Annual Report

FY2015
Fiscal Year: October 1, 2014 - September 30, 2015

Highlighting...

- Leadership through Instruction, Research, and Outreach
- The Silver Anniversary of the Alabama Transition Conference
- NEW Research Projects
- March is Transition Awareness Month in Alabama
- Who Believes in Transition...
Auburn Transition Leadership Institute
Administrative Staff and 2014-2015 Associate Graduate Assistant Staff

Front row (L-R):
Jonathan Carpenter, Tiffany Rocker, Ron Eaves, George Hall

Second row (L-R):
Deborah Henthorne, Karen Rabren, Zhen Feng, Courtney Dotson

Atop Columns (L-R):
Kat Cler, Theresa Chan, Brooke Joplin
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The Auburn Transition Leadership Institute provides valuable services and support to Alabama’s transition stakeholders. In FY15, the number of persons participating in ATLI’s instruction, research, and outreach activities totaled 8,254.

Table 1: Analysis of Transition Stakeholders Engaged in Institute Activities 2014-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Area</th>
<th>FY15 Activity</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>Graduate assistants</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undergraduate student workers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Early Learning Progress Profile</td>
<td>2,708</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Parent Survey</td>
<td>2,817</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post-school Outcomes Survey</td>
<td>571</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State Personal Development Grant</td>
<td>624</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Statewide Needs Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outreach</td>
<td>Alabama Transition Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community-based Instruction</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community Awareness Event</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State Interagency Transition Team</td>
<td>36</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training iN Transition “TNT” Series</td>
<td>565</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transition Leadership Academy</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,254</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*WE BELIEVE IN TRANSITION.*
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nearly one in five people, or 19 percent of the population in the United States has a disability (U.S. Census Bureau, Americans with Disability, 2010). Persons with disability face numerous challenges, many of which are similar to those faced by other Americans. However, everyday life obstacles can sometimes be more challenging for those with disabilities. In fact, pivotal transition time periods in the lives of people with disabilities have been recognized as being so impactful that federal legislation requires that this population receive support and services during transitions. For example, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 mandates transition services for children with disabilities as they move from early intervention to early childhood special education services as well as when secondary students prepare to exit high school. In addition, the passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 places significant emphasis and increased requirements for serving students and youth during their transition into adulthood.

The focus of our efforts at the Auburn Transition Leadership Institute (herein referred to as “ATLI” or the “Institute”) is on young people with disabilities. We work toward assuring that effective policies and programs are in place, so that competent, highly qualified professionals are trained to assist children and adolescents with disabilities during transition. We accept this challenge as part of the “Auburn Spirit” as we contribute to the University’s vision that “Central to all its functions will be the university’s historic commitment of service to all Alabamians as the state becomes a part of a global society with all of its challenges and opportunities” [emphasis added]. We feel that “all Alabamians” includes those with disabilities and it is for these citizens we seek improved life transitions.

During fiscal year 2015 (or FY15, October 1, 2014-September 30, 2015), the Institute engaged in a number of activities and projects designed to improve and/or impact the quality of life of individuals with disabilities. These activities, in part, were supported by seven contracts totaling $574,105 secured through the Alabama State Department of Education. These contracted projects were: (1) Training in Transition, offering onsite and online transition training; (2) Early Learning Progress Profile, providing online data collection and reporting for measuring the developmental growth of young children with disabilities; (3) Post-school Outcomes, delivering analysis and reporting of the post-school outcomes of youth with disabilities one year after their exit from high school; (4) Parent Survey, involving disseminating, collecting, and analyzing input from Alabama parents of students with disabilities regarding their involvement and satisfaction of services provided to their children; (5) Interagency Transition Initiative including organizing and coordinating the State Interagency Transition Team and the Transition Leadership Academy; and (7) a subcontract of the State Personnel Development Improvement Grant, conducting a statewide transition needs assessment and developing community-based work training assessments and administrative manual. In addition to these state contracts, ATLI also provided support for a personnel preparation grant from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs. We also received a $20,000 contract from the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services’ (ADRS) deaf services unit to support training and deaf awareness at the 2015 Alabama Transition Conference.

