Making the Case for Graduate Education: The Alabama Experience

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Alabama Council of Graduate Deans

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UA Graduate School
What Was the Plan?

• An earlier attempt (1998 – 2002) focused on number of degrees awarded and individual success stories.

• Decided to adopt a strategic, data-driven approach
  – Identify partners to advise on questions
  – Identify databases: state and national
  – Look at outcomes and impacts
  – One data set to be personalized by individual deans, based on their institutional needs
It’s Important to Have Partners

• Economic Development Partnership of Alabama
  – A private, non-profit organization dedicated to fostering economic growth in Alabama
  – Identified questions important to business leaders

• Center for Business and Economic Research
  – Produces forecasts and identifies trends in the Alabama economy
  – Identified sources of data that would be useful for our analysis of economic impact

• State Senator Vivian Figures (Mobile)
Craft the Message to the Audience

Our partners advised us to tailor the message to our intended audience.

- Show specific contributions of our graduates to the Alabama economy
- Engage the business community in the discussion
- Augment the existing messages of our respective institutions
- What outcomes do you want?
Sources of Data

- U.S. Census Bureau
- National Science Foundation
- Survey of Earned Doctorates
- National Center for Higher Education Management Systems [www.higheredinfo.org](http://www.higheredinfo.org)
- Alabama Commission on Higher Education
- Southern Regional Education Board
  (www.sreb.org)
Academic R&D Expenditures per Capita
Alabama 2001 - 2007

Source: data taken from National Center for Higher Education Management Systems.
www.higheredinfo.org. Data retrieved on March 5, 2009
Academic R&D Expenditures per $1,000,000 of GDP
Alabama 2001 - 2007

Academic R&D in
Alabama (2007)
$655 million

R&D spending / $1,000,000 of GDP

Data accessed on March 5, 2009
Projected Earnings Differential for Alabama MS and Doctoral Graduates – 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>total degrees</th>
<th>Projected lifetime earnings differential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MS + Post-MS</td>
<td>7,974</td>
<td>$3.19 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral</td>
<td>709</td>
<td>$0.85 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total:</td>
<td></td>
<td>$4.04 billion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If 62% of these 2007 graduates remain in Alabama after graduation:

**$2.52 billion more earned in and spent in Alabama**

Data on Degree Completions 2007 taken from the Alabama Commission on Higher Education and includes graduates of public and private universities.
What Outcomes Thus Far?

• Information provided to all graduate deans
  – Personalized approach for their specific institution
• Brochures: “Graduate Education: It’s a Great Investment”
  – UA, UAB, Univ. of South Alabama, University of Montevallo
• Web pages: UAB – modeled after Georgia Southern approach (Tim Mack)
• Videos: UA, UAB (in progress)
• Article: CGS Communicator (Oct. 2009)
• Invited presentation to ACHE (March, 2010).
Examples of Brochures

Graduate Education: It's a great investment!

UM Office of Graduate Studies
graduate@montevallo.edu
205.665.6350

Graduate Education: It's a Great Investment!

B. Keith Harrison, Ph.D.
Dean, USA Graduate School
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Graduate Education:  
It’s a Great Investment

Dr. Bryan D. Noe  
Dean, UAB Graduate School

Presentation prepared by  
the Alabama Council of Graduate Deans  
and the UAB Graduate School.

http://www.uab.edu/graduate/gradededu/Frameset6.html
UAB Graduates Contribute to Alabama and Nationally

Stephen Brossette (M.D./Ph.D. – Computer and Information Sciences, 1998)

• President and Co-Founder of MedMined, Inc.
  – Developed data mining techniques to assess the frequency with which hospital patients contract infections
  – Tracks chronic infection patterns among patients at more than 90 hospitals and health care facilities in 24 states
  – Allows hospitals to detect patterns and devise remedies
  – Pioneered electronic medical data management leading to modern paradigms for Medical Informatics

• In 2002, Dr. Brossette received the Outstanding Incubator Client Award from the National Business Incubator Association
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The Graduate School of The University of Alabama

Dissemination Plan for Economic Development Message

• On- and off-campus constituencies

• Employed a multimedia approach using one set of data/talking points to tell story in different ways

• Cast UA-specific story in context of statewide perspective
Three Finished Products Emerged

- Short video (9 min 30 sec; high-def) for DVD/posting on GS homepage, iTunesU, YouTube
  http://graduate.ua.edu/publications/econimpact.wmv or http://graduate.ua.edu/publications/econimpact.mov

- Companion hard-copy brochure for on-campus/off-campus mail distribution

- Interactive PDF version of brochure, also posted on website and other e-venues
  http://issuu.com/reata/docs/ua_grad_bro

- Bottom Line: many “I didn’t know that!” responses from constituencies AND additional benefits in recruiting students (and faculty)

- Costs: $990 for video/DVDs; $550 for brochures
What Did We Learn?

• Working together, we could pool data.
• No single dean can make the case alone.
• Consensus building to make the strongest case.

What’s Next?

• Further critiques by partners; additional partners?
• Identify target audiences for specially focused contact: engineering, biotechnology, agriculture
• Keep the data up-to-date
• Contacts with news media