A DECADE OF PROGRESS
“There was-and still is-no doubt in my mind that education represents nothing less than the doorway to personal fulfilment, social justice, true freedom and actual equality among all Americans.”

- Carl Elliott, Sr.
WHAT WE DO

The Education Policy Center is the oldest center or institute at The University of Alabama, established in 1924. Through its ongoing research and programs, it seeks to assist the College of Education in fulfilling its mission to improve the quality of life for all Alabamians through expanding access and success, strengthening equity, and advancing economic and community development.

In postsecondary education, since 2005 the Education Policy Center has published or partnered to publish 40 issue briefs and reports and 28 juried articles across four interrelated areas: (1) access and finance of public higher education; (2) college completion; (3) Pell Grants; and (4) rural community colleges. Studies have been presented at congressional briefings, the White House Domestic Policy Issues’ Rural Council, and at the U.S. Departments of Education and Agriculture. Center reports are regularly featured in the national education media (The Chronicle of Higher Education, InsideHigherEd, Community College Week, Community College Times, and Education Week), as well as in mainstream media (including Politico, The Huffington Post, and regional newspapers such as The Birmingham News and The Mobile PressRegister).

Our elementary and secondary education publications include numerous issue briefs on charter schools, No Child Left Behind and refereed journal articles, with an emphasis on the use of historical analysis. Through the University of Alabama Superintendents’ Academy (UASA), hosted at the Center from 2005 to May 2016, a collaborative partnership with the Alabama State Department of Education, we updated the state’s handbooks on Alabama school law, finance, curricular leadership, and communications, which we distributed to all 137 city and county school districts throughout Alabama. Additionally, UASA hosts a tuition-free, nondegree professional development program open to all resident Alabama educators who are eligible to become an elected or appointed superintendent. All current school superintendents are required to pass through this program at the beginning of their tenure to gain the academic and pragmatic knowledge and skills essential for successful school leadership. The UASA has also forged partnerships with the FBI Birmingham Branch (school bullying), the Federal Emergency Management Administration (crisis safety), and the School Superintendents of Alabama.
Dear Friends:

Over the past decade, the Education Policy Center has become a trusted source of unbiased research on key education issues facing Alabama, the South, and the nation. Policymakers and scholars alike respect its contributions, and we in the College of Education at The University of Alabama are committed to its continued success.

Since 2005, the Education Policy Center has attracted more than $4.6 million in externally funded contracts and grants. It has published more than 42 issue briefs and reports, which are regularly cited in national education media and mainstream publications. Its training materials can be found in all 137 city and county school districts across Alabama. And its efforts have shaped the state’s educational infrastructure.

The strength of the Center stems from its people. These pages document recent achievements under the leadership of Director Steve Katsinas, Director of Research Michael Malley, and Director of The University of Alabama Superintendents’ Academy Richard Rice and Associate Director Wayne Urban. We are especially proud of the Center’s doctoral, master’s and undergraduate Research Associates; EPC student employees have come from 7 of UA’s 9 colleges and schools that award undergraduate degrees, reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of its work.

Thanks to the Center’s work with Alabama school leaders, annual National Access and Finance Surveys, Pell Grant studies, and its partnership with the Rural Community College Alliance, the Education Policy Center has established itself as the Deep South’s leading voice for non-partisan education policy research and reform. So I am pleased to celebrate the Education Policy Center’s past achievements and look forward to a future that is bright and promising.

Peter Hlebowitsh
Dean
Stephen G. Katsinas, Ph.D.
Director and Professor of Higher Education & Political Science

Katsinas’ field work includes visits to 500 flagship and regional universities, and community colleges in 43 states. He contributed to the Carnegie Foundation’s Basic Classification (2005, 2010), embedded in all federal data sets. Katsinas’ foundation program involvement includes the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (Project ACCLAIM), the Ford Foundation (Rural Community College Initiative, Urban Partnerships Program), the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation (Alabama College Transfer Advising Corps), and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (performance funding).

Wayne J. Urban, Ph.D.
Associate Director and past Paul W. Bryant Professor in the College of Education

Wayne J. Urban is an internationally respected historian of education, with ten (co)authored books in his career. He has held two Fulbright fellowships, is a Fellow of the American Education Research Association, president of the History of Education Society and the American Educational Studies Association, and more recently has served as chair/president of the International Standing Conference for the History of Education. He gave the invited address at the 150th anniversary celebration of the National Education Association.

