Blue Skies Ahead

ALAIR 2025 Conference

Alabama Association for Institutional Research
Gulf Shores/Orange Beach, Alabama
March 12 – 14, 2025

Welcome to the 2025 ALAIR Conference
Blue Skies Ahead!

ALAIR Alabama Association for Institutional Research

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The University of Alabama at Birmingham

2025 Conference Schedule
Coastal Alabama Community College, Gulf Shores Campus
Columbia Southern University

Wednesday, March 12

5:00 PM-9:00 PM	Early Arrival Dinner

Thursday, March 13

	Breakfast on your own
8:00 AM-3:00 PM	Registration
9:00 AM-10:45 AM	ATLAS Update
10:00 AM-5:00 PM	Sponsor Exhibits
12:00 PM-12:10 PM	Welcome
12:10 PM-12:50 PM	Concurrent Sessions
1:00 PM-1:40 PM	Concurrent Sessions
1:40 PM-2:10 PM	Refreshment Break
2:10 PM-2:50 PM	Concurrent Sessions
3:00 PM-3:40 PM	Concurrent Sessions
3:40 PM-5:00 PM	Networking and Vendor Meet and Greet
6:00 PM-7:15 PM	Sunset Dolphin Cruise

Friday, March 14

	Breakfast on your own
8:00 AM-12:00 PM	Sponsor Exhibits
8:20 AM-9:00 AM	Concurrent Sessions
9:10 AM-9:50 AM	Concurrent Sessions
9:50 AM-10:20 AM	Refreshment Break
10:20 AM-11:00 AM	Concurrent Sessions
11:10 AM-12:00 PM	Keynote Address
12:00 PM-1:15 PM	Luncheon/Business Meeting

COLUMBIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

*Platinum Sponsor for
Friday Keynote Address and Business
Luncheon*

INSTRUCTURE

*Platinum Sponsor for Friday
Keynote Address
Session on Thursday at 3:00PM*

Xitracs™

*Gold Sponsor for
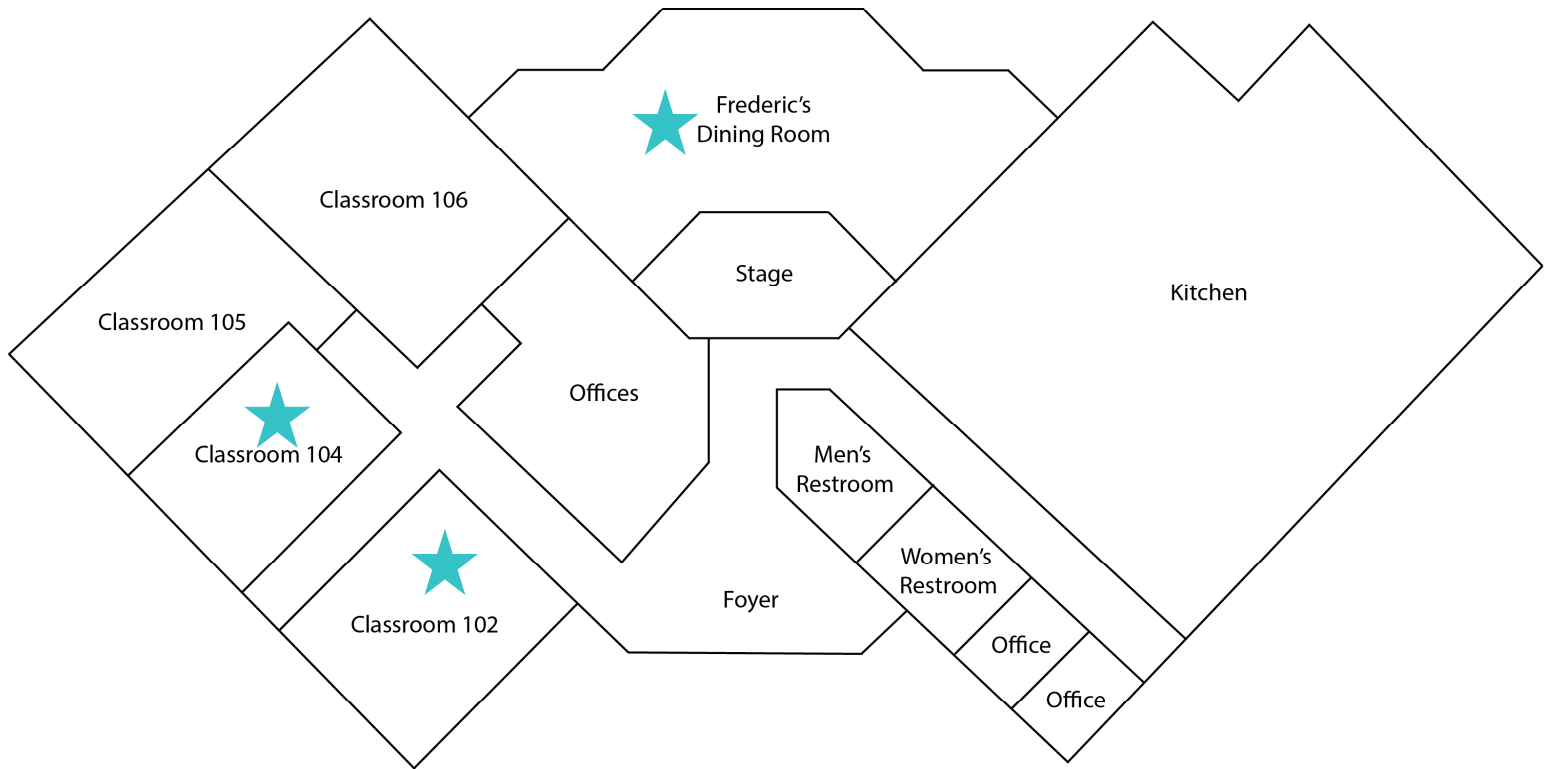Friday Refreshments
Session on Thursday at 1:00PM*

