

Welcome

PR/Award Number: **P031A190185**Reporting Period: **10/1/2019 to 09/30/2020**Grantee Name: **Auburn University at Montgomery**Program Officer: **Yolande Badarou**
(Yolande.Badarou@ed.gov)

Grant Identification

General Information

PR Award Number:	P031A190185	Unit ID:	100830
Program:	Title III - Part A Strengthening Institutions		
Grantee Name (Institution Name):	Auburn University at Montgomery		
Address 1:	7440 East Drive		
Address 2: (Optional)			
City:	Montgomery		
State:	ALABAMA	Zip:	36117 Zip + 4:
Project Title:	Enhancing Persistence through Early Engagement, Experiential Learning, and Campus Connection		
Institution Type/Control:	4-year Private	Grant Type:	Individual Development Grant

Project Director

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Grant and Report Information

Grant Award Year:	10/01/2019
Reporting From:	10/1/2019 to 09/30/2020
Grant End Year:	09/30/2024
Reporting To:	Yolande Badarou (Yolande.Badarou@ed.gov)
Total Duration of Grant:	5 Yrs

Section 1

Section 1: Executive Summary

All questions are limited to 1500 characters or less (approximately 250 words) unless otherwise stated. Keep in mind that all questions, unless otherwise stated, pertain to the reporting period indicated above.

1. The goals of Titles III, V, and VII grants are to strengthen an institution's capacity to serve low-income and minority students. Use the following questions to summarize how your grant is enabling your institution to fulfill the legislative intent of the Titles III, V, or VII program during the most recently completed grant period.

Auburn University at Montgomery is a minority-serving institution with 60% who are first-generation students. More than half of all first-time freshmen receive Pell grants. The Title III grant provided funding to establish and staff an Experiential Education and Engagement Center, dedicated to improving student retention and graduation rates by increasing student connections to campus and community while providing opportunities for high-impact practices, such as peer mentorship, service learning, undergraduate research, and internships.

Although programming for faculty, staff, and students has been limited by the Covid-19 pandemic, the establishment of peer mentors in freshman courses has exceeded our target. Grant-funded software called Mentor Collective was launched during fall, 2020 to match freshmen and transfer students each with an upper-class student who provided support to the mentee, via text messages. Flags of concern were reported to University personnel who provided follow-up action, as needed. During the reporting period, 217 freshmen/transfer students were matched with mentors, 3,376 peer-to-peer text message conversations were logged, and 22 flags of concern were addressed.

Discussions between EEEEC staff and University personnel have elucidated high-impact practices already utilized at AUM, as well as areas of needed growth. Baseline data have been established, from which goals for year two of the grant have been set. Collaborative groups have been formed to

1a. Summarize the impact your institution's Titles III, V, or VII grant has had on enrollment this year.

2018 Fall enrollment total: 5,211

2019 Fall enrollment total: 5,188

2020 Fall enrollment total: 5,212

Fall, 2020 enrollment increased by 24 students over the previous year. This may indicate "normal" fluctuation in enrollment (as indicated by similar enrollment for 2018 above), rather than effects of the Title III grant initiatives. Year one of the grant period began October 1, 2019. The AUM campus closed and courses transitioned online during March, 2020 due to the covid-19 pandemic. The Experiential Education and Engagement Center was not fully staffed until June, 2020. Due to the late hiring and programming that was postponed/cancelled due to the pandemic, the impact of the Title III grant on student enrollment for Fall, 2020 was limited. Year two of the grant will reveal a more accurate assessment of the impact of grant-funded initiatives on student enrollment.

1b. Summarize the impact your institution's Titles III, V, or VII grant has had on graduation rates this year.

2018-19 IPEDS 6 year graduation rate: 34%

2019-20 IPEDS 6 year graduation rate: 34%

The 2019-2020 graduation rate remained unchanged from the previous year. Since grant-funded initiatives during year one of the grant were targeted primarily at freshmen students, the effect of the Title III grant on graduation rate was minimal during this first year. In the next few years, however, grant-funded initiatives will have a greater impact on graduation rates as current freshmen advance through their degree programs and as the Experiential Education and Engagement Center develops more robust opportunities for high-impact practices (internships, undergraduate research, service learning, mentoring) that benefit upperclass students.

1c. Summarize the impact your institution's Titles III, V, or VII grant has had on student persistence/retention this year.

Fall 2018 – Fall 2019 IPEDS first year retention rate: 66%

Fall 2019 – Fall 2020 IPEDS first year retention rate: 70%

Like most institutions, Auburn University at Montgomery was impacted profoundly by the novel coronavirus. Campus closings, virtual instruction, social distancing, mask-wearing, isolation, and a great deal of uncertainty arrived with the surging pandemic. Reports indicate that learning among financially-disadvantaged, minority students has been especially hard-hit by the pandemic, and this demographic includes a majority of our students.