Richard L. Rice, Ph.D.
Former Director of Alabama Superintendents’ Academy

Richard Rice, Ph.D., J.D., C.P.A., was Director of the University of Alabama Superintendent’s Academy over the past decade when it was housed at the Education Policy Center (2005 - 2016). State law (Code of Alabama, Sec. 16-13A-3) directs the State Superintendent of Education to develop training in finance, instruction, and law for Alabama’s 137 county and city school superintendents. In partnership with the Alabama State Department of Education, UASA provides this required training in Finance, Law, Finance, and Instructional Leadership, and is a leading source for school leadership in Alabama.

Michael S. Malley, M.P.A.
Director of Research

Since joining the EPC in 2013, Malley has coauthored seven reports and presented at five national conferences. His current work is focused on serving vulnerable populations (specifically rural communities) through economic development research and practice. He is also past President of The Elliott Society, a student organization whose contributions impact the campus as well as the entire state. Malley holds a Master’s in Public Administration from The University of Alabama.
ASSOCIATED EDUCATION FELLOWS

Much of the Center’s work is conducted with the assistance of Senior Fellows and Fellows associated with other universities and colleges, and its Research Associates (both graduate students and undergraduate students).

James E. “Skip” Dotherow, Ph.D.
Expertise: Development, non-selective private liberal arts and public colleges, community colleges.

Arthur N. Dunning, Ph.D.
Expertise: University system leadership, HBCUs, rural development, international development

Brian K. Johnson, Ed. D.
Expertise: Community colleges, the presidency, diversity and access issues, leadership development.

Mary Allen Jolley, Ph.D. (Honorary)
Expertise: Federal policy, economic and community development, rural development.

Vincent A. Lacey, Ph.D.
Expertise: Data analytics/data management, economic development, community colleges.

R. Frank Mensel, Ph.D. (Honorary)

David S. Murphy, Ph.D., CPA, CFP
Expertise: Government & financial accounting, auditing, expert information systems; international.

Robert P. Pedersen, Ph.D. (dec)
Expertise: Community colleges, higher education history, finance.

Martin W. “Marty” Wiseman, Ph.D.
Expertise: Community colleges, economic development in small high-poverty rural communities.

David E. Hardy, Ph.D.
Expertise: Ethical issues in higher education, community college financial, administrative, instructional, governance, faculty, and student issues.

Nathaniel J. Bray, Ph.D.
Expertise: Student development, retention, faculty, data analytics, STEM education.

Arleene P. Breaux, Ed.D.
Expertise: Governmental affairs, finance, policy, presidencies, governance, regional universities.

Mark M. D’Amico, Ph.D.
Expertise: Community colleges, economic development, adult education, and state policy.

Tyson Elbert, Ph.D. Candidate
Expertise: Federal and state relations, performance funding, leadership.

Janice N. Friedel, Ph.D.
Expertise: State policy, community colleges, leadership, workforce education, performance funding.

Mark A. Fincher, Ph.D.
Expertise: Economic development, community colleges, economics of higher education, analytics.

Linda S. Hagedorn, Ph.D.
Expertise: International higher education, community colleges, transfer and articulation.

Michael A. Kennamer, Ed.D.
Expertise: Financial aid, workforce training, economic development, academic writing.

Pat G. Moeck, Ph.D.
Expertise: Community colleges, housing.

John R. Petrovic, Ph.D.
Expertise: Language and bilingual education policy, gay and lesbian issues, political theory.

Kristie R. Rankin, Ph.D.
Expertise: Community colleges, workforce training.

Dustin P. Smith, Ed.D.
Expertise: Community college history, STEM education.

Melissa Tarrant, Ed.D.
Expertise: Private liberal arts colleges, student retention, regional universities.

Zoë Mercedes Thornton, Ph.D.
Expertise: Performance funding, community colleges, dual enrollment, technical education.

Brent D. Cejda, Ph.D.
Expertise: Hispanic serving institutions, STEM policy, finance.

Andrew Dale, Ph.D.
Expertise: Access, transfer and articulation, community colleges, advocacy, digital media.

R. Matthew DeMonBrun, Ph.D. Candidate
Expertise: Data analytics, demography.

Andrew Koricich, Ph.D.
Expertise: Rural access, finance, spatial analytics.

Timothy R. Salazar, Ph.D.
Expertise: Data analytics, state and federal policy.

