



Higher Education Partnership's Position on Education Trust Fund Budget Not Passing!

The Higher Education Partnership has consistently advocated for equitable treatment for ALL of public education. The proposed 2009 Education Trust Fund budget, that did not pass on the final day of the legislative regular session, was not equitable to the public universities. As a matter of fact, it was the most inequitable 2009 operating budget proposed in the Southeast. By deciding to not pass the budget and to address the issue in a special session, all of the state's policy makers now have an opportunity to re-think "how the forecasted revenue should be divided." Ideally, a more reasonable resolution can be found. Certainly, the universities request that their voice be included as the new budget is developed.

"It is the Partnership's intention to continue to work for equity and remind the state's elected leadership that it is clearly in the state's long-term best interest to find enough revenue to support all of public education. Equity will help keep tuition as reasonable as possible, provide the resources that are critical for the faculty salaries and allocate sufficient funds to keep classes available for students. Universities are the economic engines of the nation. Yet, all engines require fuel in order to effectively execute their functions," said Gordon Stone, Executive Director of the Higher Education Partnership.

As a result of the multitude of phone calls and emails, the Partnership's constituency of faculty, staff, students and alumni were strong voices of encouragement to legislators that supported the university position. The phone calls, electronic contact, newspaper ads and DVD's were important. Thanks to all university supporters for helping make sure the legislative leaders heard the message that *Equity + Education = Excellence*.

Education Budget and the Final Day

Taken from the MONTGOMERY ADVERTISER article by Sebastian Kitchen May 20, 2008

...The lockdown was over \$25 million that higher education proponents want for universities. The proposed education budget would cut funding to higher education by \$165 million.

"Auburn and Alabama and Joe Fine killed the budget," said Sen. Hank Sanders, chairman of the Senate education budget committee. Fine refused to comment on the situation. Sanders said higher education was "greedy."

Gordon Stone, executive director of the Higher Education Partnership, said his constituents would work with everyone involved to try to find an equitable budget for K-12 and higher education. The proposed budget would have cut higher education by 11 percent and K-12 by 3 percent. Stone said an 11 percent cut is "not a good decision in any economic environment."

Sen. Larry Dixon, R-Montgomery, said the \$6.3 billion budget was brought the last day of the session to try to force senators to vote along with Sanders and the education association. "You don't bring a \$6.3 billion budget on the last day," he said.

Both sides also accused the other of being unwilling to compromise. Riley said the situation defied logic and said "there is enough blame to go around." "There was a lack of flexibility on both sides," the governor said.

...Several senators who wanted the \$25 million for higher education filibustered all day. They said the \$165 million in cuts to higher education will lead to higher tuition and difficulty competing with other states to recruit quality professors and students.

Sanders said there will be no compromise to add the \$25 million. He said he was not going to "cave."



Higher Education Partnership
P.O. Box 761
Montgomery, AL 36104

Presorted
Standard A
US Postage Paid
Permit 952