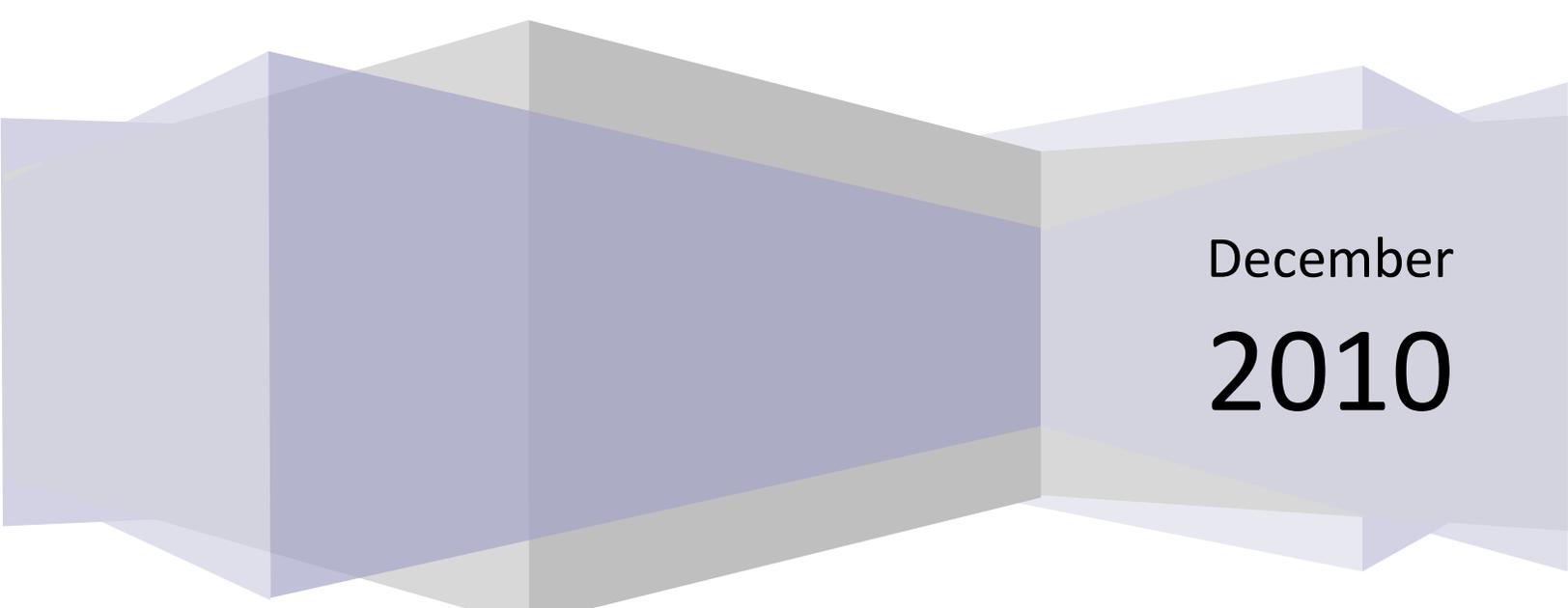


Report of the Ninth Quadrennial Evaluation Committee

Alabama Commission on Higher Education

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Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges



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*Report of the Ninth Quadrennial Evaluation Committee:
Alabama Commission on Higher Education*

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Preface

By statute, the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) completes a thorough evaluation of its accomplishments and strategic planning goals every four years (the last year of each gubernatorial term). For the Ninth Quadrennial Evaluation in 2010, consultants from the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) were chosen to conduct the review.

AGB was pleased to be selected to undertake this review, and the project fit within our broad portfolio of programs and services. The Association of Governing Boards is widely recognized as the nation's leading organization for effective leadership, governance, and trusteeship in American higher education. AGB has been in existence for nearly 90 years and has been a reliable resource for its member boards and chief executives, as well as state and national policymakers, the media, and the general public. Over the past 10 years, AGB's Ingram Center for Public Trusteeship and Governance has worked in over 30 states on a host of governance, state policy, and higher education issues.

AGB's evaluation methods for this review consisted of three major processes. First was a survey to solicit views on the work of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education. The survey was distributed electronically to 235 individuals, including public higher education and postsecondary education institutional leaders, representatives from K-12 education, and many state-agency officials and elected leaders. The response rate was high, yielding 44.6 percent. Respondents were asked to supplement their answers with written comments, none of which were for attribution. Many of these comments are included in this report and are presented verbatim.

The second part of our data and information gathering consisted of a site visit to Alabama, which resulted in over 40 in-person interviews with ACHE staff, representatives of the Department of Education and the Department of Postsecondary Education, legislators, and a member of the Seventh Quadrennial Evaluation Committee.

As a third means to obtain information, the evaluation committee conducted telephone interviews with 29 individuals, including leaders from four- and two-year institutions, the chair of two previous evaluation teams, and ACHE board members. Through interviews and survey responses, the Ninth Quadrennial Evaluation Committee compared its observations with ACHE's accomplishments, mission, and strategic planning objectives. The following report presents the committee's observations, recommendations, and evaluation materials.

We wish to thank all of those individuals who participated in the on-site and telephone interviews and the electronic survey for this Ninth Quadrennial Evaluation of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education. The staffs of the State Department of Education and the Department of Postsecondary Education were generous with their time during our visit to Montgomery on September 13-14, 2010.

The ACHE staff could not have been more hospitable during the site visit. We particularly want to thank Tim Vick, ACHE's Director of Operations and Fiscal Services and Executive Director Greg Fitch.

Ellen Chaffee
Richard Novak
Cristin Toutsis

Summary of Observations, Findings, and Recommendations

Summary of Observations and Findings:

- ACHE is making progress in reframing its mission from a regulatory agency to one with a much stronger policy-leadership role.
- ACHE has many notable achievements to its credit since the 2006 evaluation in:
 - academic program review;
 - student database development and reporting;
 - unified budget development;
 - a new State Plan for Alabama Higher Education;
 - administration of financial aid; and
 - strengthening oversight of out-of-state providers.
- ACHE operates in a decision environment that is highly political and factionalized.
- ACHE appears to have sufficient legal authority to achieve its purposes.
- Compared to other state coordinating agencies and commissions on a spectrum of authority, ACHE's authority falls significantly below that of many state agencies but still above others, particularly those that are strictly "advisory." Like similar coordinating agencies, ACHE has authority for:
 - statewide planning that includes private institutions;
 - administering state scholarship and grant programs;
 - review and appraisal of out-of-state providers; and
 - arbitrating differences and conflicts between institutions.
- Although ACHE has license to address these functions, it has little leverage to enforce or entice compliance with its decisions.
- ACHE staff are held in high regard and seen as competent, professional, responsive, helpful, and heavily overloaded with work. Limitations in staff size hamper ACHE's effectiveness.
- ACHE has increased its outreach and visibility to numerous local, regional, and statewide groups.
- ACHE has developed a compelling State Plan for higher education, [Forging Strategic Alliances: State Plan for Alabama Higher Education 2009-2014](#); however, the new State Plan has yet to resonate sufficiently with state policy makers and institutional leaders.
 - The most visible effort to advance the Plan is focused on advocating for creation of a PK-20 Council, but creation of a council has been stymied by several factors.
- The statewide student unit record database to track students through high school into college, one of the best in the nation, has helped ACHE to develop useful reports on educational attainment and regional workforce development. Nevertheless, the dataset remains an underutilized resource with untapped potential for ACHE and the state.
- ACHE administers an efficient review process for new academic programs. Constituents uniformly

praise the staff and the process.

- The Council of Presidents, an advisory council to ACHE composed of all four-year presidents and representatives of community colleges, currently meets infrequently and appears to work to little benefit.
- The failure of appointing authorities to appoint new members in a timely manner when vacancies occur on the Commission board has been a serious problem affecting Commission board and agency vitality and continuity.

Summary of Recommendations:

- Our overarching recommendation reiterates and extends a theme established in the previous two quadrennial evaluations: ACHE can enhance its value to the state and higher education by raising and informing issues in reports and other communications for debate, discussion, and action by policy makers, educators, and the public. ACHE's executive director has been very visible in regional and statewide media, which are positive developments. ACHE needs to continue to bring a high level of visibility to issues such as the need for a new financing plan; closing student achievement gaps based on income and demographic factors; and presenting policy options for addressing state needs.
 - ACHE's most powerful potential role is to provide information as an advocate for a well-educated citizenry and workforce for Alabama—to elucidate problems for those with the means to pursue solutions.
 - ACHE could be more involved with these matters by reallocating resources from some of the more time-consuming and less valuable activities, and by identifying simpler, more straightforward and possibly less regulatory approaches.
- The State Plan for higher education, [Forging Strategic Alliances: 2009-2014](#), should be the guide for much of ACHE's work in statewide policy leadership and in encouraging statewide policy discussions.
- The focus of the State Plan for higher education on overall state educational achievement is admirable. But ACHE should clarify higher and postsecondary's expectations and responsibilities for achieving the Plan's priorities and goals.
- Using the statewide student database in addition to standard system and federal reporting, ACHE should produce more on statewide or regional education issues that illuminate policy debates and options and strategic issues for the legislature and Governor.
- ACHE should also seek to overcome resistance and expand collection of course-level data, which is needed to help learn how to improve student retention, streamline the education process, analyze opportunities for collaboration, and other meaningful purposes.
- Due to staff limitations regarding data collection and analysis, ACHE should:
 - consider using college faculty and graduate students to conduct meaningful education research and author papers under ACHE supervision;
 - investigate the possibility of developing a query program for the database so that institutional users can create their own reports; and
 - explore new ways to expand the use of the Higher Education Information Advisory Group

(HEIAG) to increase capability to plumb this rich asset without unrealistic cost factors.

- ACHE should consider retaining new program review only for the purpose of ensuring academic quality, adherence to academic mission, and, where relevant, the state's need for graduates in that field. Program duplication has all but disappeared as a rational criterion for program review in most states; the time has come to reconsider it in Alabama.
- The ACHE process of building a consolidated budget recommendation appears to be a worthwhile process but may be unnecessarily cumbersome. The time required to crunch the numbers should be the minimum necessary to provide credible benchmarks.
- The mandated ACHE capital funding request and annual updates to the facilities master plan appear to be meaningless exercises without state capital support and should be discontinued.
- ACHE should consider seeking the blessings of the Governor and legislature to create a broad institutional-based study group to develop and recommend a strong, fair, and equitable funding formula (or financing plan) that would be used to build the consolidated budget recommendation and fund institutions.
 - The new formula should provide incentives to reward excellence and the achievement of state goals.
- ACHE should be a stronger voice for affordability and expanded student aid programs. Going forward, using its research capacity, ACHE should bring visibility to institutional and state policymakers on the affordability problem, including comparable data with other southern states.
- ACHE should consider additional ways to manage staff workloads, improve service, and increase timeliness by investing in additional technologies and software; an ad hoc advisory committee of selected campus representatives could provide valuable perspective.
- When the budget situation improves, Commission staff should be strongly encouraged to attend national meetings of the State Higher Education Executive Officers and regional meetings of the Southern Regional Education Board to interact with colleagues in other states.
- ACHE should also consider creating a community college advisory group to the Commission that would meet with staff and commissioners once or twice a year.
- ACHE should devise a strategy to revitalize the Council of Presidents through fewer meetings but more compelling agendas.
- ACHE should host an annual or biannual Governor's Conference for the board members of the all public and private institutions.
- Commission board meetings should devote sufficient time, if not a majority of time, to assessing progress on the State Plan for Higher Education.
- Alabama's new Governor should create a PK-20 Council by executive order, or propose legislation to do so.

- The Governor should consider allowing the executive director of the Commission to sit with the Governor's cabinet. This should not be as the Governor's appointee member of the cabinet, however, but as the head of an important agency.
- ACHE should be formally included on, and participate in, the State Workforce Planning Council.
- To ensure high caliber individuals on the Commission as vacancies occur, a statement of desirable qualifications and board member responsibilities should be developed by the Commission as a guide to the Governor and other elected leaders when making appointments.
- The Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Speaker of the House need to make appointments to the ACHE board in a timely manner when vacancies occur. Doing so will ensure a vital Commission board and agency and continuity for policy decision making.

Ninth Quadrennial Evaluation

of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education

The Ninth Quadrennial Evaluation of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education took place at a critical turning point for higher education and state coordination nationally and in Alabama. The economic recession that began in 2008 launched what national policy experts expect to be the Lost Decade of state funding. In Alabama, state appropriations to higher education declined almost one-third in just two years, with little expectation that funding levels will improve for perhaps years to come.

Political, educational, business, and philanthropic leaders throughout the nation have focused unprecedented unified attention on a single goal: dramatically increasing the proportion of American adults with postsecondary degrees. The driving force behind this commitment are the workforce needs of a successful knowledge- and innovation-based economy. One national goal is 60 percent of adults with degrees and certificates by 2025. Alabama's current rate is 32 percent compared to a national average of 38 percent. Without intervention, Alabama will achieve only 43 percent by 2025, putting it far below the national goal and very likely at a severe disadvantage compared to other states.

The review took place during election season, with a new Governor soon to take office and many changes in the state legislature. These developments could exacerbate funding uncertainties and create new policy environments.

Statutory Charge to the Evaluation Team

The statute that established the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) provides for its evaluation by an evaluation committee during the last year of each gubernatorial term. The statutory charge to the review committee was "...to evaluate the effectiveness of the Commission and to recommend changes as necessary" (Commission Statute, Section 16-5-12).

