auburn as a way to understand Auburn's current research reputation and to discover opportunities for increasing the awareness and relevance of Auburn's research reputation in keeping with President Roberts's priorities.

This research was also designed to capture perceptions of Auburn's brand among people who know the institution well—e.g., faculty, staff, current students—and among people who know about Auburn but may have much less familiarity or personal experience with the institution.

Because so many people with whom we spoke who were not current students were also alumni, we were able to learn how they maintain or wish to maintain their relationship to the Auburn Family.



## RESEARCH PURPOSES

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Qualitative research is a critical initial step in Auburn University's understanding of its brand.

We perform qualitative first so that the brand attributes (which would subsequently be quantitatively measured across a representative sample) come directly from audiences/constituents through the qualitative work. Alternatively, qualitative research allows us to test brand attributes among a small population in a setting that allows them to fully explain their reactions. These reactions can include the telling of stories that illustrate why a brand attribute rings true or not.

This allows us to move into the quantitative phase with a tightly designed, engaging instrument based on insights from the qualitative work, using smart segmentation.

# PIVOTS METHOD

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RHB created Pivots as a qualitative research methodology to explore the relationships and experiences that people who are not current students have with a college or university. These individuals could represent key affinity groups—such as faculty, staff, parents, prospective students, alumni, donors, community members and others—that have useful perspectives about an institution especially because they may not know it as intimately.

In addition to providing access to the messages, stories and characteristics that make a college or university distinctive to any number of audiences, Pivots enables us to:

- Capture the language by which your constituents describe you to each other and to people who do not know you yet
- Discover and understand brand attributes your constituents assign to you
- Explore constituent responses to creative brand expressions



## RESEARCH DESIGN

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During Spring 2023, RHB conducted 14 Pivots listening groups (totaling 55 participants) with groups of Auburn constituents including current students, faculty, academic administrators, recent graduates, leaders in economic development, mayors and more.

These were free flowing conversations intended to elicit constituent participations about Auburn's brand from their position in relation to the University.

RHB also tested a set of brand attributes developed by OCM in each group. These attributes included a value or characteristic that describes Auburn, a "We" statement defining each value or characteristic and the "voice" that should be used to evoke each attribute.

# PIVOTS LISTENING GROUPS

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DATE	AFFINITY GROUP
May 31, 2023	Auburn Academic Leaders
June 1, 2023	Auburn Academic Leaders
June 2, 2023	Foundation and Corporation Leaders
June 6, 2023	Foundation and Corporation Leaders
June 7, 2023	Employers/Recruiters
June 12, 2023	Economic Development/State Agency Leaders
June 13, 2023	High School Guidance Counselors
June 20, 2023	Journalists and Media Members
June 22, 2023	Auburn Staff
June 29, 2023	Auburn Faculty
June 29, 2023	Area Mayors
June 30, 2023	Economic Development/State Agency Leaders
June 30, 2023	Current Auburn Students
July 6, 2023	Auburn Young Alumni

## PIVOTS METHOD

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Pivots\* are, at their heart, organic conversations. RHB team members will engage in deep listening and will try to say as little as possible in a Pivot, allowing conversation to flow naturally amongst participants of a group, e.g, alumni or parents. Typically, a Pivot will begin with a brief introduction from RHB, stating who we are and why we're engaged with your institution, and will then be handed over to participants with an invitation to introduce themselves and describe their relationship to your institution. While we will come prepared with a few topics we would like them to discuss, participants are usually eager to take it from there as they compare and contrast their experiences. In that way, what emerges from the conversation is a more authentic discussion that yields valuable insights.

\*RHB calls these Pivots to acknowledge that what participants say turns around their experiences and relationships with you. The concept is borrowed from agricultural "pivots," mobile irrigators that move around an agricultural field in a circle as they water crops. The pivot is a resource that brings new things into being, as is your institution.



## RESEARCH DESIGN

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The number of participants in a single Pivot varied. Because of the brand attribute testing we performed, a group of 3-5 participants often yielded the most insights.

In those groups, each participant had space to speak extensively on their relationship to Auburn, their perceptions of Auburn's brand, and about their responses to the brand attribute testing.

## PIVOTS METHOD

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These circles visualize the affinity groups we included.

Importantly, alumni were represented in almost every group. Several times, the alumni knew each other before the Pivot.

This seemed to be a manifestation of the Auburn Family and of how Auburn draws people into a dense and multiplex network.



# DENSE AND MULTIPLEX NETWORK

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Auburn is a great example of what sociolinguists Lesley Milroy and James Milroy call *dense* and *multiplex* social networks.

Dense networks are ones in which many members of the network know each other and share mutual connections.

Multiplex networks are ones in which members are related to each other through multiple roles, e.g., graduate, journalist who covers Auburn and football fan, or graduate, son of alumni, father of alumni, and State official who partners with Auburn.

These dense and multiplex networks facilitate knowledge transfer and relationship building, but that can be inconsistent. Members might have multiplex relationships to Auburn but not be in the path of knowledge as it moves or what they do encounter does not satisfy a need they have.





# Listening Group Themes and Data

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# OVERARCHING THEMES

Across our 14 conversations, certain themes tended to recur:





## AUBURN'S DISTINCTIVENESS

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As we learned in our 2021 research and in this brand health work, there is something very real and powerful about the Auburn Family and the Auburn experience. It bonds people beyond age, geography, role in the institution and other characteristics. It can last a lifetime and across generations. It is shared and also intensely personal.

In this section, we describe several ways in which listening group participants describe how Auburn touches lives and how it distinguishes itself from other institutions of higher ed in a state that features several that are known for their alumni networks, research and community impact.

## QUINTESENTIALLY AUBURN

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Our favorite icebreaker question during the focus groups to elicit Auburn features that matter to participants is this: **“When you think about what Auburn means to you, what moments or experiences tell you ‘this is Auburn, this is what it means’?”**

Given that we met 55 participants, we did hear a range of responses. From participants who know Auburn well, we sometimes received answers that included catalogs of multi-generational relationships and plans to move back to Auburn after retirement. We also heard about coming to know Auburn as a graduate of another college or no college at all, which often happens through coming to know the research Auburn produces and how it shapes the economy of parts of Alabama.

We provide some examples here that represent the span of the answers we received.



# QUINTESENTIALLY AUBURN

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## Representative scenes and quotes

- Faculty Member and Alumnus: Being away from home for the first time while Bo Jackson and Charles Barkley were at Auburn and joining a fraternity
- Current Student: Finding a place to meld art and business
- Current Student: Finding a place to be pushed to be the best version of yourself
- Current Student: Standing in the Eagles Nest and looking out at everything
- Academic Leader: Finding a place as a woman to be welcomed as faculty in a male-dominated field and build a legacy
- Guidance Counselor: Discovering that Auburn is attainable
- Guidance Counselor: Finding a place where you can figure out your path when you don't have all the answers

# QUINTESENTIALLY AUBURN

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## Representative scenes and quotes

- Economic Development Leader: Auburn has more of a small-town feel; it's a local, folksy place.
- Economic Development Leader: I appreciated Auburn that it recognizes it has expertise and capacity that has statewide value that can help other communities improve and thrive. We work with the Urban Studio and Rural Studio.
- Employer: We are very involved in the School of Engineering; it's lifeline for us. It's a pipeline—our future workforce. It has the Advanced Structures lab ...
- Grantmaker: What we find [when we communicate with Auburn]: the personnel at Auburn—professors, deans, foundation staff are 'all in'—they are there for the right reasons, always helpful ...



# EXPERIENCING THE AUBURN FAMILY

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The Auburn Family is a lived value and so built into the experience that the Family resonated across our groups and cuts across many of the themes we discuss.