Student retention increased by 4% during this reporting period, in part due to the establishment of two grant-funded peer mentoring programs. Beginning Fall, 2019, peer mentors were embedded in freshmen core courses

and other courses with high D/F/W rates. Peer mentors assist with activities in the classroom and tutor students, outside of class. We exceeded our first-year target number of peer mentors and this program continues to grow.

During Fall, 2020, Mentor Collective software was purchased to support freshmen and transfer students, with positive results. This software matched freshmen and transfer students each with an upperclass mentor who offered guidance through text messages. During this reporting period, 217 freshmen/transfer students were matched with mentors, 3,376 peer-to-peer text message conversations were logged, and 22 flags of concern were addressed.

1d. Summarize the impact your institution's Titles III, V, or VII grant has had on fiscal stability this year.

Student enrollment during the reporting period was stable (increased by 24 students), while retention of first-year freshmen increased by 4%. We attribute the increased retention, in part, to the grant-funded support provided to first-year students by peer mentors (embedded in the classroom, tutoring outside of class, and via text messaging). Despite the fact that a global pandemic raged during year one of the grant, Auburn University at Montgomery was able to maintain Fall, 2019 to Fall 2020 student enrollment and increase retention of first-year students. This reflects the strong commitment of the University's faculty, staff, and administration to helping our students succeed academically during these very trying times. It also reflects the impact that the Title III funds have had on the fiscal stability of the University. Increasing freshmen retention by 4% (in part thanks to grant-funded peer mentors) translates into significant revenue for the University, not just for this fiscal year, but for years to come, as these retained freshmen progress through their academic programs.

2. Based on the goals set forth in your comprehensive development plan and/or grant application, summarize the major milestones reached during this grant period.

The year-one goals of the grant were fulfilled or exceeded, except for one. The target was to increase the percentage of faculty participating in professional development (regarding experiential learning) to 40%. However, we recorded only 16% participation, due to the covid-19 pandemic, closing of campus, and the hiring of EEEEC staff, late in the first grant period. A robust series of faculty trainings are planned for year two. Major milestones reached include:

- The Experiential Education and Engagement Center (EEEC) was established and staff (including a Director, Learning Specialist/Research Coordinator, and Data Analyst/Assessment Specialist) were hired.
- A Peer Mentorship Program was created and mentors were embedded within freshmen core courses and other courses with historically high D/F/W rates.
- Mentor Collective software was purchased (funded, in part, with the Title III grant) to match freshmen and transfer students with upperclass mentors for support via text messaging.
- EEEEC personnel completed a variety of professional development offerings.
- University baseline values were established to set performance goals and monitor high-impact practices (service learning, peer mentorship, undergraduate research, and internships).
- An electronic dashboard was created to share student data with faculty and staff.
- Partnerships were formed between the University and community organizations to provide experiential learning opportunities for students.
- An annual report summarizing first-year activities of the EEEEC was produced and sent to an external evaluator for review.
- Feedback from the external evaluator was used to develop action items for year two.

3. What additional ways do you think the Education Department can support you in implementing the grant project?

As the EEEEC staff has learned more about the strengths, weaknesses, and needs of our University, in terms of experiential learning and efforts to improve student retention, we learn more about software, technology, expert consultants, guest lecturers, faculty development opportunities, etc. that would assist in reaching our goals. The best way that the Department of Education can assist the University with implementing our grant-funded projects is to realize that as we learn more and fine-tune our action items, that we might wish to transfer some of the budgeted funds from one category to another/others, in order to better fulfill our grant's mission. During year one, we requested a transfer of funds for a few new expenditures, and we anticipate that this will continue throughout the grant periods.

4. Has your institution's project(s) contributed to evidence-based (a) research, (b) knowledge, (c) practice, and/or (d) policy over the past year?

Yes No

If so, how? Use quantifiable measures where possible. These may be presentations, publications, program development, and recommendations for policy changes due to the project.

At the University level, the positive impact of peer mentoring has been noted. We continue to expand the Peer Mentoring Program, both in the number of mentors involved and in the variety of courses that incorporate peer mentors.

5. If your institution has experienced any unexpected outcomes because of this project, which affect, for better or worse, its capacity to fulfill the goals of the legislation, tell us about them here. Additionally, tell us about any challenges, such as natural and national disasters, that you have had during the reporting period or that you anticipate in the coming year which may affect your ability to meet the goals of your grant. Include, if applicable, your institution's plans to combat these challenges.