Statutory Charge to the Alabama Commission on Higher Education

The legislature established the Commission and has continued to provide legislative direction for its work over the years. It has charged ACHE to:

1. Administer the statewide student database;
2. Review and approve/disapprove proposals for new programs or units of instruction;
3. Review and approve/disapprove proposals for off-campus offerings;
4. Review extensions and alterations to existing programs and units of instruction, research, and service;
5. Develop and present a consolidated budget recommendation to the governor/legislature;
6. Plan and conduct special studies, surveys, and evaluations related to postsecondary/higher education;
7. Develop and recommend legislation to insure high quality education in the state;
8. Advise the governor, at his request, regarding postsecondary/higher education matters;
9. Study and make recommendations on public institution role and scope (mission); and
10. Operate student aid programs for the state.

Evaluation Methods

The Evaluation Committee used the following methods to obtain input for the review:

- A survey that went to 235 individuals to solicit their views on the work of ACHE, including all four- and two-year public higher and postsecondary education institution presidents and chief academic/instructional officers; graduate deans; and finance, institutional research, and government relations officers of all four-year public institutions; the governor and lieutenant governor; members of the House Education Policy Committee and the House Appropriations Committee; members of the Senate Education Committee and the Senate Finance and Taxation Committee; Legislative Fiscal Office staff; 10 leaders from the executive branch; and 13 representatives of K-12 education. The response rate was 44.6 percent, with 105 individuals responding. Results of the survey are in Appendix A.
- A site visit for in-person interviews (42) with ACHE staff, representatives of the Department of Education and the Department of Postsecondary Education, legislators, and a member of the 1999 evaluation committee. A list of interviewees is in Appendix B.
- Telephone interviews with 29 individuals, including the chair of two previous evaluation teams, ACHE board members, and leaders from four- and two-year institutions. A list of telephone interviewees is in Appendix C.
- Review of two prior evaluation reports, Forging Strategic Alliances: 2009-2014, 2008-2009 ACHE Annual Report, and a number of additional documents found at ACHE's web site: <http://www.ache.state.al.us/>.
- Review of 2010 Policies, Practices, and Composition of Higher Education Coordinating Boards and Commissions, July 2010, Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges.

About the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and the Ingram Center for Public Trusteeship and Governance

The Association of Governing Boards is a national, tax-exempt, non-profit organization based in Washington, D.C. Established in 1921, its mission is to strengthen the performance of citizen governing and

state coordinating boards and academic trusteeship as the only viable alternative to direct, governmental control of higher education. Through a broad portfolio of publications, studies, programs, and direct services to its nearly 1,200 boards and 35,000 individual members who are ultimately responsible for the quality of education at some 1,800 public and independent colleges and universities, AGB encourages adherence to best practices in trusteeship, governance, and state coordination and to the highest possible performance standards. The governing boards and chief executives of virtually all of the nation's public multi-campus systems are members, as are several of the nation's state coordinating boards. The association is governed by a board of directors, most of whom are college and university trustees, and has 30 full-time staff members.

AGB sponsors the Ingram Center for Public Trusteeship and Governance. The Center's mission is to strengthen relationships between public higher education and state government leaders by serving as a broker, convener, and provider of technical and consulting services on governance and related matters. The Center collaborates with national and regional organizations of regents and legislators to address issues of mutual concern with college and university and business leaders and, upon invitation, with elected and higher education officials in particular states. The Center provides access to a variety of programs and services to advance higher education's effectiveness and responsiveness in meeting its public responsibilities. This includes state government's understanding of and commitment to higher education, and strategies to improve the governance and trusteeship of public colleges and universities, including their affiliated foundations and volunteer boards.

AGB's Ingram Center has worked with several states and multi-university systems in recent years as these states and systems have more clearly focused their attention on board education programs and system or statewide strategic agendas. The Center has helped them focus on critical matters such as the board's responsibilities in academic affairs, board chair-chief executive relations, the functions of board committees, system-level reorganization, public agenda development, board and presidential assessment, and board responsibilities in serving the public interest.

Evaluation Committee

Dr. Ellen Chaffee's distinguished career spans institutional, system, policy, and national professional leadership in both public and private higher education, as well as extensive research and publication. Past president of two universities and two national professional associations (the Association for Institutional Research and the Association for the Study of Higher Education), she has led institutional, academic affairs, student affairs, research, and equal opportunity areas. She has served on and consulted with numerous governing boards as well as national organizations in higher education research, health care, allied health, and foundations.

Dr. Chaffee was president of Valley City State University for 15 years, and served nine of those years simultaneously as president of Mayville State University. Her leadership developed a culture of innovation, change, and accountability. Previously, she was academic vice-chancellor for the North Dakota University System and before that, director of organizational studies at the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS). Chaffee earned both her M.A. and Ph.D. in higher education administration and policy analysis at Stanford University.

Richard Novak is senior vice president for programs and research and executive director of the Richard T. Ingram Center for Public Higher Education Trusteeship and Governance at the Washington, D.C.—based Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB).

As senior vice president for programs and research, he leads the association's efforts for effective programming and research for both public and private members. The Center's mission is to strengthen the

relationship between public academic institutions and state governments by enhancing the performance and capacity of public governing boards.

While at AGB, Mr. Novak has directed special initiatives on board and presidential leadership; led a multi-state study on the effectiveness of public college and university governing boards; worked to incorporate environmental sustainability into governing board agendas; and directed or co-directed studies in several states, including Maryland, South Carolina, Louisiana, Mississippi, and New Jersey. Prior to joining AGB, he spent 13 years on the staff of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. Internationally, he has co-directed a project on governance for the Ministry of Higher Education in Egypt funded by UNESCO, provided guidance to the Ireland Higher Education Authority, and worked extensively in the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

Cristin Touts is the assistant for policy analysis for AGB's Ingram Center for Public Trusteeship and Governance. At AGB, Ms. Touts produces resources on public higher education governance and trusteeship. She tracks state legislation and information regarding public board structures, compositions, and policies affecting the practices of system and institutional boards. In addition, she assists AGB's Senior Fellows with research projects.

As a graduate of the College of William and Mary, Ms. Touts earned a master of education degree in higher education administration. Most recently, she served as a Governor's Fellow for then-Virginia Governor Timothy Kaine. In that capacity, she assisted the Virginia Department of Planning and Budget and the Office of Commonwealth Preparedness on various projects and reports. Prior experience includes several positions serving the President's Leadership Program at Christopher Newport University.

ACHE in Context

A small staff led by an executive director conducts the work of ACHE under the direction of a 12-member board. ACHE is one of 26 higher education coordinating boards and commissions in the country, 25 of which responded to a 2010 AGB survey. Compared to other coordinating boards and commissions, ACHE's board is typical in size, gender, and ethnicity. Board members' terms are relatively long—nine years compared to an average of 5.5 years. The appointment process in most states is by the governor with legislative confirmation, with some states having appointments by the governor alone or the legislature alone. The appointment process in Alabama is more detailed but comparable in effect.

The ACHE board meets a little less often than the average board; coordinating boards meet eight to ten times a year for at least three hours each meeting. Most boards budget for board education on a regular or occasional basis and three states (Arkansas, Texas, West Virginia) require ongoing board education. Nearly all had held a retreat in the past five years.

ACHE appears to have sufficient legal authority to achieve its purposes. The survey of ACHE constituencies yielded 47.6 percent agreement that the Commission has sufficient authority to perform its responsibilities effectively. All coordinating agencies and university systems have both formal authority and informal authority. The former comes from statute and regulation, the latter is more a function of political acumen, key support from Governors and legislators, and persuasive skills with presidents and other senior administrators. Like other coordinating agencies, ACHE has authority for:

- Statewide planning that includes private institutions;
- Administering state scholarship and grant programs;
- Review and appraisal of out-of-state providers; and
- Arbitrating differences and conflicts between institutions.

ACHE has additional authority in areas common to some, but not all other coordinating agencies:

- Presenting a single unified budget to the governor and legislature;

- Approving new academic programs;
- The right to review existing academic programs for possible elimination;
- Approving missions; and
- Collecting data for planning and analysis.

The executive director serves the citizens of the state, not unlike state higher education executives in other states. The appointment of the executive director requires formal Senate confirmation after hiring by the Commission’s board, and reinforces the concept of statewide service to the citizens of Alabama.

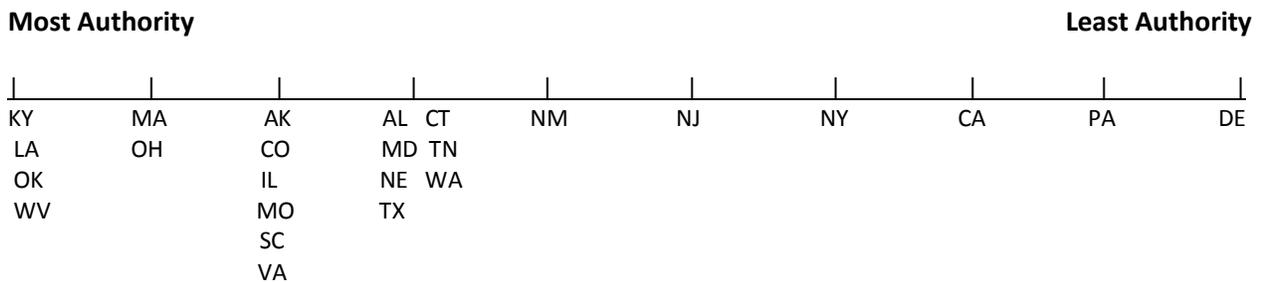
What this analysis does not reveal, however, is that although ACHE has license to address these functions, it has almost no authority or leverage to enforce or entice compliance with its decisions. In addition, the decision environment is highly political and factionalized. By all accounts, the Alabama higher education governance model is decentralized, the governor’s powers are relatively limited, and powerful lobbies and coalitions can thwart unwanted initiatives from any direction. Both the state constitution and the statutes of Alabama pertaining to the work of the Commission are unusually detailed and, to a degree we do not typically see elsewhere, Commission members, staff, and others are keenly aware that legislative mandates direct specific ACHE activities. In short, the environment for education is highly competitive and somewhat counterproductive. Many survey respondents, 55.4 percent, report impediments to the ability of the Commission to provide leadership in postsecondary/higher education. Comments provide qualitative data which suggest that state politics along with competing agendas and priorities are among these impediments.

Another decentralizing factor is the number and diversity of governing authorities for higher and postsecondary education in Alabama. The State Board of Education not only oversees the K-12 system but also governs all two-year institutions, including one upper-division university. The four-year institutions are overseen by autonomous governing boards, two of which are constitutional. All of these entities compete head-to-head for state funding. State appropriations for all education functions come from dedicated sources placed in the Education Trust Fund, creating a revenue pool that exacerbates competition among K-12, two-year, and four-year institutions. Universities in other states might well envy the lack of competition for state funding from corrections, social services, Medicaid, and other growing state functions, but such a benefit is not salient to the Alabamians we interviewed.

Figure 1 places ACHE’s authority in context with other coordinating boards and commissions. This “coordination spectrum” was assembled by AGB’s Ingram Center for Public Trusteeship and Governance.

Figure 1:

A Spectrum of State Coordinating Board and Commission Authority



Full titles:

- | | |
|--|---|
| Alabama Commission on Higher Education (AL) | Ohio Board of Regents (OH) |
| Arkansas Department of Higher Education (AK) | Oklahoma Board of Regents (OK) |
| California Postsecondary Education Commission (CA) | Pennsylvania Department of Education (PA) |

Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CO)
Connecticut Department of Higher Education (CT)
Delaware Higher Education Commission (DE)
Illinois Board of Higher Education (IL)
Indiana Commission for Higher Education (IN)
Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (KY)
Louisiana Board of Regents (LA)
Maryland Higher Education Commission (MD)
Massachusetts Board of Higher Education (MA)
Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education (MO)
Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (NE)
New Jersey Commission on Higher Education (NJ)
New Mexico Higher Education Department (NM)
New York State Education Department (NY)

South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (SC)
Tennessee Higher Education Commission (TN)
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (TX)
State Council of Higher Education in Virginia (VA)
Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board (WA)
West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (WV)

This spectrum is based on an examination of the formal statutory authority of 26 state higher education coordinating agencies and commissions, including, but not limited to, the authority for statewide planning, budgeting, and review and approval of academic programs. The spectrum is also based on the perceived or reported level of influence, or informal authority, possessed by an agency's or commission's citizen board or staff leadership. Thus, the spectrum is based on both objective and subjective criteria and will change over time as both formal and informal authority are accrued or lost. It should be noted that some agencies do not possess authority in all areas of state coordination. The New York State Education Department, for example, possesses near absolute authority on academic standards and licensure, no doubt the strongest authority in that area among the 26 state agencies listed here. But since it has little or no authority in budgeting or planning, its place on the spectrum is near the middle. It should also be noted that two agencies listed above, New Mexico Higher Education Department and Ohio Board of Regents, are no longer overseen by citizen coordinating boards.

Assessment of Commission Progress: Observations and Achievements

ACHE has many notable achievements to its credit since the 2006 evaluation. The Evaluation Committee requested a staff summary, which is attached as Appendix D.

The statutory responsibilities that are most evident in ACHE's current work are academic program review, student database development and reporting, unified budget development, the State Plan for higher education, and administration of financial aid.

In 2006, ACHE had a staff of 26 full-time and two part-time persons; today, the staff numbers 25 full-time and one part-time person. Some 20 years ago, ACHE had over 35 people in today's roles, and those who remain have additional duties due to legislative action in 1996. Perhaps the single strongest theme of all our interviewees was admiration, appreciation, and concern for the staff of ACHE. They are seen as competent, professional, responsive, helpful, and heavily overloaded with work. Some of the 2006 recommendations were not practical to pursue with such a small staff. Others may be beyond the capability of an agency with no constituency and very limited authority, especially in a highly politicized environment.