- Academic Leader: The College works hard to ensure that students are getting the support they need; they're really important to what we're doing. If we could ever get them on campus, most students have a really good Auburn experience. They can feel the Auburn Family once they're here; it's getting people here, getting them to that point.
- Staff: We moved for my husband's job, he works in University development. I think they do a great job of welcoming you in—from the beginning we felt a sense of Auburn Family. It was very family centered. He started in August 2022. We have a baby who is now is 16 months, he's never had a problem being home if she was sick, even before I got my job. That office always welcomed families into events, like an Auburn-centric Halloween event. ... We were welcomed within that; it really did feel like we were part of a larger community in that office.

# EXPERIENCING THE AUBURN FAMILY

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- Staff: I agree with her: things are slower and family focused. Coming from a big city, where things are moving faster and there is less time to hear people's experiences, here people want to share about their experiences. ... I feel like home, I feel like I have so much involvement. I have never felt distress or anxiety in my work at all, I have seen people going through anxiety in their work environments, and then there is an urge to leave. I have never felt that here.
- Faculty Member: I talked my daughter into coming here for grad school; my daughter said the Auburn Family is real, and she's as Roll Tide as they come.



HERE PEOPLE WANT TO SHARE  
ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES

## EXPERIENCING THE AUBURN FAMILY

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As we spoke with participants about the Auburn Family, we did hear stories from people who had a more difficult time “breaking into” the Family or who see others experiencing it but don’t feel it the same way.

A disconnect between participants and the Auburn Family could be related to a feature of their identities or family situation or other, sometimes physical, obstacles. We heard about some difficulty recruiting faculty into Alabama and into Auburn, especially when they come with partners who need jobs.

The extended quote from an academic leader on the next slide covers the real, felt experience of the Family and some difficulties bringing people into it.



# EXPERIENCING THE AUBURN FAMILY

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- Academic Leader: I've been breaking into the Auburn Family; they have embraced me very much. I envision staying here the rest of my career. But just the other day, there was an Alumni Advisory Council meeting. There are 10 members—all graduated before 1985, all white males, all graduates. They mentioned something that went out in alumni newsletter. I asked to receive it, and was told no because I'm not an alum. ...

This is an artificial barrier that doesn't need to be there.

[This matter across] all parts of one's life; this is challenging; it creates barriers for some or many, where we have a lot of great history, great old buildings. It presents accessibility challenges for many. ... That's that challenge of balancing the needs of the many or most with the needs of some. When we're creating the Auburn Family, the Auburn Family looks like a lot of things, we can make it look more diverse and accepting by looking at some of those things.



THE AUBURN FAMILY  
LOOKS LIKE A LOT OF THINGS,

## EXPERIENCING THE AUBURN FAMILY

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A recent graduate shared a nuanced perspective on the complexity of the Family as it tries to live out its ambitions to welcome all. In his experience, the university is not at fault when people are excluded—it's the fault of Family members who aren't living up to the Family standard:

Recent Graduate: The harsh reality is that there is a proportion of people who feel as far away from the Family as they possibly could, they participate, etc., but don't feel a part of the Family. Some people want to puke when they hear about it. It's not the fault of the institution.

The fault is on the people who think they are in the Auburn Family. ... Engagement is part of becoming the Family.

Auburn is not a historically diverse university, though it's changing; we can always do better as the people who live it. It's something the university can't control; people have to do that themselves.

## STAYING IN THE FAMILY AFTER GRADUATION

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We asked recent alumni and current students about how they want to continue their relationship with Auburn as they go forward in their lives. Some of them had ideas or are still in touch with Auburn, but others had not put much thought into it or don't know what the possibilities are.

One participant suggested that it may not be Auburn's responsibility to keep people in the Family—it's up to them to choose to engage. As well, staying engaged is a way to look beyond negativity on social media and preserve "the punch" of the Auburn experience.



## STAYING IN THE FAMILY AFTER GRADUATION

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In this quote from a generational student, we learn about his journey to creating his own Auburn student experience apart from his family's overarching relationship and how he is experiencing the Family through a graduate. Note that while he is in Princeton, NJ, for an internship, he talks about it as “there” rather than “here.” Auburn is “here”—the place from which he takes his perspective or locates himself in the world as we speak:


- Current Student: When I went on the tour, it was a different perspective than season tickets and coming to games—I was looking at it as a place I'm going to live for four years—it was a different perspective and I saw why family came here for so long and loved it. ... The reason I am in Princeton is because of an Auburn alum, there's a program called Auburn Connects. If you put your name in system, you agree that students can contact you. She is with a pharma company there I was interested in. I got in touch with her and she was so helpful. .... Another way you give back is time. She put herself on the line, that's the definition of the Auburn Family right there.

# STAYING IN THE FAMILY AFTER GRADUATION

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- Recent Graduate: From senior year I've been thinking about this. For four years, I would go to bed thinking about Auburn and would wake up thinking about Auburn. I don't really know what that would look like; there's the experience of being connected to people wearing an Auburn shirt, in the airport, and engagement with the University generally through people who went there. I recently served on the Young Alumni Council, it's a great council. I got to be connected to the University that way. As far as what to expect from the University I haven't been able to put my thumb on it. I'm not sure if it's right to expect anything from the University.

... On social media you see the bad and good. When it's something bad, it doesn't feel good. People might take it at face value and say that's a mess out there. The further out you are, the more you take what you see at face value, but if you are more connected to it it's easier to not do that, but taking it at face value takes some of the punch out of [the Auburn experience].



FOR FOUR YEARS,  
I WOULD GO TO BED  
THINKING ABOUT AUBURN  
AND WOULD WAKE UP  
THINKING ABOUT AUBURN.

# STAYING IN THE FAMILY AFTER GRADUATION

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- Current Grad Student and Graduate: I am a recent Harbert grad, continuing with my master's. I wasn't at the beginning interested in attending college initially and was super-focused on everything except academics until junior year. ... I am getting my degree done through an Auburn job. Other places wouldn't have been able to convince me to stay. They should keep doing what they're doing, entice me. As soon as I graduated there was the program for donating—like I just graduated, I get it, but beyond the money, think about how to keep people engaged and loving Auburn.



BEYOND THE MONEY,  
THINK ABOUT HOW  
TO KEEP PEOPLE ENGAGED  
AND LOVING AUBURN.



# STAYING IN THE FAMILY AFTER GRADUATION

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- Current Student: My goodness: if you love Auburn, it will love you back. When I am away, I get bored. When I graduate, I plan on staying here. Auburn is home and will be home.
- Recent Graduate: I am big on email, as crazy as it sounds. Checking email is the first thing most people do when they get to work each morning. There's no algorithm that takes that info from you. Any Auburn email is pretty valuable to me—when it comes across, it holds a lot of value; I find it super valuable. There's also Facebook and Instagram but you can easily miss that.



IF YOU LOVE AUBURN,  
IT WILL LOVE YOU BACK.

# THE CREED AND AUBURN MEN & WOMEN

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The Auburn Creed is closely related to the Family and to the Auburn experience: knowing and embodying the Creed reassures people that they know what to expect from an Auburn Man or Woman. At the same time, we did hear that the Creed is controversial to some students and faculty, though the Creed is not likely to become less important at Auburn.

This statement demonstrates how the Creed shapes how alumni can think about Family and legacy, inspiring others to do the same.

- Academic Leader: A conversation with alumni is where that started. In the College of Engineering, we have a loyal group of alumni. They are so supportive; they really believe in the Auburn Creed. Every time we have conversation with them, they believe they're leaving a legacy. They may not have resources to leave a legacy of a building, but can leave a legacy with students. As faculty, this needs to be our legacy, for our future alumni and faculty who are supporting our programs.

