



THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

Search for the Chair Department of Civil, Construction, and Environmental Engineering University of Alabama at Birmingham

The School of Engineering at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) seeks an ambitious leader and outstanding researcher, teacher, and scholar to serve as tenured Professor and Chair of the Department of Civil, Construction, and Environmental Engineering (CCEE). This is an exciting opportunity to significantly grow the department in the coming years and increase its research productivity while maintaining already strong relationships with industry in Birmingham – a metro area of 1.1 million and a regional construction hub. Candidates must have a PhD in Civil, Construction, or Environmental engineering, or a closely related discipline. Preferred qualifications include demonstrable leadership experience and professional licensure. The Chair will join a department of 11 faculty, 150 undergraduate majors, and 35 full-time graduate students. With ample resources from strong enrollment in our successful online master’s programs, the Chair will have the opportunity to make multiple faculty hires in the coming years. CCEE enjoys strong relationships with industry and an outstanding track record of educating students for careers in the engineering and construction industries. The department’s context within a university that ranks No. 32 in the nation among federal research funding offers excellent opportunities for collaboration with units across UAB, including a top School of Public Health with a Department of Environmental Health Sciences, the Materials Processing and Applications Development Center (MPAD), and the Heersink School of Medicine. Outside the university, CCEE faculty enjoy ongoing collaborations with state and local departments of transportation, local governments and planning agencies, and industry partners that include utilities, construction companies, manufacturers, and design firms. The School of Engineering is in the process of establishing an endowed professorship to be held by the Chair and will be moving into a new state-of-the-art building in 2025.

UAB is a Carnegie Level 1 research university and academic health center with more than 22,000 students and 2,400 full-time faculty members. The University has made great advances across several metrics in recent years, including enrollment, student academic quality, and research productivity. Driven by a collaborative and entrepreneurial character, UAB is Alabama’s economic and research engine and the top provider of healthcare to Alabamans. In 2021, *Forbes* named UAB the No. 1 best large employer in the nation and No. 4 for diversity. UAB was ranked the top young university in the nation and 10th world-wide in 2019 in the Times Higher Education rankings.

The next Chair will strategically pursue opportunities for growth in areas where the department can be world class, leveraging existing strengths and exciting opportunities for future directions

provided by UAB and Birmingham. They will articulate an exciting vision for leading and building innovative programs and expanding research through strategic faculty hires, drawing upon the strengths of the CCEE Department and collaborations with other units across the School and University.

The University of Alabama at Birmingham has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist with this important search. Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

University of Alabama at Birmingham

UAB is home to the [College of Arts and Sciences](#) and the [Schools of Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing, Optometry, Public Health, Health Professions, Engineering, Business, and Education](#). In addition, the [Graduate School](#) and the [Honors College](#) are organized to provide the special resources necessary for students in those schools to be successful. The [UAB Libraries](#) are integrated academic and health science libraries, reflective of UAB's unique role as both a major research and teaching institution and as an academic medical center.

President Ray Watts, MD, became UAB's seventh president in 2013. Prior to being named President, Dr. Watts had been Senior Vice President and Dean of the School of Medicine, and the John N. Whitaker Professor and Chair of the Department of Neurology in the UAB School of Medicine. Provost Pamela Benoit, PhD, became Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost at UAB in 2017. She joined UAB from Ohio University, where she served as Executive Vice President and Provost for eight years.

The [University of Alabama at Birmingham Health System](#) is an academic health system based in Birmingham with facilities and affiliations throughout the State of Alabama. The centerpiece of the system is UAB Hospital, which is today one of the four largest academic medical centers in the United States. The hospital is also the third-largest public hospital in the nation, providing patients with a complete range of primary and specialty care services. As a university hospital, UAB Hospital is a major center for clinical research and home to some of the top medical programs in America, according to *U.S. News & World Report*. UAB Hospital is listed on *Becker's Hospital Review's* 2019 list of 100 Great Hospitals in America.

The [University of Alabama System](#) consists of three doctoral research universities: The University of Alabama, the University of Alabama at Birmingham, and The University of Alabama in Huntsville. The System is governed by the Board of Trustees. Each of the component institutions has a unique mission that is consistent with the broader mission of the System. The System's Chief Executive Officer is Finis St. John, IV, who served for 17 years on the Board of Trustees before becoming Chancellor in 2019.

In 2019, through a process known as the [UAB Grand Challenge](#), UAB launched "Healthy Alabama 2030: Live HealthSmart," a program to expand proven innovations and to change policies, neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces to make Alabama a model of healthy living. In 2021,

UAB was named one of seven universities in the National Academies [Gulf Research program](#) designed to provide scholars the background, training, education and tools to implement robust, community-oriented projects in the Gulf Coast region. CCEE is an integral player in both efforts.