Coursedog

*Silver Sponsor
Session on Friday at 8:20AM*

*Support our Sponsors!
They help make ALAIR possible!*

Coastal Alabama Community College Gulf Shores Campus
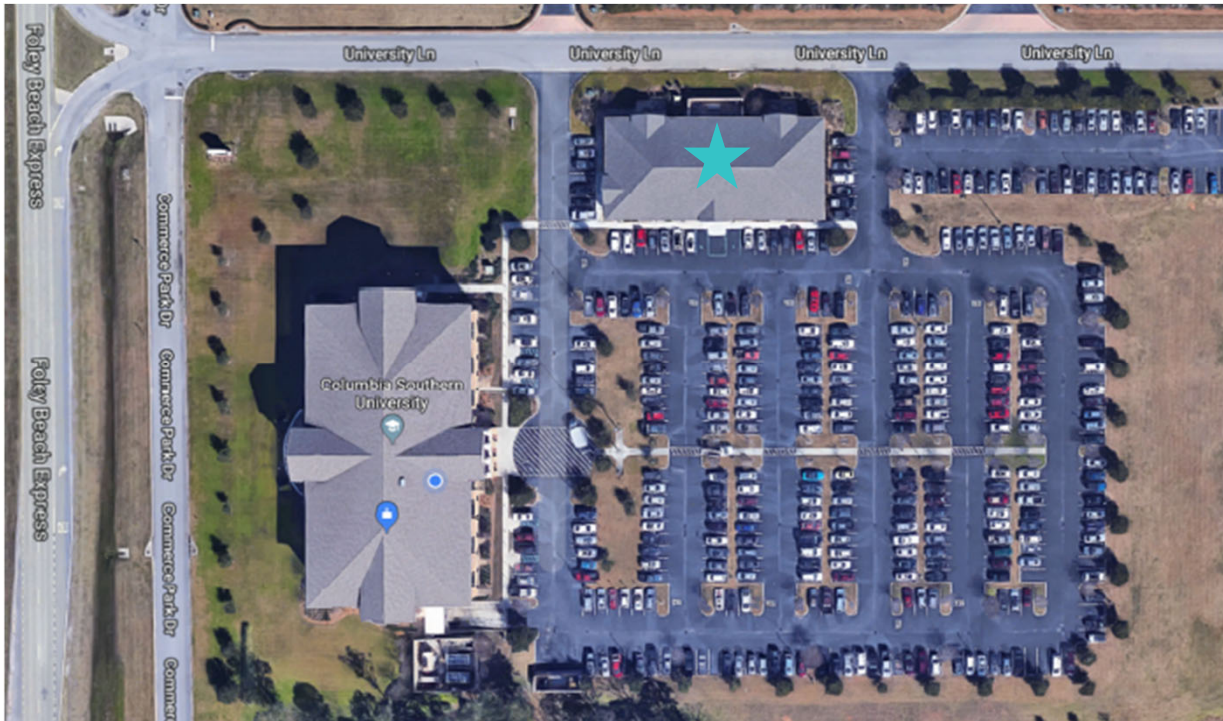## 3275 Gulf Shores Parkway, Gulf Shores, AL 36542

