

**Alabama  
Commission on Higher Education**

**Functional Analysis  
&  
Records Disposition Authority**

**Revision  
Presented to the  
State Records Commission  
April 26, 2001**

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# **Functional Analysis and Records Appraisal of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education**

## **Sources of Information**

### **Representatives of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education**

Beth Sievers, Administrative Assistant, Executive Director's Office  
Linda Thierfelder, Manager of Agency Operations, Executive Director's Office  
Dixie Brannan, Administrative Assistant, Planning and Coordination  
Brenda Carter, Director of Programs, Planning and Coordination  
Kitty Collier, Director of Planning, Planning and Coordination  
Ellen Haulman, Assistant Director, Planning  
Edward Rutledge, Chief Financial Officer  
Veronica Harris, Assistant Director, Agency Accounting  
Jan Hilyer, Assistant Director, Grants and Scholarships  
Donna Jordan, Assistant Director, Loan Servicing  
Pat Thorne, Assistant Director, Loan Servicing  
Lori Franklin, Secretary, Loan Servicing  
Sarah Williams, Assistant Director, Financial Analysis  
Sheryl Newton, Junior Accountant, Client Funds  
Walter Hutcheson, Assistant Director, Systems Operations  
Shelia McFarland, Software Support Coordinator, Data Systems

Code of Alabama 1975, Sections 16-5-1 through 16-5-33

Acts of Alabama, 1996 Regular Session

Alabama Administrative Code, Chapters 300-1-1 through 300-5-8

Alabama Government Manual (1994)

Alabama Commission on Higher Education Annual Reports (1994-1996)

Alabama Commission on Higher Education Web Site

Holdings of the Alabama Department of Archives and History for the Alabama  
Commission on Higher Education

Government Records Division, State Agency Files (1985-ongoing)

## **Current Agency Organization**

Created by the Alabama Legislature in 1969, the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as the commission) is composed of twelve members, ten of whom are appointed by the governor, one by the lieutenant governor, and one by the speaker of the house. Appointments are confirmed by the Senate. There must be one member from each congressional district, but no more than two from any one district. No member may also serve on the governing board of or be otherwise connected with any institution of higher education in the state or work for the Alabama Department of Education or for any school board.

Commission members serve nine-year terms and cannot succeed themselves if they have already served more than five years in filling an unexpired term. The commission chairperson is elected annually from the membership. The commission must meet at least once every three months and is encouraged to meet at the campuses of various institutions of higher learning around the state. The commission appoints an executive director, who must be confirmed initially by the Senate, and who acts as secretary to the commission, appoints commission staff, and carries out policies, programs, and duties assigned by the commission. Advisory groups also support the commission's work. One mandated advisory committee is the Council of Presidents, which includes the presidents of all the public four-year higher education institutions in the state, the chancellor of the Department of Postsecondary Education, and the presidents of three public two-year institutions selected by the chancellor (Code of Alabama 1975, Section 16-5-5). Commission staff members are currently organized into the following divisions: Executive Director's Office, Planning and Coordination, Data Systems, Accounting, Student Assistance, and Loan Servicing. Its major source of funding is the Alabama Education Trust Fund.

## **Agency Function**

The mandated function of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education is to serve as the state's coordinating agency for higher education (Code of Alabama 1975, Sections 16-5-2, 16-5-5 to 16-5-8). The legislature indicated that the commission was to act in an advisory and fact-finding capacity and not to take powers from the governing boards of the institutions of higher education or the State Board of Education (Code of Alabama 1975, Section 16-5-13). Recent legislation, however, has given the commission more responsibilities. The commission is one of the agencies responsible for carrying out the subfunctions in the Policy and Statute Development function of Alabama government. It also performs activities in the Education subcategory of the Client Services function, the Regulatory function, and the Financial Management subcategory of the Administrative Support Operations function.

## **Agency Subfunctions**

In performance of its mandated function, the Alabama Commission on Higher Education may engage in the following subfunctions.

- **Advising.** The commission advises the governor and the legislature regarding funding for operation and capital improvements for all state higher education institutions (Code of Alabama 1975, Section 16-5-2). It may advise the governor on any matter pertaining to postsecondary education and recommend to the legislature the enactment of legislation to promote quality higher education (Code of Alabama 1975, Section 16-5-10). When the commission implements the state university and college information system mandated by Act 96-509 of the Alabama Legislature, it will provide data to assist the governor, legislators, and educators in "informed decision making on education issues."

- **Maintaining a Statewide Information System.** The commission is mandated to maintain a state university and college information system “to provide comprehensive, meaningful and timely information pertinent to the formulation of decisions and recommendations by the commission” and to support its role as adviser to the governor and the legislature. The commission is also the state coordinating agency for all data collection requirements of the federal government relating to postsecondary education (Code of Alabama 1975, Section 16-5-7). To respond to a variety of data requests, the commission has implemented the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), a system of surveys designed to collect data from all primary providers of postsecondary education in the state. In order to track students across institutions and sectors, to monitor the status of out-of-state students enrolled in Alabama institutions, to assess student retention and completion rates for all sectors of education, and to provide feedback to high schools and transfer institutions on the performance of students, the commission is developing additional data bases. Legislation passed in 1996 called for the commission to establish a student unit record data system and a uniform electronic faculty unit record system (Act 96-771).
  