Anne R. Williamson, Ph.D.
Expertise: Budgeting, state policy, housing.

Jake L. Warner
Expertise: Data visualization, software and web development, linguistics, economic development.
In 2015-16, EPC launched the Community College Education Policy Fellows Program. Above, in April, 2016, Sen. Richard Shelby meets Fellows. EPC advocates investing $8 billion Pell surplus to reinstate year-round Pell to provide up to $130 million for Alabama public 2- and 4-year colleges. This was approved on June 8, 2016 by the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee.

RESEARCH ASSOCIATES (CURRENT AND FORMER)

Graduate students:
Doctoral – J. Lucas Adair, MPA, Ph.D. Candidate (Political Science), Louis E. Shedd, Ph.D. (Higher Education), Adam Tate, Ph.D. (Higher Education), Jonathan P. Koh, Ph.D. (Public Administration), and Fei Qiao, Ph.D. Candidate (Communications).

Masters – R. Matthew DeMonBrun (Higher Education), Quinton Poole (Business Administration), Charles “Max” Andrews (Public Administration), Phillip D. Grant (Public Administration), John H. Roberts (Public Administration), Aubrey Stewart (Public Administration).

Undergraduate students:
Rex Bailey (Communications), Adam Enyart (Engineering), Dustin Garrett (Business), Korey G. Hayes (Engineering), Landin Henderson (Business), Zach Koch (Fine Arts), Madison Marx (Business/Honors), Rebecca Midkiff (Engineering), Undre V. Phillips, (Secondary Education), Harold Dale Windfield Robinson IV (Human Environmental Sciences), Nelson Tidwell (Business), Blake Patterson (Business), John Sutton (Biology), and Spencer Whitfield (Business).
The University of Alabama Superintendents’ Academy, hosted at the Center from 2005 to May 2016, is a collaborative professional development partnership between UA’s College of Education and the Alabama State Department of Education. It develops leadership, planning and decision-making skills to advance results-oriented schools and broadens the pool of applicants ready to assume system-wide leadership positions.

Many of Alabama’s 137 county and city school systems face the real issue of finding qualified, diverse, and effective school system leaders who will improve student achievement and lead Alabama public education through the twenty-first century. For this reason, developing effective school leaders is one of the four primary goals of the Alabama State Board of Education.

Founded by the late Harold L. Bishop to address this critical challenge, The University of Alabama Superintendents’ Academy (UASA), in close collaboration with the Alabama State Department of Education, takes the best and brightest educators in school systems throughout the state and brings them together for intensive instruction and skills development utilizing the latest research and instructional delivery technology. The program’s innovative and evolving curriculum is based upon standards published by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), and the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

The UASA is open to all resident Alabama educators who are eligible to be an elected or appointed superintendent in Alabama. Successful applicants have already demonstrated an ability to make meaningful, positive contributions to elementary and secondary public education.

“The Superintendents’ Academy is instrumental in helping cultivate the school leaders of tomorrow.”
—Joseph Morton, Former State Superintendent
They make a personal and professional commitment to complete the year-long activities and program requirements of the UASA. Aspiring participants develop theoretical and pragmatic knowledge and skills essential for today’s administrators through interactive programs and sessions that transfer to real-life issues and organizational improvement to enhance K12 student achievement across Alabama.

The University of Alabama Superintendents’ Academy (UASA) has been recognized numerous times by the Alabama Board of Education, Governors Bob Riley and Robert Bentley, and Alabama State Superintendents of Education Joseph Morton and Tommy Bice, for its accomplishments and leadership in preparation programs and professional development activities for aspiring educators.

In late 2014, the ASDE approved a continuing contract for UASA of $215,000 to continue the College of Education’s statewide leadership role in preparing public school district leaders in 2015-2016. The ASDE also approved a continuing contract for UASA of $46,965 to carry forward the College of Education’s statewide leadership role to prepare handbooks on school law, school finance, curriculum/instructional leadership, and school communications for school leaders that are distributed to Alabama’s 137 public city and county school systems.

The UASA has also partnered with the Birmingham Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to develop a program on school bullying, and is currently partnering with emergency management officials in Jefferson and Tuscaloosa Counties on school safety and weather emergency evacuation preparedness. The UASA enhances presence of The University of Alabama and its College of Education in important state school leader organizations, including the School Superintendents of Alabama and the Alabama Association of School Business Officials.