The staffs of other state agencies and two- and four-year institutions hold the ACHE staff in high regard. According to the evaluation survey results, the vast majority of respondents describe the staff as effective and knowledgeable on educational issues, responsive to inquiries, and a producer of quality work. Relationships are positive, particularly among mid-level and senior professionals who must collaborate on several educational issues of cross-cutting importance. ACHE staff are dedicated and work at their full capacity to help achieve the mission of the agency. But limitations in staff size hamper ACHE's

effectiveness. Several ACHE staffers have 20 or more years of government service; their institutional memory would be lost if several retire at or near the same time.

Assessment of Responses to the 2006 Quadrennial Review

In 2006, the Eighth Quadrennial Evaluation of ACHE made the following recommendations and ACHE has made noteworthy progress on several of the most significant recommendations. There is emerging evidence of a policy orientation, for example in the major recommendations of the 2009-2014 State Plan for Alabama Higher Education, and in the efforts to bring relevant education data to the table for economic development leaders. ACHE also had an extensive, multi-constituency strategic planning process, as recommended, and it has strengthened oversight of out-of-state providers. The executive director is an ardent and tireless advocate for the establishment of a PK-20 Council, consistent with the 2006 report. The 2006 recommendations and the progress to date are summarized below. The Ninth Quadrennial review contains recommendations in many of these areas that can be found in the Evaluation Committee Recommendations section of this report.

1. Reframe the mission of ACHE from regulatory role to policy leadership.

In progress: Through the use of data and studies on specific issues, ACHE continues to try to influence policy formulation by decision makers. During this quadrennium, ACHE also advocated several new initiatives whose measure of success has been mixed. These initiatives included: the Alabama Consolidated Revitalization Initiative and Technology Effort (ACRITE), a mechanism that would have allocated funds to ACHE for challenge grants in the areas of research and economic development; a PK-20 Council; and partnering with K-12 on multiple federal grant applications. This will be a continuing challenge and continuing evolution for ACHE. Re-energizing the State Plan for Alabama Higher Education and making greater use of ACHE's statewide student database can facilitate this policy leadership role.

2. Shape next strategic plan: involve business and civic leaders, focus on higher education's contribution to the future of Alabama, include measurable goals and benchmarks, tie budget and financing policies to the action plan, and link institutional accountability to plan performance.

Operational: With the exception of tying budget and financing policies to the state plan, all other features were incorporated into the formulation of Forging Strategic Alliances: State Plan for Alabama Higher Education 2009-2014.

3. Lead higher education's role in support of P-12: use a regional approach, use regional data/information, and convene regional forums.

In progress: Priority 1 of the new State Plan, Forging Strategic Alliances: 2009-2014, calls for cooperation with PK-12 to increase students' preparedness for college and career with a focus on academic and social transitions between high school and college that will prepare students for success on the college level. Priority 2 of the plan calls for the establishment of a PK-20 Council to coordinate and advocate toward a fully integrated educational system with funding, assigned administrative responsibilities, and a commitment from the membership to sustain the work. Priority 3 of the plan calls for an increase in the number of graduates in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM fields). This includes increasing the number, preparation, and retention of K-12 teachers in natural science, mathematics, and related career technology fields and the advancement of programs that strengthen preparation of both students and teachers in

STEM-related fields. In addition, ACHE staff has made numerous presentations to local, regional and state-wide groups that incorporated data and information specific to the interests of the various groups.

4. Streamline core functions work; link program review to State Plan.

In progress: In 2006, the staff was restructured along organizational and operational lines in order to provide a more service-oriented emphasis to the public and to encourage interaction between structural units. Initiatives also were put in place for staff development/training upgrades in preparation for the future advancement of employees. As times and resources continue to change, it is essential that ACHE reconsider at least annually where and how the staff might be reconfigured, partnerships might be established, and joint efforts involving campus or state personnel created so as to ensure sufficient attention to its highest-priority activities.

5. Develop a recommended long-range financing plan.

In progress: Priority 4 of the state plans calls for all parties to seek the necessary financial resources for education in Alabama. It further encourages postsecondary institutions to develop new revenue streams that are in keeping with their educational missions. It also calls for the creation of benchmarks for higher education costs by identifying and sharing proven methods to improve efficiency. Finally, it calls for the expansion of higher education revenue, including the expansion of state support for higher education. Much more could be done by ACHE to convene a working group to develop a funding formula or financing plan that could be used to build a consolidated budget recommendation and as a rationale for funding institutions.

6. Give priority to capital needs procedures and financial aid incentives to middle school students.

In progress: ACHE continues to prepare documents highlighting the need for a cyclical process for funding capital needs. No progress has been made in securing legislative support, partially due to the ability of institutions to independently float local bonds to fund projects. Prior to the recent funding crisis, ACHE had made significant progress in increasing awareness and funding for the state's need-based student financial aid program, the Alabama Student Assistance Program (ASAP). ACHE has also worked with K-12 officials to promote the need for students to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FASFA).

7. Strengthen oversight of out-of-state providers.

Accomplished: The oversight of the delivery of postsecondary-higher education courses and programs by out-of-state institutions has been strengthened through: increased coordination with the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education, revised policies and procedures for licensure, the use of external consultants to evaluate proposed programs, and site visits.

8. Redesign ACHE's meeting agendas: monitor a limited set of basic questions, use consent agendas, and aim for 75 percent of time spent on policy leadership.

In progress: ACHE has incorporated the use of a consent agenda in order to have more time to discuss policy issues; assess research and public service program effectiveness; and consider accountability issues. ACHE also now publishes an annual legislative agenda prior to each

legislative session. The board has less time to meet than the average for coordinating boards nationally, and policy issues typically require considerable input and discussion. Improving meeting productivity to ensure sufficient attention to top priority matters for fulfilling ACHE's mission should be an ongoing goal.

9. Increase ACHE staffing in strategic planning, data/information systems, and P-12 alignment.

In progress: Due to financial constraints, hiring additional staff has not been possible; however, ACHE is seeking to hire additional staff members in the data/information systems area. ACHE is mindful that state resources may or may not be available for this function despite its centrality to ACHE's ability to fulfill its mission and legislative mandates. Continuing efforts to reallocate internally to support the data and information function are essential. Despite staffing constraints, ACHE has been very active with K-12 in the American Diploma Project, the Core Curriculum Committee, and in the application process for several federal grants.

10. Reassess statutory mandates for data collection.

Although the student database now has expanded to over 6.5 million records, little progress has been made in the creation of a faculty database beyond the initial review of definitional parameters or in the collection of course-level data at the four-year level, due to institutional concerns.

11. Establish a consumer information portal.

ACHE has attempted to address this recommendation by enhancing its website to include links to all Alabama institutions, Alabama Mentor, financial-aid resources, etc. ACHE also implemented a "comments board" so that institutions and the general public may have the opportunity to provide input on decision items. This represents a good-faith effort and a significant improvement from the past in terms of transparency, communication, and service to the people of Alabama.

State plan for higher education

ACHE has developed a compelling State Plan for Alabama Higher Education, Forging Strategic Alliances: 2009-2014. A wide base of stakeholders focused on the future challenges facing the state, as recommended by the previous two Quadrennial Review Committees. The survey of ACHE constituencies yielded 75.3 percent agreement on the importance of the initiatives in the plan.

However, the new State Plan has yet to resonate sufficiently with state policy makers and institutional leaders. Regarding the latter, this is an unfortunate development because the Plan's statewide planning advisory council included several institutional members who were appointed by their university presidents. These institutional members engaged in an open and participatory process leading to the Plan's development and its five priorities. The five priorities (cooperate with PK-12 to increase student readiness for college, establish a PK-20 Council, increase graduates in STEM fields, seek additional financial resources, and establish a workforce development plan for the state) relate as much to PK-12 education and economic development as to higher education per se. Confusion is evident among several stakeholders who expected ACHE to produce a plan focused solely on the needs of higher and postsecondary education and not on the broader responsibilities colleges and universities have for overall state educational improvement or workforce development. State statute provides the Commission the flexibility to develop such a broad Plan. Despite ACHE's best efforts, it is unfortunate that the Plan has not gained the foothold with state and institutional leaders that it can or should have. The universities feel much less connected to this State Plan than previous plans and while many institutional leaders do not mind the looser ties, somehow an

opportunity to focus university efforts on broad statewide educational goals is being lost.

The most visible effort to advance the Plan is focused on advocating for creation of a PK-20 Council, but creation of a council has been stymied by several factors: the difficulty of gaining support from all key parties for a particular approach, the perceived threat of diverting scarce resources, and lack of sustained interest from the Governor or legislature. The idea is worthy and desirable but only under supportive circumstances. An effective PK-20 Council with a clear charge, full-time staff, and the active support and engagement of the Governor, could address several education issues in Alabama needing attention, such as achievement gaps, college student remediation, and college and career readiness.

According to the AGB evaluation survey results, on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high), 40.3 percent report average efforts by ACHE to consistently advance or champion the State Plan for Higher Education with all stakeholders—educational leaders, policymakers, the press, and the general public. This is an average rating despite numerous outreach efforts and presentations the ACHE staff have made about the Plan to various groups, political leaders, and organizations.

Statewide student database

Institutions, agencies, and policy makers increasingly see ACHE as a source of useful data. From the evaluation committee's survey, 61.5 percent of respondents report that the Commission is effective with planning and conducting special studies, surveys, and evaluations related to postsecondary/higher education. The statewide student unit record database to track students through high school into college, one of the best in the nation, has helped ACHE to develop useful reports on educational attainment and regional workforce development. ACHE's effort to persuade Alabama's independent colleges and universities to voluntarily submit student unit records—provided thus far by a modest number of institutions—strengthens the overall database. The institutions find the data to be very helpful for decision making, and ACHE staff members have issued reports to assist institutions, schools, and economic developers. In addition, and according to the evaluation survey, respondents ranked the statewide student database as one of the most important responsibilities of the Commission. Over 73 percent of ACHE constituencies were in agreement regarding the familiarity and use of the database. The vast majority of respondents (57.1 percent) also report that the Commission should continue to expand the student database.

Academic programs

ACHE's work with academic programs is extensive (see Appendix D) and exemplary. Constituents uniformly praise the staff and the process.

ACHE administers an efficient review process for new academic programs that effectively uses its institutional advisory councils (the Council of University Chief Academic Officers and the Council of Graduate Deans). ACHE encourages collaborative proposals in the offering of new academic programs whenever possible, and adds value by helping institutions do a 360-degree evaluation of their proposed programs before they are submitted for formal review. Unnecessary duplication of programs appears to be lessened under ACHE review.

ACHE effectively oversees out-of-state, for-profit education providers to ensure that these institutions offer a sound educational product for Alabama students.

State higher education funding and ACHE

Education exists in a competitive and somewhat counterproductive environment. Institutional lobbyists play a major role in funding, although the Alabama Education Association, the state teacher union, remains the top lobbying/advocacy group for education.

The Education Trust Fund provides the possibility for adequate funding for education, and somewhat

protects education from the vagaries of the rest of the state budget. Yet in difficult budget times (and during the period of the Ninth Quadrennial Review), the Fund has declined. The budget process appears very political if not cut-throat between the education sectors and among colleges and universities. ACHE's potential to be a proactive agency that could administer small amounts of incentive money or challenge grants to leverage or help institutions achieve state goals is not occurring in this budget process.

Staff members at ACHE, the Department of Postsecondary Education, and the Department of Education are to be commended for their professionalism, positive working relationships, and mutual regard despite the keen competition for scarce state funds. Evaluation survey respondents report mixed comments regarding how the Commission develops and presents a consolidated budget recommendation (formerly the unified budget recommendation) to the Governor and legislature: 59.1 percent report that the Commission is effective, while another 22.9 percent of respondents report "no opinion," and 18.1 percent report that the Commission is not effective in this capacity.

The Council of Presidents, an advisory council of all four-year presidents, the chancellor of the Alabama Community College System, and three community college presidents, currently meets infrequently, with a limited agenda, often with proxies replacing some of the presidents. It appears to be the most active at the time of the consolidated budget recommendation. At other times, however, the Council appears to work to little benefit, although it may have been more engaged in the past.

Advise Governor, legislature

The executive director of ACHE appears to be more active than recent predecessors in outreach to legislators and the Governor. Much of this is related to his advocacy of the PK-20 Council envisioned in the State Plan for Alabama Higher Education. Building positive interpersonal relationships is a powerful approach to increasing ACHE's effectiveness. In addition, evaluation survey respondents rank advising the Governor regarding postsecondary/higher education matters as one of the Commission's top responsibilities. However, when asked how effective the Commission is at this responsibility, the vast majority of respondents chose "no opinion." While it appears that the executive director is working with the Governor and legislature, it does not appear that many of ACHE's constituencies are aware of these efforts.

ACHE also provided important assistance to the State Comptroller's Office and the State Finance Director. To increase transparency and accountability and to address federal requirements for the receipt of federal stimulus funds, Governor Bob Riley signed an Executive Order, later codified in law, calling for the creation of a publically accessible website detailing all spending by state government. By direction of the Office of the Governor, ACHE was tasked with creating on its website a webpage which contained links to the posted expenditures of each college and university. ACHE is to be commended for this effort.

Student aid programs

ACHE staff members get high marks from constituencies for administering student financial-aid programs. The vast majority rank operating student-aid programs for the state as one of the Commission's most important responsibilities. With this in mind, 58.0 percent are in agreement that the operation of aid is managed effectively.

