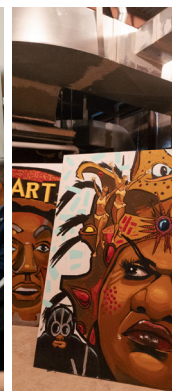


NEW FACULTY

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

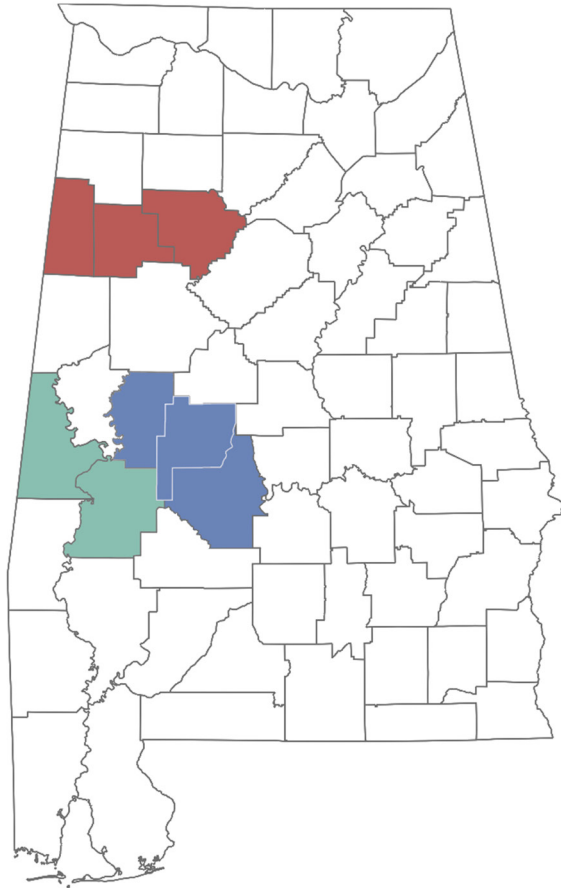
tour

MAY 8-10, 2024



Executive Report

Prepared by Dr. Elisabetta Zengaro



 **DAY 1**

WALKER COUNTY

FAYETTE COUNTY

LAMAR COUNTY

 **DAY 2**

GREENE COUNTY

SUMTER COUNTY

MARENGO COUNTY

 **DAY 3**

HALE COUNTY

PERRY COUNTY

DALLAS COUNTY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The New Faculty Community Engagement Tour (NFCET) exists to engage early-career faculty and advanced graduate students in three, day-long tours of West Alabama and the Alabama Black Belt region. This initiative provides participants with opportunities to develop innovative partnerships with community members and other campus researchers interested in community-based approaches to addressing community needs and plays a vitally important role in advancing the University's mission by facilitating campus-community partnerships.

The 2024 Tour took place on May 8, May 9, and May 10, and included stops in nine West Alabama counties. Participants were University administrators, faculty, staff, graduate students, undergraduate students and community members across various counties in the Black Belt region. Data presented in this report were collected from surveys of participants and community members. Results indicate that the NFCET continues to be a satisfying experience for participants, connecting them with research partners to further their professional aspirations based on community-identified needs.

The Division of Community Affairs is proud to host this Tour in partnership with the Office of Academic Affairs, the Graduate School, the Center for Community-Based Partnerships, and the Council on Community Based-Partnerships.

UA TOUR PARTICIPANTS

A total of 60 administrators, faculty, staff and students participated on the Tour, including five members of the Division of Community Affairs Board of Advisors, which represents a 15% increase in travelers from last year.

Registered participants were from the following departments/units:

Blackburn Institute	Department of Clothing, Textiles, and Interior Design
Center for Community-Based Partnerships	Department of Educational Leadership, Policy, and Technology Studies
College of Communication and Information Sciences	Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering
College of Community Health Sciences	Department of Mechanical Engineering
Community Affairs	Honors College
Community Affairs Board of Advisors	Office of Research and Economic Development
Department of Aerospace Engineering and Mechanics	School of Law
Department of American Studies	
Department of Civil, Construction, and Environmental Engineering	



Each stop along the Tour included discussions with community members to share community successes and challenges, as well as opportunities for collaboration. Planners administered surveys at the end of each day to obtain feedback from travelers. (Please see **Appendix A** for the survey.)

The survey included three quantitative items, which asked travelers if they were satisfied with the Tour, if it met their expectations, and if they would recommend the Tour to others respectively, on 10-point scales, with 10 being the highest score possible and 1 being the lowest score possible. **Table 1** shows the averages for satisfaction, expectations and recommendation across the entire Tour and broken down by each day.

Table 1	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Entire Tour
Satisfaction	9.18	9.5	9.61	9.4
Expectations	9.41	9.5	9.77	9.55
Recommendation	9.65	9.75	10.00	9.79

The overall responses were positive, with all the mean scores exceeding 9.0 on a 10-point scale. Judging from the responses received, the travelers were very satisfied with the Tour, thought the Tour met their expectations and would recommend it to others in the future.

Data indicates that the Tour, now in its sixth year, continues to be a positive experience for faculty, staff and students. **Table 2** shows the averages from the 2023 Tour. By comparison these results demonstrate that the 2024 Tour was an even greater positive experience for participants. This suggests that the Tour has a positive impact on campus-wide efforts to increase community-engaged research and teaching.

