

GROWTH & INNOVATION LEADERS FORUM

2025 SUMMIT

FEBRUARY 4, 2025

WORKBOOK AND NOTES



Alabama
Entrepreneurship
Institute

2025 GROWTH & INNOVATION LEADERS SUMMIT

FOUNDING MEMBERS



2025 GROWTH & INNOVATION LEADERS SUMMIT

WELCOME FROM THERESA M. WELBOURNE

Welcome to the inaugural Summit.

We started the Growth and Innovation Leaders Forum in 2020. The Forum and this first Summit were started to help fulfill AEI's mission of not only helping individuals innovate and then start new businesses but also to assist them in continually growing their startups. Our goal is to have a niche focused on growth, and we cannot do that without also working with larger and more established organizations. The need to innovate and grow is not just part of a startup's strategy; it is critical for all leaders in all types of organizations.

Therefore, we started the Growth and Innovation Leaders Forum in 2020 with five founding companies, Alabama Power, Medical Properties Trust, Protective Life, Regions, and Shipt. We started out with networking meetings, with the first being hosted by Medical Properties Trust, and we also hosted several virtual learning sessions, in-person programs and round table discussions. Members work with students who do consulting projects focused on the members' current challenges or opportunities. We also conduct research on growth and innovation, as part of our mission is to not just share knowledge but create new knowledge together.

The Summit was always part of our plan, and 2025 is the first year we are offering this initiative. Also, as we continued to work with our members we found that there was an interest to not only learn from other established firms but to include smaller and startup organizations. We know that innovation is more likely to occur in groups where the individuals have different and unique backgrounds, and this is what you will see at the Summit and in our other offerings.

Participants in the Summit are executive business leaders, students, faculty, staff and leaders from UA and other universities. We also have attendees from Birmingham, Huntsville and Mobile in addition to people from out of state.

Make sure you exercise your innovation muscles today and also consider becoming a member of the GAIL Forum. We need you to be part of our growth and innovation learning community.

2025 GROWTH & INNOVATION LEADERS SUMMIT

INTRODUCTION

The First Annual Growth and Innovation Leaders Summit brings together learning from student consulting projects, member innovations, experts from around the nation, and also new academic research on the drivers of growth and innovation. This event's goal is to help grow the knowledge that is required to drive individuals, teams, and businesses forward both in the State of Alabama and beyond.

This workbook is designed for you to have an opportunity to take notes and organize them in a way that allows you to go back to your organization and share key learnings and ideas with all of your leadership team and coworkers.

HOW TO ENGAGE IN THE GAIL SUMMIT

- Access The University of Alabama Acelevents platform to get access to resources, network with other participants, and find information about more events.
- Meet people. Network and make sure you get contact information so you can connect with people after the Summit. You can also connect on the Community Platform.
- Find nuggets of information to share with your organization.
- Think about your top-3 challenges or opportunities and look for answers in the sessions and breakouts.
- Participate in the breakout sessions and live case discussions.

2025 GROWTH & INNOVATION LEADERS SUMMIT

AGENDA

(All Central Time)

9:00 - 9:45 a.m.

Breakfast & Networking

9:45 - 10:00 a.m.

Welcome, Introduction, & Goals

Dr. Theresa M. Welbourne, Executive Director, AEI and Will and Maggie Brooke Professor in Entrepreneurship at The University of Alabama

10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Learning to Work with an Innovation Mindset

John Sweeney, Owner and Keynote Speaker at Brave New Outpost

Margi Simmons, Director of Applied Improvisation at Brave New Outpost

11:00 - 11:15 a.m.

Break

11:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Keynote: ERGs Innovating and Growing Hibbett

Bill Quinn, Vice President, Digital Commerce for Hibbett Sports

12:30 - 1:30 p.m.

Lunch & Networking

1:30 - 2:30 p.m.

Building a Shipt College Town Brand

Ryan Keelin, Category Insight Manager, Shipt

Heather Mitchell, SVP Growth Partnerships, Shipt

Joshua V. White, Program Manager: AEI at The University of Alabama

UA Student Team:

Marlena Barrido

Bobby Brady

Tanner Jones

Tommy Orchanian

Dakota Stern

2:30 - 3:30 p.m.

Big Company & Small Company Partnerships

Kevin Kaye, Innovation Manager at Alabama Power Company

Benzamin Choi, CEO at Alabama Capital Network

Matthew Jaeh, Managing Director at Techstars Alabama Energytech Accelerator

Dr. Kay M. Palan, Dean, Culverhouse College of Business at The University of Alabama

3:30 - 3:45 p.m.

Break

3:45 - 4:45 p.m.