Other FY15 activities and projects conducted by ATLI included offering the 25th anniversary of the Alabama Transition Conference, providing community-based training for local high school students, and preparing and disseminating a bi-annual newsletter on transition related topics. As a result of the hard work and dedicated staff of the Institute, 8,254 Alabamians have been collectively engaged or impacted by our projects and activities during the past fiscal year. We appreciate all those who have helped us make this year’s accomplishments possible and we dedicate our work to those we serve — being always focused on building brighter futures for all children, youth, and young adults with disabilities.
ANDREW BURQUE
YOUNG ADULT IN TRANSITION
“When I graduate, I want to work at the movies.”
ANDREW BURQUE

Student ● Auburn High School
Interviewed with his mother, Angie Burque

Drew’s Story

Tennis balls, zoo lights, and Brio trains; these are a few of Drew Burque’s favorite things. Drew is a senior attending Auburn High School and will be graduating in May. He enjoys participating in extracurricular activities, including Expressions of a BraveHeart, Dream Court Tennis, and Special Olympics as well as spending time with his family. Drew inspired his mom, Angie Burque, to form and co-direct Expressions of a BraveHeart, a free fine arts program that allows youth and young adults with disabilities to be creative. Although he has already experienced a number of transitions in his young life, his upcoming transition of graduating from high school is one which is filled with the most uncertainty for him and his mom.

Over the past five years, Drew has been involved in a number of activities, in and out of school, which have focused on providing him with instruction in academics, life skills, personal social skills, and employability skills. With an amazing support system, Drew has grown into a beautiful, kind, and brave young man who counts on those closest to him. During transition planning for life after high school, Angie, Drew’s biggest advocate, began to teach the concept of work to him from an early age. Beginning in junior high school, she began observing Drew’s enjoyment at the movie theatre, saying to him, “Maybe you can obtain a job at the movies when you are bigger?” Once entering high school, Drew’s post-school employment goal was to work at the movie theatre. Drew and his mom are extremely hopeful that his dream of working at the theatre will come to fruition by May. When discussing what has been effective for Drew while in high school, Angie emphasized the importance of supportive family and qualified special education teachers working with students with disabilities through the transition process.

Drew has also participated in several job site experiences through community-based instruction to acquire transferable job skills. For example, he has worked at Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI), the Auburn Transition Leadership Institute (ATLI), Community Market, Salvation Army, Monarch Estates, Mugshots, and Niffers. Drew exclaimed that his favorite community experience is working at ATLI. While volunteering at ATLI, Drew participates in weekly employment development experiences and was part of the 2014 Alabama Transition Conference program. He also took part in the 2015 proclamation signing by the governor, marking March as Transition Awareness month. Drew’s mother expressed sincere appreciation for the staff at ATLI.

Angie feels that Drew’s high school journey has been preparing him daily for transitioning into new environments; however, she does not feel that there is enough available for him once he leaves the structured environment of high school. With continued advocacy, Angie is hopeful that legislation will provide more funding and opportunities for individuals who have so much to give to the community but require additional supports. Graduation for Drew means the end of a consistent routine and marks the beginning of uncharted waters for him—a new journey for an individual with moderate autism. With the support of his mom, brother, Joseph, grandparents, vocational rehabilitation services, and perhaps other adult services, Drew’s transition story is only just beginning.

—Story by ATLI graduate assistant, Betty Schiffer
“The Transition Leadership Academy has been a useful resource for our transition teams. Working through the Academy has allowed me as a director to focus on the needs of our system and develop plans to provide transitioning strategies for the teachers and students.”

“Nothing thrills me more than to see former students who are successful, independent adults, and working, and providing for themselves. At the end of the day, that is what I believe we are all called to do.”
DONNA FLANNAGAN
Special Education Director • Lawrence County Schools

Since her high school days, Donna Flannagan developed a passion and drive to serve those in need within the field of transition. Donna earned both her bachelor of science in special education and master’s degree in instructional leadership from the University of North Alabama. She also attained her master’s degree in collaborative special education from Auburn University; currently she serves as the director of special education and personnel for Lawrence County Schools. Within this position, she aims to provide resources and training for teachers in order to meet the needs of all the special education students residing in Lawrence County, focusing mainly on assisting students to be college and career ready. As director, Donna has worked closely with career and technical education, Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, and community colleges throughout the county to provide transition opportunities for students.

Donna vividly remembers when her love for special education began. It was during her high school days at Mount Hope High School. She took an elective class as a junior that allowed her to help in the special education classroom each day. In directly assisting the students with disabilities, she realized how rewarding it is to work with students having different abilities. Additionally, her interest in secondary transition became ignited when she started working with high school students. Donna recognized that the diverse and challenging needs during the transition from high school to attaining a career were not being met by the limited resources available. Consequently, Donna sought out to pursue her career in both special education and transition.