Evaluation Committee Recommendations

Our overarching recommendation reiterates and extends a theme established in the previous two quadrennial evaluations: ACHE can enhance its value to the state and higher education by raising and informing issues in reports and other communications for debate, discussion, and action by policy makers, educators, and the public. ACHE's executive director has recently been very visible in regional and

statewide media, which are positive developments. ACHE needs to continue to bring a high level of visibility to issues such as the need for a new financing plan; closing student achievement gaps based on income and demographic factors; and presenting policy options for addressing state needs. Survey respondents identified a number of candidate topics for such work (Appendix A). ACHE could be more involved with these matters by reallocating resources from some of the more time-consuming activities that, even though they may be legislatively mandated, are not relied upon by decision makers in the institutions or in government.

Recognizing the importance of complying with the law, identifying simpler, more straightforward, and possibly less regulatory approaches could bring staff workloads to a more manageable level and yield time for higher-value pursuits. ACHE's most powerful potential role is to provide information as an advocate for a well-educated citizenry and workforce for Alabama—to elucidate problems for those with the means to pursue solutions.

State plan for higher education

Forging Strategic Alliances: State Plan for Alabama Higher Education 2009-2014 should be the guide for much of ACHE's work in statewide policy leadership and in encouraging statewide policy discussions. To set an example for such policy discussions, each Commission board meeting should begin with a progress report on some or all of the five priority areas and their respective goals.

The focus of the State Plan for Alabama Higher Education on overall state educational achievement is very admirable. But ACHE should clarify higher and postsecondary's expectations and responsibilities for achieving the Plan's priorities and goals. The Sample Reporting Template in the appendix of the Plan is a start. But this might be better accomplished by formulating basic questions to gauge progress on the State Plan and how the Plan will make a difference for Alabama, as was similarly suggested in the 2006 Quadrennial Review. Those questions were (and would remain): Are Alabama students ready for college-level learning and a high-skill workforce? Are Alabama students progressing through the education pipeline from ninth grade to a college degree or postsecondary certificate? Are they completing high school ready for college-level learning, entering college, and persisting to graduation? Are Alabama students completing certificates and degrees, especially in areas critical to the state's and each region's economies? Is the state's investment in R&D linked to the future competitiveness of the state and each of its regions? Is college affordable for all Alabamians in relationship to their ability to pay?

From these basic questions on the Plan's priorities and goals, statewide targets could be established in specific areas. Several indicators are suggested in the Sample Reporting Template. Institutional engagement with the Plan and expectations for contributions to it could also be generated from these six questions—for example, on certificate and degree completion, with an expectation that each institution would report annually on its progress and contributions. It is unclear if the Sample Reporting Template sets this expectation or not. There need not be sanctions or penalties for not meeting expectations, but the act of reporting annually could help ensure buy-in to the Plan's priorities.

Alabama would benefit greatly from an active PK-20 Council, and ACHE is to be commended for its leadership, energy, and persistence in building the concept and support base. If ACHE continues to be the lead advocate for the Council's creation, then ACHE needs to redouble its efforts on expanding the support base and getting partners to speak with equal passion about the necessity of the Council. ACHE also needs to focus on building greater support for the Council with college and university leaders to overcome grave doubts within the higher and postsecondary education community.

Statewide student database

Alabama's citizens and workforce are far behind most of the country educationally. This is not news to Alabamians, but the cost to the state's citizens and its future is growing exponentially as the national

commitment to increased postsecondary attainment gains force in nearly every other state. A common metric is the percent of adults age 25-64 who hold at least a two-year degree. As of the 2008 Census, the figure for the nation was 38 percent; for Alabama only 32 percent. The national goal is 60 percent by 2025. The projection for Alabama in 2025 is only 43 percent, so Alabama is on track to be much further behind other states than it is today. Even more compelling, the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce predicts that 55 percent of Alabama's jobs will require postsecondary education by 2018—that is 373,000 of the 680,000 total projected vacancies resulting from job creation, worker retirements, and other factors¹.

The student database has provided important data and information to state and higher education users but remains an underutilized resource with untapped potential for ACHE and the state. ACHE should use all of the data at its disposal to produce more reports on statewide or regional education issues that illuminate policy debates and options and strategic issues for the legislature and the Governor. The Alabama legislature has limited research staff. ACHE could become the trusted source for information that would support good policy and resource decisions at the legislative level.

ACHE is also seeking to expand its data collection efforts to include course-level data. Some individuals and institutions are uneasy about this initiative, but course-level data is needed to help learn how to improve student retention, streamline the educational process, analyze opportunities for collaboration, and other meaningful purposes. Concerns about course-level data can be addressed in the implementation process. Pursuing this next level is consistent with national developments and would provide information for important policy and institutional decisions. ACHE should continue to pursue this data collection.

Due to staff limitations, ACHE should consider using college faculty and graduate students to conduct meaningful education research and author papers under ACHE supervision. While the student database is a prime resource for such work, collaborative efforts could also produce valuable issue papers on diverse topics. ACHE should also investigate the possibility of developing a query program for the database so that institutional users can create their own reports. ACHE should also explore new ways to expand the use of the Higher Education Information Advisory Group (HEIAG) to increase capability to plumb this rich asset without unrealistic cost factors.

Academic programs

Program duplication has all but disappeared as a rational criterion for program review in most states; the time has come to reconsider it in Alabama. One reason for reconsideration is the fact that an extensive program review and approval process puts public institutions at a competitive disadvantage in relation to their private counterparts that have far greater freedom in new program decisions and delivery. The state does not provide additional funding for new programs, nor is there a formula to tie state funding to enrollment. Therefore, creating new programs does not directly affect how much a university receives from the state.

The incentive to institutions is to maintain a program inventory that fulfills their mission and meets the needs of their service area, builds on synergies among programs and specific strengths at the institution, and achieves the most favorable cost/benefit ratio. By tightly controlling program inventories, states constrain institutional entrepreneurship that can produce more value for the state without additional cost. ACHE should consider retaining new program review only for the purpose of ensuring academic quality, adherence to academic mission, and, where relevant, the state's need for graduates in that field.

Consolidated budget recommendation

Developing a consolidated budget recommendation, as mandated by law, appears to remain a

¹ Statistics are from *A Stronger Nation through Higher Education*. Lumina Foundation for Education, Indianapolis, 2010, pp.11-12.

worthwhile process, even if the request has little value to legislators and the Governor's budget office. As a coordinating agency, ACHE is not equipped by policy to enforce budget discipline. Nevertheless, developing the recommendation does appear to allow higher and postsecondary institutions to come together to talk about individual and collective resource needs and should continue.

The ACHE process of building budgets, however, may be unnecessarily cumbersome. Given that we found no one who believes that either the Governor or the legislature takes the recommendation seriously, the time required to crunch the numbers should be the minimum necessary to provide credible benchmarks. In addition, the mandated ACHE capital funding request and annual updates to the facilities master plan appear to be meaningless exercises without state capital support and should be discontinued.

ACHE should consider seeking the blessings of the Governor and legislature to create a broad, institutional-based study group to develop and recommend back to the Governor and legislature a strong, fair, and equitable funding formula (or financing plan) that would be used to build the consolidated budget recommendation and fund institutions. The new formula should provide incentives to reward excellence and the achievement of state goals.

Student aid

Affordability is becoming an ever-greater challenge in Alabama. According to a 2009 financial report from State Higher Education Executive Officers, Alabama's net tuition revenue is 37 percent higher than the national average, but tuition aid for students is about 40 percent below the national average. Furthermore, Measuring Up, the 2008 national report card of the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, gives Alabama a grade of 'F' on affordability. As stated in Measuring Up, "higher education has become less affordable for students and their families. Poor and working-class families must devote 51 percent of their income, even after aid, to pay for costs at public four-year colleges. Financial aid to low-income students is low. For every dollar in Pell Grant aid to students, the state spends only five cents."

ACHE should be a stronger voice for affordability and expanded student aid programs. Although ACHE is not specifically charged with advocating for state student aid funds, in the recent past it has helped to make the case for increases in state aid programs. As noted in Appendix D, Commission Achievements, the Alabama Student Assistance Program received a \$2.7 million increase in funding in fiscal year 2006-2007. Going forward, using its research capacity, ACHE should bring visibility to institutional and state policymakers on the affordability problem, including comparable data with other southern states.

Commission operations

In response to the recommendation of the Eighth Quadrennial Review, ACHE restructured its staff in 2006 to create a more service-oriented and interactive office. By all accounts, as heard in our interviews and recorded in the survey, the reorganization achieved its purposes. Given scarce resources, especially since the 2006 review, ACHE should consider additional ways to manage workloads, improve service, and increase timeliness by investing in additional technologies and software. This could be a very good time to take a fresh look at assumptions and patterns, and having an ad hoc advisory committee of selected campus representatives could provide valuable perspective.

When the budget situation improves, Commission staff should be strongly encouraged to attend national meetings of the State Higher Education Executive Officers and regional meetings of the Southern Regional Education Board to interact with colleagues in other states working on similar problems and issues in statewide coordination.

ACHE should also consider creating a community college advisory group to the Commission that would meet with staff and commissioners once or twice a year. Such an advisory group could open up communication with the two-year sector and clear the air on disagreements. Most importantly, regarding advisory groups, ACHE should devise a strategy to revitalize the Council of Presidents through fewer

meeting but more compelling agendas, and a prohibition on proxies except under exceptional circumstances.

As recommended in the Eighth Quadrennial Review, the Commission should host an annual or biannual Governor's Conference for the board members of the all public and private institutions. This should be a meeting coordinated by the Commission but in cooperation and participation with the Governor's Office and the Council of Presidents. It should focus on contemporary issues facing higher and postsecondary education and the state, provide an update and progress report on the State Plan, and serve as an education and orientation program for good practices in trusteeship. Such a conference is part of a "convening" role with institutions and policymakers that would enhance the value of ACHE.

Commission board

By all reports, the appointed Commission members work well with the staff and are supportive of creating and sustaining an effective agency that focuses both on institutional needs and the future of Alabama. Commission members need to ensure that they are always perceived as keeping the broad interests of the state in mind as they make planning decisions or decisions on new academic programs. And when and where appropriate, members need to play a more visible role in advancing ACHE's agenda with the public, policymakers, and the media, as well as with colleges and universities.

The failure to appoint new commission members in a timely manner when vacancies occur has been a problem. Some members have continued to serve well beyond their appointed term until a new appointment is made. To ensure the appointment of high-caliber individuals to the Commission as vacancies occur, a statement of desirable qualifications and board member's responsibilities should be developed by the Commission as a guide to the Governor and other elected leaders when making appointments. Suggestions are listed in Appendix E.

As noted above, Commission board meetings should devote sufficient time, if not a majority of time, to assessing progress on the State Plan for Alabama Higher Education, as well as identifying and discussing other state needs demanding the attention of higher and postsecondary education. This was a recommendation of the Eighth Quadrennial Review Commission as well. Using consent agendas has no doubt helped in streamlining meetings to allow more time for strategic policy discussions. Making final decisions on new academic programs should not be the compelling reason for Commission meetings or agendas.

Recommendations to the incoming Governor and legislature

PK-20 Council. Alabama's new Governor should create a PK-20 Council by executive order, or propose legislation to do so. As ACHE has done, there are many resources and models to consult to ensure the council's effectiveness, including the Southern Regional Education Board. One of the council's first tasks should be the development of a common definition of college readiness using the new recommended standard of the National Governors Association and Council of Chief State School Officers as a starting point. Alabama's participation in Achieve and the American Diploma Project provides the needed basis for this endeavor. The PK-20 Council can serve as a focal point and consistent presence to sustain education reform efforts and raise educational attainment at all levels. Additional areas needing attention are high school drop-out prevention, school/college relations, and building a pipeline of graduates in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

Representation in Governor's cabinet. The Governor should consider allowing the executive director of the Commission to sit with the Governor's cabinet. This should not be as an appointed member of the cabinet, however, but as the head of an important agency. As Aims McGuinness, leader of the two previous evaluation committees has noted, there are reasons the position should not be a cabinet level or Governor's appointed position. In any given state, the state higher education executive must balance his or

her work between the branches of government. Bringing higher education to the cabinet table will better enable the state to capitalize on those institutional and intellectual assets to help move the state forward.

Workforce development. Although the executive director is a guest participant at meetings of the State Workforce Planning Council, the Commission is not formally at the table for higher education on workforce development issues. The participation of the Department of Postsecondary Education is assumed to be sufficient. Yet all colleges and universities make significant contributions to the state's workforce. State-level discussion should include four-year institutions, preferably through ACHE's formal inclusion and participation on the State Workforce Planning Council.

Commission board appointments. Having members with expired terms on the ACHE board is a significant concern. The state's best efforts to ensure timely appointments would greatly aid the work of the board and staff. The Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Speaker of the House need to make appointments to the ACHE board in a timely manner when vacancies occur. Doing so will ensure a vital commission board and agency and continuity for policy decision making.

Conclusion

Nationally, state commissions and coordinating agencies face difficult challenges in providing and sustaining statewide policy leadership. They sit at the intersection of state needs and institutional ambitions. They must balance competing institutional pressures, serve the sometimes conflicting needs of state elected leaders, and alter procedures and processes in recognition of changes in the educational market place.