**KEY PERSONNEL:** Dr. Richard L. Rice, Jr., Director, UASA, and Associate Professor of Educational Administration (2005-May 2016); Drs. Dave Dagley and John Tarter, Professors of Educational Administration, UA; and Dr. Timothy Lewis (2005-2009).
The Education Policy Center, commissioned by the Higher Education Partnership of Alabama, completed a study to define and measure the quantifiable relationship between the funding of Alabama’s universities and the per capita income of its citizens. Data mined from nationally recognized and publicly available databases was aggregated for multiple regression analysis. These sources included the American Institutes for Research’s Delta Cost Project, the United States Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching’s 2010 Basic Classification System, and the Return on Investment (ROI) model initially developed by Jacob Mincer (historically known as the father of modern labor economics). The study revealed a statistically significant relationship: Alabama’s fiscal prosperity is inexorably hinged to investment in public higher education.

This relationship encompasses both monetary and nonmonetary returns. Monetarily, in addition to the increased per capita income for Alabamians, the study observed more income tax receipts and more money for all of education in Alabama; furthermore, the continuous increases in per capita income in turn feed further investment. Nonmonetarily, the human capital returns permeate all of Alabama’s industrial sector, especially the automotive and aerospace industries. The cumulative evidence leaves no doubt that any investment in Alabama’s public higher education is well worth its cost.

IMPACT ON THE UNIVERSITIES: CARNEGIE FOUNDATION DESIGNATION

In 2008, The University of Alabama formally sought designation for both its curricular engagement and student engagement from the prestigious Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Dr. Carolyn Dahl, then Dean of UA’s College of Continuing Studies and EPC Director Katsinas were asked to cochair a special ad-hoc universitywide committee to prepare UA’s detailed forty page application. Hearings were held to which each of UA’s colleges and schools, and the divisions of academic, community, and student affairs sent representatives to present their outreach activities. The result was one of the most comprehensive reports documenting UA’s outreach activities ever with the Carnegie Foundation approving both designations in December 2008.
NATIONAL IMPACT: FOSTERING RURAL REGIONAL INNOVATION

The Agriculture Act of 2014 signed into law by President Obama on February 8, 2014 reauthorizes U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs responsible for the development of rural areas of our country. Since the 1930s, USDA’s Rural Development Division only recognized our nation’s great network of land-grant universities. Section 6018 of the bipartisan Agricultural Act of 2014 for the first time formally designates the Secretary of Agriculture to work with the nation’s 600 rural community, technical, and tribal colleges to coordinate effective rural development strategies and foster rural regional innovation.

Section 6018 was submitted by the Rural Community College Alliance to key members of the U.S. House and Senate Agriculture Committees, based upon assistance received from the Education Policy Center. More than 14 different programs within USDA’s Rural Development Division are impacted, with the goal of combining revenue streams to uplift rural economies, which, as the chart below indicates, host community colleges that themselves have been slow to recover from the Great Recession.

All of these reports are available to the public at http://uaedpolicy.ua.edu.

“America’s 600 publicly controlled rural community and tribal colleges celebrate doors that they alone open. They provide access to general education for transfer; for-credit technical, vocational and occupational programs of 12 months to two years in duration that lead to high-skill, high wage jobs; workforce training; and they provide community services, serving as regional cultural centers for the performing and fine arts.”

—Why Rural Community & Tribal Colleges Matter
In partnership with the National Council of State Directors of Community Colleges and the American Association of Community Colleges, The National Access and Finance Surveys were initiated by EPC Director Katsinas while at the University of North Texas in 2003 and transferred to UA’s Education Policy Center in 2005. Nationally recognized higher education experts review each year’s survey instrument. This dynamic partnership has resulted in at least 49 of 51 possible state-level responses each year over the past decade.

EPC research has documented that the long-term decline in state funding for public higher education began two decades before the 1998 academic year, the first to be documented by the Delta Cost Project (2010). In FY1980-81, 16 states provided 60% or more of total revenues for their community colleges; by 2000-2001, none did. In FY1980-81, 55% of U.S. community college students attended in one of the 22 states where the state invested 50% or more of the total revenues for their community colleges; by FY2000-01, it was just 8% in 7 states. Our annual National Access and Finance Surveys continue to document this decline: in 2003, 34 of 46 states reported mid-year cuts in state appropriations; in 2010, 34 of 48 did so.

