

# HIGHER EDUCATION DAY TALKING POINTS

- Universities bring \$20 billion to the Alabama economy annually.
- Every \$1 the state invests in higher ed returns \$12.5 to taxpayers.
- Across the state, more than 70,000 jobs are created in relation to a university - making higher education the largest employer in the state.
- A \$1,000 increase in funding for higher education returns a net value of \$8.7 MILLION in total per capita income in the State.

## THE SPARK FOR TOMORROW:

- The highest demand for employees in the next decade is projected to be for those with Bachelor's Degrees or higher.
- Those with a Bachelor's Degree will earn over \$1 million more over the course of their life than their peers without a degree.
- *(In Alabama, they can expect to earn an average of \$17,000 more annually than their peers with lower levels of education.)*

## THE CHALLENGE:

- Only 26% of Alabamians have a college degree, significantly less than the national average of 33%.
- Public funding for higher education lags behind regional averages by more than \$1,600 per full time equivalent student, making it more expensive for Alabama students to achieve educational dreams.

## MORE INFO AT:

<https://www.higheredpartners.org/resource-guide-1>



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## ACTIVITY:

Using the Higher Education Partnership's Resource Guide, examples from your advocacy workshop, and knowledge of your campus, build talking points for higher education day that address current issues in Alabama and highlight the unique value of your campus. The Key Issues described below are the result of conversations with key legislators, and will help you address the ideas that are at the front of their minds.

Choose a prompt (or two) below and dive into to developing your talking points. You're free to use your creativity on structure but, for an easy template, we suggest including the following:

- A Story/Anecdote or Example from Your Campus
  - You may want to consider relevant data or statistics from your university
- A Statewide Fact or Data Piece to Support Your Story
- An ask or reminder!

Don't be afraid to work collaboratively! It's okay to crowd source ideas – ask your friends, favorite professors, and research on your university website to find more ideas. These talking points are about showcasing strengths at each of our schools as part of the impact our universities have on Alabama.

For additional resources on developing talking points, you can reference your handbook from the Advocacy Workshop or email Ale'gna at [asmoot@higheredpartners.org](mailto:asmoot@higheredpartners.org)

*Bonus points: Post your talking points on Social Media on Higher Ed Day and tag the Partnership to share your support!*

### **Key Issue #1:** Innovation and Entrepreneurship

The Governor's Commission on Innovation and the subsequently formed Innovation Corporation have emphasized the need for new, innovative ideas to bolster Alabama's economy. How does your university promote innovation and entrepreneurship? What are some things you (or your peers) have experienced related to creative new ideas? How does your university support research?

*Prompts Continued on Next Page*

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**Key Issue #2: Workforce and Career Development**

Gov. Kay Ivey named filling 500,000 skilled jobs as one of her economic priorities. As we continue to move Alabama into the economy of the future, the State will rely on young leaders like yourself. How has your university prepared you for a career? What experiences have you had that have inspired you to pursue a certain field?

**Key Issue #3: Challenges Facing Recruiting and Retaining Educators for Our School**

Alabama, like most states across the U.S., is facing a teacher shortage for our schools. Our legislators are working diligently to provide additional incentives and infrastructure to recruit more teachers. We know that their efforts work in tandem with the great education future teachers receive from our universities. What is one unique thing your university does to educate teachers or help prepare the next generation of students? How has your university made a difference in K-12 education in your area?

**Key Issue #4: Reaching Every Corner of Alabama**

Our Universities are located in only about 12 of the 67 counties in Alabama, but that doesn't mean we don't reach every single one. What do students at your university do to give back to the State? How do you reach beyond the borders of your school to make a difference?

**Other Misc. Topics:**

Interested in something else? We'd love to hear your ideas and help you address topics in higher education that are important to you. Reach out to the Partnership to brainstorm and refine your topics!

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