The fiscal conditions and political influences in Alabama are not dissimilar to those in other states. Within this environment, the Alabama Commission on Higher Education provides highly valuable services and much needed policy information to the state and its higher and postsecondary institutions. The Ninth Quadrennial Evaluation Committee hopes that the observations and recommendations contained in this report can help to improve and enhance the Commission's progress and performance. ACHE has made strides in becoming a more effective policy-leadership agency, and it needs to strengthen this role going forward. By using its statewide data effectively, being an honest broker among competing institutions, and by convening state, education, civic, and business leaders around the education needs of the state, ACHE can use its limited authority and voice to effect positive change.

Appendices

Appendix A: Ninth Quadrennial Evaluation Committee Survey - Brief Overview

Respondents. The majority of respondents are college or university officials from public four- and two-year institutions. Public four-year officials make up 44.2 percent of respondents, and public two-year, 29.8 percent. Members of the state legislature represent 7.7 percent, and K-12 officials represent 5.8 percent.

Evaluating the Commission's responsibilities. Respondents report that the Commission is adequately effective regarding its seven responsibilities: administering the Statewide Student Database; reviewing and approving/disapproving proposals for new programs or units of instruction; reviewing and approving/disapproving proposals for off-campus offerings; reviewing extensions and alterations to existing programs and units of instruction, research, and service; developing and presenting a consolidated budget recommendation to the governor/legislature; studying and making recommendations on public institution role and scope (mission); and operating student aid programs for Alabama.

Also, the majority of respondents report that the Commission is moderately effective in developing and recommending legislation to ensure high quality education in Alabama.

Ranking of responsibilities. In rank order, respondents report the most important responsibilities of the Commission as: 1) administering the Statewide Student Database; 2) reviewing and approving/disapproving proposals for new programs or units of instruction; and 3) operating student aid programs for Alabama.

Reviewing extensions and alterations to existing programs and units of instruction, research, and service, and developing and recommending legislation to insure high quality education tied as the next most important responsibilities.

Authority. The survey yielded 47.6 percent agreement that the Commission has sufficient authority to perform its responsibilities effectively.

Impediments. Many survey respondents, 55.4 percent, report impediments to the ability of the Commission to provide leadership in postsecondary/higher education. Comments provide qualitative data suggesting that state politics along with competing agendas and priorities are among these impediments.

Staff members. The survey yielded significant agreement that Commission staff members are very effective, knowledgeable on educational issues, and responsive to inquiries in a timely fashion.

Priorities of the State Plan. On a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high), 43.2 percent report high levels of agreement regarding ACHE's five priorities in Forging Strategic Alliances: State Plan for Alabama Higher Education 2009-2014.

Other issues for the State Plan. For the 37.3 percent of respondents who describe issues facing Alabama that are not in the State Plan, top comments include: increasing access and degree attainment for students from underserved populations, and the rising cost of higher education—for both institutions and students.

Championing the State Plan. On a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high), 40.3 percent report average efforts by ACHE to consistently advance or champion the State Plan for Alabama Higher Education with all

stakeholders—educational leaders, policymakers, the press, and the general public.

Student Database. The survey yielded 73.5 percent agreement on the familiarity and use of ACHE’s Statewide Student Database.

Ninth Quadrennial Evaluation Committee Survey

What is your position? (check one)			Response Percent	Response Count
Public 4-Year College or University Official			44.2%	46
Public 2-Year College or University Official			29.8%	31
Private College or University Official			1.0%	1
Member of Campus or System Board of Trustees			0.0%	0
K-12 Official			5.8%	6
Member of State Legislature			7.7%	8
Executive Branch Official			2.9%	3
Civic or Business Leader			1.9%	2
Member of the News Media or Press			1.9%	2
Other (please specify)			4.8%	5
			answered question	104
			skipped question	1

Ninth Quadrennial Evaluation Committee Survey

Using the Commission Responsibilities and scale listed below, please indicate your assessment of the Commission's effectiveness for each function (with 5 being the most effective to 1 being no opinion). 5 - Highly Effective 4 - Adequately Effective 3 - Moderately Effective 2 - Not Effective 1 - No Opinion Effectiveness Rating

	5	4	3	2	1	Response Count
1. Administering the Statewide Student Database	31.3% (26)	37.3% (31)	16.9% (14)	3.6% (3)	10.8% (9)	83
2. Reviewing and approving/disapproving proposals for new programs or units of instruction	27.7% (23)	37.3% (31)	14.5% (12)	14.5% (12)	6.0% (5)	83
3. Reviewing and approving/disapproving proposals for off-campus offerings	21.7% (18)	33.7% (28)	18.1% (15)	14.5% (12)	12.0% (10)	83
4. Reviewing extensions and alterations to existing programs and units of instruction, research, and service	23.2% (19)	42.7% (35)	14.6% (12)	12.2% (10)	7.3% (6)	82
5. Developing and presenting a consolidated budget recommendation to governor/legislature	14.5% (12)	22.9% (19)	21.7% (18)	18.1% (15)	22.9% (19)	83
6. Planning and conducting special studies, surveys, and evaluations related to postsecondary/higher education	20.5% (17)	22.9% (19)	18.1% (15)	14.5% (12)	24.1% (20)	83
7. Developing and recommending legislation to insure high quality education in the state	13.4% (11)	12.2% (10)	28.0% (23)	25.6% (21)	20.7% (17)	82
8. Advising the governor, at his request, regarding postsecondary/higher education matters	12.0% (10)	12.0% (10)	21.7% (18)	14.5% (12)	39.8% (33)	83
9. Studying and making recommendations on public	18.1% (15)	22.9% (19)	21.7% (18)	21.7% (18)	15.7% (13)	83

institution role and scope (mission)						
10. Operating student aid programs for the state	14.8% (12)	33.3% (27)	9.9% (8)	8.6% (7)	33.3% (27)	81
					<i>answered question</i>	84
					<i>skipped question</i>	21

Selected Comments	
1	ACHE needs to take into account the viability of existing programs before approving new programs. When existing programs have very few graduates, why approve new programs in the same area?
2	ACHE recommendations often not followed or over-ridden by political influences. Need more money and programs to operate student aid programs.
3	ACHE is seen as interfering with accessibility and operation of higher education.
4	Not very focused on role of the two-year college.
5	ACHE has significant impediments to influencing legislative decisions.
6	ACHE needs to do a better job of involving all interested parties when institutions want to teach off campus in another institution's catchment area.

Ninth Quadrennial Evaluation Committee Survey

In your view, please rank the importance of the following ten Commission Responsibilities (with 10 being the most important to 1 being the least important). Only use each number once.

Ranking of Importance (10=most important; 1=least important)

	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Response Count
1. Administering the Statewide Student Database	34.6% (28)	12.3% (10)	3.7% (3)	13.6% (11)	6.2% (5)	6.2% (5)	6.2% (5)	6.2% (5)	3.7% (3)	7.4% (6)	81
2. Reviewing and approving/disapproving proposals for new programs or units of instruction	30.0% (24)	16.3% (13)	15.0% (12)	3.8% (3)	6.3% (5)	5.0% (4)	3.8% (3)	7.5% (6)	5.0% (4)	7.5% (6)	80
3. Reviewing and approving/disapproving proposals for off-campus offerings	8.8% (7)	13.8% (11)	18.8% (15)	12.5% (10)	10.0% (8)	5.0% (4)	7.5% (6)	3.8% (3)	12.5% (10)	7.5% (6)	80
4. Reviewing extensions and alterations to existing programs and units of instruction, research, and service	7.5% (6)	15.0% (12)	15.0% (12)	11.3% (9)	11.3% (9)	8.8% (7)	7.5% (6)	8.8% (7)	12.5% (10)	2.5% (2)	80
5. Developing and presenting a consolidated budget recommendation to governor/legislature	15.0% (12)	8.8% (7)	13.8% (11)	1.3% (1)	8.8% (7)	16.3% (13)	15.0% (12)	5.0% (4)	2.5% (2)	13.8% (11)	80
6. Planning and conducting special studies, surveys, and evaluations related to postsecondary/higher education	6.3% (5)	6.3% (5)	13.8% (11)	13.8% (11)	15.0% (12)	12.5% (10)	10.0% (8)	8.8% (7)	11.3% (9)	2.5% (2)	80

7. Developing and recommending legislation to insure high quality education in the state	11.3% (9)	15.0% (12)	10.0% (8)	10.0% (8)	2.5% (2)	13.8% (11)	13.8% (11)	10.0% (8)	8.8% (7)	5.0% (4)	80
8. Advising the governor, at his request, regarding postsecondary/higher education matters	11.3% (9)	11.3% (9)	15.0% (12)	8.8% (7)	6.3% (5)	11.3% (9)	6.3% (5)	15.0% (12)	8.8% (7)	6.3% (5)	80
9. Studying and making recommendations on public institution role and scope (mission)	10.0% (8)	8.8% (7)	16.3% (13)	10.0% (8)	6.3% (5)	5.0% (4)	6.3% (5)	15.0% (12)	10.0% (8)	12.5% (10)	80
10. Operating student aid programs for the state	19.0% (15)	8.9% (7)	8.9% (7)	7.6% (6)	12.7% (10)	6.3% (5)	5.1% (4)	2.5% (2)	12.7% (10)	16.5% (13)	79
answered question											82
skipped question											23

Selected Comments	
1	ACHE has no teeth. Research institutions have very powerful lobbyists.
2	I don't really feel that this ranking provides an accurate reflection of importance. I would have preferred groupings since I think several of these are of equal importance or unimportance.
3	Budget should be most important, but the way it is done does not benefit Community Colleges.
4	ACHE must have statutory or constitutional authority to at least distribute higher education appropriations to institutions. Tell new governor ways that ACHE can be useful: provide prioritized "to do" list and methods for facing top three higher education priorities.

Ninth Quadrennial Evaluation Committee Survey



Selected Comments	
1	ACHE typically reaches into areas that are under the auspices of university boards, which causes friction and diminishes its overall effectiveness.
2	They do not need more authority.
3	The law gives enough authority, it is not used.
4	Too much authority--it is seen as self-serving and hindering free development of programs and accessibility of higher education.
5	Two-year colleges and technical schools have oversight of state board of education that also oversees K-12. Rules for major universities depend on laws setting up boards of governance for the schools.

Ninth Quadrennial Evaluation Committee Survey

Are there impediments to the ability of the Commission to provide leadership in postsecondary/higher education?



Selected Comments	
1	State politics, conflicts between K-12 and higher education.
2	An internal culture of apparent bureaucracy and boredom.
3	ACHE misses many opportunities to provide leadership (vision) for higher education; two- and four-year institutions are under the control of individual boards; ACHE confuses leadership/advocacy of higher education with control of institutions, which is not the role of ACHE as a coordinating board.
4	ACHE really does not have any control over two-year institutions. The two-year institutions need to report to ACHE -- not post secondary.
5	Leadership
6	Relationship with the Postsecondary leadership.
7	ACHE has a decidedly anti-community college bias.
8	Political issues impact its ability as well as a reluctance of the Commission itself sometimes to take a hard or unpopular stance on some items.
9	ACHE has not been advantageous to the mission of two-year college education and has inadequate representation from this important branch.
10	Appropriate state funding.
11	Lack of sufficient authority and insufficient funding.
12	Needs more strength/teeth. Must have influence even with 2 constitutional institutions.
13	Personnel and "old guard" mentality impede progress.
14	There are political forces that try to pit K-12 against Higher Education, to the detriment of Higher Education's importance to the future of Alabama.
15	Sometimes lack of cooperation from institutions...lack of attention to recommendations by political leadership.
16	There appear to be some gray area between ACHE and Alabama Postsecondary relating to community colleges.
17	Turf. Also split oversight of some two-year programs, including for-profit colleges.
18	Lack of focus.

Ninth Quadrennial Evaluation Committee Survey

Using the scale provided, please indicate your assessment of the Commission's effectiveness for each of the responsibilities specified below. 5 - Highly Effective 4 - Adequately Effective 3 - Moderately Effective 2 - Not Effective 1 - No Opinion

	5	4	3	2	1	Response Count
1. Do you find the staff to be knowledgeable on educational issues?	41.0% (34)	38.6% (32)	10.8% (9)	3.6% (3)	6.0% (5)	83
2. Does the work produced meet quality standards: accuracy, neatness, thoroughness, etc.?	45.8% (38)	37.3% (31)	6.0% (5)	2.4% (2)	8.4% (7)	83
3. Is the staff responsive to inquires in a timely fashion?	54.2% (45)	24.1% (20)	9.6% (8)	3.6% (3)	8.4% (7)	83
4. Do employees express ideas clearly, both orally and in writing, listen well and respond appropriately?	39.8% (33)	41.0% (34)	8.4% (7)	3.6% (3)	7.2% (6)	83
5. Do you find that the staff displays positive and cooperative attitudes?	47.0% (39)	28.9% (24)	9.6% (8)	8.4% (7)	6.0% (5)	83
					<i>answered question</i>	83
					<i>skipped question</i>	22

Selected Comments	
1	The instructional and institutional research staff is top notch!
2	Lack of institutional experience of staff is sometimes a limitation.
3	Employees: sometimes verbose.
4	Need to increase funding to add additional staff. The staff workload is too much for such a small staff.
5	The staff is excellent and articulate about staying on point about the ACHE mission.
6	Director answers own phone and is quick to respond to media inquiries. People on his staff responsible for core programs also highly responsive. Because of state law, however, the commission has little control over some programs that might be under its oversight in some states.

Ninth Quadrennial Evaluation Committee Survey

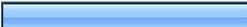
In December 2009, the Alabama Commission on Higher Education released the State Plan for Alabama Higher Education, “Forging Strategic Alliances: 2009-2014.” For the first time, in addition to higher education and postsecondary education officials, participants from K-12 and business and industry were included in the development process. The plan has five priorities with 10 goals. The priorities are: increasing students’ preparedness for college and career; establishing a PK-20 Council; increasing graduates in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics); seeking necessary financial resources for education; and establishing a comprehensive Workforce Development Plan for Alabama. On a rating scale, do you agree with the five priorities of the State Plan for Higher Education?