When asked about what the future holds for the field of transition, Donna responded that she envisions it as being “wide open.” She anticipates that administrators, teachers, and transition specialists will continue to be committed to doing what it takes to help students transition from high school to their postsecondary or employment goals. However, she takes note that there is a continued need to have financial assistance in order to provide the necessary programs for students and that employers will also need to receive training on the benefits of hiring students with disabilities. As her previous experience at the Transition Leadership Academy (TLA) has been a useful resource to help Lawrence County transition teams focus on the needs of the system and to develop plans to provide transitioning strategies for both teachers and students, she hopes to continue participating in TLA in the future. Furthermore, Donna is optimistic about the future collaboration among high schools, colleges, and employers to offer students more opportunities. She hopes that students will become “successful, independent adults, who are able to work and provide for themselves.”

–Story by ATLI graduate assistant, Theresa Chan
“Always do your best because the people you serve deserve nothing but your best,” says Dr. Karen Rabren.

“It resonated with me. Seeing the kids come in with big smiles on their faces.”
MARY “REENIE” LAGINESS
Special Education Teacher ● St. Amant High School, Louisiana
ATLI Graduate Associate 2012-2014

Mary “Reenie” Laginess’ passion for transition began during her undergraduate career at Auburn University when taking a transition course. As she neared the attainment of her bachelor’s degree, she met professionals working at the Auburn Transition Leadership Institute (ATLI) and decided to apply for the Collaborative Approach to Training Transition Specialists (CATTTS) master’s degree program. Soon after, she became an ATLI graduate assistant and CATTTS scholar. Reenie speaks highly of her professors and supervisors because she feels she gained personal growth that she now takes into her career as a special education teacher. During Reenie’s time at ATLI, she was involved with projects related to the Parent Survey, community-based instruction, and the Alabama Transition Conference. She noted that her work related to parental involvement highlighted a key area of interest that continues to influence her practices today. Reenie reflected on her time at Auburn by saying, “[I] became invested in the transition process [to] better myself and learn all I could learn.”

Reenie shared that the challenges she faced in the beginning at ATLI became beneficial experiences that helped her gain confidence. For example, she learned to take initiative and expand her skills, when she was asked to do tasks for which she had no experience. These opportunities required her to develop research and other professional skills that she uses in her current position. Reenie further explained that the work atmosphere prepared her for a career in the field, mainly by developing skills needed to manage and prioritize demanding tasks. Reenie expressed gratitude stating, “[I] will never be able to repay ATLI for the invaluable experience and being able to learn from the best.”

Reenie is in her second year of teaching at a rural school in Louisiana. “I love it. I love working with the students and my coworkers. That’s what it’s all about.” Within her school, all of the teachers and administrators work together in a student-centered approach. “It’s cool to get out and implement [my training] and confidently know you’re saying the right information as a new teacher.” Additionally, Reenie spoke highly of the special needs counseling services within the school, which she had not previously experienced. Students provided with this service on their Individualized Education Program’s are able to meet with a special needs counselor to practice social skills instruction, behavioral interventions, anger management, and self-determination skills on a weekly basis within the school. Reenie takes pride in her school knowing that all professionals contribute to meeting the needs of students.

When reflecting on her time spent at ATLI, one can still hear admiration and warmth in her voice. Reenie states, “I can’t say how valuable that time was, working to push forward the state of Alabama.” Everyone from her professors, to supervisors, to state leaders genuinely wanted the best for those who would be promoting the field of transition throughout their careers. She wholeheartedly believes the problem solving and research development will continue leading to improvements for students. Reenie describes regularly sitting at her desk and remembering a quote she once heard from Dr. Rabren, “Always do your best because the people you serve deserve nothing but your best.” She explains its importance stating, “It resonated with me. Seeing the kids come in with big smiles on their faces.”

—Story by ATLI graduate assistant, Kat Cler
“Transition has taken on an entirely different meaning when it comes to students with disabilities graduating today. Good transition is a stepping stone for a better quality of life overall and can evolve into meaningful and successful careers for students.”
JEWELL PITTS
Coordinator of Children and Adolescents Services, Division of Developmental Disability
Alabama Department of Mental Health

For 35 years, Jewell Pitts has worked with individuals with developmental disabilities for the Alabama Department of Mental Health. She currently serves as the coordinator of Children and Adolescent Developmental Disabilities Services. In this role, Jewell serves as a liaison between the five developmental disabilities regional offices in the state and other state agencies providing services to children. During her time in the Department of Mental Health, Jewell has watched transition for students with disabilities shift from a few, limited services to being a focal point of post-graduation plans for high school students.