Like most educational institutions, Auburn University at Montgomery was affected in many ways by the covid-19 pandemic. In March 2020, campus was closed (and remained closed through Spring and Summer semesters), courses transitioned to virtual instruction, while faculty scrambled to learn technology and methods associated with online teaching. Instructors struggled to redesign course material for the online format and worked hard to help students succeed during this challenging period. This was not a good time to ask faculty to engage in professional development involving yet another course redesign (incorporating experiential learning into the curriculum). The challenges presented by the pandemic, in addition to the hiring of the EEEEC staff late in the grant period, limited our ability to provide experiential learning workshops with University instructors, as planned. However, with vaccination efforts underway and a return to on-campus instruction, we are developing a robust series of professional development opportunities for faculty, beginning in Summer, 2020. We feel confident that we will be able to meet our faculty development goals in year two.

6. Under the competition for which your grant application was funded, did you respond to any Education Department evidence standards?

Yes No

7. Have you conducted any formative evaluation relating to your grant?

Yes No

7a. If yes, summarize the results of the formative evaluation.

The Title III grant funded Mentor Collective software which matched freshmen and transfer students each with an upperclass mentor with whom they could communicate via text messages. Mentor Collective personnel conducted a formative assessment of AUM mentors and mentees to determine student satisfaction with the program and evaluate its effectiveness. Results of the assessment are summarized below:

91.09% of mentees in the program reported high satisfaction (selected 5 or above out of 7 when asked "how likely is it that you would recommend this program to another student?").

- This is calculated from 61 mentees who completed conversation reports across 101 responses (some mentees submit multiple reports throughout the program).
- 92/101 responses were high satisfaction (5 or above).

97.82% of mentors in the program reported high satisfaction (selected 5 or above out of 7 when prompted with "I am enjoying my experience as a mentor.").

- This is calculated from 135 mentors who completed conversation reports across 642 responses (some mentors submit multiple reports throughout the program).
- Mentor responses are always much higher than mentee responses because mentors are trained to report conversations with their mentees.
- 628/642 responses were high satisfaction (5 or above).

7b. Have the results of the formative evaluation yielded any improvements in your projects and/or campus?

The University has expanded mentor outreach to admitted students to connect the newly admitted students to the resources and mentors BEFORE they begin their study at AUM.

The mentor model has been expanded and enhanced as part of a project within the College of Science to create a tiered mentoring model in STEM classes, the goal to provide two levels of support for students and also the faculty teaching within the courses.

8. If you have conducted any other program evaluation, assessment, or research related to the grant, please summarize your results.

Towards the end of year one, a report summarizing work of the Experiential Education and Engagement Center (EEEC) was submitted to Dr. Marjorie Piechowski, an external evaluator. Dr. Piechowski noted that, despite the challenges presented by the global pandemic, year one goals of the grant had been met, except for faculty development participation in trainings focused on experiential learning. Her recommendations, which will help guide our goals for year two, include:

- Publicize the EEEEC more widely across campus and the community
- Attend department and college-wide faculty meetings

- Publicize the EEEEC to incoming students
- Utilize unused year-one funds to expand EEEEC programs
- Expand evaluation and assessment of EEEEC initiatives

9. Please attach any evaluation results including formative evaluations, summative evaluations, journal articles, presentations, and publications relating to your grant projects. These documents may provide greater detail of your results, or items that you would like to highlight.

2020_Evaluation_Report_of_Title_III_Year_One.pdf

2019_20_EEEEC_Annual_Report_FIN_ALpdf.pdf

MentorCollectiveAssessment.docx

Please indicate if the assessments were conducted by an evaluator hired specifically to monitor the grant, your institution's research office, or grant personnel (director, etc.).

Yes No

Section 2: Institutional Profile

Institutional Measures (GPRA indicators):

The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) is a statute that requires all Federal agencies to manage their endeavors and corresponding results. Each agency states what it intends to accomplish, identifies the resources required, and periodically reports its progress to Congress. It is expected GPRA indicators will contribute to improvements in accountability for the expenditures of public funds, improve congressional decision-making through more objective information on the effectiveness of Federal programs, and promote a new government focus on results, service delivery, and customer satisfaction. As of 2017, the GPRA indicators for Title III, Title V, and Title VII grants within the Higher Education Act (HEA) are (1) Enrollment, (2) Retention, (3) Graduation, and (4) Fiscal Stability.

2A Institutional Measures (GPRA Indicators)

Complete the following table up through the current Reporting Period. Your "Total Fall Enrollment" and "Fall to Fall Retention %" should come from the Fall Census Data.