# THE CREED AND AUBURN MEN & WOMEN

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- Current Student: He's a graduate of Auburn—that must mean he's an Auburn Man. Auburn Men and Women believe in these things and can do anything.
- Economic Development Leader: I was at a big meeting of agriculture departments from other states. ... We visited Auburn with an incredible tour and it ended up with dinner at the President's home. Commissioner Pate asked me to Google the Auburn Creed and asked me to read it. I said if you ask me to do so, I will cry. There was a young man there who had memorized the Creed and recited it in his Auburn blazer.
- Staff: This is an elite veterinary program. We have engaging faculty and do everything we can in academic affairs to ensure they are heard and assisted in their career. We hold true to the Creed.
- Economic Development Leader: Auburn alumni are much more into the Auburn Creed: that's the Auburn way, the Auburn Creed. I've never heard an Alabama person say that. We may say that in an athletic way but I've never heard a parallel to the Auburn Creed.



WE HOLD TRUE  
TO THE CREED.



# THE CREED AND AUBURN MEN & WOMEN

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We did hear opposing views about the role of the Creed in Auburn's culture.

- Faculty Member One: At Auburn High School, my daughter is going into her senior year. Their views are very progressive, different than their parents. They just don't buy into that [the Creed]. Both of my daughters are in what used to be Boy Scouts. They're trying to build good character, help people build a good life, live the Family and Creed opposed to how they're written. ...
- Faculty Member Two : Some of the stuff from the Creed—did they have powdered wig on when they wrote that? I tell my own kids, you get everything handed to you. ... The first line of the Creed talks about a practical world. I agree with that first line: I get what I work for; life is hard; you've got to get out there and get with it. ... To be candid or cynical, 80% of the student body only read it when they came to Camp War Eagle; it's too long. I'm not opposed to it. It's not a polarizing thing for the masses.
- Faculty Member Three: That's such an interesting perspective from [Faculty One] on the Creed. I hadn't heard that before and I consider myself progressive. I always took it as positive motivation. The President used it for his installation speech. I'm going to have to think on that one. I've always been a big fan of it. We have it printed in between our buildings.

# THE CREED AND AUBURN MEN & WOMEN

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- Faculty Member One: I'm from the North; it's also changes in generations. I doesn't really think about it, but students come to me and point it out; younger people think about the world in different ways. Universities are about learning to think, having discussions about these kinds of topics. You want to promote people at Auburn to be critical thinkers and good stewards in society. Whatever they do, you want them to make informed decisions, but that's not what we ever tell them college is for. They don't read the Creed the same way others do. If nothing else, students want to challenge authority, and that's okay. We need to be okay with that. Auburn struggles with that; It's good to encourage them to do that.

# AUBURN IS A UNIVERSITY AND A TOWN

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The relationship between Auburn the University and Auburn the Town is close and “symbiotic.” Growth in one is tied to growth in the other. Several of our conversations included talk about how to manage that growth effectively to preserve the intimate feeling and “special flavor” of both.

- Mayor: It’s symbiotic. His problems are my problems. We do things practically. We share a police force. Auburn has partnered with the city, with investments (hospital, performing arts, research center). We collaborate on facilities, including how they will affect traffic. Pres. Roberts sat on the industrial board; he is still on the board. It’s pretty powerful that he wanted to stay on the board. ...

It goes back to Auburn’s DNA. Neither has all the answers, and we’re not going to tell each other how to do our jobs. We want to help each other. ...

The University being the anchor of our community in a variety of ways brings so much to table that small town can’t have; as Auburn grows as a community will the elevated role of Auburn stay? Thinking about the future—do we need a future airport? These are sizable decisions to make. We have gotten to this point because of goodwill and financial support; will that perpetuate when decisions are bigger and more costly?



# AUBURN IS A UNIVERSITY AND A TOWN

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- Academic Leader: My quintessential Auburn moment? Right from day one. I became an informal spokesperson when I got here. I always used to say, Auburn is a well-kept secret. We didn't forcefully advertise. The quality of life Auburn offers, it's truly a remarkable place. ... Auburn has a special flavor.
- Staff: At Alabama there is a cohesiveness but it's different, not family focused. Auburn is a family-centered place. We sometimes talk about it as Mayberry. We fell in love with the town, the pace.
- Economic Development Leader: The densification of students downtown is great. We're trying to maintain the uniqueness of Toomer's Corner. ... We have to maintain to continue to be a center for families. We added a performing arts center and museum across the street. ... We've improved traffic flow for athletic events—improved dramatically. The school system has been priority. A lot of people live there and commute to Montgomery every day.



WE SOMETIMES  
TALK ABOUT IT AS MAYBERRY.

## AUBURN V. ALABAMA (& OTHERS)

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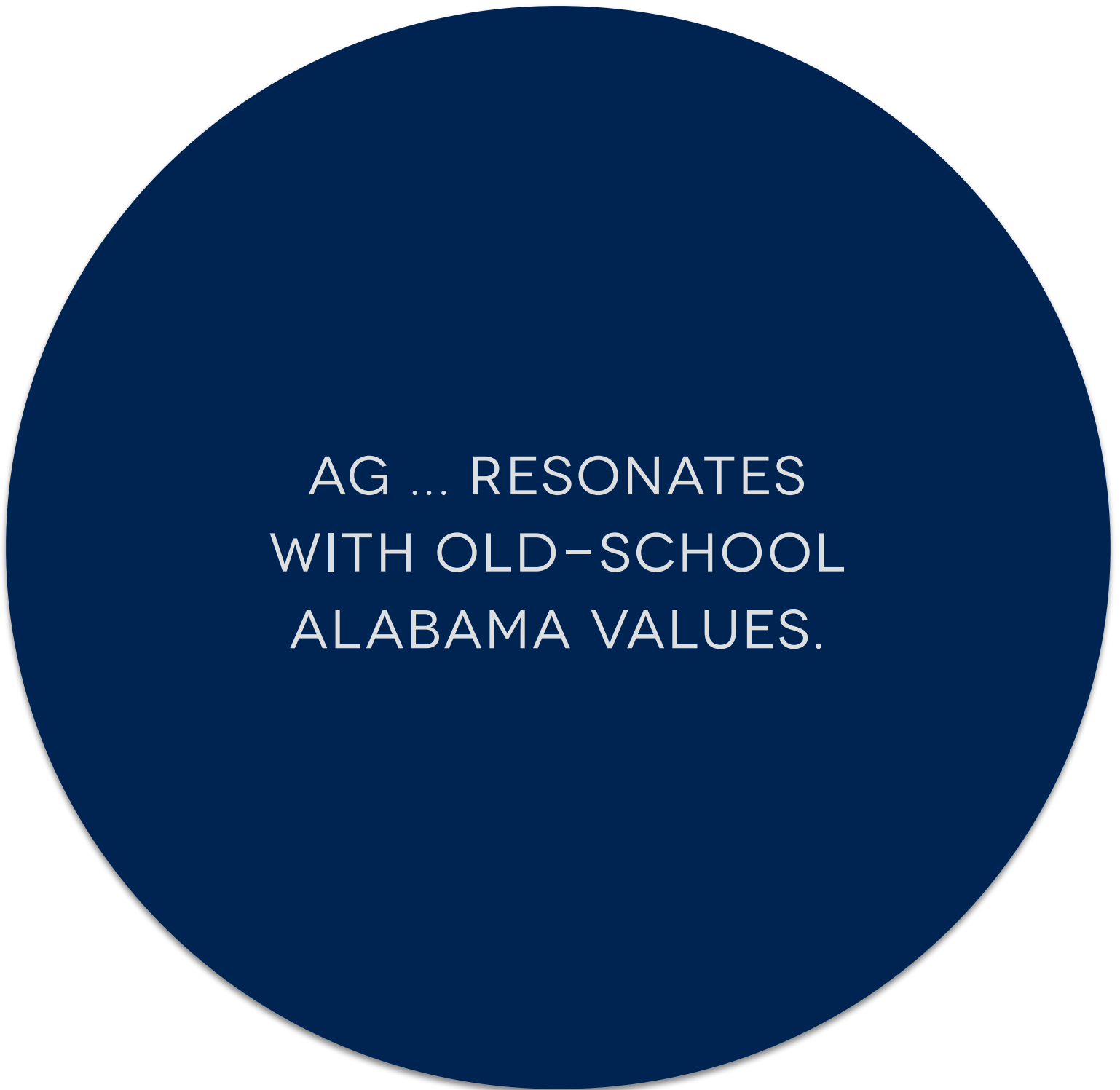
Many of the comparisons we heard between Auburn and other institutions came from our economic development and media conversations because those participants work across the state and have a broad view of how institutions differ.