While reflecting on how drastically transition has changed over the years, Jewell recalls during the earlier years of her career, when services were only available for adults with little to no focus on youth. At that time, students were expected to earn a certificate or diploma from high school, live at home and work in a sheltered workshop. However in more recent years, transition has added a new dimension to graduation. Jewell states, “Transition has taken on an entirely different meaning when it comes to students with disabilities graduating today. Good transition is a stepping stone for a better quality of life overall and can evolve into meaningful and successful careers for students.” In Jewell’s eyes, the fact that Alabama has joined other states who no longer institutionalize people with disabilities has been a contributing factor in improved transition services provided in the state. School systems are now more focused on developing successful post high school options for students, which is guided by a sound transition plan.

Jewell has seen transition evolve throughout her career in mental health services and believes transition services will continue to improve. In the future, she hopes that transition “will not just be a buzz word” but will instead be synonymous with "economic accountability". Individuals with disabilities can be significant contributors to the economic growth of communities as they transition from high school into the various job markets. Although Jewell believes that transition has come a long way, she acknowledges that there are areas in need of improvement. Some of those areas include an early start to transition planning, increase in financial resources for job development, and a different mindset on the expectations for students with disabilities. For the field of transition to continue progressing and overcoming challenges, Jewell says, “Strong support systems and programs must be put in place.” Through programs such as the Transition Leadership Academy hosted by Auburn Transition Leadership Institute, Jewell recognizes the opportunity provided to her, and other state professionals, to have face-to-face dialogue with leaders of school systems in order to identify their strengths and weaknesses in an effort to improve transition services. This type of experience allows for the exchange of ideas and disclosure of resources to enhance the transition experience for all students. For students going through the transition process, Jewell hopes that, “Students will leave high school with a sense of purpose and awareness of their total worth as contributing members of society.”

—Story by ATLI intern, Leah Kartovicky
The ATLI staff wishes to recognize **MR. GEORGE S. HALL** for his years of service as we have collectively worked to improve the quality of life for persons with disabilities in Alabama. He has contributed to a number of projects that have positively impacted transition services for the young children and youth with disabilities in our state. Your dedication and contributions are greatly appreciated and you will be missed.

We wish you the best in your retirement years.
THROUGH THE YEARS...

...AT ATLI

Special Recognition
ATLI WELCOMES NEW STAFF MEMBERS

JIAN FANG
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COORDINATOR
Quigdao, China
Computer Science & Software Engineering
Since September 2015

EVA WESCHE
ASSISTANT CONFERENCE COORDINATOR
Temporary Employment Services
Stuttgart, Germany
Since September 2015

LEAH KARTOVICKY
INTERN
Alpharetta, Georgia
Rehabilitation and Disability Studies
Since August 2015
INTRODUCTION

The vision of the Auburn Transition Leadership Institute is a society in which all individuals are valued as contributing members, each dignified by his or her strengths and abilities. As such, the mission of the Institute is to help youth with disabilities achieve successful integration into community life by providing continuous improvement resources to the systems, practitioners, and citizens who assist these young people with their transition to adulthood. This mission is achieved through research, instruction, and outreach goals.

**Instruction goals** focus on providing experiences in research, instruction, and service delivery; offering opportunities for internships; integrating research into publications or presentations; and providing pre-service experiences.

**Research goals** involve designing, developing, and/or conducting research for local, state, and/or national transition stakeholders; sharing transition research results with local, state, and federal agencies; and disseminating transition research findings at state, national, and international forums.

**Outreach goals** support engaging transition stakeholders in professional or personal development; providing resources to public school systems to improve their transition programs; providing personal development opportunities for youth and young adults in transition; supporting local, state and national interagency dialogue; and promoting transition awareness in local, state and national communities.

In the pursuit of these goals, ATLI fulfills its responsibility to the State of Alabama by improving the services for successful transitions to adult roles for young citizens with disabilities.

During FY15, ATLI rendered services for seven contracts with the Alabama State Department of Education, specific support services for one federal grant with the United States Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs, and used contract funds from the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services’ (ADRS) deaf services unit to support transition training. Through these funding sources and a base budget provided by Auburn University, the Institute engages in projects and activities to improve and/or impact the quality of life of persons with disabilities. ATLI’s activities are organized and implemented under the three main mission areas of the university: instruction, research, and outreach. In addition, ATLI is contributing to the University’s strategic mission priorities.

The Institute helps support the University’s Strategic Priority 1 by offering graduate assistantships to students that provide them with funding to complete their degrees, as well as making available to them opportunities to expand their education.

Activities that support Strategic Priority 3 include the ATLI’s ongoing commitment to secure extramural funding to support its operations. During FY15 a total of eight graduate students were funded and engaged in scholarly activities, thus contributing to part 5f of this priority. The Institute also engages in a number of web-based initiatives that adds to the University’s goal 6a to develop new initiatives in technology.