	5	4	3	2	1	Rating Average	Response Count
5=strongly agree; 1=strongly disagree	43.2% (35)	32.1% (26)	16.0% (13)	2.5% (2)	6.2% (5)	1.00	81
	<i>answered question</i>						81
	<i>skipped question</i>						24

Selected Comments	
1	Many of these goals are outside of the higher education sphere of influence.
2	ACHE ignored the Council of University Presidents and worked against the presidents on the development of the PK-20 Council; there were two primary issues: the presidents wanted the work ACHE to focus on higher education and not K-12, as ACHE is supposed to be representing higher education and K-12 has its own support structure, and ACHE is seeking to shift funds from university budgets to the ACHE budget to support the effort (as you know institutions have lost over one-third of their state funds over the past two years). FYI...in the state of AL higher education and K-12 battle each year for the same funds, so higher education and K-12 are competitors in that regard.
3	The last plan was much better than the new one.
4	Previous Plan was a better plan.
5	Increasing student preparedness is primarily a high school issue. I am firmly against ACHE establishing and running a PK-20 Council; I do not believe it is within their intended charter.
6	Problem is that there is no widespread discussion so these become institutional goals and not ACHE goals.
7	Those are priorities for the primary grades - Not higher education.

Ninth Quadrennial Evaluation Committee Survey

Are there any other significant issues facing Alabama that are not in the State Plan for Higher Education that the Commission should address?

Yes 

No 

Response Percent	Response Count
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37.3%	28
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62.7%	47
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<i>answered question</i>	75
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<i>skipped question</i>	30
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Selected Comments

1	Increased student access to higher education for students from underrepresented groups.
2	Increasing degree attainment generally, especially among traditionally ill-educated portions of the population.
3	Rising tuition.
4	Reducing the cost of higher education.
5	Maintaining higher education.
6	Equity funding of Higher Education.
7	Do we really need more doctoral/research universities? Decisions by the commission are supporting the expansion.
8	Recruiting and maintaining well qualified, full-time faculty.
9	Increasing diversity in STEM fields.
10	Public involvement in the education process - not just educators.
11	Dual enrollment quality and the perception of quality when taught by high school teachers in their own school. Taxpayers pay double--once to the school district and once to the college.
12	A true plan and motivation for higher education. It would be desirable for AL to develop a comprehensive plan such as the California Master Plan.
13	Increasing post-secondary attainment in ALL fields, not just STEM.
14	Long term equitable financing.
15	A realistic funding proposal/formula.
16	I am concerned about funding for the arts and about establishing a priority of providing new initiatives of health and physical education training for future teachers. Alabama adults are Number 2 in the nation in obesity, and Alabama children are number 6 in the nation in obesity. This means a higher mortality outlook for the state.
17	Use of technology for program delivery.
18	Funding for higher education.
19	Funding
20	The rise in "for-profit" educational entities and what is being done to regulate them.
21	Totally revamp funding formula among colleges and universities, performance based funding mechanisms.
22	Finding distinctive research niches.
23	Find methods by which to engage influences with State Plan for specific goals therein.

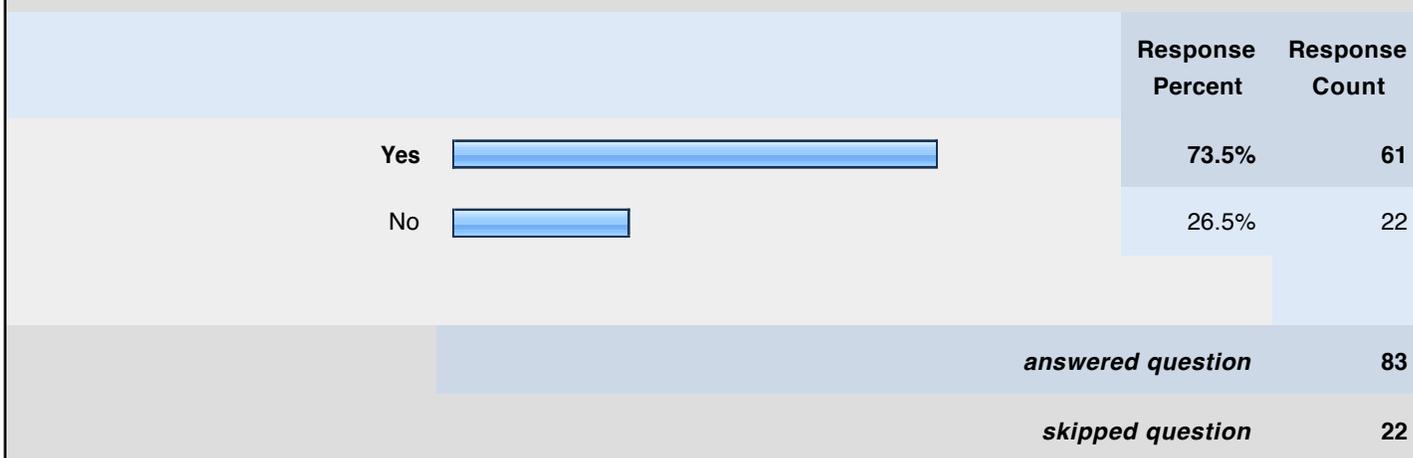
Ninth Quadrennial Evaluation Committee Survey

How would you rate the Commission’s efforts to consistently advance or champion the State Plan for Higher Education with all stakeholders: educational leaders, policymakers, the press, and the general public?

	5	4	3	2	1	Rating Average	Response Count
5=highest; 1=lowest	14.3% (11)	20.8% (16)	40.3% (31)	16.9% (13)	7.8% (6)	1.00	77
	<i>answered question</i>						77
	<i>skipped question</i>						28

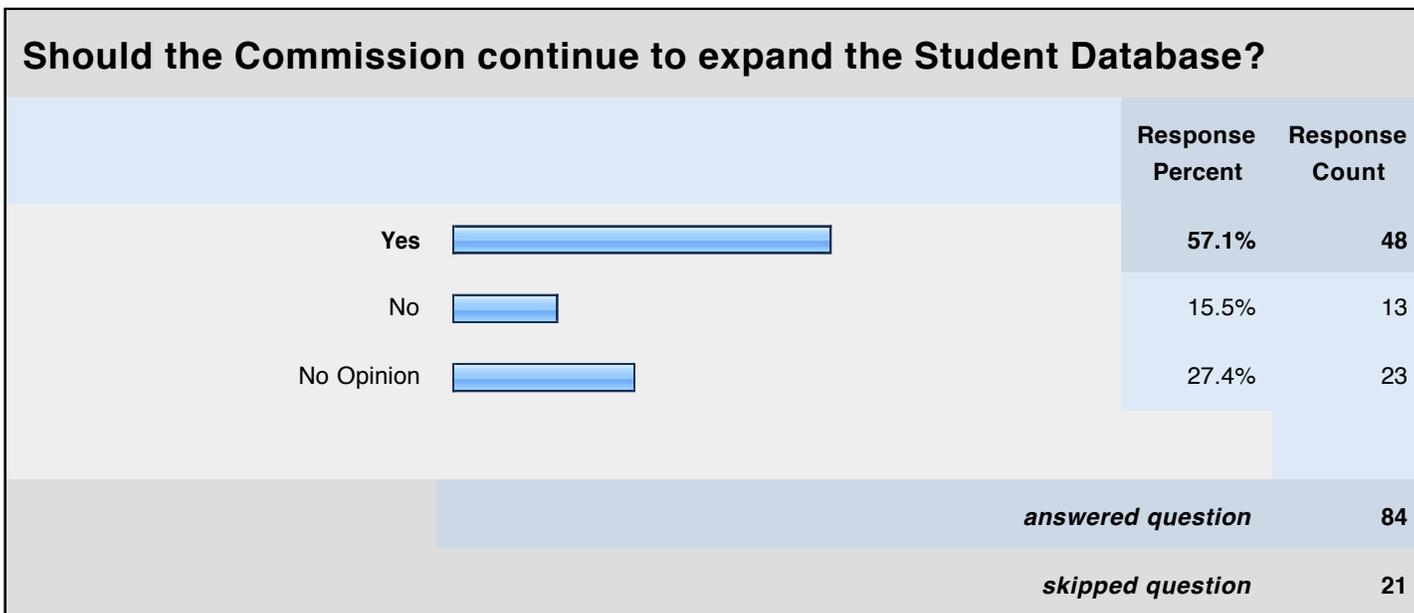
Ninth Quadrennial Evaluation Committee Survey

A primary responsibility of the Commission is the Statewide Student Database. Over six million records are currently being held by ACHE. The data is being used to assist K-12 school districts in examining remedial concerns, grant preparation and resource planning. Alabama's colleges and universities use this data to identify enrollment trends, various interest areas, completion rates, budgeting priorities, and to meet federal reporting requirements. A new data effort relates to regional business/industry needs associated with workforce development. Are you familiar with or do you use data from the Student Database?



Selected Comments	
1	Excellent resource.
2	Some universities are not dependent on the development of this database, as the large institutions already have access to this kind of information through other clearinghouses. In the state of AL, the K-12 side of education needs to develop its side of the effort. While we do agree on the concept of having the data base, we disagree that additional money should be spent to recreate and duplicate what is already available on the higher education side.
3	It would be good if the reports could be made available in a more timely manner.
4	The data is not available on a timely basis.
5	I have concern regarding inconsistencies in data reporting.
6	Our colleges are suffering from excessive reporting requirements and this adds to the burden.

Ninth Quadrennial Evaluation Committee Survey



Selected Comments	
1	The database is very comprehensive and staff readily accommodates special requests.
2	The Commission should focus on the integrity of the data already being collected.
3	ACHE seeks to get confidential student records from institutions. If ACHE would focus on getting an effective database established without seeking information; what is needed, the system would be more valuable to the institutions and their efforts would enhance ACHE's relationship with the institutions rather than diminish it.
4	The Commission should focus on the integrity of the data already being collected.
5	But only if it's coordinated well and does not draw funding away from existing needs.
6	I question the propriety of using this data when there are limited performance objectives for colleges and universities. Anybody can use it to "cream" admissions. That is not a purpose that best serves Alabama.

Ninth Quadrennial Evaluation Committee Survey

Additional Survey Comments?	
	Response Count
	15
<i>answered question</i>	15
<i>skipped question</i>	90

Selected Comments	
1	Staff does a fairly good job with limited resources and authority. It will never be truly meaningful in Alabama's highly politicized climate. They will always be outgunned by AEA and generally ignored by legislators.
2	My experiences with the staff and data products produced have always exceeded expectations.
3	The state has too little education and probably too many 4-year institutions. ACHE requires a lot of information from those institutions (and the two-year institutions) but provides little value in return.
4	Overall, if ACHE would focus on its responsibilities as a coordinating board as provided by the legislature, its effectiveness and value to the state's higher education system would increase; the institutions would have more support (advocacy and funding fairness) with the public; K-12, public officials in general; and the legislature would not be inclined to consider legislation to abolish the ACHE, which it does about every three-four years. The ACHE staff is competent and works diligently and independent of the political environment. The commission members are political appointees and tend to be sensitive to influence and pressure related to their decisions.
5	Staff is generally helpful. Unfortunately, act far too often as an adversary, rather than a partner, of the colleges and universities.
6	ACHE is to be commended for its efforts in improving education in Alabama; however, there is a tremendous void in getting the general public involved in education except for providing the funding. Once taxes are paid there is no further input allowed unless you are an educator, elected official or lobbyist. The concerns of the general public and parents are not solicited or received. Even the make-up of the Commission (though apparently inaccurate based on terms of service reflected at the website) reflects an elitism that does not appear to value input from those in the trenches. Can we get a PTA president engaged in the higher education discussions? Higher education does not begin at college. It starts in the minds of babes and ends with lack of access, which for many Alabamians is as a babe. ACHE needs to address higher education starting at this level -preparing today's parents to be the educators we know they need to be in order to have meaningful education in this state.
7	The Commission needs to allow more collaborative programs between institutions rather than clinging to archaic notions of service delivery areas.
8	The staff work load is excessive. There must be an increase in funding to provide additional staff.
9	Would be nice if the Commission had a greater understanding and appreciation of the role and needs of the two-year colleges.
10	I think Dr. Fitch hit the nail on the head in talking about the ACHE goals of Workforce Development and College Affordability. With the current economic conditions bringing us closer to a double-dip recession, or even worse, the down-the-road prospect of stagflation, the future of this state may pivot on how well these two ACHE goals can be met.
11	I applaud ACHE for being inclusive with K-12 education, business and industry, and private education in their strategic planning. However, the process used was too directive and top-down driven from the Director and did not reflect the true vision of the participants.
12	The database has a wealth of data, but institutions cannot access the data to make data-driven decisions.
13	The structure of higher education governance in Alabama is archaic. That, to me, places ACHE in an untenable position for being "responsible" for anything in state higher education. The sovereignty of the individual campus, answerable ONLY to an appointed Board of Trustees means that ACHE can only request information. ACHE cannot require standardization on matters of state significance as the federal government does on all reports from institutions receiving federal money--and they all do. In this sense, ACHE is a "Paper Tiger." It cannot help Alabama in its current form. The state needs an entity that can require compliance of higher educational institutions.
14	Be partner with new administration; be innovators; show initiative; work with influences within new administration of executive and legislative branches.