The National Access and Finance Surveys are not strictly about community colleges. Rather, they are an annual national assessment of access and funding issues for all public higher education sectors — flagship universities, regional universities, and community colleges. Our surveys provide a 35,000-foot view of access and finance in the fifty states. Variations in appropriations by higher education sector were larger before the Great Recession than today. Our surveys emphatically show the “high tuition/high aid” model doesn’t work, because states do not match tuition increases with increased state student aid in bad economic times. That states increasingly treat all three public higher sectors the same in both bad times and good, speaks to the need for public higher education to speak with one voice across all three sectors.

The years prior to 2008 saw steady increases in operating budgets. But following the Great Recession, finances have worsened. Our 2013 report, Halfway Out of Recession, But a Long Way To Go, found 14 states failed to appropriate operating budget funds at or above the predicted inflation rate, while 2014’s Recovery Continues, But Competition is Fierce found that 31 states failed to do so. Special sections center on key issues facing higher education leaders including facilities, workforce training in the Great Recession, Pell Grants, and college completion. Our February 2015 report was

“...increasingly treat all three public higher education sectors the same in terms of across-the-board operating budget cuts and tuition increases in times both bad and good, speaks to the need for public higher education to speak with one voice across all three sectors.”

—Halfway Out of Recession, But a Long Way To Go
one of the first nationally to document a decline in the nation’s community college completion rates. That so few states have long-term plans for the operating and capital budgets needed to expand college degree completion speaks to the perilous conditions facing American public higher education. The chart below shows that just two states raised operating budgets each year since the Great Recession at or above the inflation rate—five failed to do so a single time. Cuts in state funding means boards of trustees must either raise tuition, cut programs, or both.

**Operating Budgets vs. Inflation, FY2011–12 actual, and FY2015–16 predicted**

*All of these reports are available to the public at http://uaedpolicy.ua.edu/access--finance.html.*

**KEY PERSONNEL:** Stephen G. Katsinas, EPC Director; Janice N. Friedel, Iowa State University; Mark M. D’Amico, University of North Carolina-Charlotte; Jake L. Warner, EPC Fellow; Terrance A. Tollefson, Professor Emeritus, East Tennessee State University; J. Lucas Adair, EPC Research Associate.
The first of EPC’s Pell studies began after observing long lines of students signing up for new Summer Pell funding at community colleges serving some of the highest poverty rural counties in America in May 2010. Nationally, the number of Pell recipients grew from 6 to 9 million from 2009 to 2012; President Obama predicted 800,000 new Pell recipients in 8 years in signing legislation expanding Pell funding in March 2010. Preliminary results from EPC’s April 2011 study showed the impact of new Pell funding, presented at the U.S. Department of Education in February 2011, found just under half that number enrolled at just 205 community colleges in one year!

Our February 2012 study of Pell grants in Kansas found to our surprise that west Kansas counties where the population had declined by 5% between the 2000 and 2010 Census, Pell not only turned part-time students into full-time students as expected, Pell grew the base of part-time students as well. When our 2012 study of Pell’s impact in Kansas was presented at the U.S. Department of Education in Washington, Secretary Arne Duncan said increases in Pell funding was perhaps the single most gratifying accomplishment of his tenure. EPC studies of the impact of increased
Pell funding in the states of Iowa, New Hampshire, and seven other states revealed similar findings. The March 2012 companion technical report resulted in statewide coverage.

But the wildly popular new 2010 and 2011 Summer Pell program created a funding shortfall, resulting in federal legislation passed in June 2012 mandating new Pell Eligibility restrictions, effective immediately in August 2012. EPC’s study November 2012 study commissioned by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education, A Study of Pell Grants in Alabama, found nearly 5,000 students lost Pell Grant eligibility in the Fall 2012 term alone, and projected 16,500 Alabama public two- and four-year institution students would lose Pell eligibility in the 2012-13 academic year. A companion study conducted by EPC for the Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges produced statewide headlines. In February 2013, an EPC study released at a Congressional Briefing hosted by U.S. Senator Thad Cochran, found community colleges lost 17,000 students across the 62 community colleges in Alabama, Arkansas, and Mississippi.