For more than five decades, UAB has been pushing frontiers in education; research, innovation and economic development; community engagement; and patient care. UAB is proud to be located in the heart of Birmingham and is committed not only to creating new knowledge through research, but also translating that knowledge to improve the community, and indeed to improve society. UAB students, faculty, and staff are committed to taking an influential role as responsible stewards of our environmental resources, and to using educational, operational, and research activities to promote global sustainability thinking and local action.

Birmingham has been recognized as an “All-America City” by the National Civic League, designating it as one of the top 10 American cities to live and work, and one of the top 10 entrepreneurial and job growth hot spots in America. It enjoys a close relationship with UAB, located in the heart of downtown. The University and Birmingham have partnered on several initiatives to improve [energy efficiency and planning](#), [educational opportunity](#), and the quality of [education](#) for children in the city. In 2018, Birmingham received a [Smart Cities Challenge](#) grant and is partnering with UAB and the Alabama Power Company to leverage data intelligence to inform decisions and develop programs to improve the city’s infrastructure.

Birmingham is also a renowned culinary destination with a host of attractions only a short walk from UAB’s campus, including the Birmingham Civil Rights District National Monument, comprising sites such as Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, Kelly Ingram Park, and the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute—a major destination for visitors from around the world. Birmingham’s cultural scene is thriving, with museums, numerous galleries, music and arts festivals, theatres and live music venues, a professional ballet company, a professional opera company, a School of Fine Arts, the Jazz Hall of Fame, and the recent restoration of the historic Lyric and Alabama Theatres. In September 1996, UAB’s Alys Stephens Performing Arts Center became the home of the Alabama Symphony Orchestra. The city has more green space per capita than any other major city in the United States.

The School of Engineering

The UAB School of Engineering is dedicated to research excellence and providing the highest quality education to a diverse population of future engineers. It consists of four departments: Biomedical Engineering (joint with the School of Medicine), CCEE, Electrical and Computer Engineering, and Mechanical and Materials Engineering. The School has approximately 50 faculty and enrolls about 900 undergraduate and 500 graduate students across six undergraduate majors and 15 graduate degree programs. The School offers highly adaptable programs that range from M.S./Ph.D pathways to thriving online master of engineering degree tracks for working professionals. The School offers unique opportunities for interdisciplinary research collaboration within engineering, across the university, and with local industry. The School is ABET accredited with the next comprehensive view scheduled for 2024-25.

UAB Engineering emphasizes real-world, hands-on education, with students developing projects for local clients as early as freshman year. Most of our students pursue internships, co-ops, and other experiential learning, and in 2021 we launched our [Guaranteed Internship](#) program to ensure this opportunity is available to everyone. Nearly 30% of our undergraduates are women, more than 25% are students of color, and many are first-generation college students. Most of our graduate students are working professionals employed by construction, utility, materials, and manufacturing firms in Birmingham and beyond. Beyond the Civil, Construction, and Environmental Engineering Department, the School of Engineering boasts one of the top-ranked Biomedical Engineering programs in the South, and a long tradition of advanced materials research supported by an on-campus foundry and the [Materials Processing & Applications Development \(MPAD\) Center](#). Our Engineering Technology and Applications Development ([EITD](#)) group builds hardware for the International Space Station (ISS) and is supporting multiple payloads aboard the ISS at any one time.

In 2025, the School will move to an \$80M state-of-the-art building as part of [UAB's new Science and Engineering Complex](#). This new facility will house classrooms, teaching labs, and interdisciplinary research labs in areas ranging from neuroengineering and wearable devices to transportation and smart cities. A Student Success Center combining career services, tutoring, and advising and a Design and Prototyping Lab supporting design classes, student projects, and K-12 outreach will anchor the new building.

Leadership

Dr. Jeffrey Holmes joined UAB as the Dean of the School of Engineering in July 2020. He came to UAB from the University of Virginia, where he was a professor of biomedical engineering and medicine and the inaugural director of the Center for Engineering in Medicine. The initiative was designed to jumpstart medical innovation by fostering partnerships between engineers and clinicians. Prior to UVA, he taught at Columbia University where he helped found and build a new biomedical engineering department.

More information about the School may be found at: <https://www.uab.edu/engineering/home/>

The Department

The Department of Civil, Construction, and Environmental Engineering boasts a thriving undergraduate program, multiple highly-ranked online Master of Engineering programs, and MS/PhD programs. CCEE faculty conduct research in the built environment, congestion management, infrastructure resiliency, and high-performance structural materials. Birmingham is home to major construction companies that generate over \$6.5 billion in annual revenue. The department has a 100 percent placement rate for graduates seeking jobs and 85 percent of undergraduates in the department complete a regional internship or co-op during their time at UAB. The Department is also a partner in [STRIDE](#), the US DOT/RITA funded University Transportation Center for the Southeast, and has strong, longstanding working relationships with the Alabama Department of Transportation, the Regional Planning Commission of Greater

Birmingham and the City of Birmingham. CCEE has coordinated degree programs and research collaborations with UAB's School of Public Health (SPH), which is ranked in the top-20 nationally by US News and World Report.