You may park in front of and enter through the Dining Room.

Registration, refreshment breaks, and the Vendor Meet and Greet will be held in the Dining Room.

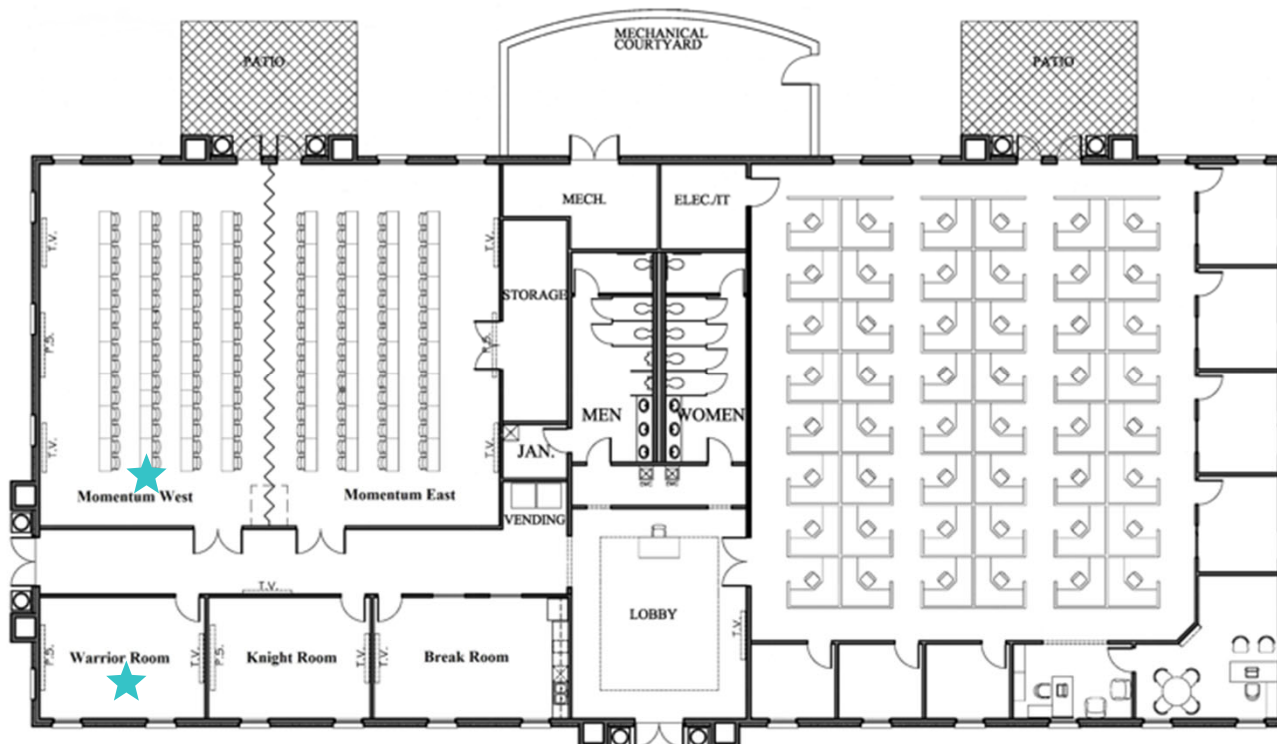Concurrent sessions will be held in classrooms 102 and 104.