- **Planning.** The commission is responsible for statewide long-range planning for postsecondary education. This includes establishing “statewide objectives and priorities with methods and guidelines for achieving them” (Code of Alabama 1975, Section 16-5-6). Planning for statewide changes in postsecondary education often involves conducting studies and organizing advisory groups. A number of groups advise the commission on a long-term basis, including the Council of Presidents, mandated by the legislation that originally created the commission; the Council of University Chief Academic Officers; the Council of Deans of Arts and Sciences; and the Council of Graduate Deans. Other groups may form to study and provide advice on a particular higher education issue, such as a recent advisory group created to study a statewide policy on out-of-state tuition. The legislature mandated the creation of the Articulation and General Studies Committee to develop by 1998 a statewide freshman and sophomore level general studies curriculum to be taken at all public colleges and universities and by 1999 a statewide articulation agreement for transfer of credit among state institutions (Code of Alabama 1975, Section 16-5-8).

Act 96-539 of the Alabama legislature provided that every public institution of higher learning in Alabama submit annually to the commission a facilities master plan, including a five-year plan regarding new facility construction and acquisition. The commission must review these plans and make known any concerns and/or recommendations to the institution’s board of trustees or, in the case of a two-year institution, to the State Board of Education. The institution must prioritize all capital budget requests and include them in the master facilities plan, accompanied by a needs assessment (Code of Alabama 1975, Section 16-5-15). The commission’s role is to provide more systematized planning for facilities construction, acquisition, and improvement among the state’s postsecondary institutions and to assist the budgeting process for higher education.

- **Coordinating.** The commission is authorized to review periodically all new and existing programs at colleges and universities and to study both needless duplication of programs and areas in which programs are not adequately provided, in order to “strengthen the total program of higher education in the state” (Code of Alabama, Section 16-5-8). The Articulation and General Studies Committee discussed in the subfunction above is developing programs that will eventually produce better coordination among the curricula of the state’s public colleges and universities. The commission administers several statewide programs that attempt to coordinate the resources of the various institutions. One of these is the Network of Alabama Academic Libraries. Its goal is to share collective library services to enhance graduate education, develop research level collections, and increase staffing and facilities. The commission acts as state coordinator for the Southern Regional Compact for Education. Another program coordinating resources from state government, business and industry, and state research institutions is the Alabama Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research, which builds statewide science and engineering research and education in the state. The commission coordinates the Eminent Scholars Program that provides matching state funds to colleges and universities that have received private endowments for eminent scholars to occupy departmental chairs. The legislature has not funded this program in the past several years, however. The commission was also briefly designated by the federal government as the State Postsecondary Review Entity (SPREE) in order to reduce fraud and abuse in Title IV programs. This program was terminated in 1995, however, because of lack of funding by congress.
  
- **Approving/Authorizing.** The commission must approve any new unit or program of instruction for academic credit before state funds can be spent on it and must also regulate and authorize off-campus offerings. It may issue negative opinions on new units in reports to the institution and in its comments on an institution’s legislative budget request. Any program submitted to the commission on which no action is taken within ten months is automatically considered approved (Code of Alabama 1975, Section 16-5-8). The commission must also approve off-campus programs. The commission classifies and prescribes the role and scope of each institution, hears applications for changes in an institution’s classification, and recommends changes when it considers them necessary. Institutions must submit regular reports to the commission, providing data on credit hour production, enrollment, tuition and fees, research, facilities inventory and space utilization, and utilities cost and consumption. The commission develops criteria for determining the need for new public institutions and gives its opinion on any proposal to establish additional colleges and universities. It also authorizes and regulates instructional programs offered by non-Alabama institutions in the state. Legislation passed in 1996 (Act 96-557) mandates that the commission monitor existing programs of instruction at public two- and four-year institutions of higher education in the state to ensure that they meet minimum degree productivity standards. The commission identifies non viable programs and notifies the institution that it has three years to meet

standards. Failure to meet standards will result in the phase-out of the program (Code of Alabama 1975, Section 16-5-8).

- **Budgeting.** The various higher education institutions submit budget proposals to the Office of the Budget no later than ninety days before the beginning of the legislative session, and the commission receives, evaluates, and coordinates these budget requests and presents to the legislature a single unified budget report with its recommendations (Code of Alabama 1975, Section 16-5-9). The recently passed legislation requiring facilities master plans from all postsecondary institutions includes a requirement for prioritization of capital budget requests and a needs assessment. The commission must consider this information when compiling its unified budget recommendations.
- **Providing Financial Assistance.** In 1980 Executive Order No. 33 created the Alabama Higher Education Loan Corporation (AHELC) to issue bonds to provide Alabama lending institutions with a secondary market for student loans. It issues tax-exempt revenue bonds to purchase student loans and to fund its operations. It also services its own loans and loans from financial institutions that pay AHELC for this service. A nine-member board governs AHELC, and the commission carries out its daily operations. The board, which consists of four ex officio members and five members appointed by the governor, meets annually.