Grant Year Collection Year	Pre-Grant (2018-19)	Year 1 (2019-20)	Year 2 (2020-21)	Year 3 (2021-22)	Year 4 (2022-23)	Year 5 (2023-24)
Total Fall Enrollment	5,211	5,188				
Fall-to-Fall Retention %	66	70				
4-Year Graduation Rate (2- & 4-Year)	10	13				
6-Year Graduation Rate (4-Year)	34	34				

2B Institutional Leadership

1. Have there been changes in institutional leadership (presidents, vice-presidents, provosts, etc.) or in the Grant Leadership (project director, activity director, etc.)?

- Yes No

2. Have there been changes in grant leadership (project director, activity director, etc.)?

- Yes No

2a.If yes, how has this affected the grant?

Search for Director of the Center was conducted first year and new Director came on board in June 1, 2020. This completed the team within the Center.

2C Accreditation

1. Which is your institution's primary accrediting agency? [Please check only one]

- Middle States Commission on Higher Education
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
- The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
- Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges Senior College and University Commission
- Other (please specify)

Accreditation Changes

1. Has the accreditation of your institution changed since you began the project (e.g., status changes or the addition of new programs)? (Include guidance around accreditation changes in user manual and FAQs).

Yes No

2D Audit

1. Institutions that expend \$750,000 worth of federal funds in one year must complete an audit annually pursuant to 2 CFR part 200, subpart F. Were you required to complete an audit pursuant to 2 CFR part 200, subpart F?

Yes No

2. If yes, has an audit pursuant to 2 CFR part 200, subpart F been completed?

Yes No

2b. If no, why hasn't an audit pursuant to CFR part 200, subpart F been completed? When do you plan to complete the audit?

The institution engages PwC for the Uniform Guidance Audit which meets this requirement. The last UG audit that PwC has completed to date is for FY2019. PwC will begin the FY 20 UG audit soon, and it is due by June 30.

2E Endowment

1. Do you have an Endowment Challenge Grant that has not matured?

Yes No

2. Are grant funds from this award being used for an endowment activity?

Yes No

3. Do you have an endowment activity on a previous award not matured?

Yes No

If yes to any of the above questions, you will be required to complete the FY 2021 Endowment Financial Report (OMB 1840-0564) by the deadline. The report is available on the EFRS tab in this system.

Section 3: Grant Project Status and Budget

3A Project Objectives

1. What is the overall goal of your grant?

The overall goals of our grant include the following:

1. To increase student engagement with the University.
2. To establish strong retention and persistence rates for first-year and first-generation students.
3. To establish strong graduation rates for first-time students, particularly those who are high need.

2. What is the expected long-term impact of the grant project on the institution?

The expected long-term impacts of the grant on the University include the following:

1. To make Auburn University at Montgomery the institution of choice.
2. To improve the University's financial stability by providing infrastructure to increase student engagement and retention, leading to an increase in the number of students ultimately graduating.

3B Grant Activities

Number of Grant Activities: 2

Grant Activity 1/2

Activity Description:

Develop High Impact Practices that connect students to campus.

Objective 1/7

Objective Description:

Increase the number of students participating in experiential learning opportunities. 2337 undergraduate students participated in experiential learning opportunities in the 19?20 academic year. Data for experiential learning inside the course was collected and analyzed by tracking the students that participated in courses tagged as experiential learning types as well as courses submitted through faculty/staff surveys. Data for experiential learning outside of the course was collected and analyzed by tracking the students that had been tagged by our EEEEC activities and attributes.

Objective Status: On schedule

Performance Measure 1/1

Performance Measure Description:

Count of Students: Baseline set in 2019-2020 year. This number will increase 10% each year.

Measure Type:

Date Measured:

Frequency Measured:

Project

09/30/2020

Measured each semester

Data Type:



Raw Number



Ratio

Target	Actual
999.00	2337.00

Objective 2/7

Objective Description:

Increase number of students participating in undergraduate research opportunities. 635 students participated in undergraduate research opportunities in the 19?20 academic year. Data was collected and analyzed by tracking the undergraduate students that participated in courses tagged as research type as well as courses submitted through faculty/staff survey.

Objective Status: On schedule

Performance Measure 1/1

Performance Measure Description:

Baseline established for all undergraduate students in 19-20 academic year. This number will increase 10% each year.

Measure Type:

Date Measured:

Frequency Measured:

Project

09/30/2020

Measured each semester

Data Type:



Raw Number



Ratio

Target	Actual
999.00	635.00

Objective 3/7

Objective Description:

Expand the presence of peer mentors within University Success Course. Twenty-five peer mentors are hired to work with student within the freshman success course in the 2019-2020 academic year.