- Economic Development Leader: From the outside looking in, Auburn is much more accessible than Alabama. I went there, love them, owe them so much. Alabama positioned themselves as elitist and upper-middle class. Auburn is less pretentious, more reasonable, accessible.
- Economic Development Leader: Research-wise, the state has several good universities. They all contribute in different ways with different areas of interest: UAH for technology; UA for business and law. Economic development-wise, I'm not sure what the out-of-state percentage is at Auburn. Many folks consider that as a negative at UA—it's more than 60%. ... People use that to elevate Auburn's family atmosphere.
- Economic Development Leader: UA is like a bank and Auburn is like a credit union.

## AUBURN V. ALABAMA (& OTHERS)

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- Journalist: I'd say it's definitely "institutional" with Alabama. Being in journalism, I check myself throughout the year: do I have better relationship or better feeling about Auburn because I went there? It's just there. But objectively, it is more of a family feeling than an institutional feeling.
- Economic Development Leader: Why do I say Auburn is folksy? They own fact that it's a land-grant school; they have their own agriculture majors. Mississippi State is very parallel. Ole Miss and MSU is comparable to Alabama and Auburn. Ag that they take pride in resonates with old-school Alabama values.
- Economic Development Leader: UAB has a significant presence in Birmingham. It has the capacity and local presence to be involved in some bigger things. We fund more than Alabama or Auburn, but that's a given in a place-based foundation. I spent time at Heifer International. I worked there before so I worked with Auburn Extension, the vet school, etc. It's a land-grant—yes, agricultural, but so much more than that with the local presence Cooperative Extension.



AG ... RESONATES  
WITH OLD-SCHOOL  
ALABAMA VALUES.



## AUBURN V. ALABAMA (& OTHERS)

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Our conversation with Guidance Counselors allowed us to dig into the college search process and how counselors apply what they know about students and institutions to make useful suggestions for where to apply.

- Guidance Counselor and Alumna: I'm not highly active with Auburn; I do attend sporting events with family when I can; outside of that not particularly. I attend events when I can. I am going to an Auburn Experience event on Friday. It's ever-changing. Even though I went to school over 30 years ago, a lot has changed. I do that every two-three years so I can best direct students who would be a fit there, and then I will schedule groups of students to go there.
- Guidance Counselor Two: Location is one reason [Auburn is popular with the students I work with]. It's a good balance of going away to school and still really close to home and what's familiar, so it's an easy transition. Kids have grown up going to football games and wearing Auburn gear. There are ways that Auburn could improve, specifically when dealing with money—they're offering more money at Alabama sometimes. ... My school has dual-enrollment agreements with Alabama and Auburn, and others, which helps students and parents understand better what furthering their education can provide for them, even if they're interested in a technical field.

## AUBURN'S LAND-GRANT MISSION

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Auburn's "land-grant mission" was a frequent topic of conversation, often introduced as a theme by participants themselves. We noticed that there may be some confusion about whether Auburn is "the land-grant" or "a land-grant"—or exactly what "land-grant" means. Nevertheless the call to be hands-on and present in the community energizes and touches many of the participants with whom we spoke.

- Academic Leader: We have the land-grant mission: for the local community, state and beyond—it says we are to "serve." We serve students, serve families across the state and beyond. The land-grant mission is very pervasive. We are here to serve very different groups of people. For students, we make them better citizens and professionals.
- Economic Development Leader: There are three land-grants in the state. I want Auburn to be a leader. I want Auburn to produce quality people, because it's quality people who make a name and brand for the University.
- Journalist: As far as the land-grant stuff, sometimes I feel like it's kind of murky. Sometimes we get a release that talks about land grant here. It feels like filling a check mark here. There's not a clear understanding of land grants—it seems important but they're not telling me why.

# AUBURN'S LAND-GRANT MISSION

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- Faculty Member: What I love about my job is working with the public, working with stakeholders—water utility folks—being a land-grant. ... The fact that we're encouraged to connect with the public is great. I think I had a good day today when I'm connecting with farmers in the field.
- Academic Leader: I am very interested in doing research and applying research. I have an Extension specialist position here where I teach, do research, and take what is being learned out in the community. Auburn being the land-grant is a big part of our mission. That we can weave the three-pronged mission together in the work we do is very satisfying and gratifying.
- Academic Leader: [My quintessential Auburn moment:] There was a moment in my interview: someone spoke to with passion about the land-grant mission. It's a vocation to serve in the college and across university. I had a huge breath of relief; I've found a place [where that is important].



I HAD A GOOD DAY TODAY  
WHEN I'M CONNECTING  
WITH FARMERS IN THE FIELD.



## AUBURN ATHLETICS AND BRAND EFFECTS

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We did not ask explicitly about participant relationships to Auburn Athletics. That came up organically as conversations unfolded. It Nonetheless, it was interesting to learn how participants see the brands of the University and Athletics. It's clear from these examples that this is an unresolved question for some people while for others, like students, Athletics can be the gateway to other aspects of the University.

- Current Student: Coming to Auburn was all driven by athletics—Auburn football, basketball, baseball. Once I got here and got a taste of the journalism program, coming out of high school, I wanted to be involved in sports. I wasn't born to run a ball or shoot a ball. I want to talk about sports; I think I talk pretty well; I want to get on that side of things.

# AUBURN ATHLETICS AND BRAND EFFECTS

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- Academic Leader: We spend a lot of time discussing: what do the 5-10 top schools do that we don't? Reputation-building takes decades. What are the things we can do that can make quick gains? What are the long-term things we need to be doing? We have Pres. Roberts who can help us. I don't know that as an institution, that we are regularly asking, what do the best do, and what are we not doing well? We need to think about everything from collateral we're sending to students, to the way we are exposing our research nationally. Coincidentally, our highest ranking is 23, now we're in the 30s. We have been in 50s and 60s. Our highest was when the football team won the national championship. To the extent that academics cannot compete with athletics branding but can leverage Athletics's reputation we should do that—that can be difficult to do.



OUR HIGHEST RANKING WAS  
WHEN THE FOOTBALL TEAM  
WON THE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP.

# AUBURN EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYEE BRAND

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Auburn's role as both an employer and shaper of employees was part of many of our conversations. Unsurprisingly, the Family and the Creed play important roles in shaping the work environment at Auburn and what people expect of Auburn students who do internships or get jobs after graduation.