Paths to Growth: Learning from the 100 Survivors of the Biggest IPO Cohort to Date

Dr. Theresa M. Welbourne, Executive Director, AEI and Will and Maggie Brooke Professor in Entrepreneurship at The University of Alabama

4:45 - 5:30 p.m.

Panel of Established Firms Driving Innovation

Bobby Bragg, Director of Practice Growth, at JamisonMoneyFarmer

Dustin Dew, Innovation Leader at Protective Life

Rosa Hooper, Senior VP of Operations at Medical Properties Trust

Jef Naidoo, Moderator

5:30 - 5:45 p.m.

Closing Session

Dr. Theresa M. Welbourne, Executive Director, AEI and Will and Maggie Brooke Professor in Entrepreneurship at The University of Alabama

John Sweeney, Owner and Keynote Speaker at Brave New Outpost

Margi Simmons, Director of Applied Improvisation at Brave New Outpost

5:45 - 8:00 p.m.

Reception, Cocktails, Food, & Networking

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WELCOME: LEARNING TO WORK WITH AN INNOVATION MINDSET

SESSION 1



DR. THERESA WELBOURNE

*Executive Director, AEI
Will and Maggie Brooke Professor in
Entrepreneurship
The University of Alabama*



JOHN SWEENEY

*Owner and Keynote Speaker
Brave New Outpost*



MARGI SIMMONS

*Director of Applied
Improvisation Brave New Outpost*

KEY INSIGHTS FROM THIS SESSION

HOW DOES THIS SESSION CONNECT TO YOUR GOALS? WHAT OPPORTUNITIES EXIST FOR INNOVATION?

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SHARE WITH YOUR TEAM (IDEAS, ACTION STEPS, QUESTIONS)?

RESOURCES TO FURTHER EXPLORE OR QUESTIONS YOU STILL HAVE

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KEYNOTE: INNOVATING AND GROWING HIBBETT

SESSION 2



BILL QUINN

*VP Digital Commerce
Hibbett Sports*

KEY INSIGHTS FROM THIS SESSION

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BUILDING A SHIPT COLLEGE TOWN BRAND

SESSION 3



RYAN KEELIN
Category Insights Manager
Shipt



HEATHER MITCHELL
Category Insights Manager
Shipt



JOSHUA V. WHITE, PHD
Program Manager, AEI
The University of Alabama



LENA BARRIDO
MBA Student



BOBBY BRADY
Student



TANNER JONES
Student



TOMMY ORCHANIAN
MBA Student



DAKOTA STERN
Student

KEY INSIGHTS FROM THIS SESSION

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BIG COMPANY AND SMALL COMPANY PARTNERSHIPS

SESSION 4



BENZAMIN CHOI

*CEO
Alabama Capital Network*



MATTHEW JAEH

*Managing Director
Techstars*



KEVIN KAYE

*Innovation Manager
Alabama Power Company*



KAY PALAN

*Dean,
Culverhouse College of Business
The University of Alabama*



WILL WRIGHT

*Adjunct Instructor & Founder
Update*

KEY INSIGHTS FROM THIS SESSION

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PATHS TO GROWTH: LEARNING FROM THE 100 SURVIVORS OF THE BIGGEST IPO COHORT TO DATE

SESSION 5



DR. THERESA WELBOURNE

*Executive Director, AEI
Will and Maggie Brooke Professor in Entrepreneurship
The University of Alabama*

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PANEL OF ESTABLISHED FIRMS DRIVING INNOVATION

SESSION 6



BOBBY BRAGG

*Director of Practiced Growth
JamisonMoney Farmer PC*



DUSTIN DREW

*Innovation Leader
Protective Life*



ROSA HARPER

*Senior VP of Operations
Medical Properties Trust*



JEF NAIDOO

*Department Head and Associate
Professor of Management
Culverhouse College of Business
The University of Alabama*

KEY INSIGHTS FROM THIS SESSION

HOW DOES THIS SESSION CONNECT TO YOUR GOALS? WHAT OPPORTUNITIES EXIST FOR INNOVATION?

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END-OF-DAY DEBRIEF

BIGGEST SURPRISE OR “AHA” MOMENT

TAKEAWAYS FOR MY ORGANIZATION

TAKEAWAYS FOR MY PERSONAL GROWTH

NEXT STEPS FOR GROWTH AND INNOVATION

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NOTES

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NOTES

A dark, semi-transparent background image showing a group of people in a meeting or conference setting. They are seated around a table, and some are looking towards the camera while others are looking away. The image is used as a backdrop for the text.

GROWTH & INNOVATION LEADERS FORUM

CONTACT US

**FOR FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES TO BE INVOLVED IN AEI RESEARCH /
PROJECTS, OR TO JOIN THE GAIL FORUM CONTACT
DR. THERESA WELBOURNE.**

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