Columbia Southern University
21982 University Lane, Orange Beach, AL 36561

★ Columbia Southern University Continuing Education Building

You may park anywhere.

Concurrent sessions will be held in the Warrior Room and Momentum West. The keynote address will be held in Momentum.

Wednesday, March 12, 2025

5:00–9:00 PM   Early Arrival Dinner On Your Own

Thursday, March 13, 2025

Breakfast on your own

8:00 AM–3:00 PM   Conference Registration

9:00 AM–10:45 AM   Longitudinal Data System (ATLAS) Update

Longitudinal Data System (ATLAS) Update
Room: 102
Nathan Rankin, *Office of Education and Workforce Statistics*

The Alabama Terminal for Linking and Analyzing Statistics (ATLAS) on Career Pathways is the state's Statewide Longitudinal Data System. As a federated data solution, ATLAS brokers connections between multiple state partner agencies from preschool, K12, higher education, and workforce development, while ensuring they maintain control of their data. Under the governance of the P20W Council, chaired by the Governor of Alabama and managed by the Office of Education and Workforce Statistics, (OEWS) ATLAS supports research that requires cross-agency collaboration to understand program outcomes and participant pathways. The system maintains rigorous privacy and security protocols, including data de-identification and strict aggregation rules for published reports. Codified through the Alabama Credential Quality and Transparency Act of 2023, ATLAS brings together key state agencies to create throughlines for program outcomes and performance metrics. This presentation will explore how ATLAS's governance structure, privacy framework, and partner collaboration model enable evidence-based policy decisions while maintaining the highest standards of data security and privacy, along with modernization efforts and lessons learned.

10:00 AM–5:00 PM   Sponsor Exhibits (Dining Room)

12:00–12:10 PM   Welcome (Dining Room)

Thursday, March 13, 2025 (con't)

12:10–12:50 PM   Concurrent Sessions A

Session 1: Creating Academic Optimism at Your Institution
Room: 104
Sidney L. Brown, *Tuskegee University*

This session will equip faculty and administrators with the essential skills, knowledge, and dispositions required to foster Academic Optimism within your institution. We will explore key pillars derived from data that assesses the organizational climate, with a focus on building Academic Optimism, Collective Efficacy, Faculty Trust, and Academic Emphasis.

Through this presentation, educators and administrators will gain a deeper understanding of how the school environment—shaped by both formal and informal structures, as well as the political dynamics within the institution—affects the motivation and behavior of teachers and administrators. Attendees will be introduced to the concept of organizational climate and how it can range from stagnant to thriving, determining whether your institution is moving forward, maintaining, or facing challenges.

By the end of the session, participants will be equipped with actionable strategies to cultivate a positive, optimistic school culture that drives student success and strengthens the overall educational experience.

Session 2: Using Generative AI to Assist Data Analytics
Room: 102
Addison Woll, *Drake State Community and Technical College*

I will begin by providing an overview of what generative AI is, and its limitations. I will also discuss ethical concerns using gen AI tools. I will then present a problem of identifying toxic and beneficial course combinations for student enrollments. I will provide step by step guides for using generative AI tools to assist in data analytics to provide data on course combinations that result in lower than average grades, or progress towards degree, or benefits therein. The session will end with a discussion on other types of heavy lift data analytics generative AI, or other tools, could be used for by participants, and limitations.

Thursday, March 13, 2025 (con't)

1:00–1:40 PM   Concurrent Sessions B

Session 3: Career Pathways of Agriculture Students: An Introspective Look Through a 40-Year Lens
Room: 104
Jessie Lynn, *Alabama Commission on Higher Education*

As technological advancements reshape the agricultural industry, workforce demands continue to evolve, requiring new skills, credentials, and career pathways. To effectively align educational programs with industry needs, accurate institutional data reporting practices and program inventory oversight are essential. This session will explore the intersection of workforce development, program reporting practices, and policy implementation, with a focus on Alabama's agricultural sector.