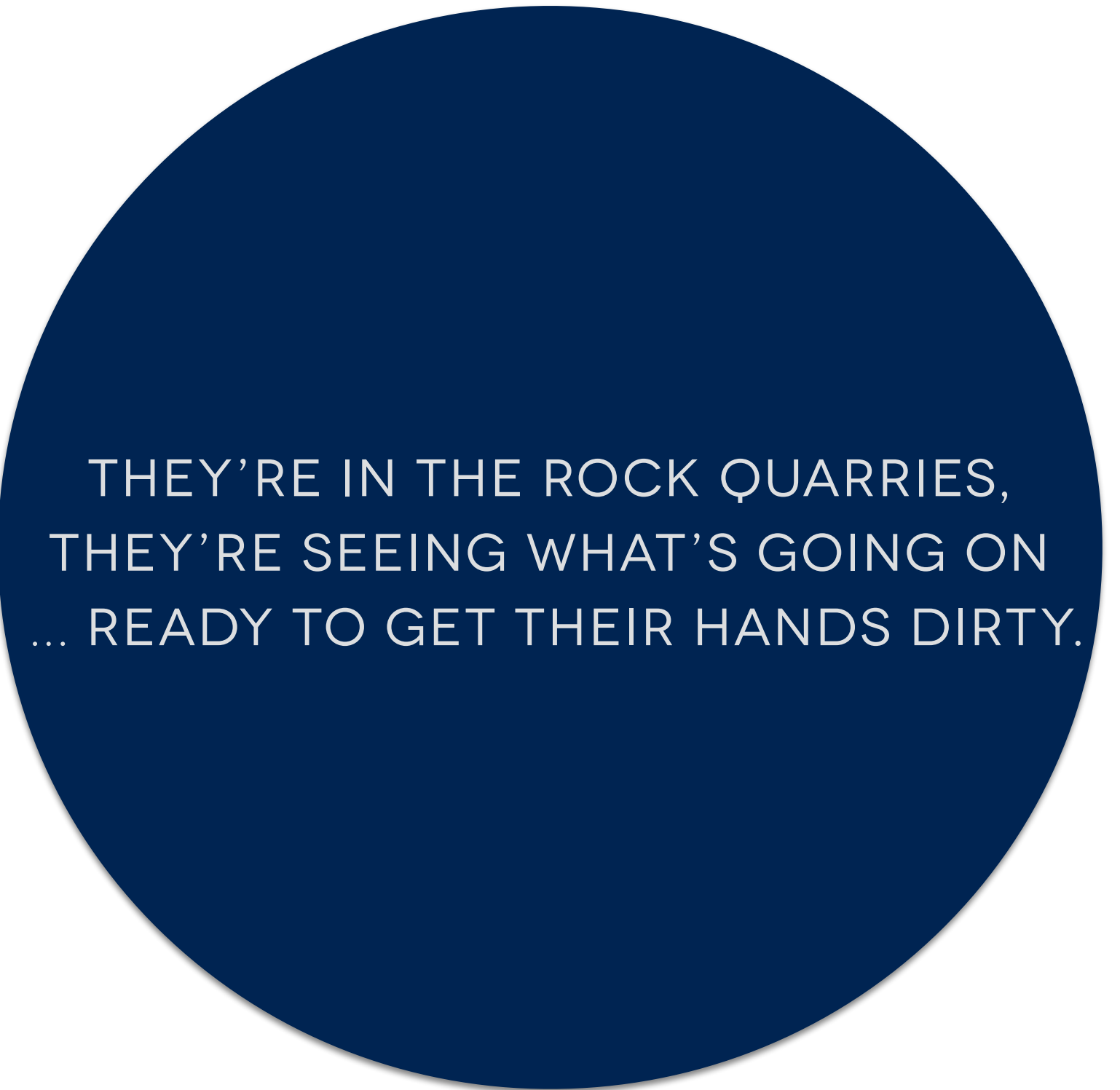
- Staff: At Auburn, we need to think about the flexibility of the new generation. That's something we learned during pandemic. We need to think about how easy it is to bring faculty here—it's a great community, but a great community when you have kids and have family. We are losing a lot of staff members to other institutions; they are more flexible with time. Faculty have inherent flexibility; as an institution it is an opportunity.
- Staff: My job is to make people feel like they're part of a family, whether they're coming from a different city or coming from a different country. For me, Auburn felt just like family; we're here to serve you; we're family here at Auburn. I was telling people [in an onboarding session] about the tailgate tent—go to a tent and people will invite you in; we're here for you as a family.
- Academic Leader: We just recently met with a corporate sponsor group who were Auburn engineers who hire AU engineers. Hiring Auburn grads and engineering grads is a badge of honor. They recognize the rigor of the program. Our stock is rising.



# AUBURN EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYEE BRAND

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- Employer and Funder: Interns and employees from Auburn are ready to absorb. We put them out there—they're in the rock quarries, they're seeing what's going on. They get hands-on learning. They're just ready to absorb, get to work, ready to get their hands dirty.
- Employer: We have an interesting relationship because our employees become Auburn instructors and we take feedback as a company seriously. We are high touch, we look for how the University takes feedback from us. They seem to respond pretty well. There was an issue with test flights, and they seem to be responsive in the last year and a half. Something that can be improved is senior administration's awareness of the needs of this program, like it's a high capital investment in space, and doesn't necessarily get the positive attention it deserves. From an engagement standpoint, these alumni are going to be very high-worth potential donors after a lifetime of [being pilots]. They deserve the attention as much as the other majors, since it's so capital intensive and human intensive—I'm saying as someone who doesn't donate as much as I should.



THEY'RE IN THE ROCK QUARRIES,  
THEY'RE SEEING WHAT'S GOING ON  
... READY TO GET THEIR HANDS DIRTY.

## AUBURN IN ALABAMA: RESEARCH AND OUTCOMES

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Because expanding Auburn's research and reputation is a part of Pres. Roberts's agenda, we paid special attention to how research emerged as a theme in our conversations. Many people with whom we spoke are aware of research happening in some part of Auburn, and some were able to speak concretely to the effects of that research. We also heard enthusiasm for Pres. Roberts ambitions for Auburn's research.

- Mayor: One of Pres. Roberts's primary goals is research, to increase Auburn as research institution, to create a greater capability of research being done. He bought a building in Huntsville; it's so important and he made the investment.
- Economic Development Leader: On the professional front, I work a lot with Auburn on conservation work that's environmentally focused. A lot of people don't know what impactful work is being done.

# AUBURN IN ALABAMA: RESEARCH AND OUTCOMES

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- RHB: What will be Auburn's legacy to the State of Alabama?
- Economic Development Leader: The legacy is the incredible research that they're doing, the changes that they're making. I travel around and get to visit with Extension guys. They're reporting on the research projects getting done. Auburn is changing the face of agriculture in the state and have done that through the years. A lot of research is coming to fruition now and Alabama stands to gain in the next few years.
- Faculty Member: I'm tired of hearing it has to stay small and keep "family;" you're an R1. You can't do both well, you need to make a decision. ... I interviewed at Clemson two weeks before Auburn; Clemson became an R1 before Auburn. Clemson was a superstar compared to Auburn. There are several colleagues who ask, why didn't I go there? Clemson was far outshining Auburn; they're making decisions and going with them; they're hiring faculty and investing in programs in ways that we don't. It's night and day how much different it is now with comparable programs/units there.



THE LEGACY IS  
THE INCREDIBLE RESEARCH  
THAT THEY'RE DOING.

## **PRES. ROBERTS IS THE AUBURN MAN FOR THE JOB**

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What with all the conversation we had about what it mean to be an Auburn Man or Woman, it was natural that Pres. Roberts would come up in conversation. Participants are generally very excited for his presidency and agenda and feel he is the right person for the job because he embodies Auburn's culture. The next slide contains an extended transcript from our media group that teases out some of the ways he and Tracy Roberts are embodiments of Auburn's values.


- Recent Graduate: I love Dr. Roberts; he's the man for the job; he's phenomenal. But, when he was announced as president, I said that's Auburn being Auburn. He's an Auburn guy—fits the mold, fits the culture. He's going to create a lot of change, but it's going to be at Auburn's speed.
- Mayor: President Roberts wants Auburn to be important to every county in the state; I believe him. I know he has a heart for that.



