



### Let our Momentum be Maintained

*"Higher Education Day 2009 was a huge success. The crowd was the largest on record. With over 3000 in attendance, the legislative leaders and the constitutional officers recognized that the universities were serious in their call for equity in the way funds are distributed both in the Education Trust Fund appropriations and in the stimulus. The early returns show that the leaders are responding. Indications are that the stimulus may be distributed in a favorable manner to higher education. Therefore, do not let the momentum slow down. Continue to contact your elected officials and encourage them to stand for ALL of public education Pre-K through PhD." stated Gordon Stone, Executive Director of the Higher Education Partnership.*

### The Budget Starts to Move – March 26, 2009 – Contacting Legislative Leaders

#### DESCRIBE THE CURRENT BUDGET SCENARIO.

The current budget scenario is more fair than previous years and the federal stimulus plan seems to be on a path for higher education to achieve its desired percentage of resources. This is welcome news since the 2009 operating budget for higher education is approximately 20 percent below where it was in 2008. The damage caused by a prolonged funding downturn is that universities never regain the education funding that is lost during the years of cuts.

The universities have actively called for fairness. The university lobbyists have been constant in their working for equity. Leaders like Representative Mike Hubbard and Senator Del Marsh have gone to the governor and asked him to stand behind the federal definition of relative shortfall when allocating the stimulus funds. Meanwhile, the governor has spoken at Higher Education Day and met with the University Presidents' Council. Each of these efforts has helped make the university case for equitable funding.

Of course, nothing is definite until the final passage of the Education Trust Fund Budget for 2010. The budget proposal must make its way through the legislature. Therefore, **the voices of university voters must continue to be heard.** The opponents to fairness and equity are actively working against the university message. They are asking the legislature to provide K-12 with a greater share. They will be aggressive; therefore, university advocates must be quick to contact their legislative leaders. **Email your House member and/or Senator and ask them to not cut the university share of funding in a disproportionate manner.**

#### WHAT IS THE RESULT OF FURTHER CUTS TO UNIVERSITY CONSTITUENTS:

- Faculty
  - Currently, data shows the average for faculty salaries at \$6000 behind the national average. Additional cuts will weaken these numbers.
- Funding per Student (FTE)
  - Alabama will fall further behind the region in what we provide, as state support, for our students. The result is a greater share of the burden will be covered by tuition. Currently, funding per student (FTE) is:
    - Southern Average (SREB) = \$6678
    - Alabama = \$6488
    - Georgia = \$7297
    - Florida = \$8005
- Students & Tuition
  - National rankings for the increases in tuition in fees over the past 12 months show Alabama had the 2nd highest increase by percent. More cuts mean more increases.

#### THANK YOU!

The Higher Education Partnership appreciates the leadership provided by student, faculty, staff and alumni leaders as they worked to make Higher Education Day a success. The leadership of Partnership Board Chair, Dr. Lori Owens, and the Chair of the University Presidents' Council, Dr. Bill Meehan, is truly appreciated.