Over the past 40 years, shifts in technology, conservation practices, cultural perspectives, and standardized reporting have significantly impacted agricultural education. Understanding these historical and future trends is key to aligning academic strategies with industry developments.

A major challenge in addressing these workforce gaps lies in the accuracy and consistency of institutional data reporting. The correct use of CIP identifiers and precise data collection are vital in shaping policy decisions, funding allocations, and program viability. This session will emphasize the impact of institutional data and program oversight, ensuring accuracy and completeness before data leaves the reporting institution.

Session 4: An Introduction to Xitracs: Flexible and Focused on YOUR Evidence-Informed Future
Room: 102
Stephanie Allen, *Xitracs*

Xitracs is a user-friendly, cost-effective software platform that allows your IR/E staff, other campus leaders, and users-at-large to streamline work related to learning outcomes assessment, institutional effectiveness reporting, program review, strategic planning, faculty/staff credentialing, agency accreditation activities, grant management, AI integration options, and more!

This presentation will give an overview of how Xitracs supports success and continuous improvement in these key area. We will wrap up the session with time for your questions and input.

Xitracs™ for IE/IR

ASSESSMENT
PLANNING
ACCREDITATION
CREDENTIALING

* **AI. Ready**
* **LMS Integration**
* **Data Export to Excel and Data Warehouse**
* **Grant Management**
* **Academic Program Review**
* **SACSCOC Full Accreditation Support**
* **Faculty/Staff Credentials Management and SACSCOC Reporting**

And so much more!….

Thursday, March 13, 2025 (con't)

1:40–2:10 PM   Refreshment Break (Dining Room)

2:10–2:50 PM   Concurrent Sessions C

Session 5: Welcoming the Clear Blue Sky: Research at ACCS Institutions
Room: 104
Kelly Birchfield, *Alabama Community College System*

Zicheng Hong once said, "[i]f the mind is illumined, there is a clear blue sky in a dark room." At the ACCS, we seek to peer into the corners of darkened rooms and bring forth the light. Over the last decade, academicians from four-year and two-year institutions have been encouraged to conduct research at our institutions, as long as the findings are shared with our colleges and the system office. In 2019, the ACCS created a federally registered IRB, and ever since, researchers have been steadily submitting protocols. This presentation will provide an overview of different research projects conducted at ACCS institutions and will highlight some illuminating findings. A discussion will be held about possible next steps that might be taken to share results more broadly.

Session 6: On goal setting, potential, and gratitude
Room: 102
Wendy Broyles, *Troy University*

Based loosely on Jon Acuff's 2023 book "All it takes is a goal," this presentation distills down to the highlights of tapping into potential while cultivating gratitude and setting personally valuable goals for the different facets of life. We can look to our past to help us understand what experiences, accomplishments, relationships, and objects matter most to us. We can set easy goals to break out of the comfort zone and work up to guaranteed goals that help us tap into our greatest potential. We can build work-life balance through pursuing goals related to our career, relationships, health, finances, and fun. We have so much potential! Let's be intentional about unlocking it.

Thursday, March 13, 2025 (con't)

3:00–3:40 PM   Concurrent Sessions D

Session 7: The Impact of Troy University's QEP: Evaluating student and faculty focused initiatives
Room: 104
Richard Ledet, Johanna Alberich, and Wendy Broyles, *Troy University*

This presentation describes the assessment plan and updated outcomes of Troy University's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). The QEP was put in place in 2020 as a part of the SACSCOC reaffirmation process, and adds to ongoing efforts aimed at reinforcing its position as Alabama's International Institution. This plan involves two independent but complementary globally-focused initiatives intended to: 1) enhance the learning experience of students by promoting international scholarship and research abroad, and; 2) promote inter-cultural competency among employees as a form of professional development. This assessment strategy is being utilized by the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness, members of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee, and a QEP Leadership Team in order to measure the progress of these separate but complementary initiatives. Additional efforts to assist with the preparation of the QEP Impact Report will be explained, and numerous "lessons learned" will be discussed for the benefit of others involved in the preparation, implementation, and evaluation of a QEP.