Public engagement to improve transition services is central to the ATLI; therefore, we engage in a number of projects and activities that support the University’s Strategic Priority 4. For example, we involve current students and alumni in the Alabama Transition Conference and Transition Leadership Academy. We also deliver online training to reach all Alabamians interested in improving transition services for individuals with disabilities.

The Institute supports the University’s Strategic Priority 5, as we commit resources and work with students and faculty in research, scholarship, and creative work that improves transition services.

In conclusion, ATLI is contributing to the vision and mission of Auburn University as it seeks to make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities, so they may become integrated and productive citizens, to the greatest extent of their capabilities.
Instruction

Guided Leadership Experiences for Professionals-in-Training

STUDENT STAFF MEMBERS GAIN PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Contributing to the mission of the Auburn Transition Leadership Institute, our student staff members produce work of value to the university, the state, and their own professional vitae. During FY15, ATLI’s student staff members engaged in events, projects and/or activities in the areas of instruction, research, outreach, and leadership. The engagements provided experiences and exposure through the following avenues:

**Instruction**—Providing research-based, community-based instruction to local high school students with disabilities, gaining university teaching experiences as graduate teaching assistants, and sharing resources and knowledge through training presentations at various meetings or state, national, and/or international conferences.

**Research**—Preparing research-based proposals for submission to present at state, national, and international conferences and engaging in data-based projects such as: the Early Learning Progress Profile (ELPP), the Parent Survey, the Post-school Outcomes Survey, the statewide Alabama Transition Needs Assessment Survey, and the Community-based Work Training (CBWT) Administration Manual and accompanying assessments.

**Outreach**—Planning and coordinating ATLI’s two major outreach events—the Transition Leadership Academy (TLA), and the Alabama Transition Conference, with the associated volunteer recruitment and training for each event.

**Leadership**—Participating in Alabama’s State Interagency Transition Team meetings, mentoring new student staff members, facilitating TLA teams, providing technical assistance (TA) and feedback to TLA teams, assisting with writing state reports and grant proposals for extramural funding, as well as collaborating with local, state, and national leaders.

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*DISCUSSION/QUESTIONS*

Courtney K. Dotson  
Auburn University | College of Education  
Department of Special Education and Early Childhood Education
Instruction (continued)

Guided Leadership Experiences for Professionals-in-Training

Instruction Goal 1

**Work Experiences in Instruction, Research, and Service Delivery**

ATLI’s student staff members capitalized on various opportunities as pre-service professionals in the area of instruction, research, and services during FY15. These opportunities ranged from gaining skills in providing instruction and data collection, input, and reporting on ATLI projects such as entering and analyzing the Alabama Parent Survey data, the Training iN Transition series data, as well as collecting and recording the community-based instruction data. In addition, the student staff members assisted with the development of outreach and research projects, along with assisting Dr. Karen Rabren during instruction of a university course.

“**I love it. I love working with the students and my coworkers. That’s what it’s all about.**”
—Reenie Laginess, Former ATLI Graduate Assistant

Instruction Goal 2

**Integration of Research Into Publications and Presentations**

Contributing to the field of transition and under the direction of Dr. Karen Rabren, ATLI continues to support university students as they conduct original research that will ultimately lead to publications. During FY15, Dr. Rabren and ATLI assisted three university students with conducting research, four students with presentations at a state conference, and one student delivered presentations at two international conferences, the Division on Career Development and Transition 18th International Conference in Ohio and the 2015 Annual Meeting of American Educational Research Association in Chicago, with ATLI’s director.

Instruction Goal 3

**Application of Research-based Transition Methods in Providing Services to Individuals and Programs**

Theory to practice has definitely been an extension of ATLI this fiscal year. ATLI’s student staff members are extended the opportunity to actually apply the research-based methods they have been exposed to by providing direct services to youth and young adults with disabilities, as well as to the professionals who serve this population. These opportunities were afforded through ATLI’s projects and activities associated with the Alabama Transition Conference, the Transition Leadership Academy, Community-based Instruction, and the Community Awareness Event to name a few.
Instruction (continued)

Guided Leadership Experiences for Professionals-in-Training

Achievements for Instruction Goal 1

Goal 1a: 4 students will gain research experience
Actual: 8 students gained research experience
Goal 1b: 3 students will gain instruction experience
Actual: 8 students gained instruction experience
Goal 1c: 5 students will assist with product development/service delivery
Actual: 8 students assisted with product development/service delivery