IMPACT

In 2015-2016, the EPC launched the Alabama Community College Policy Fellows Program, in partnership with Mississippi State University’s Stennis Institute of Government. The program provides a year of advanced leadership development, networking, and advocacy training. The culmination was a week in Washington DC in April 2016 on an issue of the Fellows’ choice — in our case, renewing the year-round (summer) Pell Grant. Ten days before our trip — weeks after our congressional visits had been arranged—the GAO released a report that said that there was an $8 billion surplus in the federal Pell grant program. Our group advocated with Senators Cochran and Shelby, and other members of our delegations to re-instate the year round Pell in April, after our trip, EPC provided advocacy information for our college and university chancellors and presidents. On June 8, 2016, the United States Senate approved a bipartisan bill devoting the bulk of the $8 billion surplus to reinstate year-round Pell, providing up to $1,650 in added Pell aid for academically talented students to attend and succeed in college ($130 million in Alabama alone) in summer 2017.

PARTNERS & FUNDERS OVER THE YEARS:

• Alabama Commission on Higher Education
• Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges
• Kansas Association of Community College Trustees
• Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges
• Mississippi State University-Stennis Institute of Government
• Iowa State University
• Rural Community College Alliance

RESEARCH TO IMPROVE K-12 EDUCATION IN ALABAMA

Under the leadership of Associate Director Wayne Urban, a past Paul W. Bryant Professor in the College of Education, the Education Policy Center applies historical analysis to produce issue briefs on key topics facing education in Alabama, the Deep South, and the nation.

CHARTER SCHOOLS: AN ANALYSIS OF THE ISSUES, reviews the political climate surrounding charter schools, the evidence on student achievement, and the experience of two neighboring states with charter schools.

A CLOUDY FUTURE FOR NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND? reviews the development of NCLB, highlights aspects of the law that proved controversial, and considers future prospects as Congress considers reauthorization.

PERFORMANCE VERSUS PROMISES: AN EVALUATION OF TEACH FOR AMERICA’S RESEARCH PAGE, provides an independent review of the research cited on Teach for America’s research web page.

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR URBAN ALSO ASSISTS THE CENTER & COLLEGE BY:

• Organizing EPC’s Brown Bag Lunch Series, begun in 2006, to promote faculty dialog across programs and departments within the 100+ faculty across UA’s College of Education.
• Hosting EPC’s Book Series, begun in 2008, to foster extended dialogue on key issues facing education in Alabama, the Deep South, and the nation.

KEY PERSONNEL: EPC Associate Director Wayne J. Urban, EPC Fellow John R. Petrovic; Philip Kovacs and Erica Slate-Young, University of Alabama at Huntsville.
More than Science and Sputnik, the National Defense Education Act of 1958 (2010, The University of Alabama Press), describes the political process by which University of Alabama graduates and former Student Government Association Presidents Senator Lister Hill and Representative Carl A. Elliott, Sr., in cooperation with the Eisenhower Administration crafted America’s response to the Soviet Union’s launch of Sputnik, the world’s first satellite. The NDEA ushered in extraordinary federal investments in education to overcome a perceived national failure to produce enough qualified scientists, engineers, and mathematicians to compete with the Communist bloc.


—Mary Allen Jolley, Legislative Clerk, Subcommittee on Special Education, 1957-58
The Elliott Society is a service-based honor society dedicated to social and educational equality. Membership is granted to students, faculty, and staff of the University that have expressed their dedication to see these aims through. The Elliott Society is named in honor of the late Carl Atwood Elliott Sr., a former University of Alabama SGA President who later became an Alabama congressman in the U.S. House of Representatives. He based his political principles on assistance to the needy, racial tolerance, and better educational opportunities for all. His works in Congress focused on education. Elliott’s most notable achievements are his participation in The Library Services Act of 1956 and the National Defense Education Act of 1958. The University of Alabama’s Elliott Society establishes initiatives and collaborates with other service organizations to advocate the principles that Congressman Elliott upheld.

OUR FOUNDING PRINCIPALS:

TO RECOGNIZE
University of Alabama students, faculty, and alumni who have made significant leadership contributions to the campus, community, state, and/or nation in the areas of social and cultural progress, regardless of grade point averages.

TO PROVIDE
members the opportunity to join together to develop bonds and assist one another in projects of mutual interest and community need.

TO SPONSOR
scholarship in areas of mutual interest and community need and to present those findings responsibly to the community and its leaders.