Objective Status: On schedule

Performance Measure 1/1

Performance Measure Description:

Initial year 5 peer mentors will be hired to work with students within Freshman Student Success Course. The number of peer mentors will increase by 5 each year.

Measure Type: Project **Date Measured:** 09/30/2020 **Frequency Measured:** each semester

Data Type: **Raw Number**
 Ratio

Target	Actual
5.00	25.00

Objective 4/7

Objective Description:

Increase number of faculty participating in professional development focused on experiential learning and undergraduate research. 16% of AUM faculty members have taken part in at least one professional development activity focused on incorporating experiential learning or undergraduate research into the classroom. Data was collected and analyzed by tracking attendees of all professional development activities.

Objective Status: Not Achieved

Performance Measure 1/1

Performance Measure Description:

By Fall 2020, 40% of AUM faculty will have taken part in at least one professional development activity focused on incorporating experiential learning or undergraduate research into the classroom. Percentage will increase 10% each year until by Spring 2024, 80% of AUM faculty will have taken part in at least one professional development activity.

Measure Type: Project **Date Measured:** 09/30/2020 **Frequency Measured:** each semester

Data Type: **Raw Number**
 Ratio

Target	Actual
138.00	54.00
/	/
344	344
40%	16%

Objective 5/7

Objective Description:

Increase retention rates for first time freshman. Fall 2019 bachelor's degree seeking, first-time, full-time freshman cohort retention rate is 70%, a 4% increase from Fall 2018 cohort baseline data. Data collected and analyzed by AUM Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

Objective Status: On schedule

Performance Measure 1/1

Performance Measure Description:

Retention rates will increase 1% per year from Fall 2018 baseline.

Measure Type: **Date Measured:** **Frequency Measured:**

Project

09/30/2020

Annual

Data Type:



Raw Number



Ratio

Target	Actual
404.00	420.00
/	/
602	602
67%	70%

Objective 6/7

Objective Description:

Increase retention rates: 2nd - 3rd year and 3rd - 4th year. Fall 2018 bachelor's degree seeking, first-time, full-time freshman cohort 2nd to 3rd year retention rate is 52%. Baseline data for Fall 2018 bachelor's degree seeking, first-time, full-time freshman cohort 3rd year to 4th year retention rate will be determined when official Fall 2021 statistics are available from AUM Office of Institutional Effectiveness (October 2021)

Objective Status: On schedule

Performance Measure 1/1

Performance Measure Description:

Retention rates will increase 1% per year from Fall 2018 baseline.

Measure Type:

Date Measured:

Frequency Measured:

Project

09/30/2020

Annual

Data Type:



Raw Number



Ratio

Target	Actual
999.00	377.00
/	/
999	730
100%	52%

Objective 7/7

Objective Description:

Increase graduation rates. Fall 2012 bachelor's degree seeking, first-time, full-time freshman cohort 6 year graduation rate is 34%, a 6% increase from Fall 2011 cohort baseline data. Fall 2013 bachelor's degree seeking, first-time, full-time freshman cohort 6 year graduation rate is 34%, a 0% increase from Fall 2012 cohort data. Data collected and analyzed by AUM Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

Objective Status: On schedule

Performance Measure 1/1

Performance Measure Description:

Graduation rates will increase by 1% per year from Fall 2011 cohort baseline.

2011 cohort 6 year graduation rate: 28%

2012 cohort 6 year graduation rate: 34%

Measure Type:

Date Measured:

Frequency Measured:

Project

09/30/2020

Annual

Data Type:



Raw Number



Ratio

Target	Actual
207.00	200.00
/	/

589	589
35%	34%

Grant Activity 2/2

Activity Description:

Close the loop in student data tracking, management, and interpretation. Develop a dashboard that allows faculty to see the impact of experiential learning activities on student retention and persistence.

Objective 1/1

Objective Description:

Increase faculty and staff access to timely student information. Database and data visualization tools were still in development at this time. Training began subsequently.

Objective Status: Not Achieved

Performance Measure 1/1

Performance Measure Description:

By Fall 2020, 20% of faculty and staff will have participated in professional development training on accessing engagement and persistence data. Percentage will increase by 10% per year. By Spring 2024, 60% of faculty and staff will have participated in training.