In the past the commission has administered the Guaranteed Student Loan Program. Although it is no longer responsible for new applications, it must continue to maintain records from this program for a specified period to meet federal requirements. It currently administers other grant programs for in-state students - the Alabama Student Assistance Program, the Alabama Student Grant Program, the National Guard Educational Assistance Program, the Emergency Secondary Education Program, the Police Officers' and Fire Fighters' Survivors' Educational Assistance Program, and the Chiropractic Scholarship Program. The commission is also the agency designated by the U. S. Department of Education to administer the higher education component of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Mathematics and Science Program. This is a competitive grant program that allocates federal funds to institutions of higher education for professional development for K-12 teachers. Educational assistance contracts may also be offered in conjunction with such programs as the Academic Common Market (AAC, 300-2-4).

- **Reporting/Publicizing.** The commission must submit an annual report to the governor and legislature that includes the results of any studies undertaken during the year, remarks on major developments, trends, and policies in higher education, and recommendations for future action. The commission is also mandated to study itself by commissioning a team of outside consultants every four years to review its work and help plan for its future. The commission must provide a report of this study to the legislature (Code of Alabama 1975, Section 16-5-12). It must also make regular reports to the legislature on the progress and findings of such advisory groups as the Articulation and

General Studies Committee. The commission is mandated to study by means of advisory groups and report to the governor and legislature on needless duplication of education, research, or service programs and programs that are not adequately provided in the state (Code of Alabama 1975, Section 16-5-8). Legislation passed in 1996 requires the commission to report to individual high school officials and the State Board of Education information compiled from the Student Unit Record Data Base concerning the progress made by their respective graduates within the public institutions of higher education in Alabama (Code of Alabama 1975, Section 16-5-7). Under Act 96-771 the commission must annually summarize information from all two- and four-year institutions concerning faculty work loads in a report to the governor, legislature, State Board of Education and the Council of College and University Presidents. Pursuant to additional 1996 legislation, the commission must report to the same entities on all higher education programs it has deemed to be nonviable. (Code of Alabama 1975, Section 16-5-8). In addition, the commission has responsibility for conducting public information programs to inform citizens about education issues in the state (Code of Alabama, Section 16-5-10).

The commission may also prepare and distribute informational materials to inform the public about its programs, particularly grant and scholarship information. The commission's web site is another means of providing information about the agency and its programs to the public. Information on the web site includes the current state plan for education, the state's academic program inventory, information about how to apply for financial aid, and links to some of the state's public postsecondary institutions. The commission's web site address is <http://webserver.dsmd.state.al.us/ache/ache.htm>.

- **Administering Internal Operations.** A significant portion of the commission's work includes general administrative, financial and personnel activities performed to support the programmatic areas of the agency including:

**Managing the Agency:** Activities involved in managing the agency may include internal office management activities such as corresponding and communicating; scheduling; meeting; creating policy and procedures; reporting; litigating; legislating (drafting, lobbying, tracking); publicizing and providing information; managing records; and managing information systems and technology.

**Managing Finances:** Activities involved in managing finances may include the following: budgeting (preparing and reviewing the budget package, submitting the budget package to the Department of Finance, and documenting amendments and performance of the budget); purchasing (requisitioning and purchasing supplies and equipment, receipting and invoicing for goods, and authorizing payment for products received); accounting for the expenditure, encumbrance, disbursement, and reconciliation of funds within the agency's budget through a uniform system of accounting and reporting; authorizing travel; contracting with companies or individuals; bidding for products and services; and assisting in the audit process.

**Managing Human Resources:** Activities involved in managing human resources may include the following: recruiting and hiring eligible individuals to fill vacant positions within the agency; providing compensation and benefits to employees; supervising employees (evaluating performance, disciplining, granting leave, and monitoring the accumulation of leave); and providing training and continuing education for employees.

**Managing Properties, Facilities, and Resources:** Activities involved in managing properties, facilities, and resources may include the following: inventorying and accounting for non-consumable property and reporting property information to the appropriate authority; constructing buildings and facilities; leasing and/or renting offices or facilities; providing for security and/or insurance for property; and assigning, inspecting, and maintaining agency property, including vehicles.

**Completed: April 1998**

**Attachments: Organizational Chart**

# **Analysis of Record Keeping System and Records Appraisal of the Commission On Higher Education**

## **Agency Record Keeping System**

The commission creates both paper and electronic records.

Paper-Based Systems: There is a paper copy of most electronic records.

Computer Systems: The commission's computer system is an IBM AS400, to which all employees are linked, either by terminal or personal computer. A local area network (LAN) is in the process of development. Currently only Data Systems is attached to it, but other divisions will be added in the near future. The AS400 is connected to three outside systems: to the Information Services Division (ISD) of the Finance Department; to UNIPAC Corporation in Denver, Colorado, which provides a student loan servicing system that is utilized by approximately 30 commission employees; and to the State of Kentucky's AS400, which now manages the Guaranteed Student Loan program formerly administered by the commission. The commission has developed a web site. It distributes some of its publications through the Internet. Some parts of the commission's system are backed up nightly; there is a full system backup quarterly. The backups are stored with ISD.

All employees have access to an interoffice E-mail system; a few have Internet access. There are currently no agency-wide E-mail policies or guidelines. These systems will soon be tied together on the LAN.