Achievements for Instruction Goal 2

Goal 2a: 3 students will conduct research leading to publication
Actual: 3 students conducted research leading to publications
Goal 2b: 4 students will deliver presentations at state conferences or meetings
Actual: 4 students delivered 4 presentations
Goal 2c: 1 student will present at a national or international meeting or conference
Actual: 1 student presented at 2 international conferences

Achievements for Instruction Goal 3

Goal 3a: 4 ATLI direct service experiences will be provided
Actual: 4 direct service experiences were provided
Goal 3b: 4 consumer empowerment experiences will be provided
Actual: 5 experiences in consumer empowerment were provided
Goal 3c: 5 service experiences in transition program development will be provided
Actual: 7 experiences in program development were provided
Research
Explorations and Findings in Service to Decision-makers & Policymakers

TRANSITION RESEARCH USED TO IMPROVE PROGRAMS

During FY15, the Institute collected and analyzed response data from transition stakeholders for the purpose of improving local, state, and national transition programs, consistent with its mission to provide continuous improvement resources. Stakeholder feedback analyzed during this year included response data for reporting Federal Indicator 7, 8, and 14, as well as an online statewide transition needs assessment. ATLI staff and student staff participated in these projects, as well as the development of a community-based work training assessment and administrative manual. Activities associated with these five projects included the following:

**Indicator 7 (Early Learning Progress Profile)**—Maintaining and modifying the Early Learning Progress Profile (ELPP) web site, responding to technical assistance requests from local and state users, and compiling year-end data for analysis and reporting to the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE).

**Indicator 8 (Parent Survey)**—Coordinating the printing and assembly of 20,000 survey packets for mailing, maintaining and modifying an online parent survey website for collecting and hosting school system survey results, scanning paper surveys returned by mail, analyzing online and paper survey responses for reporting to ALSDE, and compiling survey response reports for each participating school system.

**Indicator 14 (Post-school Outcomes Survey)**—Reviewing and analyzing Post-school Outcome (PSO) data for reporting to ALSDE, and compiling survey response reports for each participating school system.

**Alabama Statewide Transition Needs Assessment**—Analyzing prior Alabama parent and professional responses about transition needs, reviewing professional literature, communicating with transition professionals, identifying assessment items, creating an online assessment, and analyzing online responses for reporting to ALSDE.

**Community-Based Work Training Assessment and Administrative Manual**—Reviewing professional literature about community-based work training (CBWT), drafting and proofing the CBWT administrative manual and its accompanying instruments, and reporting to ALSDE.
Research (continued)
Explorations and Findings in Service to Decision-makers & Policymakers

ALABAMA PARENT SURVEY

In FY15, the Alabama Parent Survey data was collected, analyzed, and reported to the Special Education division of the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE). This survey data is reported for Federal Indicator 8, to measure the percent of parents with a child receiving special education services who report that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities, which is included in Alabama annual performance report to the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education (OSEP).

During this 12th year of collecting and analyzing Alabama’s Parent Survey data, ATLI received 2,817 survey responses from 35 participating school systems. These 2,817 responses represented a 15% return rate of the 19,340 surveys mailed out in February, a decline of 9% from the prior year’s rate, which may have been due to using a much smaller mailing envelope to reduce postage costs. Despite the lower return rate, of the responses received to the first 11 survey questions describing school efforts to involve parents of students with disabilities, 76% of respondents selected either agree or strongly agree, a 1% increase over the prior year’s 75% supportive response rate.

POST-SCHOOL OUTCOMES

FY15 marks the 20th year that ATLI has analyzed and reported Federal Indicator 14 Post-school Outcomes (PSO) Survey data to the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE). These results are used to measure the percent of youth who are no longer in secondary school, had Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) in effect at the time they left school, and were enrolled in higher education or training, employed, or both, one year after leaving high school.

Of the 571 former students with disabilities, who completed the PSO survey, 22% (n=127) of them were enrolled in higher education within one year of leaving high school. An additional 40% (n=229) were competitively employed and 12% (n=71) were either enrolled in some other postsecondary education or training program or engaged in non-competitive employment within one year of exiting high school, with both of these figures showing a 4% increase above the prior year’s figure.

These results were reported for both the entire statewide sample, as well as the 33 participating school systems. In addition, former students’ responses to PSO Survey items were reported aggregately by each school system and posted online at ATLI-hosted website for subsequent download and use.
Research (continued)

Explorations and Findings in Service to Decision-makers & Policymakers

EARLY LEARNING PROGRESS PROFILE

The Early Learning Progress Profile (ELPP) project completed its fourth year of collecting preschool student data for Alabama’s Indicator 7 data in FY15. Per the Federal Indicator 7 measure, reported to the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs, these data are used to determine the percent of preschool children aged 3 through 5 with IEPs who demonstrate improved (a) positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships); (b) acquisition and use of knowledge and skills; and (c) use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.