## PRES. ROBERTS IS THE AUBURN MAN FOR THE JOB

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- Journalist One: The tone at the top sets that tone and sets that example; they are the example and they are showing you by example. ... His wife is a veteran—a real kick-butt woman. Auburn is not getting that out there; that's a story that Auburn hasn't played up enough. They present a game ball to a veteran and she would be out there. You wouldn't know that if you're not going to games.
- RHB: What an amazing way to think about the Auburn Family.
- Journalist Two: There's such a thing as an Auburn Man or an Auburn Woman. It doesn't mean we could never have a president who isn't one of us. President Roberts is one of us, while bringing a breath of fresh air. The perception from my end is it's going great guns. There was sigh of relief among my friends when Dr. Roberts came along. They feel AU made a good choice.
- Journalist One: There's a lot of respect for Dr. Roberts from people who graduated a long time ago. My great-uncle graduated in the 50s and was nominated for the Hall of Fame. My sister is a chemical engineer. He was her professor.



THERE'S SUCH A THING  
AS AN AUBURN MAN  
OR AN AUBURN WOMAN.

# Brand Attribute Testing Results

R H B

# BRAND ATTRIBUTE TESTING

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PERSONALITY ATTRIBUTES <i>How people see us</i> <i>How people see us</i>	VOICE <i>How we express our personality</i>
<b>Authentic</b> We believe character is built by working hard to earn our achievements. We are genuine in our actions and our words.	We say what we mean and mean what we say.
<b>Unafraid</b> We have a spirit that is not afraid and we do not back down in the face of challenge.	We believe in our abilities and are never afraid to try.
<b>Bold</b> We are confident in our knowledge and skills, willing to take risks to drive innovation and solve real-world problems.	We claim our earned achievements, demonstrate our value with proof and are aspirational about the future we will help shape.
<b>United</b> We believe in the power of human connection and that we are at our best when all feel welcomed, valued, respected and engaged.	We speak thoughtfully, considerate of all perspectives.
<b>Resolute</b> We are firm in our purpose and belief, and determined in our ideas and action, pursuing knowledge and solutions for the betterment of self and others.	We speak with purpose and determination in accessible language.
<b>Nimble</b> We are alert and clever, able to move quickly and lightly – agile to change course when necessary.	We sound active and concise, never passive or rambling.

# BRAND ATTRIBUTE TESTING

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**Personality:** A set of human traits that Auburn faculty, staff and students embody while delivering on our brand promise. It is how we bring our brand to life in all communications, marketing and interactions. It provides a framework for how our brand should look, feel and sound.

## For Participants:

- Do these characteristics accurately describe Auburn University?
- Do these feel right, in terms of embodying Auburn University?



# BRAND ATTRIBUTE TESTING

## PERSONALITY ATTRIBUTES

*How people see us*

*How people see us*

## VOICE

*How we express our personality*

### **Authentic**

We believe character is built by working hard to earn our achievements. We are genuine in our actions and our words.

We say what we mean and mean what we say.

### **Unafraid**

We have a spirit that is not afraid and we do not back down in the face of challenge.

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### **Bold**

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# BRAND ATTRIBUTE TESTING

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## Authentic

Across affinity groups, participants thought this was an appropriate and accurate description of Auburn, even if not everyone preferred the exact word choice.

- Guidance Counselor: It's hard to put your finger on. Auburn has always just had it. Auburn doesn't really try to be other schools. They are who they are, even though they've made changes over the years ... very much based in tradition. Auburn is Auburn ... has its own unique thing about it.
- Faculty Member: I would agree ... the feeling of a strong work ethic that aligns with Auburn and what I think it does.
- Employer: Call it out, express it, what you're good at ... The evidence will back it up. No problem with it.
- Employer: It lands with what I see with students.



THAT'S PART OF WHAT SETS  
AUBURN APART. THEY INSTILL  
THAT IN THE PEOPLE.

# BRAND ATTRIBUTE TESTING

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## Authentic

Those who did not prefer the exact word appeared to interpret its use more as a literal external expression rather than a brand attribute that would help inform and inspire communications.

- Auburn Academic Leader: Wouldn't say, would show it. No one at Auburn would tell you we're genuine. We'd show it.
- Grantmaker: Something about when you have to say we are genuine, it loses something.
- Journalist: Being authentic, just be it. Don't say you're being hip, just do it. Just be it.



NO ONE AT AUBURN WOULD  
TELL YOU WE'RE GENUINE.  
WE'D SHOW IT.

# BRAND ATTRIBUTE TESTING

## PERSONALITY ATTRIBUTES

*How people see us*

*How people see us*

## VOICE

*How we express our personality*

### **Authentic**

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# BRAND ATTRIBUTE TESTING

---

## Unafraid

The more connected a participant was to Auburn and recognized this attribute's presence in the Creed and/or recognized "unafraid" as representing a spirit, the more likely it resonated as true.

- Graduate: I believe this is true. Auburn equips students and individuals that are involved with Auburn with that fearless mindset ... definitely believe that. That's real.
- Auburn Academic Leader: A spirit that is not afraid empowers people to overcome obstacles, achieve aspirations, and live bold and resilient lives. It's not about "unafraid."
- Staff Member: Makes me think of the Creed ... unafraid of next step or next challenge.



A SPIRIT THAT IS NOT AFRAID  
EMPOWERS PEOPLE TO OVERCOME  
OBSTACLES, ACHIEVE ASPIRATIONS.