Measure Type:

Date Measured:

Frequency Measured:

Project

09/30/2020

Annual

Data Type:



Raw Number



Ratio

Target	Actual
157.00	1.00
/	/
787	787
20%	0%

3C Budget

Enter your budget. If you click the "changes" box, a text field will display within that section for you to enter a line item budget narrative explaining the changes

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	
Budget Category	Carryover Balance (Previous Year)	Actual Budget	Total Budget (B+C)	Expenditure	Non-Federal Expenditure	Carryover Balance (Current Year)(D-E)	Carryover Percentage (G/D as %)	Next Year's Actual Budget	Change
Personnel	0.00	326,000.00	326,000.00	97,546.43	15,609.05	228,453.57	70.08	352,838.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fringe Benefits	0.00	50,376.00	50,376.00	26,526.94	5,088.19	23,849.06	47.34	40,573.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Travel	0.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	672.80	0.00	2,327.20	77.57	3,000.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equipment	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supplies	0.00	13,000.00	13,000.00	1,113.42	0.00	11,886.58	91.44	24,000.00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Please state the changes made to Supplies below:

Increase supplies by \$11,00 for Year 1 of Suitable Software - approved use of carryover from Year 1.

Contractual	0.00	25,425.00	25,425.00	0.00	0.00	25,425.00	100.00	25,475.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Construction	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Endowment	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	<input type="checkbox"/>

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	
Budget Category	Carryover Balance (Previous Year)	Actual Budget	Total Budget (B+C)	Expenditure	Non-Federal Expenditure	Carryover Balance (Current Year)(D-E)	Carryover Percentage (G/D as %)	Next Year's Actual Budget	Changes
Total	\$0.00	\$417,801.00	\$417,801.00	\$125,859.59	\$20,697.24	\$291,941.41		\$445,886.00	

3D Summary Budget Narrative

Please explain budget changes, as needed, particularly the use of funds from cost savings, carryover funds and other expanded authorities changes to your budget. Provide an explanation if you are NOT expending funds at the expected rate. Describe any significant changes to your budget resulting from modifications of Grant activities.

1. Have all funds that were to be drawn down during this performance period been drawn down?

No Yes

If no, please provide a description of the funds (i.e., the amount) that have not been drawn down in the GAPS/G5 system, and explain why they haven't been drawn down:

There are significant unused funds which remain following year one of the grant. These funds remain unspent for the following reasons:

- Staff of the EEEEC were hired late into year one of the grant, and some funding for peer mentors remains, resulting in personnel and fringe benefit savings of around \$248,623.
- The covid-19 pandemic resulted in the closing of campus and a University ban on large gatherings, external presenters, and travel to conferences. Contractual funds, and most of the money allocated for travel remain unspent, totaling around \$27,752.
- Few monies were spent on supplies (training materials, promotional items, office supplies, etc.) during the University's closure, leaving an unused balance of \$11, 887 of the allocated funds for supplies.

2. Did you have any unexpended funds at the end of the performance period?

No Yes

If you did, explain why, provide the amount, and indicate how you plan to use the unexpended funds (carryover) in the next budget period.

There are significant unused funds which remain following year one of the grant. These funds remain unspent for the following reasons:

- Staff of the EEEEC were hired late into year one of the grant, and some funding for peer mentors remains, resulting in personnel and fringe benefit savings of around \$248,623.
- The covid-19 pandemic resulted in the closing of campus and a University ban on large gatherings, external presenters, and travel to conferences. Contractual funds, and most of the money allocated for travel remain unspent, totaling around \$27,752.
- Few monies were spent on supplies (training materials, promotional items, office supplies, etc.) during the University's closure, leaving an unused balance of \$11, 887 of the allocated funds for supplies.

3. Do you anticipate any changes in your budget for the next performance period that will require prior approval from the Department (as designated by EDGAR, 34 CFR 74.25 and 80.30, as applicable).

No Yes

4. Is this a cooperative arrangement grant?

No Yes

5. Many grantees include community partners, other institutions of higher education, and secondary schools in their work. Please complete the table below (if applicable) with information related to any partners that you might be working with on your grant. Also describe if and how these partners roles have changed, and whether this had any impact on your ability to achieve your approved project objectives and/or grant activities.

<p>Partner Name: City of Montgomery - Dept. of Economic and Community Development</p> <p>Description of Partner's Role: AUM is partnering with the City of Montgomery on a year-long Shady Street Habitat Improvement Project. AUM students are helping to remove debris, create walking trails, reduce invasive/exotic vegetation, research biota and history of the area and create interpretive signage, and plant a pollinator garden.</p> <p>Did role change?: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p>Impact on your ability to achieve objectives/activities: Provided service learning opportunities for our students. Positive impact on number of students involved in service learning.</p>

Partner Name: Lagoon Park Trail Association

Description of Partner's Role:

• The Lagoon Park Trail Association is a group of volunteers that help to create and maintain trails at Lagoon Park for hiking, mountain biking, etc. They have welcomed AUM faculty and staff in helping with their work at the park and have provided lunch for student volunteers. This is an excellent resource for students to do community service, in close proximity to the AUM campus, without having to drive long distances. Several of the Lagoon Park Trail Association board members are alumni of AUM and may be able to provide opportunities for AUM students to seek internships and/or employment.