TO DEVELOP
strong and courageous individuals of character both inside and outside the bonds of membership.
KICKSTART COLLEGE

New research shows that reaching middle school about, first, the courses to take in high school to be college-ready students, and second, financial aid awareness, is critical in heating up low-income student aspirations to attend college.

KickStart College is an orientation event tailored to 8th graders from Title I middle school students. This civic engagement initiative brings participants and beyond insight into the academic and social atmosphere of The University of Alabama, and it encourages students to make the right decisions as they approach high school. Students receive information about the right courses to be college-ready, knowledge of the Capstone and its student life, information about financial aid and college readiness, and words of inspiration. In the finale, students make their way across stage to receive their KickStart College Diploma, which for many marks their first step toward postsecondary success.

HEATING UP ASPIRATIONS IN 2015-2016

Going forward, in 2015-2016 we will continue to serve Tuscaloosa City and Tuscaloosa County middle school students, and expand into middle schools in Appalachian Alabama and the Black Belt, whose high schools traditionally send low numbers of students to UA. In doing so we hope to expand KickStart College, to include additional points of contact before graduating, and to begin measuring the success of KickStart participants.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- 2,500 students served
- 11 middle schools reached, most in multiple years
- 80% of attendees qualify for federal free & reduced school lunch
PARTNERSHIPS

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS ARE VITAL TO OUR WORK

FACULTY FROM THE FOLLOWING UNIVERSITIES HAVE BEEN INVOLVED WITH OUR WORK:

• California State University-Northridge
• East Tennessee State University
• Iowa State University
• Lawson State Community College
• Lynchburg College
• Mississippi State University
• Northeast Alabama Community College
• Snead State Community College
• Southern Illinois University
• University of Alabama at Huntsville
• University of Arkansas
• University of Kentucky
• University of Missouri-Kansas City
• University of Nebraska-Lincoln
• University of North Carolina-Charlotte
• University of North Texas

ORGANIZATIONS WITH WHICH WE PARTNER AND/OR SUPPORT OUR WORK:

• Alabama Articulation and General Studies Committee
• Alabama Commission on Higher Education
• Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education
• Alabama State Department of Education
• Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges
• American Public University
• Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching
• Council of University Government Affairs Representatives of Alabama
• Higher Education Partnership of Alabama
• Jack Kent Cooke Foundation
• Kansas Association of Community College Trustees
• Mid-South Partnership for Rural Community Colleges
• Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges
• National College Advising Corps
• National Council of State Directors of Community Colleges
• National Institute for Rural Community Colleges
• Rural Community College Alliance
• Rural Policy Research Institute
• University of Alabama Cartography Laboratory
• University of Alabama Division of Academic Affairs
DEGREE COMPLETION & PBF

COLLEGE COMPLETION

The Education Policy Center’s extensive work on the most important student financial aid program for academically talented, economically disadvantaged students to attend college, Pell Grants, led us to examining college completion. Improving college completion rates is of interest to major foundations, federal officials, and members of congress, as well as state-level policymakers. Yet our 2015 report, A New Way Is Needed to Jump-Start Degree Completion, revealed a majority of state-level community college leaders reported flat or declining rates of college degree completion. Released in February 2015 at a conference co-sponsored by Mississippi State University’s Stennis Institute of Government and EPC to discuss the public policy implications of President Obama’s Free Community College Tuition proposals, we predicted college completion will not rise without substantial new federal and state investments. To graduate students requires enrolling them, and our past Pell studies found declining enrollment rates due to cuts in federal Pell grants. Sadly, our other research shows state investments in public higher education have been declining in the Deep South in recent years.

PERFORMANCE-BASED FUNDING (PBF)

The Education Policy Center’s extensive work on college finance that dates to 2005, and includes a 2012 study for the Alabama Community College System that proposed a new funding formula. At this time, Alabama Governor Robert Bentley had publicly called for a performance funding for the ACCS. This led to our interest in performance funding.

Our September 2013 study, Performance-Based Funding: The National Landscape, was one of the first national studies of performance-based funding (PBF). We found PBF was a policy response to the call for greater transparency and accountability in public higher education, with 39 states currently active in PBF, and the community college sector leading the regional university and flagship university sectors. Yet we found that “despite recent attention, there is not compelling evidence of the link between PBF and improved student outcomes at this time.” The publication of this study led EPC Director Katsinas to be invited to a major conference sponsored by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in 2014.