The commission maintains several data bases. The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Systems (IPEDS) consists of statistical information about state colleges and universities required by the U. S. Department of Education. The commission pays the UNIPAC Corporation a monthly fee to maintain all of the loan servicing data bases. In 1996 the legislature mandated that the commission create a state university and college information system that will include a student unit record system and a faculty unit record system. An advisory committee has been working on development of these two data bases.

## **Records Appraisal**

The following is a discussion of the two major categories of records created and/or maintained by the Commission on Higher Education: Temporary Records and Permanent Records.

The commission has served in the past, and may again in the future, as a repository and clearinghouse for records required in a lawsuit against a number of postsecondary institutions. While the commission may not create the records, it becomes their custodian. These records

should be treated as any other public records in regard to their disposition and either transferred to the Department of Archives and History for preservation as essential documentation of the lawsuit or destroyed according to the approved records disposition authority.

Although the commission is on a regular audit cycle by the Examiners of Public Accounts, the Alabama Higher Education Loan Corporation (AHELC), whose operation are administered by the commission, undergoes an independent audit annually and also an annual lender audit guide review required by the U. S. Department of Education.

**I. Temporary Records.** Temporary records should be held for what is considered their active life and be disposed of once all fiscal, legal, and administrative requirements have been met. Some of the temporary records created by the commission are discussed below:

- **Academic Programs Files.** These records contain materials on proposed academic programs that must be submitted to the commission for approval. Much of the material in these files is duplicated in other commission records that have been designated as archival. A summary of the proposal and staff reports and recommendations is in the commission meeting minutes and packet. Recommendations of the University Chief Academic Officers and the Council of Graduate Deans are in the Advisory Council Files. The materials in the files on the history of an institution's academic programs have long-term value to commission staff members in preparing their reports and recommendations.
- **Nonresident Institution Review Files.** The commission approves all nonresident institutions offering courses in the state to make certain that proposed courses meet acceptable academic standards. These records contain support documentation for this approval process. A summary of the proposed offerings of these institutions and staff reports and recommendations is in the commission meeting minutes and packet.
- **Off-Campus Files.** The commission is responsible for reviewing and approving all off-campus instruction performed by public two-year and four-year institutions. Materials in the files include correspondence, proposals, and reports. A summary of the proposal and staff reports and recommendations is in the commission meeting minutes and packet.
- **Academic Program Inventory Documentation Files.** These records provide the supporting documentation for the academic program inventory. These contain certification forms and institution requests for additions and deletions. Decisions about additions to the program are included in the commission meeting minutes and packet. Deletions are presented as action or information items to the commission and are also included in the meeting packet.
- **Program Viability Analysis Files.** Recent legislation has changed the commission's process of reviewing programs to ensure they meet minimum degree productivity standards. These records provide documentation of the process. Staff reports and

recommendations regarding program viability are included in the commission meeting minutes and packet.

- **Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).** This data consists of reports and statistics from Alabama's postsecondary institutions on a variety of topics. The information from these files is entered in a data base and provided, as mandated by law, to the U.S. Department of Education. Much of this information is eventually summarized in the commission's published reports and recommendations and in reports of the U. S. Department of Education.
- **Time-to-Degree and Allied Health Study Files.** These records document two recent studies undertaken by the commission for planning purposes. The final reports of the studies will be included in the commission meeting minutes and packet and may be published for use by the Governor and Legislature. The files contain the supporting documentation used to create the reports.
- **Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) Files.** The commission administers the functions of the Southern Regional Compact for Education in Alabama. These include the Academic Common Market, contract programs for the Meharry Medical College and the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine, and the Minority Doctoral Scholars Program. The records include files on individuals who apply for the programs. SREB maintains the program files and creates publicity materials, and once an individual is enrolled in a program, the institution maintains the student's records. The commission does not continue to track the individual throughout his/her academic career. SREB programs are described in the commission's annual report.

**II. Permanent Records.** The Government Records Division recommends the following records as permanent.

**Advising:**

Records documenting this subfunction are found in the commission meeting minutes and packet, the meeting minutes of the advisory groups, in the administrative correspondence of the executive director, and in the commission's published reports. These records are described under other subfunctions below.

**Maintaining a state wide information system:**

Archival documentation for this subfunction may be found in the various reports that are compiled from the data collected in the information system.

## Planning:

- **Meeting Minutes of the Council of College and University Presidents.** This council was established by the legislature as a permanent advisory body to the commission. Its minutes document the commission's consideration of the present and future needs of higher education and present the point of view and concerns of the state's public colleges and universities. These records also document other subfunctions of the commission, including advising, coordinating, approving/authorizing, and budgeting.
- **Facilities Master Plan and Capital Project Request Recommendations and Reports.** The commission created this document for the first time in 1997 pursuant to Act 96-539 of the Alabama Legislature. It will probably become one of the commission's published reports. It summarizes the facilities master plans required to be submitted to the commission by every public postsecondary institution in Alabama. This record documents long-range planning for the physical expansion of Alabama's institutions of higher learning. It also helps to document the subfunction of budgeting, because institutions are required under Act 96-539 to prioritize capital improvement budget requests and to justify them under the master plan.
- **Long-Range Planning Files.** These records document the commission's fulfillment of its statutory mandate to conduct statewide long-range planning for postsecondary education in Alabama. The files include both published planning documents and unpublished supporting material. The most recent state plan covers the years 1996 through 2000 and is available both in paper format and on the commission's web page.