Appendix B: In-person interviews

Montgomery and Birmingham, Alabama

September 13 and 14, 2010

Dr. Tommy Bice

Deputy State Superintendent of Education, Alabama Department of Education

Ms. Susan Cagle

Director of Institutional Finance and Facilities, Alabama Commission on Higher Education

Mr. Michael Clemons

Network Administrator, Alabama Commission on Higher Education

Mr. Willie Darden

Senior Programmer, Technology Services, Alabama Commission on Higher Education

Mrs. Natalie Davis

Research Assistant, Alabama Commission on Higher Education

Mrs. Susan Davis

Staff Accountant, Alabama Commission on Higher Education

Dr. Glenn Deibert

Executive Vice Chancellor, Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education

Ms. Patsy Eiland

Programming and Development Manager, Alabama Department of Education

Dr. Gregory Fitch

Executive Director, Alabama Commission on Higher Education

Dr. Elizabeth French

Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning, Alabama Commission on Higher Education

Rep. Mac Gibson (R)

District 88, Alabama House of Representatives

Mr. Steven Glover

Director of Information Technology Services, Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education

Rep. David Grimes (R)

District 73, Alabama House of Representatives

Ms. Leigh Grogan

Vice Chancellor for Fiscal Services, Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education

Mrs. Veronica Harris

Director of Fiscal Services and Accounting, Alabama Commission on Higher Education

Mrs. Ellen Haulman

Assistant Director of Instruction, Alabama Commission on Higher Education

Dr. Frieda Hill

Chancellor, Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education

Mrs. Teresa Hutcheson

Senior Accountant, Alabama Commission on Higher Education

Mr. Walter Hutcheson

Director of Technology Services, Alabama Commission on Higher Education

Dr. Eddie Johnson

Deputy State Superintendent of Education, Alabama Department of Education

Ms. Trish Jones

Instructional Specialist, Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education

Ms. Sherry Key

Director, Career and Technical Education, Alabama Department of Education

Dr. William Keller

Currently Retired; former Assistant to the Dean for Journalism Administration, University of Alabama

Mrs. Nancy Lacey

Staff Associate, Institutional Effectiveness and Planning, Alabama Commission on Higher Education

Mr. Ron Leonard

Director of Network of Alabama Academic Libraries, Alabama Commission on Higher Education

Mrs. Yolanda McCree

Accountant, Alabama Commission on Higher Education

Mrs. Shelia McFarland

Software Support Coordinator, Alabama Commission on Higher Education

Dr. Jayne Meyer

Director of Teacher Education and Certification, Alabama Department of Education

Mr. Stephen Mims

Programmer, Technology Services, Alabama Commission on Higher Education

Dr. Paul Mohr

Director of Special Programs, Alabama Commission on Higher Education

Mrs. Deborah Nettles

Administrative Assistant, Alabama Commission on Higher Education

Mrs. Cheryl Newton

Grants Administrator, Alabama Commission on Higher Education

Ms. Margaret Pearson

Academic Program Review Analyst, Alabama Commission on Higher Education

Dr. Craig Pouncey

Deputy State Superintendent of Education, Alabama Department of Education

Mrs. Diane Sherman

Director of Research Services, Alabama Commission on Higher Education

Mrs. Subrena Simpkins

Staff Associate, Research Services, Alabama Commission on Higher Education

Dr. Kandis Steele

Director of Academic Programs, Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education

Ms. Lynne Thrower

Director of Private School Licensure, Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education

Mr. Tim Vick

Director of Operations and Fiscal Services, Alabama Commission on Higher Education

Rep. Pebblin Warren (D)

District 82, Alabama House of Representatives

Mr. Gary Weatherly

Director, Information Systems, Alabama Department of Education

Mrs. Jacinta Whitehurst

Administrative Assistant, Alabama Commission on Higher Education

Appendix C: Phone interviews

September 23, 24, 28, and 29, 2010

Dr. Denver Betts

Vice President for Academic Affairs, Athens State University

Dr. Laurel Blackwell

President, Chattahoochee Valley Community College

Dr. Judy Bonner

Provost and Executive Vice President, University of Alabama

Mr. Ralph Buffkin

Board Member, Alabama Commission on Higher Education

Dr. William Cale

President, University of North Alabama

Dr. Nancy Chandler

President, Enterprise Ozark Community College

Dr. Drew Clark

Director of Institutional Research and Analysis, Auburn University

Mr. Jeff Coleman

Board Member, Alabama Commission on Higher Education

Mr. Tom Davis

Board Chair, Alabama Commission on Higher Education

Mr. Phil Dotts

Board Member, Alabama Commission on Higher Education

Dr. Joan Exline

Associate Vice President, Institutional Research, Planning and Assessment, University of South Alabama

Dr. Richard Federinko

Senior Vice Chancellor, Troy University

Mrs. Sherri Fulford

Executive Director for Governmental Affairs, Auburn University

Dr. Jay Gogue

President, Auburn University

Ms. Margaret Gunter

Director, Communications and Government Relations, Alabama Commission on Higher Education

Dr. William Harris

President, Alabama State University

Dr. Richard Holland

President, University of West Alabama

Mr. Bill Jones

Director of Governmental Relations, University of Alabama System

Dr. James Lowe

President, Bishop State Community College

Dr. Aims McGuinness

Senior Associate, National Center for Higher Education Management Systems

Dr. William Meehan

President, Jacksonville State University

Dr. Debra Moriarity

Dean, School of Graduate Studies, University of Alabama-Huntsville

Mr. Gordon Moulton

President, University of South Alabama

Dr. Charles Nash

Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, University of Alabama System

Mr. Billy Powell

Board Member, Alabama Commission on Higher Education

Dr. Malcolm Portera

Chancellor, University of Alabama System

Mr. Steve Shaw

Vice Chair, Alabama Commission on Higher Education

Dr. Alicia Simmons

Director of Institutional Research and Assessment, Jacksonville State University

Ms. Alicia Taylor

Vice President of Instruction, Calhoun Community College

Appendix D: Commission achievements, 2006-2010

In response to a request from the Evaluation Committee, Commission staff submitted the following summary of Commission achievements from 2006-2010.

State Plan

The State Plan for Alabama Higher Education (2009/10 - 2013/14), a statutorily mandated project, was completed in 2009. The statewide planning advisory council represented public and independent colleges both two- and four-year institutions of higher education, and for the first time included public K-12 leadership; established parent-education representatives; and business and industry participants. The committee members identified five priorities with goals that included student preparation for college, collaboration and coordination among leaders in STEM fields and best practices on retention and student affairs. They also recommended the establishment of a PK-20 Council to integrate a seamless approach to education. This defined partnership between education and industry would deal with various components of the educational system including high school graduation and college readiness, as well as an educated workforce to meet market demand.

Instructional Unit Activities

The Code of Alabama, 16-5-8 (c) states that the governing boards of public institutions of higher education in this state and the campuses under their governance or supervision shall not undertake the establishment of a new unit or program of instruction for academic credit with state funds before submitting plans for the new unit or program to the commission for its review, evaluation, and approval. The following is a summary of instructional unit activities between January 2006 and December 2010.

Academic Program Review Leading to Approval of Programs by the Commission:

- Universities: 50 programs approved through September 2010. Four program submissions anticipated in December 2010.
- Two-year colleges: 36 programs approved through September 2010. Seven program submissions anticipated in December 2010.
- Number of requests for new off-campus instructional sites reviewed: 48
- Review and approval of new off-campus programs: 6
- Number of extensions and alterations to existing units of instruction (includes the addition of options, concentrations, major curriculum changes to academic programs, etc.): 107, including 4 submissions anticipated for the December 2010 meeting.
- Number of information items reviewed and presented to the Commission (includes such items as establishment of departments, addition of teaching certification programs to existing academic programs, establishment of centers that do not grant academic credit): 177, including 9 submissions anticipated for the December 2010 meeting.

Review of New and Existing programs

The Commission places pre and post-implementation conditions on the approval of new academic programs. Post-implementation conditions typically relate to enrollment levels, completion levels, job placement levels, licensure examination passage rate levels, and accreditation. Programs must meet conditions in order to be allowed to continue.

- Post-implementation reports reviewed and presented to the Commission (review of new programs): 58.
- In addition, 17 requests for amendment of post-implementation conditions were reviewed and presented to the Commission. At least four more reports will be reviewed and presented to the Commission in December 2010.

Viability review of existing programs

As a part of its program review process, the Commission is required by the Code of Alabama Chapter 16-5-8 (2) to enforce, monitor, and report on minimum degree productivity standards for all existing programs of instruction at public two-year and four-year institutions of higher education. Productivity standards are based, primarily, but not exclusively, on the annual average number of degrees conferred during an identified five-year period for senior institutions and a three-year period for two-year institutions, as verified by the Commission. Minimum productivity standards vary by degree level. The annual average number of degrees conferred constitutes a productivity standard by which programs shall be deemed viable or non-viable. The viability standard annual graduation rates shall be: A diploma, certificate consisting of 45-90 quarter hours; associate or baccalaureate degree program, 7.5 graduates per year; a masters degree program, 3.75 graduates per year; an education specialist degree program, 3 graduates per year; and a doctoral degree program, 2.25 graduates per year.

- 2006 Review of Core-Liberal Arts Programs
- Ongoing monitoring of programs identified as non-viable (2006 through the present)

Policy Development and Revision:

- Revision of the Commission’s policy on off-campus instruction (approved March 2, 2007)
- Development of a distance education policy with other units of the Commission staff; the policy included guidelines related to the ACHE Standard, data collection, and the Academic Program Inventory (approved June 22, 2007)
- Revision of the Commission’s instructional role policy (approved June 18, 2010)

Studies:

- “The Doctor of Nursing Practice: A Background Paper for Alabama” (May 2, 2007) by Ellen Haulman, et al.

Data Collection and Dissemination

In 1996, the Alabama Legislature amended the Commission’s statute to require the Commission to obtain specific information from each two- and four-year public institution of higher education so as to establish a student unit record data system (Act 1996, No. 96-509, p. 647). In 2006, the Alabama Statewide Student Database contained a combined total of approximately 4.1 million records. Today it contains approximately 5.9 million student records. From this data, the Commission produces multiple reports.

In 2008, a pilot project with the Independent College/University Association was initiated to include data from private, non-profit institutions of higher education in the student database. For the first time, the Fall 2009 Student Profiles included data from private institutions. In Alabama, the independent colleges grant approximately 17 percent of the bachelor’s degrees and the institutions are key business partners in economic development. The inclusion of this data will provide a more comprehensive look at the overall picture of higher education in Alabama.

In 2009, data collaboration between the Alabama Department of Education and the Commission’s Student Database netted Alabama “All-Star” status in a Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation project on

implementing and meeting educational accountability measures. Alabama was one of just six states to achieve that ranking, which led to the appointment of ACHE's director of research services, Diane Sherman, being named as one of two Alabama representatives to a U.S. Department of Education committee to study common data standards.

In April 2009, the Commission and the Alabama State Department of Education signed a memorandum of agreement supporting the sharing of student data. This joint agreement solidifies the commitment of all levels of education to utilize student data in the most efficient and effective way. This effort supports the PK-20 Initiative and is essential in expanding grant activities with ACHE's partners. Another aspect of partnering has been the work done by K-12 and Commission representatives on the Longitudinal Data Grant application to establish an electronic transcript. Another partnership with the State Department of Education led to the awarding of the College Access Challenge Grant. The funds are aimed at increasing the percentage of qualified high school students that graduate from high school and are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary/higher education and/or the workforce.

The Commission has been actively involved in coordinating educational activities with the business community utilizing data collected through the Alabama Student Database. Customization is available for each workforce region in the state to show enrollment, completions, remedial education, and other areas of interest by academic discipline for each public school and county. This information is vital for economic developers, whether recruiting new industry, or expanding existing ones.

In 2009, the Electronic Transcript/Common Application Steering Committee was created by the executive director of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education to advise Alabama education agencies in the creation of an automated electronic transcript system for the State of Alabama. The committee is also reviewing requirements for and the feasibility of a common application for students to use when applying for entrance to Alabama's colleges and universities.

Non-Resident Institution Review

The 2006 Quadrennial Review included two recommendations regarding the review of institutions operating as foreign corporations in Alabama:

Governor and State Legislature: To "enact substantially strengthened oversight of the delivery of postsecondary higher education courses and programs by out-of-state institutions and providers by: Strengthening Alabama standards and requirements to be comparable to the highest and most demanding requirements of any state and designating ACHE as the entity to coordinate, if not undertake consolidated responsibility for the functions now undertaken by the Secretary of State, the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education (ADPE), and ACHE for the approval of out-of-state postsecondary/higher education institutions and providers to operate in Alabama, including licensure, authorization, consumer protection, and quality assurance."

Commission: To "develop and recommend a proposal to the Governor and Legislature for strengthening the oversight of out-of-state institutions and providers, including recommendations regarding the staffing and budget necessary to perform these functions."

Response: Strengthened oversight of the delivery of postsecondary higher education courses and programs by out-of-state institutions has been accomplished, albeit by means other than the methods recommended by the Quadrennial Review Committee 2006.

ADPE revised its policies and procedures regarding licensure of private, postsecondary schools (2006), *Guidelines for Policy 720.01: Private School Licensure in Alabama*. The new policies substantially strengthened ADPE's criteria for licensure, including a requirement for accreditation and revocation of existing licensure upon failure to comply. As a result, licensure has been denied to a number of questionable schools and revoked where schools have failed to meet the new requirements. In addition, ADPE has increased its fee structure and appears to have used the additional funds to add staff to support its private school oversight responsibilities.