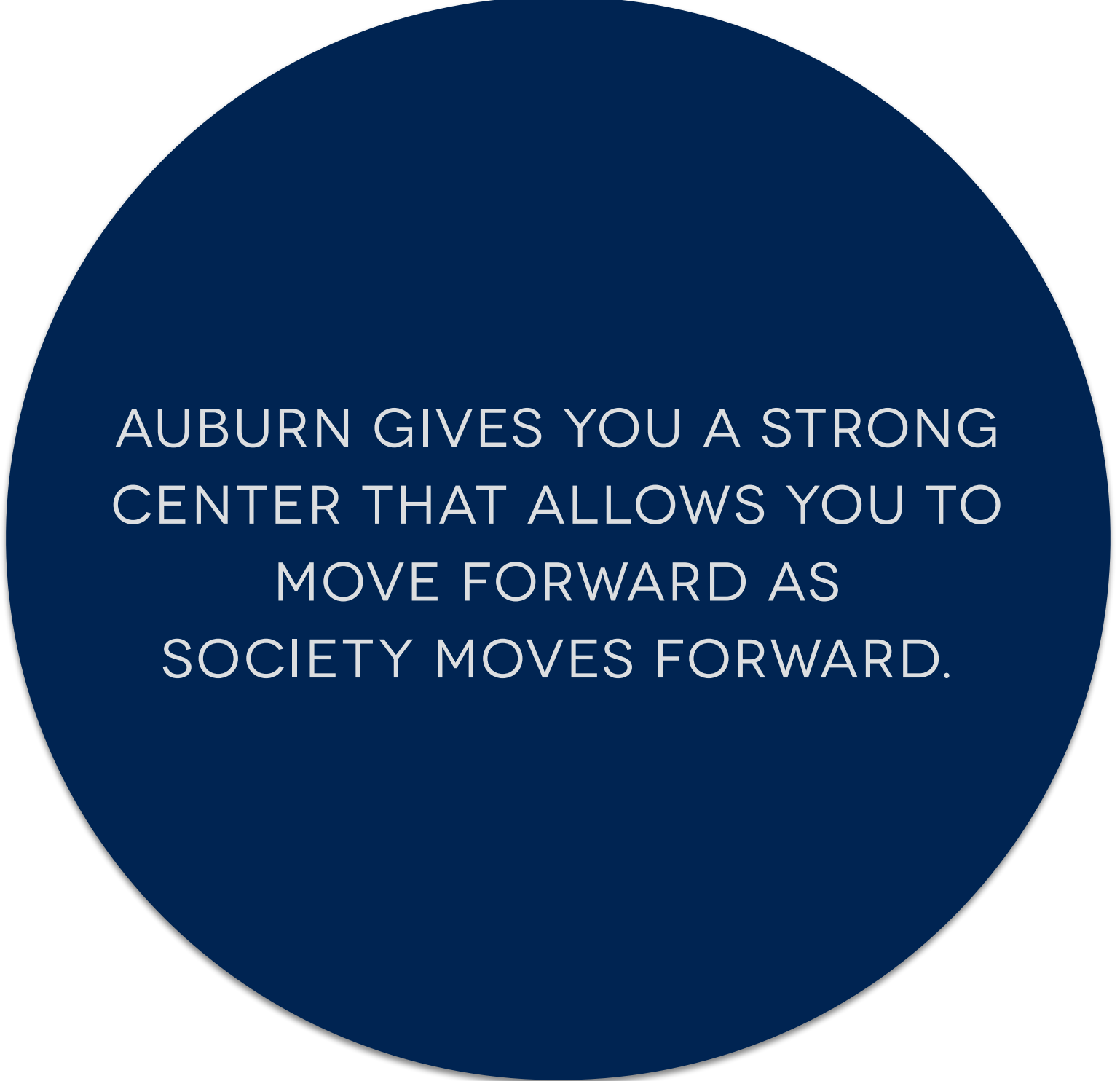
# BRAND ATTRIBUTE TESTING

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## Unafraid

The more connected a participant was to Auburn and recognized this attribute's presence in the Creed and/or recognized “unafraid” as representing a spirit, the more likely it resonated as true.

- Guidance Counselor. That's accurate. If you're part of the Auburn community—whether you attended or not—there's a pride behind it. Not a boastful pride, unapologetic. Everyone doesn't have to fit inside of a box. it's okay to not fit the norm.
- Faculty Member: It's okay to use in the context of your spirit. You can be bold and afraid at the same time ... statement of spirit that is not afraid.
- Grantmaker: Auburn gives you a strong center that allows you to move forward as society moves forward ... It's moving forward.



AUBURN GIVES YOU A STRONG  
CENTER THAT ALLOWS YOU TO  
MOVE FORWARD AS  
SOCIETY MOVES FORWARD.

# BRAND ATTRIBUTE TESTING

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## Unafraid

For those who did not seem to make the connection with the Creed, some reacted to the word's negative prefix. Some internal participants discussed unafraid as an aspirational attribute, citing times when the institution has been and has not been unafraid.

- Grantmaker: Say what you are or what you do.
- Employer: Something more along the lines of consistent desire for excellence despite challenge or in the face of adversity and challenge.
- Academic Administrator: I still think Auburn is cautious. Would like to be more risk-taking at times. It's not that we're fearful.



YES WITH ATHLETICS ...  
EMBOLDENED WHEN WE ARE IN  
COMPETITION WITH OTHERS.

# BRAND ATTRIBUTE TESTING

## PERSONALITY ATTRIBUTES

*How people see us*

*How people see us*

## VOICE

*How we express our personality*

### Authentic

We believe character is built by working hard to earn our achievements. We are genuine in our actions and our words.

We say what we mean and mean what we say.

### Unafraid

We have a spirit that is not afraid and we do not back down in the face of challenge.

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### Bold

We are confident in our knowledge and skills, willing to take risks to drive innovation and solve real-world problems.

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### Nimble

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# BRAND ATTRIBUTE TESTING

---

## Bold

This attribute had universal acceptance across all affinity groups as being true of Auburn.

- State Economic Development Leader: More definitive call to action statement. Others are a little more passive or responsive.
- Academic Administrator: That's what we are.
- Academic Administrator: Definitely resonates.
- Employer: I do see that in their makeup.
- Guidance Counselor: They're confident in what they know and ready to take next step in whatever they do ... feel prepared.
- Staff Member: Yes, as a professional, we are confident on knowledge, skills and narrative we build around our initiatives, and we want to convince people of solutions to real-world problems.



THEY'RE CONFIDENT IN WHAT  
THEY KNOW AND READY TO  
TAKE THE NEXT STEP IN  
WHATEVER THEY DO.


# BRAND ATTRIBUTE TESTING

---

## Bold

A few external participants preferred “confident” over “bold,” and a few internal participants asked whether exploration and curiosity could be represented.

- State Economic Development Leader: I like the word confident. I always want someone who’s confident.
- Grantmaker: I like confident better than bold. Bold sounds a little ... in your face. You’re confident is a little softer. We know what we’re doing and going to get the job done.
- Faculty Member: How about being curious, ask questions, try new things?



I AGREE THAT THESE WORDS  
REPRESENT AUBURN AND WHAT  
THEY STRIVE TO BE.

# BRAND ATTRIBUTE TESTING

## PERSONALITY ATTRIBUTES

How people see us

How people see us

## VOICE

How we express our personality

### Authentic

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# BRAND ATTRIBUTE TESTING

---

## United

Many participants saw this as a representation of the Auburn Family and the relationships developed through the Family.

- Economic Development Leader: Something that Auburn consistently does ... gets behind a cause or a person.
- Mayor: I think that's Auburn. That is the Auburn Family.
- Mayor: You've got to develop relationships. It all starts with developing relationships. It's relationships for life when it comes to people from Auburn. They're there for one another for life.
- Student: United represents it well. It's kind of a life thing. Auburn does a good job providing opportunities to make that happen.
- Guidance Counselor: You definitely do have those connections for a lifetime no matter what you do after leaving that campus.



IT'S RELATIONSHIPS FOR LIFE  
WHEN IT COMES TO PEOPLE  
FROM AUBURN.



# BRAND ATTRIBUTE TESTING

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## United

Some participants applied “united” to the context of inclusion, as many internal stakeholders did. As a result, several viewed this attribute as aspirational.

- Employer: I like “united.” It’s increasingly hard to talk about these things ... We want people to feel included. Language that was mainstream for so long has become fraught and politicized. These seem universal ... well put and is substantive.
- Academic Administrator: We could work on this area and become more of who we’d like to be.
- Faculty Member: This seems aspirational. I hope it’s what we do. I’m immediately aware of the fact we don’t always do it. 90% of the time welcoming people in and respecting everybody.



WE COULD WORK ON THIS AREA  
AND BECOME MORE OF  
WHO WE’D LIKE TO BE.

# BRAND ATTRIBUTE TESTING

## PERSONALITY ATTRIBUTES

*How people see us*

*How people see us*

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# BRAND ATTRIBUTE TESTING

---

## Resolute

Resolute was not a familiar term for many participants. However, both internal and external stakeholders viewed the description—particularly purpose and determination—as an embodiment of Auburn,

- Academic Administrator: Translates very well in terms of our Creed. That's what it is. We all here at Auburn have a sense of purpose and have beliefs that knowledge is power, and we're here to make self and other people better.
- Academic Administrator: Confident in our abilities to identify issues and find ways to solve them ... Confident in abilities collectively. I trust people at Auburn to be the best at what they do, to have expertise/skills to address any kind of problem that comes their way.



I TRUST PEOPLE AT AUBURN TO  
BE THE BEST AT WHAT THEY DO.


# BRAND ATTRIBUTE TESTING

---

## Resolute

Resolute was not a familiar term for many participants. However, both internal and external stakeholders viewed the description—particularly purpose and determination—as an embodiment of Auburn.