Did role change?:

No Yes

Impact on your ability to achieve objectives/activities:

Enhanced the service learning opportunities for our students and also opened up opportunities for future internships.

Partner Name: Oak Mountain State Park

Description of Partner's Role:

We have partnered with Oak Mountain State Park to do a series of Warhawk Workdays – to provide students the opportunity to do service learning. Workdays have involved creating a pollinator garden with native plants, and there are plans to help with renovations and exhibit development at their interpretive center, as well as trail and park maintenance, as needed. OMSP has discussed possible internships, as well.

Did role change?:

No Yes

Impact on your ability to achieve objectives/activities:

Enhanced service learning opportunities for our students.

Partner Name: Alabama Wildlife Center

Description of Partner's Role:

Alabama Wildlife Center has offered to allow AUM students to assist with their operations to care for injured and orphaned birds. There are many areas where AUM students can be involved, including: feeding birds, pen maintenance and cleaning, writing educational materials, designing exhibits, helping with events, etc. Due to the winter covid surge, we have only helped there once so far – with decorations for a Halloween event for the public.

Did role change?:

No Yes

Impact on your ability to achieve objectives/activities:

Enhanced service learning opportunities for our students.

6. Do you wish to make any changes in the grant's activities for the next budget period?

No Yes

7A. Were there any changes to key personnel during this reporting period?

No Yes

7B. If yes, did you receive approval from your Program Officer?

No Yes

8. Have you met your goals and objectives as outlined in your approved activities for this reporting period?

No Yes Partially

If "no" or "partially" please explain:

All but one goal of the grant was met. We did not meet the 40% faculty participation in experiential learning-focused professional development due to the covid-19 pandemic, campus closure, and delayed hiring of EEE staff during year

one of the grant. However, beginning in May, 2021, we have a robust series of professional development sessions planned for faculty in year two of the grant.

9. Provide any other appropriate information about the status of your project including any unanticipated outcomes or benefits from your project in the space below:

The threat of the covid-19 pandemic hung over year one of the Title III grant, limiting/postponing/canceling numerous planned activities, including faculty professional development, travel, and face-to-face experiential learning. However, despite the pandemic, a robust Peer Mentorship Program was established to support new freshmen and transfer students. Peer mentors were placed inside classrooms, they tutored students outside of class, and were available for support through a text messaging system. While educational institutions throughout the U.S. faced reduced enrollment and declining retention, Auburn University at Montgomery maintained stable enrollment and increased freshmen retention by 4%. We believe that new students persisted in their studies, during unprecedented pandemic challenges, in part, due to the grant-funded support of their peer mentors.

Section 4: LAAs

LAAs

Grant Activity	LAAs	Total Dollars Spent
<p><u>Grant Activity 1:</u></p> <p>Develop High Impact Practices that connect students to campus.</p>	<p><u>LAAs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and improvement of academic programs <u>Dollars Spent: \$22,722.00</u> • Purchase of library books, periodicals, and other educational materials, including telecommunications program materials. <u>Dollars Spent: \$317.49</u> • Funds management, administrative management, and acquisition of equipment for use in strengthening funds management. <u>Dollars Spent: \$795.93</u> • Academic tutoring, counseling, and student support service programs designed to improve academic success. <u>Dollars Spent: \$15,419.81</u> • Other Activity : Program Coordinator effort allocation 75% <u>Dollars Spent: \$124,073.37</u> 	<p>\$163,328.60</p>
<p><u>Grant Activity 2:</u></p> <p>Close the loop in student data tracking, management, and interpretation. Develop a dashboard that allows faculty to see the impact of experiential learning activities on student retention and persistence.</p>	<p><u>LAAs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other Activity : Program Coordinator Effort allocation (25%) Data Analyst <u>Dollars Spent: \$53,402.89</u> 	<p>\$53,402.89</p>
<p>Total Dollars Spent on All Activities</p>		<p>\$216,731.49</p>

Section 5: Institutionalization

Grant Activity 1

Develop High Impact Practices that connect students to campus.

Financial Cost (\$)

153,154.00

Approved Line Items

75% of Project Coordinator salary and benefits are allocated to Activity 1. 100% of Instructional Specialist salary and benefits are allocated to Activity 1. These two positions will transition to the University budget in a stair-step fashion over the course of Years 3 – 5 of the grant (Yr 3 – 25%; Yr 4 – 50%; Yr 5 – 75%; and then beyond moving fully to the University budget.