Session 8: Canvas LMS: The Next-Generation Teaching and Learning Platform
Room: 102
Douglas Grooms, *Instructure*

Today's learner was raised with the world at their fingertips. In an instant, we can connect with friends around the world, watch movies on an airplane, or shop online whenever and wherever we want. Why should learning be any different?

With Canvas LMS, it isn't. Canvas LMS provides students with the ability to access their education instantly, anywhere, anytime. It has quickly become the go-to, easy-to-use educational hub for the modern learner.

As a cloud-based, mobile-friendly, and refreshingly easy to use system with unparalleled uptime, it's no mistake why Canvas LMS is the choice of nearly all leading colleges and universities. Simply put, Canvas is the LMS that get put to use, day in and day out. Faculty can focus on teaching and students can focus on learning while our seamless technology silently powers the operation.

3:40 PM–5:00 PM   Networking and Vendor Meet and Greet

6:00 PM-7:15 PM   Sunset Dolphin Cruise

CANVAS LMS

The Next-Generation Teaching & Learning Platform

Using education technology doesn't have to be, and should not be, difficult.

Today's learner was raised with the world at their fingertips. In an instant, we can connect with friends around the world, watch movies on an airplane, or shop online whenever and wherever we want. Why should learning be any different?

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What makes Canvas LMS the preferred solution for both faculty and students?

It comes down to three main components:

1. Ease of use
2. Versatility
3. Accessibility

Canvas LMS in a Nutshell

Instructors Can:

- Build engaging online courses with ease
- Assess student work and view class performance over time
- Focus on teaching and improving their craft without technological interference
- Access a community of fellow educators looking to share best practices & connect

Students Can:

- Learn from anywhere in the world, anytime they'd like, from any device
- Communicate directly with faculty & peers from within the application
- Access a life-long ePortfolio showing proof of skills attained through their studies
- Focus on learning without technological interference

Administrators Can:

- Equip faculty & students with the most chosen & used LMS on the market
- Measure their return on investment with reporting highlighting tool adoption
- Give teachers and students a powerful new tool for achieving educational goals

Instructure.com/higher-education/products/canvas/canvas-lms

INSTRUCTURE

28101 Perdido Beach Blvd
Orange Beach, AL 36561

We're not sure which view is more spectacular: a gorgeous sunset on the horizon of Orange Beach or wild dolphins playing alongside our boat. You can decide for yourself when you join us on a sunset dolphin cruise! Experience marine life and see wild dolphins on the Gulf Coast near Orange Beach, Gulf Shores, and Perdido Key with our unique glass bottom boat tour.

Our experienced captain and crew mention facts about wild dolphins, marine birds, and aquatic life on this specialty dolphin tour. Keep a lookout for our marine locals as you relax on our comfortable boat and enjoy the last light of day on this hour and a half cruise.

Friday, March 14, 2025

Breakfast on your own

8:00 AM–12:00 PM   Sponsor Exhibits

8:20–9:00 AM   Concurrent Sessions E

Session 9: Tracking Dual Enrollment and Applicant Conversions
Room: Momentum West
Addison Woll, *Drake State Community and Technical College*

I will describe the need for tracking conversion of dual-enrollment students from dual-enrollment to first-time students at your institution. I will then present on my process to determine the conversion rate from dual-enrollment to first-time student using data found through ACCS ARGOS reports, the STU file, and using python coding. I will discuss the types of data, and alternatives that can be used based on data available. We will then discuss looking for pitfalls in the data analytics, to ensure you are measuring what you think you are measuring.

If time allows, I will also cover using tools such as chatgpt or claude.ai to assist in basic Python programming to assist in data analytics for someone with basic to no knowledge of Python code.