KEY PERSONNEL: EPC Fellows Janice Friedel, Zoe Thornton, Mark D’Amico, and EPC Director Steve Katsinas
The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching turned to UA’s Education Policy Center to assist with their 2005 Basic Classification, to help classify Associate’s Colleges. The Carnegie Basic Classification of Institutions of Higher Education was developed by Clark Kerr and initially published in 1973, and updated again in 1976, 1987, 1994, and 2000. It is the nation’s most respected and widely used classification of higher education institutions by policymakers, practitioners, and researchers alike. The geographically-based classification that EPC Director Steve Katsinas, Senior Fellow Vince Lacey, and Director of Research David Hardy developed led to their being invited to serve as Carnegie Consulting Scholars in 2009-10 and 2010-11, to assist the Foundation in their 2010 update. The Carnegie Basic Classification is included in every published data set released by the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics. For this work, EPC Director Katsinas was awarded UA’s Blackmon-Moody Outstanding Professor Award in 2012, the only winner from the College of Education in the past 25 years.

KEY PERSONNEL: Stephen G. Katsinas, EPC Director; EPC Senior Fellow Vincent A. Lacey; EPC Director of Research David E. Hardy (2005 to 2010), EPC Research Associate Adam Tate.
GOING FORWARD:
THE MARGIN OF EXCELLENCE

It has been a productive decade at the Education Policy Center. We have striven to be good stewards of the resources invested by our funding partners.

We continue on our journey to become the “go to” source of solid, non-partisan research on education issues facing Alabama, the Deep South, and the nation. It is a privilege to offer a Deep South perspective often missing in national public policy debates related to federal education issues.

Moving forward, we pledge to continue to help public policy-makers in Alabama. This is evidenced by our newly launched Alabama Education Policy Fellows Program. It is evidenced by the evolving partnerships of The University of Alabama Superintendent’s Academy, hosted at the Center from 2005 to May 2016, with UA’s Cartography Laboratory to document funding tied to public school students as required by the 2013 Alabama Accountability Act. This mapping has led to collaborative partnerships with emergency management agencies in Jefferson and Tuscaloosa counties to assist with school safety/evacuation plans. Given the outbreak of tornadoes in 2011, this could not be more timely.

We will continue to document access and finance trends at the national level. This is entirely consistent with The University of Alabama’s recently revised, enlarged mission statement: “To advance the intellectual and social condition of the people of the State, the nation, and the world through the creation, translation, and dissemination of knowledge with an emphasis on quality programs of teaching, research, and service.”

Our service activities continue to focus on uplifting academically talented, economically disadvantaged students. We will seek to expand the Carl Elliott Honor Society’s innovative KickStart College program to Alabama’s underserved Black Belt and Appalachian Alabama middle schools that traditionally send few graduates onto college. Rep. Elliott said “There was—and still is—no doubt in my mind that education represents nothing less than the doorway to personal fulfillment, social justice, true freedom, and actual equality among all Americans.” KickStart College may be a national model that addresses a fundamental problem in the “arc of poverty,” that extends from West Virginia to rural Georgia, through Alabama to east Texas. We are seeking funding to document this.

To move forward will unquestionably require increased private sector support to provide the critical “margin of excellence.” Our state has faced rapidly declining state resources. The State of Alabama reduced its investments in public education at all levels by 36% between FY2008–2015. We will be looking for private sector funding to augment declining resources, to fund programs like EPC’s new Public Policy in Action Lecture Series, which brings leaders to campus to interact with UA students and faculty. To fund the undergraduate and graduate students involved in our research, public policy, and service activities necessarily requires enlightened private sector leaders to step forward to assist us in building a better Alabama and Deep South.
“The Education Policy Center is a trusted source of unbiased research on issues of access and economic development in the Deep South. Policymakers in our region respect its work, and appreciate the commitment on the part of The University of Alabama’s College of Education in supporting it.”

— William F. Winter, former Governor of Mississippi

“The Alabama Education Policy Center is doing great things for postsecondary education in the South and throughout the country. Their research has a real impact on how decisions are being made in the state-house and in administrative offices, and they have quickly become a leading voice for understanding higher education in society. Their work on the impact of Pell Grants, in particular, has highlighted an impressive ten-year run by the Center.”

— Michael T. Miller, Dean, College of Education and Health Professions, University of Arkansas
“The history of any community of scholars mirrors to a considerable degree the life of the nation which it serves”

- James Brian Conant, 1951