To determine the progress of Alabama’s preschoolers with disabilities, ATLI’s ELPP website collects and stores data submitted by local case managers, about the developmental growth of their preschool children for 70 standards at two points: when the children first begin receiving services and when they are about to exit their program. The difference between these two sets of data is used to determine the percentage of students who (a) substantially increased their rate of growth, and (b) were functioning within age expectations by the time they exited the program for each of the three outcome areas.

During FY15, 2,708 complete preschool student records were submitted to the ELPP website. A subsequent analysis of these data indicated that the students’ progress, as measured by the difference between their Entry and Exit ratings approximated or exceeded the state target percentages.
NEW! COMMUNITY-BASED WORK TRAINING INSTRUCTION

A new initiative, completed during FY15 for ALSDE’s Special Education division, was the development of the Community-based Work Training (CBWT) administrative manual. This 60-page manual provides instructions and instruments for evaluating local CBWT programs during three phases: Pre-program, Implementation, and Post-program, with the evaluation items for each phase supported by the professional literature.

The administration of the CBWT evaluation utilizes existing forms, from ALSDE’s Preparing for Life Transition Planning Guide, and two new instruments to guide the collection of data during the Pre-program development and Implementation phases of a local CBWT program. The data collected during the first two phases is summarized into five tables, in the Post-program phase, to provide feedback and prompt discussions about how to improve the CBWT program in subsequent implementation periods. The three-phase CBWT evaluation is user-friendly and flexible in its design, allowing local systems to continue using the forms within the Preparing for Life Transition Planning Guide, while using the new instruments and tables to collect and review quantitative and qualitative data, as appropriate to their local CBWT program.
NEW! ALABAMA STATEWIDE TRANSITION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

During FY15, ATLI developed the Alabama Statewide Transition Needs Assessment Survey (ASTNAS) over a nine-month period to determine the transition needs of students with disabilities, as perceived by the transition professionals who serve them. Based on thematic analyses of prior parent focus group meetings and qualitative survey responses of transition professionals, eight transition domains and 234 potential assessment items were initially identified. A two-phase review by five practicing transition professionals reduced the number of assessment items to 81. The online assessment also included nine items about the participant’s demographic and professional characteristics.

An analysis of the ASTNAS data showed that the 624 transition professionals represented 60 of Alabama’s 67 counties and that 95% (n=590) reported having a special education or transition role. A factor analysis identified five factors: Collaboration, Independence, Assessment, Parent Involvement, and Employment Development. All five factors were found to be reliable with coefficient alphas ranging from .88 to .96.

A multivariate analysis indicated that when training hours increased, transition program needs decreased (i.e., transition programs were perceived to have a fewer number of needs). A second finding was that for the ASTNAS domain, Independence, respondents from counties with the highest per-capita income had significantly higher scores on Independence domain items than respondents from counties with the lowest per-capita income.
Research (continued)
Explorations and Findings in Service to Decision-makers & Policymakers

Research Goal 1
INVOLVE LOCAL, STATE, AND NATIONAL TRANSITION STAKEHOLDERS WITH DESIGNING, DEVELOPING, AND/OR CONDUCTING RESEARCH

In FY15, local and state transition stakeholders participating in ATLI research by contributing response data to the Post-school Outcomes Survey, the Parent Survey, the ELPP website, and the ASTNAS online survey.

Research Goal 2
SHARE TRANSITION RESEARCH RESULTS WITH LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL AGENCIES

For FY15, data from the Post-school Outcomes Survey, the Parent Survey, the Early Learning Progress Profile website, and the Alabama Statewide Transition Needs Assessment Survey were provided to ALSDE for reporting to Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

During the 2015 Transition Leadership Academies, district-level Post-school Outcomes and Parent Survey data analysis reports were shared with local education agencies in drafting their transition plans for the upcoming school year.