Session 10: Harnessing Analytics to Drive Student-Centric Operations
Room: Warrior Room
Ben Chester and Jamie Flood, *Coursedog*

Traditionally, academic processes such as scheduling, curriculum management, the catalog, and assessment lived in isolation, making it difficult to access valuable data. Today, new solutions bring these disparate processes and associated data together. Discover how unified data in academic operations can unlock fresh insights and analytics that drive student retention and strengthen the financial stability of your institution.
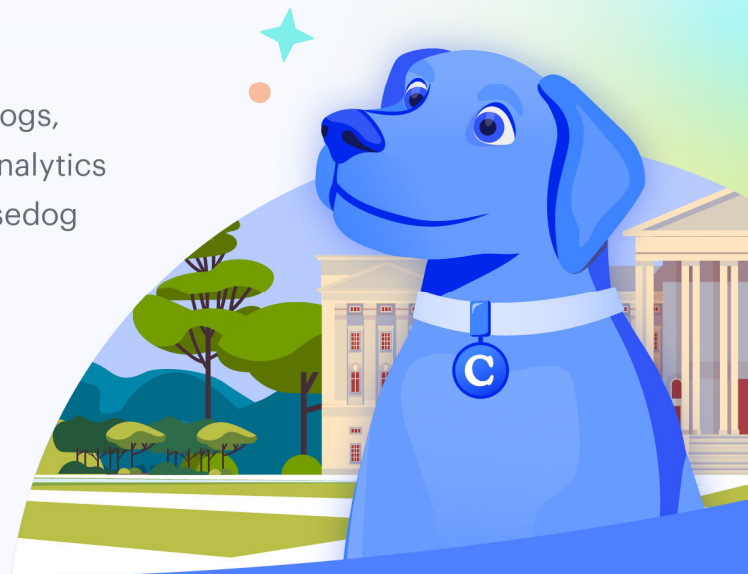
Session and Conference Evaluations

Your opinion matters! We all know how important feedback can be to our profession. Please let us know your thoughts on the conference as well as each individual session.

Use this QR code to complete the session and conference evaluations

Friday, March 14, 2025 (con't)

9:10–9:50 AM   Concurrent Sessions F

Session 11: Aligning Teaching Excellence Centers with Institutional Goals
Room: Momentum West
Carrie Manning, Leora Waldner, and Lisa Vardaman, *Troy University*

In the growth process of an institution, new initiatives should align with an institution's mission and goals. Such alignment advances the mission of the institution, creating a much-needed synergy among departments, schools, and colleges. This session will review how Troy University is strengthening the planning process by connecting its proposed Teaching Excellence Center with the proposed goals of the next Strategic Plan. In turn, this alignment shapes the scope of the Center—i.e., should it focus exclusively on teaching, or encompass other arenas such as faculty development and leadership?

Session 12: Charting Our Success: Measuring Our Impact and Progress
Room: Warrior Room
Mandy Sessions, *Wallace Community College Dothan*

In this insightful session, we will explore the meticulous process that Wallace Community College – Dothan undertook to develop and implement its strategic plan, which has been instrumental in driving our institution's success. We will provide an in-depth look at how we measure our impact and progress, ensuring that our strategic initiatives align with our mission and vision.

9:50–10:20 AM   Refreshment Break (Momentum)

Friday, March 14, 2025 (con't)

10:20–11:00 AM   Concurrent Sessions G

Session 13: Leadership Lessons from Ted Lasso
Room: Momentum West
Ginny Cockerill, *Greenville Technical College*

This presentation explores leadership lessons inspired by Ted Lasso, the hit TV show that showcases a Coach Lasso's unique and heartwarming approach to leadership. Through optimism, relationship-building, humility, and resilience, Ted Lasso models an effective leadership style that fosters team cohesion and individual growth. Attendees will gain insights into how these principles can be applied in the higher ed context to create positive, high-performing work environments.

Session 14: Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) Lightning Talks
Room: Warrior Room
Wanda Rowe, John Glasscock, and Scott Corey, *Alabama Commission on Higher Education*

This session will be in a lightning talk format presented by ACHE research staff. It will focus on a variety of topics that will touch on recent and pending IPEDS updates, current data mining initiatives, latest changes to academic programming reporting, recent state legislation related to higher education, a conversation on current data edit procedures, and a few other topics along with a few prize drawings. Participants in this fast-paced session will have a whole seat but will only need the edge!