Table 2	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Entire Tour
Satisfaction	9.09	9.5	9.38	9.29
Expectations	9.21	9.61	9.62	9.44
Recommendation	9.58	9.67	9.73	9.64

"It was so touching to listen to the panelists talk about their various wins and challenges and how they have been able to keep pushing for a better community."



Fayette

Six open-ended questions yielded qualitative data in terms of how participants thought the Tour furthered their careers and educational opportunities through building community partnerships. Themes from these responses indicate that the Tour provided participants with a greater sense of reciprocity, collaboration, and networking with communities outside the University.

"I appreciate the opportunity to make connections and broaden my professional network," said one staff member.

"I enjoyed learning about the creative and intelligent ways community leaders are working to address quality-of-life concerns in their communities. Many were able to express exactly what they need from UA and what that looks like," said another staff participant.

One faculty member noted that the Tour provided opportunities "to engage in research that can directly impact Alabama communities that need it most."

For potential collaborations in research and teaching, respondents noted areas for partnerships within their field of study, such as youth leadership, education, communications, entrepreneurship and healthcare.

COMMUNITY PARTNER FEEDBACK

There were 48 community partners who served as site coordinators and panelists over the nine sites visited. Community partners were surveyed via Qualtrics for their feedback on the Tour. (Please see **Appendix B** for the survey.)

Quantitative questions addressed community partners’ satisfaction, meeting expectations and the likelihood of participating in future Tours on 10-point scales, with 10 being the highest score possible and 1 being the lowest score possible. Results are presented in **Table 3**.

Table 3		Average Community Partner Scores
Satisfaction		9.82
Expectation		9.88
Future Participation		9.87

Overall, responses were highly positive, with all the mean scores exceeding 9.0 on a 10-point scale, indicating that participating site coordinators and panelists value the experience and the opportunity to participate in the Tour.



Millport

“[I enjoyed] the conversations with all the people from UA and learning about opportunities on campus.”



Like the participants, community partners also answered six open-ended questions. The qualitative data analysis reflected similar themes of collaboration and connectivity as those from the faculty, staff and student responses based on community partners' experiences and perceptions of opportunities that would benefit from University partnerships.

"[I enjoyed] learning of the opportunities available to partner," said a community participant.

"It allowed local community partners to the network and share information," another community participant said.

"I look forward to participating again," added another participant.

"[I enjoyed the] opportunity to share assets of our community," said one community participant.

Additional input was gathered during community-led panel discussions, in which community partners identified needs within their communities that would benefit from University partnerships. These community-identified needs were in education, healthcare, youth development and entrepreneurship.

SIGNIFICANCE

The Tour continues to play a positive role in overcoming barriers between academia and community by encouraging University and community partnerships that support communities' successes and address quality-of-life issues in Alabama and beyond. As one participant noted when reflecting on community collaborations, they enjoyed "having the opportunity to see areas where we can support them further." By engaging in dialogue with communities across the Black Belt, faculty, staff and students can continue to advance the University's mission of teaching, research and service.



APPENDIX A



2024 Post-Tour Feedback | Participants

Thank you for participating in UA’s 2024 New Faculty Community Engagement Tour. We request your participation in this short survey to help us determine 1) how useful the Tour was for you and 2) improvements for future tours. This survey should take 5–10 minutes to complete.

1. Please circle the group into which you best fit:

Community Student Staff Faculty

2. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your satisfaction of today’s Tour? (Please circle 1 if you were not satisfied at all to 10 if you were completely satisfied.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. How well did the Tour meet your expectations? (Please circle 1 if it did not meet your expectations at all to 10 if it met your expectations completely.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. How likely are you to recommend this Tour to future new faculty, staff or students? (Please circle 1 if you definitely would NOT recommend the tour to 10 if you are extremely likely to recommend it.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. What did you like most about participating in today’s Tour?

6. What areas for collaboration or partnerships did today’s Tour provide?

7. What suggestions do you have to improve the Tour?

8. What additional information would you like to know about the places you visited today?

9. Please add any additional comments you would like to make.

APPENDIX B



2024 Post-Tour Feedback | Community Participants

Thank you for participating in UA's 2024 New Faculty Community Engagement Tour. We request your participation in this short survey to help us determine 1) how useful the Tour was for you and 2) improvements for future tours. This survey should take 5–10 minutes to complete.

1. Please circle the site where you participated:

Jasper Fayette Millport Boligee York Demopolis Greensboro Uniontown Selma

2. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your satisfaction with your role in the planning/participation of the Tour? (Please circle 1 if you were not satisfied at all to 10 if you were completely satisfied.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. How well did the Tour meet your expectations? (Please circle 1 if it did not meet your expectations at all to 10 if it completely met your expectations.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. How likely would you be to agree to participate in next year's New Faculty Tour? (Please circle 1 if you definitely will not participate next year to 10 if you fully intend to participate again.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. What did you like most about participating in today's Tour?

6. What areas for collaboration or partnerships did today's Tour provide?

7. What suggestions do you have to improve the Tour?

8. What suggestions do you have for follow-up?

9. Please add any additional comments you would like to make.