- Grantmaker: Conveys confidence that [we] spoke about under “bold.” Know what our purpose is, believe in it and act on it.”
- Graduate: I don’t love the word resolute, but the definition behind it is Auburn.
- Graduate: I believe in this. Auburn does a great job in giving people purpose, allowing them to discover their purpose through the different avenues while you’re on campus as a student. Furthermore, having that foundation or united front, it all adds to someone being able to find their purpose or believe in their purpose.



AUBURN DOES A GREAT JOB IN  
GIVING PEOPLE PURPOSE,  
ALLOWING THEM TO  
DISCOVER THEIR PURPOSE.



# BRAND ATTRIBUTE TESTING

---

## Resolute

A few participants wanted to make sure the description did not convey rigidity.

- Grantmaker: If you're firm in your purpose and belief, are you going to be open to the belief and values of others?
- Academic Administrator: Beginning to sound like we're so sure of ourselves that we don't acknowledge the bumps along the road, the flaws that we have.



ARE YOU GOING TO BE OPEN  
TO THE BELIEF AND VALUES  
OF OTHERS?

# BRAND ATTRIBUTE TESTING

## PERSONALITY ATTRIBUTES

*How people see us*

*How people see us*

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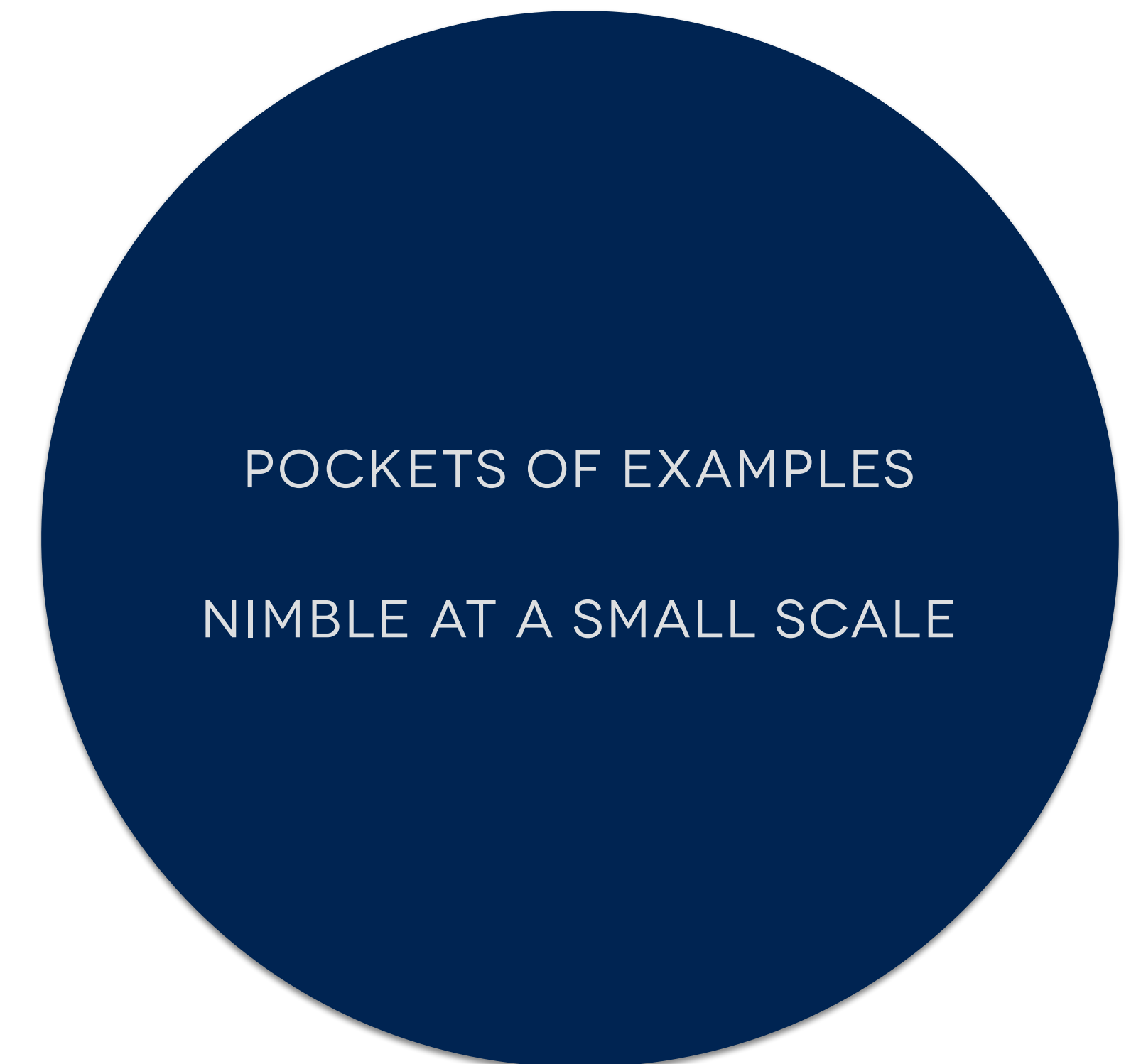
# BRAND ATTRIBUTE TESTING

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## Nimble

Internal participants used this topic to explore Auburn as an organizational enterprise, and external participants talked about higher education more broadly. (Several internal stakeholders spoke about how a decentralized structure can be an impediment to being nimble as an overall institution.)

- Academic Administrator: Pockets of examples where Auburn demonstrated nimbleness.
- Academic Administrator: Business is better at being nimble than universities are.
- Faculty: We can be nimble at a small scale ... much harder at institution the level.



# BRAND ATTRIBUTE TESTING

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## Nimble

The description—or what it evoked—resonated with many. Some participants suggested that “clever” could have a negative connotation.

- Guidance Counselor: They’re doing everything they can do to make Auburn experience a positive one for their students and parents.
- Faculty Member: I like the definition of nimble better than the word nimble.
- Graduate: How do you capture that Auburn is willing to make change and willing to move the entire university forward in a positive way and remain true to tradition?
- Guidance Counselor: Faculty and staff there have gone above and beyond to help students be the best students they can be.
- Academic Administrator: Clever could be associated with not deep thinking. One of the things we value is rigor, in pursuing any idea or any project. Clever sounds like a quick solution.



THEY’RE DOING EVERYTHING  
THEY CAN DO TO MAKE AUBURN  
EXPERIENCE A POSITIVE ONE



# Final Thoughts & Next Steps

RHB

## FINAL THOUGHTS & NEXT STEPS

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Brand attributes are one form of organizational language and culture that should be viewed as an “action suit” rather than a “straitjacket.” This means that how Auburn constituents speak and behave should emerge out of a set of shared resources, priorities and dreams that can be shaped for the most effective use as needs arise—like the tools that populate a superhero’s outfit and utility belt.

Sharing brand language strengthens Auburn’s ability to become coherent and to adapt messaging so that you can be champions for Auburn’s audiences.

# BRAND NARRATIVE & BRAND HEALTH INDEX

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Brand Narrative: Translating the remarkable institution that Auburn is into a verbal framework for expression to your many audiences.

- “It’s hard to put your finger on.”
- “It sounds cliché but there is an Auburn Family, and it’s hard to explain it.”

You now have the opportunity—and obligation—to establish and provide the definitive language to convey the Auburn story authentically and intentionally to different segments of your population.

# BRAND NARRATIVE & BRAND HEALTH INDEX

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## Quantitative Research

Auburn University's Brand Health Index will be determined through a quantitative survey instrument incorporating key metrics of brand health (including brand awareness, brand familiarity, brand associations and perceived quality/excellence).

The Brand Health Index will provide a baseline brand health measure for Auburn University to subsequently track progress on a regular basis (e.g., annually).





# AUBURN

## Qualitative Brand Study and Brand Attribute Testing

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July 14, 2023

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GREATER RELEVANCE