## Coordinating:

- **Eminent Scholars Program Files.** The Eminent Scholars program represents an effort by the state to attract prominent academics to the state's colleges and universities. These records document certification of private funds awaiting matching with state funds to create an Eminent Scholar Chair. They contain information about some of the donors, the institutions awarded the chairs, and sometimes the individuals named as eminent scholars.
- **Title VI Files/Knigh t v. Alabama.** The court case Knigh t v. Alabama involved desegregation and equalization of funding and facilities at the state college and university level. Although the lawsuit was originally filed in the mid-1970s, these records concern only the later stages of the case and document the commission's role in coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the Knigh t v. Alabama 1991 and 1995 Remedial Decrees. Most of the material is reports, motions, and orders created for the United States District Court, Northern District of Alabama, Southern Division. Although the files consist chiefly of duplicates of material in the court file that was not originally created by the commission, the records provide a significant source of documentation of

the settlement phase of this landmark court case.

Other legal case files of the commission have not been designated as archival and are listed under the “Administering Office Operations” subfunction in the RDA. If the commission becomes involved in the future in another lawsuit with significant implications for higher education in the state, records of the case should be appraised for possible archival value.

- **Minutes of the Network of Alabama Academic Libraries (NAAL).** The NAAL coordinates the sharing of academic library resources supporting graduate education and research. Minutes are created by the NAAL Advisory Council, its Executive Committee, and its administrative and program committees. They provide evidence of a cooperative effort among Alabama’s postsecondary institutions offering graduate education and other significant archival and library institutions in the state and document the commission’s role in coordinating it.

#### **Approving/authorizing:**

- **Meeting Minutes and Meeting Packet of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education.** The meeting minutes provide documentation of commission policy making. The commission must vote on approvals of programs and institutions and authorize any changes. Attached to the minutes are staff reports that provide research and recommendations regarding proposed new academic programs. These minutes are also important in documenting executive policy in other subfunctions, including advising, planning, coordinating, and budgeting.
- **Administrative Correspondence of the Executive Director.** This correspondence also documents policymaking for the commission in its role of approving and authorizing academic programs and institutions. The records provide documentation of executive policy in the advising, planning, coordinating, and budgeting subfunctions as well.
- **Advisory Council Files.** These records contain the constitutions, by-laws, and meeting minutes of organizations or councils that serve in an advisory capacity to the commission. Such groups include the Council of University Chief Academic Officers, the Council of Deans of Arts and Sciences, and the Council of Graduate Deans. While these groups do not actually approve or authorize new programs, their recommendations are a significant factor in the commission’s decision making process.
- **Academic Program Inventory.** This record documents the academic programs in public institutions that have been recognized by the commission consistent with its program review authority. It is updated after commission meetings and was formerly published annually. The inventory will now be disseminated to the public through the commission’s web site. The archival record is the commission’s printouts of the updates.

- **Role Matrices Files.** These records consist of reports that indicate the areas in which the state's postsecondary institutions already have programs and have permission to expand them or initiate new programs. The role matrices document not only the commission's responsibility to approve and authorize programs and prescribe the role and scope of each institution, but also its duty to coordinate higher education course offerings and minimize program duplication. The role matrices are updated every five years.

#### **Budgeting:**

- **Unified Budget Recommendations.** The commission reviews and analyzes budget requests from all the state institutions of higher education and makes its recommendations for funding to the governor and the legislature. This published document provides evidence of what funding the state's colleges and universities request each year. This can be compared to what they eventually receive from the legislature.

#### **Providing Financial Assistance:**

- **Meeting Minutes of the Alabama Higher Education Loan Corporation (AHELC).** AHELC issues bonds to finance student loans and also services student loans for state banks. These minutes reflect the policies that AHELC sets for these activities. The minutes may also include documentation of AHELC bond issues, including the bond resolution and purchase contracts.
- **Meeting Minutes of the Police Officers' and Fire Fighters' Survivors Educational Assistance Program.** The commission administers scholarships under this program, but a separate board decides how they will be awarded. The minutes reflect the award criteria of the board.

#### **Reporting/Publicizing:**

- **Annual Reports/Other Published Reports.** The annual report, which must be created annually for the governor and the legislature, provides a valuable summary of the commission's activities during the preceding year, as well as its recommendations for improving higher education in the state. The commission has begun implementing an annual report from the commission to the legislature on each postsecondary institution's facilities master plan and capital project requests. The Statistical Abstract: Higher Education in Alabama, also published annually, provides data and reference information on Alabama's institutions of higher education and is compiled primarily for the use of these institutions. Other reports were also mandated by 1996 legislation but have yet to be created. These reports provide an excellent summary of higher education in the state and of the commission's activities as a compiler and distributor of information about higher education.

- **Quadrennial Evaluation Files.** These records document the activities of the review team that evaluates the commission and prepares a report to the legislature every four years. They provide a summary of the commission's accomplishments and its strengths and weaknesses over a four-year period.
- **Programmatic Informational/Educational Publications.** Some of the commission's programs, particularly those associated with loans and scholarships, publish and distribute informational materials that publicize and describe the program and explain its procedures. These materials provide summary information about programs and procedures in a format that is easy to understand.