More information about CCEE can be found at: <https://www.uab.edu/engineering/civil/>

The Role of Chair: Opportunities and Challenges

Reporting to the Dean, the Chair serves as the chief academic and administrative officer of the Department. The Chair is responsible for strategic planning, academic leadership, curriculum development, and fiscal management. They will be a champion for the Department within the School, across the University, and in the broader community. This work will include fundraising for scholarships, buildings, endowments, and other School priorities.

The successful Chair will bring inspirational vision and a deep-rooted commitment to the work of the faculty and success of the Department and will address the following opportunities and challenges:

Grow research

With annual research expenditures of about \$1 million, the next Chair will be charged with growing the department's research enterprise. They will strategically pursue focused areas of research excellence, developing cluster groups to work on research themes that further distinguish the department regionally and nationally. The Chair must be research active and have the credentials, energy, and vision to lead the department to research success in exciting new areas. They will have the opportunity to build on existing relationships across UAB and with local industry and government agencies.

Hire and develop faculty

Thanks to strong online enrollment growth, particularly in the [Master of Engineering in Construction Engineering Management](#), the chair will have the resources and opportunity to grow the department by 50% over the next 5 years. They must be a compelling recruiter with the vision to identify areas where the department can stand out and to strategically build teams of faculty who complement one another. The Chair must also be a connector and strong mentor to enable faculty to succeed and build a culture that will lead to long-term faculty retention.

Develop resources and fundraise

Departments in the School are not limited by a centrally controlled budget or allocated faculty lines. Chairs are empowered to develop resources from enrollment and fundraising and to use those funds to develop programs and recruit faculty. The Chair will seek out opportunities and partnerships to develop resources that can be invested in the department. This will include innovations in the curriculum to attract students and building on strong relationships with industry, alumni, and the department's advisory board.

Develop and communicate an affirming vision for the Department

The Chair will join a department consisting of a mix of senior and junior faculty with research and teaching expertise across a range of areas. The Chair must work with faculty and student stakeholders and School leadership to develop a vision and identity to bring the department together. In planning for the success of the department's future, the Chair should prize open, transparent communication; clear and streamlined processes for action; and creative, forward-thinking ideas.

Qualifications and Experience

The successful candidate will be an accomplished scholar with a strong track record of research and teaching. They will have demonstrated academic leadership skills and vision to lead a department that emphasizes research excellence and quality undergraduate and graduate instruction. This individual must be able to work effectively with a broad range of constituents, including senior leadership, faculty, students, staff, donors, and external partners. The candidate will be expected to demonstrate many, if not all, of the following qualifications and experience:

- A record of powerful advocacy for teaching, learning, and research; experience in developing and pursuing a strategy for growth and success in an academic setting;
- The ability to articulate an exciting vision for leading education initiatives, expanding research, and leading and building innovative programs;
- The ability to foster interdisciplinary activities and develop large-scale research initiatives between the department and other departments inside and outside the School of Engineering;
- A commitment to enhancing and nourishing a cultural climate that supports diversity, equity, and inclusion in all facets;
- A commitment to fairness and transparency;
- Successful leadership experience, including a record in building units or activities of comparable scale and complexity; the ability to create buy-in with key constituencies;
- Excellent communication skills, both oral and written; outstanding listening skills;
- An innovator who is willing to be flexible to achieve goals and bring groups together;
- Superb planning, management, and financial skills;
- An entrepreneurial spirit, integrity, and collegiality;
- A record of research and teaching excellence that merits the appointment of Full Professor with tenure in the department.

TO APPLY

Review of applications, nominations, and expressions of interest will begin immediately and continue on a confidential basis until an appointment is made. A pre-employment background check investigation is performed on candidates selected for employment. All inquiries, nominations/referrals, and applications should be submitted in strict confidence via Isaacson, Miller's website: <https://www.imsearch.com/search-detail/8786>

Greg Esposito, Partner
Afi Tettey-Fio, Senior Associate

UAB is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer committed to fostering a diverse, equitable and family-friendly environment in which all faculty and staff can excel and achieve work/life balance irrespective of, race, national origin, age, genetic or family medical history, gender, faith, gender identity and expression as well as sexual orientation. UAB also encourages applications from individuals with disabilities and veterans.