Institutionalization Plan

As noted above, the University has committed to a transition of these full-time positions to the University budget. In addition, the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan has a goal to “Enhance pathways for educational success” by “increasing opportunities for student engagement and service learning on campus”. In addition, a specific strategic direction is focused on developing a peer mentor program in the student success course. A separate goal focuses on research with a commitment to “increasing student participation in research and creative activity to ensure 5 percent undergraduate participation and 15 percent graduate participation by 2024”. The University has made a budget commitment of \$50,000 to support undergraduate research efforts in AY '20-21 and further committed to an increase in that support in AY '21-22 to \$100,000. A third goal focuses on “Improving faculty and staff recruitment and retention”. with a commitment to supporting faculty professional development.

Grant Activity 2

Close the loop in student data tracking, management, and interpretation. Develop a dashboard that allows faculty to see the impact of experiential learning activities on student retention and persistence.

Financial Cost (\$)

93,134.00

Approved Line Items

Approved Line Items 25% of Project Coordinator salary and benefits are allocated to Activity 1. 100% of Instructional Specialist salary and benefits are allocated to Activity 1. These two positions will transition to the University budget in a stair-step fashion over the course of Years 3 – 5 of the grant (Yr 3 – 25%; Yr 4 – 50%; Yr 5 – 75%; and then beyond moving fully to the University budget.

Institutionalization Plan

25% of Project Coordinator salary and benefits is allocated to Activity 2 100% of Data Analyst salary and benefits are allocated to Activity 2. These two positions will transition to the University budget in a stair-step fashion over the course of Years 3 – 5 of the grant (Yr 3 – 25%; Yr 4 – 50%; Yr 5 – 75%; and then beyond moving fully to the University budget.

2. In the space provided below please explain any notable experiences you have had in institutionalizing this project. Please list any considerable challenges, successes, or failures.

Like most educational institutions, Auburn University at Montgomery was affected in many ways by the covid-19 pandemic. In March 2020, campus was closed (and remained closed through Spring and Summer semesters), courses transitioned to virtual instruction, faculty and staff transitioned to teaching and working remotely.

Challenges created by this transition included limited ability to create experiential learning opportunities for our students, limits on internship opportunities and barriers, both in terms of time and desire for faculty development.

Huge success was realized in our expansion of mentoring for our students. Student mentors transitioned to the online environment and provided much needed support to instructors and their peers and also served as a line of communication for students facing significant life challenges.

The hiring of the EEEEC staff late in the grant period, limited our ability to provide experiential learning workshops with University instructors, as planned. However, with vaccination efforts underway and a return to on-campus instruction, we are developing a robust series of professional development opportunities for faculty, beginning in Summer, 2020. We feel confident that we will be able to meet our faculty development goals in year two.

3. Has the grant facilitated or contributed to bringing additional resources to your institution, for example, new Federal, State, or local dollars that can be attributed partly to your grant activities? Please explain.

The mentor model funded by the Title III grant was used as a foundation for a grant proposal to the Howard Hughes Medical Institute Inclusive Excellence Grant (HHMI). The grant was successful and received first round funding of \$30,000 with an invitation to participate in additional steps in the process.

The service learning activities within the Title III Center received support funding from the following: Alabama Audubon Society (\$1500, for supplies to be used on field trips); Mid-South Council of Alabama Resource Conservation and Development (\$7000 to purchase equipment for service learning projects for students)

Certification

You do NOT need to send a signed certification form to ED or upload a signed certification form.

1. Reporting Period

10/1/2019 to 09/30/2020

2. PR Award Number

P031A190185

3. Project Title

Enhancing Persistence through Early Engagement, Experiential Learning, and Campus Connection

4. Recipient Information

Name: Auburn University at Montgomery

Address: 7440 East Drive , , Montgomery , ALABAMA 36117

5. Contact Information

Name: Mrinal Varma

Title: Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor

Phone: (334)-244-3600 Ext:

Email: varma@aum.edu

6. Authorized Representative

(The Institutions President or someone with the institutional authority to sign off on federal sponsored agreements) **To the best of my knowledge and belief, all data in this performance report are true and correct.**

Name

Joy L. Clark

Email

jclark@aum.edu

Phone

(334)-244-3539

Date

04/16/2021

Report Submitted

This report was submitted by **Joy L. Clark** on **04/16/2021**.

If you have additional questions, or need to make changes, please [contact](#) the Help Desk or your Program Officer.