**III. Records No Longer Created.** The following records were created by the commission over time but are no longer created in this same format. In most cases these records support federally funded programs that no longer exist because their funding was terminated or because the program was moved to another agency.

**A. Permanent Records.**

**Coordinating:**

- **Meeting Minutes of the Advisory Committee of the State Postsecondary Review Entity.** The federal government designated the commission to act as the review mechanism in order to reduce fraud and abuse in Title IV programs. The program was funded briefly by Congress and was terminated in 1995 before it actually became operational. The minutes of the advisory committee document efforts to set up the program and to determine its policies and guidelines.

**B. Temporary Records.**

- **State Postsecondary Review Entity Program Files.** These files contain correspondence, memoranda, materials from other state programs, federal guidelines, and drafts. The archival documentation of this program is in the meeting minutes of the commission and of the advisory committee.
- **Records of the Guaranteed Student Loan Program.** This federal student loan program, formerly administered by the commission, transferred its operations to the state of Kentucky in 1996. Records that must be maintained by the commission to meet federal requirements include loan subrogation files, paid-in-full accounts, loan default aversions, student assistance administrative files, closed accounts discharged in bankruptcy, student loan applications, and routine accounting records.

- **Proprietary Task Force (PTF) Files.** These records document the findings, procedures, and recommendations of the task force to the legislature regarding proprietary institutions. The task force is no longer in existence. Archival documentation of this program is in the meeting minutes of the commission.
  
- **Alabama Universities/TVA Research Consortium (AUTRC) Grant Files.** These records were created to document the financial transactions associated with awarding funds to this program. They contain information on the projects funded, the process for awarding grants, and the records of the transactions.
  
- **National Science Foundation (NSF) Files.** These records contain application materials, proposals, budgets, and consultant contracts relating to NSF studies, which were intended to improve science, mathematics, and engineering instruction in the state.

## **Permanent Records List Commission On Higher Education**

### **Planning:**

1. Meeting Minutes of the Council of College and University Presidents
2. Facilities Master Plan and Capital Project Request Recommendations and Reports.
3. Long-Range Planning Files.

### **Coordinating:**

1. Eminent Scholars Program Files
2. Title VI Files/Knigh t v. Alabama.
3. Minutes of the Network of Alabama Academic Libraries (NAAL).

### **Approving/authorizing:**

1. Meeting Minutes and Meeting Packet of the Alabama Commission on Higher Commission
2. Administrative Correspondence of the Executive Director
3. Advisory Council Files
4. Academic Program Inventory
5. Role Matrices Files

### **Budgeting:**

1. Unified Budget Recommendations

### **Providing Financial Assistance:**

1. Meeting Minutes of the Alabama Higher Education Loan Corporation (AHEL C)
2. Meeting Minutes of the Police Officers' and Fire Fighters' Survivors Educational Assistance Program

### **Reporting/Publicizing:**

1. Annual Reports/Other Published Reports
2. Quadrennial Evaluation Files
3. Programmatic Informational/Educational Publications.

# **Alabama Commission on Higher Education Records Disposition Authority**

This Records Disposition Authority (RDA) is issued by the State Records Commission under the authority granted by the Code of Alabama 1975, Sections 41-13-5 and 41-13-20 through 21. It was compiled by the Government Records Division, Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH), which serves as the commission's staff, in cooperation with representatives of the staff of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education. The RDA lists records created and maintained by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education in carrying out its mandated functions and activities. It establishes retention periods and disposition instructions for those records and provides the legal authority for Alabama Commission on Higher Education to implement records destruction.

Alabama law requires public officials to create and maintain records that document the business of their offices. These records must be protected from "mutilation, loss, or destruction," so that they may be transferred to an official's successor in office and made available to members of the public. Under the Code of Alabama 1975, Section 36-12-40, "every citizen has a right to inspect and take a copy of any public writing in this state, except as otherwise expressly provided by statute." Records must be kept in accordance with auditing standards approved by the Examiners of Public Accounts (Code of Alabama 1975, Sections 36-12-2, 36-12-4, and 41-5-23). For assistance in implementing this RDA, or for advice on records disposition or other records management concerns, contact the ADAH Government Records Division at (334) 242-4452.

## **Explanation of Records Requirements**

- This RDA supersedes any previous records disposition schedules governing the retention of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education's records. Copies of superseded schedules and earlier RDAs are no longer valid and should be discarded.
- The RDA establishes retention and disposition instructions for records, regardless of the medium on which those records may be kept.
- Electronic mail is a communications tool that may record permanent or temporary information. As for records in any other format, the retention periods for e-mail records are governed by the requirements of the subfunctions to which the records belong.
- Some temporary records listed under the Administering Internal Operations subfunction of this RDA represent duplicate copies of records listed for long-term or permanent retention in the RDA's of other agencies.
- Certain other records-related materials need not be retained as records under the disposition requirements in this RDA. They may be disposed of, without notice of destruction, in whatever way the agency determines best. Such materials include: (1) duplicate record

copies that do not require official action, so long as the creating office maintains the original record for the period required; (2) catalogs, trade journals, and other publications received that require no action and do not document government activities; (3) stocks of blank stationary, blank forms, or other surplus materials that are not subject to audit and have become obsolete; (4) transitory records, which are temporary records created for short-term internal purposes that may include, but are not limited to: telephone call-back messages; drafts of ordinary documents not needed for their evidential value; copies of material sent for information purposes but not needed by the receiving office for future business; and internal communications about department social activities, such as a note to a group going to lunch.

