



## HIGHER EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP 20 YEARS OF ADVOCACY

# Advocacy Workshops in Full Swing

October 2018 HEP Newsletter

### Supporters of Higher Education,

The Higher Education Partnership's advocacy workshops are in full swing. We have spent the month of October on the road meeting with SGA Presidents and presenting advocacy workshops that are designed to keep campuses informed on the ways they can be successful advocates.

With the November election less than a month away, our first advocacy workshop focuses on getting students registered to vote. Many of our college campuses have held voter registration drives that the HEP has supported. Alabama's Secretary of State John Merrill has made the registering to vote process easy and painless. Visit his office's website [here](#) to get registered and prepared to vote in November.

Over the next few weeks, I hope everyone has an opportunity to share their support of higher education with candidates running for public office. The advocacy efforts during the campaign will help candidates remember the higher education community when they are in office.

**Gordon Stone, Executive Director**



Photo: University of Alabama in Huntsville Student Government Association President Ashley Dodson explains to a UAH student how to register to vote. The Higher Education Partnership is supporting voter registration drives in advance of the November General Election.

## University Student Presidents' Council School Supply Drive

The University Student Presidents' Council held a school supply drive on campus to collect items for local schools in need.

The Higher Education Partnership made a special donation to support the drive. For campuses that participated, the Partnership donated a \$25 Walmart gift card.

We appreciate the leadership of Council Co-chairs Grace Newcombe (University of South Alabama SGA President) and Price McGiffert (University of Alabama SGA President) to help meet local community needs.



*Photo: The Higher Education Partnership donated a \$25 Walmart gift card to University of South Alabama Student Government Association President Grace Newcombe. The University Student Presidents' Council is holding a school supply drive to help local schools in need.*



*Photo: The Higher Education Partnership donated a \$25 Walmart gift card to University of Alabama in Huntsville Student Government Association President Ashley Dodson. The University Student Presidents' Council is holding a school supply drive to help local schools in need.*

## Issue in Focus

### College Completion and Earnings Potential Challenged by Student Debt

By Gordon Stone

According to a 2018 news release by the Southern Region Education Board (SREB), there continues to be a problem in many states with the growing level of college based debt that students are experiencing. One thing leads to another, but it is easy to show that too much dependency on debt will ultimately reduce the rate of college completion and the earning potential in a state.

While student populations are dealing with the challenges of rising tuition and fees, the four-year institutions are dealing with the difficulties caused by a shrinking margin between the cost of operations and state appropriations. Most states in the SREB have goals designed to increase the overall educational attainment of the population. Alabama is not an exception. Decreasing the potential for debt will help encourage college attendance.

There is a direct relationship between affordability and state appropriations. If appropriations increase then there is less pressure for tuition and fees. As has been observed in the past, the percentage of family income consumed by college cost of tuition and fees has grown to where it is now 13 percent for the middle income family. The percentage of income consumed for tuition and fees for the low-income families is 46 percent. If these numbers are not affordable, students are forced to turn to debt.

The good news of this SREB news release is that across the region progress in college completion is being made. Susan Campbell Lounsbury, SREB director of education data services, reported: "If states can loosen the stranglehold of high college costs, they will help more of their residents earn the credentials that lead to good jobs and stronger economic development."

There is also good news about completion. Universities across the region are to be

commended for the improvement in (graduation) progression rates. Since 2008, the rates have improved by 5 percentage points. However, currently only 37 percent of working adults hold an associates or higher degree in the SREB region. Nationally, the percentage is 41 percent.

The economy depends on continued improvement in college graduation rates. Clearly, earnings potential improves as educational level increases. SREB reports that individuals with a bachelor's degree earn \$29,000 more on average in a year than their peers without a college degree. (2015) Adults with a bachelor's degree earned an average of \$67,000 annually which is greater than their peers with an associate's degree. They earn approximately \$46,000 annually.

The conclusions are simple. With better funding and less pressure on tuition and fees, the debt load will diminish and the completion rate will improve. As more students graduate, the earnings potential will increase.

## ICYMI: AL ranked third for most higher education cuts since 2008 recession

WSFA-12 News in Montgomery recently aired a report that noted Alabama's ranking in state funding per student for higher education.

The WSFA article was in response to a report released by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities that noted in the decade since the Great Recession, state spending on public colleges and universities remains well below historical levels.

Higher Education Partnership Executive Director Gordon Stone spent time speaking with reporter Lydia Nusbaum about the Partnership's historical perspective on higher education state funding.

The WSFA report can be found [here](#).

The full report from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities can be found [here](#).

## News From Around University Campuses

[Rocket City Now](#): Event at Athens State to raise awareness of domestic violence

[WHNT-CBS-Huntsville](#): Alabama and Friends concert raises over \$1 million for Jacksonville State

[WTVY-CBS-Dothan](#): Troy University honored with C-130 plane

[WTVM-ABC-Columbus/Auburn](#): Auburn University testing new safety app

[AL.Com](#): Alabama university lands near top for black student equity and success

[Montgomery Advertiser](#): Walt Maddox visits Alabama State University campus

[Alabama Newscenter](#): University of Alabama engineers develop solution to child heat deaths in cars

[University of South Alabama Media Center](#): South Offering Advanced Certification Scholarship for Teachers

[Montgomery Advertiser](#): 'Escalating cycle' of Alabama court fines, fees counter public safety aims, new report says

[University of Montevallo Media Center](#): Dahle recognized in 2018 Women to Watch

**Newswise:** UAH's Jackson County safe school technology tests may keep children statewide safer

**Rocket City Now:** Alabama A & M holds largest career fair of the year for students

## Calling All Cooks

To celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Higher Education Partnership, a cookbook was published to celebrate the history and success of Alabama's public universities. We have copies of the cookbook still available, so we are making them available once again.



*Wonder What. . .*

### Alabama's Serving for Dinner?

The *Scholarly Gourmet* was published in celebration of the Higher Education Partnership's 10th anniversary. The cookbook was a joint effort of the 14 public universities in the state of Alabama and is filled with recipes, stories and photographs of well-known alumni along with over 250 recipes from faculty, staff and alumni of each university. The *Scholarly Gourmet* will provide for hours of great reading, cooking and eating.

Your purchase of *The Scholarly Gourmet* directly supports the Higher Education Partnership Foundation funding leadership and educational programs for university students.

Supply is limited so order your book today.

### *The Scholarly Gourmet:*

*A Collection of Recipes from Alabama's Public Universities*



Visit our website at [www.higheredpartners.org](http://www.higheredpartners.org) to order your copy on-line. Payments can be made through Paypal. Or send in the order form with payment to Higher Education Partnership, 2 North Jackson Street, Montgomery, AL 36104.

For more information, call 334-832-9911

Request Your Cookbook Here!

## Questions? Thoughts? Concerns?

*Connect with Us!*

Do you have a story idea or issue in focus we should include in an upcoming newsletter? Email [partners@higheredpartners.org](mailto:partners@higheredpartners.org) and let us know!

