Public Opinion and Higher Education in Alabama
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Methodology

• Conducted By the Center For Governmental Services at Auburn University

• Based Upon Three Statewide Telephone Polls Conducted During:
  – July 2001,
  – March 2002,
  – November 2002

• Margin of Error is +/- 5%
Issue Areas

A. Importance of Higher education to Alabamians

B. Public Assessment of the Quality of Alabama Higher Education

C. Awareness and Involvement of Alabamians with Higher Education Programs and Services

D. Public Assessment of the Financial Situation of Alabama Higher Education.
A. Importance of Education to Alabamians (March 2002)

Nine out of Ten Alabamians State That the Quality of Higher Education in the State is Important to Them.
A. Importance of Education to Alabamians (March 2002)

![Chart showing the importance of education to Alabamians]

- **Very Important**: 73% K-12 Education, 74% Higher Education
- **Important**: 22.8% K-12 Education, 18% Higher Education
- **Slight Importance**: 1.6% K-12 Education, 3.7% Higher Education
- **Unimportant**: 1.1% K-12 Education, 1.8% Higher Education
- **Don't Know**: 1.6% K-12 Education, 2.5% Higher Education
A. Alabamians Are Personally Affected By the Quality of Higher Education (July 2001)

- Strongly Agree: 59%
- Agree: 30%
- Neutral: 2%
- Disagree: 5%
- Strongly Disagree: 4%
B. Public Assessment of the Quality of Alabama Higher Education

3 out of 4 Alabamians State that Alabama’s Higher Education is Equal to or Better Than in Other States

2 out of 3 Alabamians Concur That the Reputation of Alabama’s Higher Education System is Very Strong
B. Alabama’s Colleges and Universities Compared to other States (March 2002)

- Same: 58%
- Better: 18%
- Worse: 11%
- No Opinion: 13%
B. Alabama’s Colleges and Universities Have a Strong Reputation (November 2002)

- Agree: 54%
- Strongly Agree: 13%
- Disagree: 19%
- Strongly Disagree: 5%
- No Opinion: 9%
B. Public Assessment of the Quality of Alabama Higher Education

Alabamians Give a “C” Grade to Alabama’s Higher Education Performance.

66% Positively Assess the Specific Contributions Made by Alabama Higher Education.

60% State That Higher Education in Alabama Provides a Good Return for the Tax Dollar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Area</th>
<th>Very Poor</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-School Educ.</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>1.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-12 Education</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>1.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Transport.</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elderly Services</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roads</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## B. Assessment of Higher Ed. Services (November 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Area</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintain High Academic Standards</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>62.8%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved the Quality of Life in Your Community</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>59.7%</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribute to the Economic Development of Your Community</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td>60.3%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Workforce Development for Employers in Your Community</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>58.4%</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equip Students With the Skills to Succeed in Today’s Economy</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>67.6%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Remedial Training for Students Who are Unprepared</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>59.0%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make Valued Research Contributions</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>58.8%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B. Alabama Higher Education Provides a Good Return on The Tax Dollar (November 2002)

Agree: 53%
No Opinion: 14%
Disagree: 18%
Strongly Disagree: 7%
Strongly Agree: 8%
C. Public Awareness and Involvement in Higher Education

- 86% of Alabamians Experienced With a College or University Program Are Satisfied.
- 90% of Alabamians Are Familiar With One or More Programs or Services.
- 75% of Those Aware of Higher Education Programs Have Utilized One or More Programs and/or Services.
C. Level of Satisfaction With College or University Program (November 2002)

- Completely Dissatisfied: 4%
- Somewhat Dissatisfied: 4%
- No Opinion: 6%
- Somewhat Satisfactory: 44%
- Complete Satisfaction: 42%
C. Awareness and Participation in College or University Programs (November 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program or Service</th>
<th>Percent Awareness</th>
<th>Percent Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continuing Education Course</td>
<td>66.3</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College or University Library</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>42.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Events</td>
<td>62.4</td>
<td>36.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Business Courses</td>
<td>66.3</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce Training</td>
<td>55.9</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Development Programs</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Revitalization Program</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance Learning Programs</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
D. Assessment of the Financial Situation of Alabama Higher Education

- 83% of the Public Agree that Alabama K-12 Systems Face Serious Financial Difficulties
- 65% Agree That Alabama Higher Education Systems Face Serious Financial Difficulties
- 60% Would Support a Tax Increase to Strengthen Alabama’s Colleges and Universities.

- **Agree**: 36%
- **Strongly Agree**: 46%
- **Strongly Disagree**: 2%
- **Disagree**: 8%
- **No Opinion**: 8%
D. A Serious Financial Situation Affects Alabama Higher Education (November 2002)
D. Percentage Favoring a Tax Increase For Education (March-November 2002)
D. Tax Increase For Education Change in Public Opinion (March-November 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>K-12 Education Tax Support</th>
<th>Higher Education Tax Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong Opposition</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Opposition</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Opposition</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong Support</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Support</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Support</td>
<td>66.4%</td>
<td>68.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thank You

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