## **Records Disposition Requirements**

This section of the RDA is arranged by subfunctions of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education and lists the groups of records created and/or maintained by the commission as a result of activities and transactions performed in carrying out these subfunctions. The commission may submit requests to revise specific records disposition requirements to the State Records Commission for consideration at its regular quarterly meetings.

### ■ **Advising**

No records are created that are specific to this subfunction only. Documentation of this subfunction may be found in meeting minutes of the commission and its advisory groups and in published reports.

### ■ **Maintaining a Statewide Information System**

Integrated Post Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Files  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 15 years.

### ■ **Planning**

MEETING MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL OF COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS  
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

Recordings of Meetings.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until the official minutes are adopted and signed. (This retention applies to all of the commission's meetings that are recorded.)

Facilities Master Plan Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year.

FACILITIES MASTER PLAN AND CAPITAL PROJECT REQUEST RECOMMENDATIONS  
AND REPORTS

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

Time-to-Degree and Allied Health Study Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 10 years after studies are completed.

■ **Coordinating**

EMINENT SCHOLARS PROGRAM FILES

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

U.S. Department of Education Math-Science Federal Program Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.

Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCOR) Grant Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 10 years.

Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.

TITLE VI FILES/KNIGHT V. ALABAMA

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

MINUTES OF THE NETWORK OF ALABAMA ACADEMIC LIBRARIES (NAAL)

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

NAAL Program Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

**Records No Longer Created:**

MEETING MINUTES OF THE STATE POSTSECONDARY REVIEW ENTITY ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

State Postsecondary Review Entity Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years after close out of program.

Proprietary Task Force Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.

Alabama Universities/TVA Research Consortium (AUTRC) Grant Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 10 years.

National Science Foundation (NSF) Files  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.

■ **Approving/Authorizing**

MEETING MINUTES AND MEETING PACKET OF THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER  
EDUCATION

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

ADMINISTRATIVE CORRESPONDENCE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

ADVISORY COUNCILS FILES

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

Nonresident Institution Review Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 10 years.

Academic Programs Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 20 years.

Academic Programs Tracking Log

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

Off-Campus Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 20 years.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM INVENTORY

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

Academic Program Inventory Documentation Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 20 years.

Program Viability Analysis Files.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 20 years.

ROLE MATRICES FILES

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

■ **Budgeting**

UNIFIED BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

Unified Budget Recommendations Working Files  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year.

Facilities/Utilities Files  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.

## ■ **Providing Financial Assistance**

Title II (EESA) Grant Files  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years after the submission of the final federal financial report.

Dwight D. Eisenhower Mathematics and Science Education Grant Files  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years after the submission of the final federal financial report.

Student Assistance Initiated Loan Servicing (SAILS) Payment Coupons  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years.

SAILS Paid in Full Histories  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years.

SAILS Deferment and Forbearance Documentation Files  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 10 years.

MEETING MINUTES OF THE ALABAMA HIGHER EDUCATION LOAN CORPORATION  
(AHELC)  
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

AHELC General Ledgers and Journals  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 8 years after last bond is retired.

AHELC Files  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 8 years after last bond is retired.

Lenders' Requests for Interest and Special Allowance  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 10 years or until completion of 2 independent audits, whichever is later.

Lender Third Party Servicer Files/Bank Deposit Receipts  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years or until the completion of 2 independent audits, whichever is later.

Quarterly Statistical Reports Sent to U. S. Department of Education  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 10 years.

Appalachian Youth Scholarship Program Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years from initial application.

Alabama Student Grant Program Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years after date of submission of the institutional award list.

State of Alabama Chiropractic Scholarship Program Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years after date of the certification of an application.

Technology Scholarship Program for Alabama Teachers Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years after date of the certification of an application.

Police Officers' and Firefighters' Survivors' Educational Assistance Scholarship Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years after the date of certification of an institutional invoice.

MEETING MINUTES OF THE POLICE OFFICERS' AND FIREFIGHTERS' SURVIVORS  
EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

Emergency Secondary Education Scholarship Program Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years after the date of certification of an application.

Alabama Student Assistance Program Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.

Alabama National Guard Educational Assistance Program Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 12 years after the first tuition payment.

**Guaranteed Student Loan Program, Records No Longer Created:**

Loan Subrogation Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years after loan is subrogated.

Paid-in-Full Accounts

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years after loan is closed.

Loan Default Aversions

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.

Student Assistance Administrative Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.

Closed Accounts Discharged in Bankruptcy

Disposition: Temporary Record. Closed Accounts - Retain 5 years after account is discharged.  
Closed Accounts with Judgments - Retain 5 years after final expiration of court judgment.

Student Loan Applications

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years after the loan is paid in full or is declared uncollectible.

Routine Accounting Records

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years from official termination of program - 12/31/96.