ACHE amended its administrative rules governing the review and approval or disapproval of non-resident programs of instruction (December 2009). The amendment provides for an external review of programs proposed by unaccredited institutions. External consultant(s) are chosen by the Commission with the proposing institution underwriting all costs. The amendment was certified on February 8, 2010. As of this date, all non-resident institutions approved by the Commission to offer degree programs to Alabama residents are accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education and/or Council on Higher Education Accreditation.

To ensure that the bifurcated process does not serve as an obstacle to maintaining rigorous programmatic standards, Commission staff continues to enjoy close and open communication with ADPE staff regarding licensure and programmatic approval of non-resident programs.

Scope of Activity

As of October 1, 2010, 64 private, proprietary, and out-of-state public institutions licensed or exempted from licensure by the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education (ADPE) were operating as foreign corporations or non-resident institutions in Alabama. This is a 14 percent increase in non-resident schools over the previous year (2009) monitored by ACHE staff, and a two-fold increase since 2005.

In addition to an inventory of non-resident institutions under the jurisdiction of the Commission which is regularly updated and available on the Commission's website at www.ache.alabama.gov, archival records of more than 400 closed or inactive non-public institutions, both in state and out of state, are maintained.

Full-Scale Programmatic Reviews: Commission staff conducts full-scale programmatic reviews with required site visits in accord with ACHE Procedures and Regulations for 35 institutions. Protocols mirror the Commission's programmatic review process for approval of new programs offered by public institutions, albeit without consideration of duplication of programs. Regional or national accreditation does not eclipse the full-scale review process.

Of the 35 institutions subjected to full-scale programmatic review in 2010, 21 institutions were approved to offer degree or certificate programs at 28 locations in the state. These 35 institutions offer more than 425 programs of study with an estimated 5,000 Alabama residents attending on-site locations. The remaining 14 institutions offer their programs of study exclusively online to Alabama residents.

Waiver from Full-Scale Programmatic Review: In accord with ACHE protocols and practice, 29 institutions currently receive grants of waiver from the requirements of the Commission's full-scale programmatic review process. Desk audits are performed for the following:

1. Institutions offering programs of less than 3 academic quarters/2 semesters in length (16);
2. Institutions limiting their activities to the recruitment of students by licensed agents (7);
3. Institutions incorporated in Alabama (6).

Student Aid

In FY 2006-07, the state level, need-based student financial aid program, the Alabama Student Assistance Program (ASAP), received a \$2.7 million increase in funding from the legislature. This represented a 158.09 percent increase over the prior year. In addition, ASAP also received a one-time infusion of \$10 million as part of the Knight v. Alabama Settlement Agreement.

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) - State Minority Doctoral Scholars Program was established in 1993 to address the long-standing national shortage of minority faculty members at institutions of higher learning. Alabama has been a major contributor to the success of this program. For example, Alabama is first among SREB states in terms of total scholars served: 129 of a total of 953 (13.54 percent), and graduates 72 of 492 (14.63 percent).

During the 2007 legislative session, the Alabama Teacher Recruitment Incentive Program was created. The purpose of this scholarship/loan program was to attract new teachers to four high demand fields of study. ACHE was charged with the administration of this program.

Legislative Activities

In addition to monitoring hundreds of bills each legislative session that dealt with education or agency administration matters, between 2006 and 2010, the Commission staff assisted legislators with proposed legislation on the following subjects:

- formulating the Education Trust Fund budget;
- regulating diploma mills;
- rising textbook costs;
- creating a common college application;
- revising the definition of an eligible institution in the Alabama Student Grant Program;
- Making post-doctoral students eligible for awards from the Alabama Chiropractic Scholarship Program.

Media / Publications

As the result of numerous contacts with education reporters, editorial boards and through the use of opinion-editorials, there has been a significant increase in the media profile of the Commission.

In addition, the Commission produces many documents on various subjects. These documents can be found at www.ache.alabama.gov under the heading, "Reports." Unless otherwise noted, these documents are produced annually. The following is a partial list of available documents.

- ["Forging Strategic Alliances: State Plan for Alabama Higher Education 2009-2014"](#)
– produced each four-year planning cycle.
- Agency Annual Reports
- Agency Brochures
- Institutional Profiles
- High School Reports
- Statistical Abstract (includes information on completions, enrollment, faculty, student database, tuition and fees, etc)
- Student Source Survey
- Consolidated Budget Recommendation (formally known as the Unified Budget Recommendation)
- Facilities Master Plan
- Building Inventory and Space Data Report—produced biennially

Staff Reorganization

In 2006, the agency staff was restructured along organizational and operational lines in order to provide a more service oriented emphasis to the public and to encourage interaction between structural units.

Other

The Commission's executive director was appointed two years ago to the Governor's Broadband Initiative Advisory Board. The group was tasked with: mapping available broadband resources; integrating high-speed Internet service across the state; and targeting rural areas lacking access. During the past year, the executive director, who also sits on the executive committee, was assigned to a sub-committee charged with reviewing applications from within the state which generated approximately \$250 million in intra/inter-state grants from the federal government.

Alabama's portion of the Gulf of Mexico, hard hit by the BP oil spill, led ACHE to coordinate and respond in recent months through multiple channels. The impact on the environment, the decline in tourism during the peak of the 2010 season, coupled with the financial fallout of the gulf coast businesses, particularly the seafood industry, were tremendous blows to Alabama's already struggling economy. ACHE worked with universities throughout Alabama, the Dauphin Island Sea Lab and the Alabama Marine Environmental Science Consortium, and three other states to provide accurate and timely information to Alabama Citizens, stakeholders and the federal government.

Another avenue of ACHE coordination involved the Network of Alabama Academic Libraries (NAAL) and institution and county/civic libraries in creating a Gulf Oil Spill Resources webpage through the Alabama Virtual Library (AVL). This site can be found at: <http://www.avl.lib.al.us/oilspill/redirect.php>. This site provides a designated web address which details the environmental impact, clean-up efforts, health concerns, employment opportunities, claim filing and other up-to-date information on the oil spill. This free service exemplifies the far-reaching ability of education to teach beyond the classroom.

The economic downturn that swept the country hit Alabama's Pre-paid Affordable College Tuition Program (PACT) during the first quarter of 2010, leading to passage of the Save Alabama PACT bill in the final hours of the 2010 legislative session. The executive director, as a PACT board member, served as a media spokesperson for the PACT Board. He was appointed to a three member committee, joined by a legislator and a representative of the Retirement Systems of Alabama, to review applications for money managers.

Consortia

The Commission is charged with encouraging the establishment and development of "formal consortia for the advancement of higher education comprised of institutions of higher education in the state." Ala. Code §16-5-10(11)(1975). In this capacity the primary responsibility of the Commission is to serve as fiscal agent for line items in its budget that support several consortia, including the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) and the Articulation and General Studies Committee (AGSC).

Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCOR)

The Alabama EPSCoR (ALEPSCoR) program is dedicated to the advancement of economic development via scientific and engineering research through a collaborative effort among the state's research universities. Alabama's investment in the ALEPSCoR program (averaging \$470K/year since 2006) has led to new federal awards and a return on investment of over 51 to one. The Executive Director is a voting member of the EPSCoR Steering Committee (SC); his staff representative serves as Vice-Chair of the SC.

In 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009 the Alabama Legislature increased the ACHE line item appropriation to EPSCoR for the purpose of funding a Graduate Research Scholars Program (GRSP). The goal of the GRSP is to attract high quality graduate students to Alabama's research universities. To date, five rounds of

competitive grant awards in the amount of \$25,000 each have been offered to more than 100 recipients of Alabama's next generation of research scholars who are destined to become the industrial and academic leaders of tomorrow. Three GRSP brochures that chronicle accomplishments of this project to date and provide an historical reference to the ongoing work have been published and distributed to state and national audiences.

In 2008 a series of events led to the Commission staff undertaking an audit review of Alabama A&M Research Institute (AAMURI), a non-profit center associated with and located at Alabama A&M University, for the purpose of bringing to closure accounts of FY 2007-08 state funds for the Alabama EPSCoR, a line-item appropriation in the ACHE budget in the amount of \$1,450,000. During this period the Executive Director of AAMURI also served as the Executive Director of the Alabama EPSCoR. The ACHE audit review, undertaken with the full cooperation of the administration of Alabama A&M University, was issued in May 2009 with the following recommendations intended to strengthen the checks and balances in the current organizational and management structure of the Alabama EPSCoR by providing for more transparency and rigorous accountability in fiscal and program management.

1. That the organizational structure of the Alabama EPSCoR program be changed to disassociate the position of NSF Principal Investigator from that of the Executive Director of EPSCoR and to provide for the effective management of the GRSP.

Response: The EPSCoR Steering Committee appointed a new Executive Director in September 2010.

2. That fiscal responsibility for state funds currently administered by A&M be assigned to another member institution of the Steering Committee.

Response: For FY 2009-10 funding cycle, the Commission assumed the role of fiscal agent for EPSCoR funds. The host institution of the new Executive Director, UAB, will assume fiscal responsibility for state funds for Alabama EPSCoR beginning FY 2010-11.

3. That no state funds appropriated to the ACHE for EPSCoR as a line item in the ACHE budget be used to support AAMURI or its staff.

Response: No state funds issued since FY 2008-09 state funds have been used to support AAMURI or its staff.

4. That an investigation of activities associated with the distribution of FY 2007-08 EPSCoR funds disbursed to AAMURI be undertaken by the Examiner of Public Accounts or the Attorney General's office to determine whether malfeasance has occurred.

Response: The Examiner of Public Accounts determined that no malfeasance had occurred.

Articulation and General Studies Committee/Statewide Transfer and Articulation Reporting System (AGSC/STARS)

The AGSC was created by the Alabama legislature in March 1994 (Act 94-202) for the purpose of establishing a statewide freshman and sophomore-level general studies curriculum to be offered at all public colleges and universities, and to develop and adopt a statewide articulation agreement for the freshman and sophomore years for the transfer of credit among all public institutions of higher education in Alabama. Membership of the AGSC is specified in the legislation. The Executive Director of the Commission is an ex-officio, non-voting member of the AGSC; the Administrative Assistant to the Executive Director serves as Secretary to the AGSC and is responsible for maintaining the historical record of the consortium.

The STARS System enables public two-year students in Alabama to obtain a Transfer Guide/Agreement for the major of their choice. This guide/agreement, if used correctly, guides the student through their first two years of coursework and prevents loss of credit hours upon transfer to the appropriate public four-year university in Alabama. Since the fall of 1998 (12-year period), over 716,000 official transfer guides have been obtained by students and administrators through the STARS website. In 2009-2010, over 89,000 official transfer guides were produced.

Appendix E: Qualifications and expectations of board members

The following is a statement of well-accepted expectations of board members and desired qualifications for board members. Having statements like these on the record can help ensure the selection of appropriate board members and increase their knowledge and confidence in performing their responsibilities.

Qualifications Sought in Individual Board Members

1. An orientation to the future with an appreciation of the state's higher education heritage.
2. Capability and willingness to function as a member of a diverse group in an atmosphere of collegiality and selflessness.
3. An appreciation of the public nature of the position, including an understanding and respect for state open meeting and records laws, and a willingness to undergo some level of public scrutiny.
4. Valid knowledge and experience that can bear on state and higher education problems, opportunities, and deliberations.
5. A record of accomplishment in one's own life, including a proven record of contribution on other boards, including those of the state's universities.
6. Enthusiastic understanding and acceptance of the individual missions of each institution and a willingness to understand the responsibilities of each within the broad higher education system of the state.
7. A willingness to commit the time and energy necessary to fulfill the responsibilities of a board member.
8. Willingness to forego, while a member of the board, any partisan political activity that could be disruptive or harmful to the state, the board, or agency.
9. Overriding loyalty to both the state interest and higher education rather than to any region, community, or constituency, no matter how selected to the board.

Expectations of Individual Board Members

1. To seek to be fully informed about higher education policy and the state's college and universities—public, private, and proprietary—and university systems.
2. To understand the responsibilities of higher education in addressing the public interest and public good by fulfilling the educational needs of the state's citizens.
3. To understand where each institution fits into overall state higher education policy and what it contributes to the state's future.
4. To understand emerging issues within a national context and to understand their potential effects on state higher education policy.
5. To be able to articulate cogent arguments for several statewide policy positions to advance higher education in, for example, student aid policy, institutional funding policies, policies for student learning and success, and policies for accountability.
6. To understand the breadth of authority of the state entity and how to use it to accomplish state goals: how it can leverage change, use regulation judiciously, serve as a convener, and be a partner with other education, business, and political leaders.
7. To help advance state goals or a state policy agenda to a broad constituency: elected leaders, public education, civic and business leaders, and other higher education leaders.
8. To be able to support positive change in state higher education policy while cognizant that preserving tradition, culture, and long-term stability is critically important.

9. To understand that the board's responsibility is statewide coordination and policymaking and not involvement in institutional governance, agency or office administration, or institutional management.
10. To strengthen and sustain the agency and board staff, particularly the chief executive, while being an active, energetic, and probing board member exercising critical judgment on policy matters.
11. To defend the autonomy and the independence of higher education institutions while encouraging responsiveness to state needs and priorities.
12. To represent all the people and the broad public interest of the state and no particular interest, institution, community, or geographical constituency.
13. To help enhance the public image of higher education as well as that of the board.
14. To foster openness and trust among the board, the various college administrations, faculty, students, legislature and governor's office, and the general public.
15. To be able to assess strategies and capacity to accomplish state goals, and demonstrate leadership on needed course corrections.
16. To know when to support and buffer executive staff during difficult decision-making periods with institutional or state elected leaders.