Friday, March 14, 2025 (con't)

11:10-12:00 PM   Keynote Address (Momentum)

Russ Bartlett

Russ Bartlett has been flying, building, or selling airplanes his whole adult life. He was a U.S. Navy F/A-18 Hornet pilot. He was Commanding Officer and Flight Leader of the legendary Blue Angels. Upon retirement from the Navy, he took the things he learned flying and leading, especially at the Blue Angels, to the Aerospace and Defense industry. He was president of Beechcraft Defense Company, CEO of Textron Airborne Solutions, and COO at Kaman Aerospace Corporation. In those roles, he tested, tweaked, and validated his best practices and is currently out on the speakers' circuit to share them with the American people.

But his journey sure didn't start that way! As an adventurous 11-year-old growing up on Nantucket Island, he fell in love with his Honda Trail 70 dirt bike and has had multiple motorcycles in his life ever since. His pre-teen summers were spent on the water, unsupervised, in a 13-foot Boston Whaler speedboat (Mom, what were you thinking???). After high school he landed at the United States Naval Academy, one of the best things that ever happened to him. Despite the great college start, he called his parents at the end of his sophomore year to tell them he was quitting the Naval Academy to become a professional motocross rider. Somehow Mom and Dad talked him off the ledge on the dirt bike thing. Russ decided that becoming a Naval Aviator was the closest thing he could find to riding motocross. And the rest is history.

Captain Russ "Beef" Bartlett, U.S. Navy (retired), became a combat-seasoned F/A-18 Hornet pilot and was a squadron commander twice: the first time as the Commanding Officer of a Navy Strike Fighter squadron, forward-deployed to the aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk in Japan; and the second time as Commanding Officer and Flight Leader of the Blue Angels. He accumulated 4400 flight hours (3200 or so in the Hornet) and made 841 aircraft carrier arrested landings, 333 of them at night. Post-Navy, he's been in leadership roles in corporate America ever since. He lives his life by his simple motto: "Drive fast. Take chances."

12:00-1:15 PM   Luncheon/Business Meeting (Momentum)

AIR 2025 Forum
May 20 - 23
Rosen Shingle Creek, Orlando, FL

2025 SACCR Conference
September 8 - 10
Beau Rivage Resort, Biloxi, MS

SAIR 2025 Conference
September 27 - 30
Hilton Alexandria Mark Center, Alexandria, VA

Looking Back … Ten Years of ALAIR

Year	Location	Vice President/ Conference Chair	Institution	Conference Theme
2024	The University of Alabama at Birmingham	Dr. Preston Robinson	Tuskegee University	Iron Sharpens Iron
2023	The University of Alabama in Huntsville	Ms. Ginny Cockerill	The University of Alabama in Huntsville	Learning Together in Rocket City
2022	Orange Beach	Ms. Mandy Sessions	Wallace Community College-Dothan	Pivoting To A Better Future
2021	No Conference due to COVID	Dr. Jacob Pleitz	The University of Alabama	
2020	Orange Beach	Ms. Lesley Shotts	J.F. Drake State Community and Technical College	A New Decade of Data
2019	Lake Guntersville	Mrs. Wendy Broyles	Troy University	Reaching New Heights
2018	Orange Beach	Ms. Julianna Proctor	The University of Alabama	Learning from the Experts
2017	Auburn University at Montgomery	Ms. Kelly Birchfield	Alabama Community College System	CommUNITY!
2016	Samford University	Mr. Toner Evans	Samford University	Academ(ia) Awards: Best Practices/ Performances in IR
2015	Eufaula (Wallace Community College Dothan)	Mrs. Angel Jowers	University of West Alabama	Back to the Future

Welcome to the 2025 ALAIR Conference
Blue Skies Ahead!

ALAIR
Alabama Association for Institutional Research

Thank you for coming!
See you at ALAIR 2026!