■ **Reporting**

Annual Report/Other Published Reports

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

QUADRENNIAL EVALUATION FILES

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

PROGRAMMATIC INFORMATIONAL/EDUCATIONAL PUBLICATIONS

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

■ **Administering Internal Operations**

**Managing the Agency:**

Commission Member Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

Friday Report Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.

Routine Correspondence

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which records were created..

Administrative Reference Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

Agency Legal Counsel's Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 10 years after closure or final disposition of the case.

Legislation Tracking Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

#### Administrative Procedures Rules Filings

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which records were created.

Records documenting the implementation of the agency's RDA ( copies of transmittal forms to Archives or State Records Center, evidence of obsolete records destroyed, annual reports to ADAH)

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

#### Copy of RDA

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year the in which the RDA was superseded.

Computer systems documentation (hardware/software manuals and diskettes, warranties, Y2K records)

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain documentation of former system 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the former hardware and software no longer exists anywhere in the agency, and all permanent records have been migrated to the new system.

#### **Managing Finances:**

Records documenting the preparation of a budget request package and reporting of the status of funds, requesting amendments of allotments, and reporting program performance.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Records documenting the requisitioning and purchasing of supplies and equipment, receipting and invoicing for goods, and authorizing payment for products.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Records of original entry or routine accounting transactions, such as journals, registers, and ledgers, and records of funds deposited outside the state treasury, including bank statements, deposit slips, cancelled checks, etc.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Records documenting requests for authorization from supervisors to travel on official business and other related materials, such as travel reimbursement forms and itineraries.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Records documenting contracts for services or personal property.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after expiration of the contract.

Records documenting the bid process, including requests for proposals and unsuccessful responses.  
Disposition: Retain in office (Code of Alabama 1975, Section 41-16-24)

**Audit Reports**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created

**Managing Human Resources:**

**Job Recruitment Materials**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

**Position Classification Files**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 4 years after position is reclassified.

**Application Materials (including, for local, rejected applications)**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year.

**Records documenting payroll (e.g. pre-payroll reports, payroll check registers)**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created

**Records documenting payroll deduction authorizations**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after separation of the employee from the agency.

**Records documenting payroll deductions for tax purposes (including Form 941)**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after end of year in which the records were created.

**Records documenting an employee's work history, generally maintained as a case file**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after separation of the employee from the agency.

**Records documenting employees' daily and weekly work schedules**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

**Records documenting an employee's hours worked, leave earned, and leave taken (including time sheets)**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

**Records documenting sick leave donations**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Records documenting final leave status (cumulative leave)

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after separation of the employee from the agency.

Employee Flexible Benefits Plan Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. General information - Retain until superseded.  
Other (applications, correspondence) - 6 years

State Employees Injury Compensation Trust Fund Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after separation of the employee from the agency.

Records documenting agency provision of training and professional development

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

**Managing Properties, Facilities, and Resources:**

Semiannual Inventory Lists

Disposition: Retain in office (Code of Alabama 1975, Section 36-16-8[1]).

Transfer of State Property Forms (SD-1)

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Property Inventory Cards and/or Computer Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the items were removed from inventory.

Receipts of Responsibility for Property

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until return of item to property manager.

Real Property Leasing/Renting Records

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for 6 years after the termination of the lease or rental agreement.

Vehicle and Equipment Maintenance Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the property is sold or replaced.

Motor Pool Vehicle Use Records

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

## Approval of Records Disposition Authority

By signing this agreement the Alabama Commission on Higher Education acknowledges its responsibilities for the proper management of its records and agrees to abide by the implementation guidelines listed below:

- The Alabama Commission on Higher Education will designate a managerial position as the agency records officer. This position is responsible for: ensuring the development of quality record keeping systems that meet the business and legal needs of the commission, for coordinating the transfer and destruction of records, for ensuring that permanent records held on alternative storage media (such as microforms and digital imaging systems) are maintained in compliance with national and state standards, for submitting an annual report on records management activities to the State Records Commission in April of each year, and for ensuring the regular implementation of the commission's approved RDA.
- Permanent records in the Alabama Commission on Higher Education custody will be maintained under proper intellectual control, and in an environment that will ensure their physical order and preservation.
- Destruction of temporary records, as authorized in this RDA, should occur agency-wide on a regular basis-- for example, after the successful completion of an audit, at the end of an administration, or at the end of a fiscal year. Despite the RDA's provisions, no record should be destroyed that is necessary to comply with requirements of the state Sunset Act, audit requirements, or any legal notice or subpoena.
- The commission should maintain full documentation of any computerized record-keeping system it employs. It should develop procedures for: (1) backing up all permanent records held in electronic format; (2) storing a back-up copy off-site; and (3) migrating all permanent records when the system is upgraded or replaced. If the commission chooses to maintain permanent records solely in electronic format, it is committed to funding any system upgrades and migration strategies necessary to ensure the records' permanent preservation and accessibility.
- The Alabama Commission on Higher Education agrees to allow the State Records Commission, its staff, and the Examiners of Public Accounts to examine the condition of the permanent records maintained in the custody of the commission and to inspect records destruction documentation. Government Records Division archivists are available to train the commission staff in RDA implementation and otherwise assist the commission in implementing its records management program.

This records disposition authority is hereby adopted.

By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Henry J. Hector, Executive Director  
Alabama Commission on Higher Education

By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Edwin C. Bridges, Chairman  
State Records Commission