



STARS Leadership Conference

University Advocates Conference

Higher Education Day Rally

Blackbelt Project - Academic Premier Day

November 2011

Boldly Telling the Story in 2012

During the past few years of legislative sessions, the Higher Education Partnership has continued to request for university funding that: 1) Starts with the previous year's appropriations as a base, 2) Funds the mandates to cover the retirement contribution for current employees and the PEEHIP contribution for retirees, and 3) Provides sufficient funding to allow universities to address economic development opportunities. For next year, the specific funding request has not been fully defined. However, the challenge facing all of education is beginning to take form. Record low revenue shortfalls are being forecast by Governor Robert Bentley.

Alabama citizens continue to call for a focus on improving jobs and generating more income. Currently, the state is 11 out of 16 Southern Region Education Board states in "per capita income." This is an unacceptable statistic because income and consumption are keys to improving Education Trust Fund revenue and Pre-K through Ph. D. education is critical to improving job opportunities.

Achieving improved education funding in these difficult budget times may seem impossible. With that in mind, the universities must make their best case. Therefore, it is paramount that the universities communicate their role in economic development.

To illustrate the value of investing in public universities, the Higher Education Partnership is calling on faculty, staff and other employees to "be bold in telling the story." There are many exciting facets of Alabama's public universities that are unrecognized for the difference they make in the lives of Alabamians. Universities generate nearly ten dollars for every one dollar invested in them. To make the point; faculty, staff and other employees must "be bold in telling the story."

A recipe for "being bold in telling the story":

1. Identify the area of expertise and the unique work being performed
2. Draft a statement describing the work
3. Tell who or what is benefiting from the work
4. Explain the return that is generated to the community both in the form of revenue and in quality of life
5. Place this information in an article that is limited to 200 words or less
6. Send this to your closest weekly newspaper, daily newspaper and al.com
7. Forward a copy to the Higher Education Partnership. As the public universities' advocacy voice, the Partnership will distribute this to the policy-makers.

The best way to generate improved funding is to illustrate the strength of the university product.