Research Goal 3
DISSEMINATE FINDINGS AT STATE, NATIONAL, AND INTERNATIONAL FORUMS

In FY15, presentations that extend activities associated with the Post-school Outcomes and Parent projects were shared at the 2015 Alabama Transition Conference and during two international conferences: the Division on Career Development and Transition 18th International Conference in Ohio, and the 2015 Annual Meeting of American Educational Research Association in Chicago.
Research (continued)

Explorations and Findings in Service to Decision-makers & Policymakers

Achievements for Research Goal 1

Goal 1a: 100% Post-school Outcome Survey return rate
**Actual: 61% return rate**

Goal 1b: 25% Parent Survey return rate
**Actual: 15% return rate**

Goal 1c: 100% of ELPP technical assistance requests addressed
**Actual: 99% of ELPP technical assistance requests addressed**

Achievements for Research Goal 2

Goal 2a: Generate PSO Survey reports for one-fourth of Alabama’s Local Education Agencies (LEAs)
**Actual: One-fourth of Alabama LEAs’ reports generated**

Goal 2b: Generate Parent Survey reports for one-fourth of Alabama LEAs
**Actual: One-fourth of Alabama LEAs’ reports generated**

Goal 2c: 138 of Alabama Local Education Agencies’ ELPP student data records submitted via the ELPP website
**Actual: 132 of Local Education Agencies’ ELPP student data records submitted via the ELPP website**

Achievements for Research Goal 3

Goal 3a: 1 state level forum
**Actual: 1 state forum**

Goal 3b: 1 national level forum
**Actual: 0 national forum**

Goal 3c: 1 international forum
**Actual: 2 international forums**

“...Therefore, I believe in work, hard work.”
MARCH IS TRANSITION AWARENESS MONTH

TRAINING IN TRANSITION

2015 ALABAMA TRANSITION CONFERENCE
Outreach

Projects and Activities in Service to the Transition Community

OUTREACH PROGRAMS SERVE TRANSITION STAKEHOLDERS

The Institute contributes to the Auburn University mission of outreach in a number of ways. Two of the most comprehensive outreach activities provided by ATLI staff members is through continuing education programs and online professional development. The annual Alabama Transition Conference is one of ATLI’s most expansive outreach continuing education events and one of the largest conferences held at Auburn University. This professional and personal development event regularly attracts over 700 participants each year. Our distance education program, known as Training iN Transition (TNT), includes 10 separate content modules that have individual lessons in evidence-based, practical applications of transition practices.

We also provide clinical services in the form of community-based instruction for local high school students with disabilities throughout the 9-month school year. In addition to the on-campus support for youth with disabilities in our local community, ATLI has facilitated the development of the Youth and Young Adults Transition advocacy groups throughout the state, by providing local school systems with support, guidance, and program materials.

Our civic engagement activities include providing leadership and participation on Alabama’s State Interagency Transition Team and at the National Capacity Building Institute on transition. At both of these forums state and national transition policies are conceptualized, discussed, and formulated. In addition, ATLI’s two Transition Leadership Academies keep invited school systems and communities abreast of the latest policies and practices in transition so they can develop their own local plans for implementing transition services and programs.

ATLI outreach programs and services provide current, research-based transition information that is shared with fellow Alabamians, as well as others beyond our state’s borders. This is accomplished through outreach scholarship that is disseminated in numerous presentations at local, state, national, and international venues, and in publications including professional journal articles, manuals, reports, and bi-annual newsletters.

WE BELIEVE IN TRANSITION AND SUPPORT IT...
Outreach (continued)
Projects and Activities in Service to the Transition Community

THE ALABAMA TRANSITION CONFERENCE
CELEBRATING 25 YEARS • SILVER ANNIVERSARY

The Alabama Transition Conference is one of the largest and the most longstanding annual conference hosted by Auburn University. This year, the Auburn Transition Leadership Institute was proud to celebrate the conference’s silver anniversary. On March 2nd – 4th, the 2015 Alabama Transition Conference recognized its early beginnings and soared to new heights by featuring the home city of the conference, Auburn, the loveliest village on the plains. To commemorate the anniversary year, the outreach event was extended an additional day and included two evening events, a dinner and a movie networking venue and a silver anniversary reception with entertainment provided by the Auburn Knights.

The conference was held at the Marriott at Grand National in Opelika, Alabama hosting over 750 attendees, 50 concurrent sessions, seven workshops, a youth conference, a high school to college level poster session competition, exhibitors, as well as offering attendees up to 17.75 continuing education units (CEUs) or 11 units for rehabilitation professionals.

Adding the true Auburn touch to this special year, the opening ceremonies of the conference started with many celebrity guest appearances. After a warm Auburn University welcome from Drs. Karen Rabren and Royrickers Cook, transition-affiliated Auburn “greats” took the stage and the Auburn Creed was recited by current and former Auburn University football athletes and Auburn “celebrities”: Trovon Reed, Deon Mix, Lauren Jones, Melvin Ray, Anna Bandy, Anna Page Minor, and Dr. Johnny Green. After this exciting opening, the Opelika “Bulldawg Pride” cheerleaders, all students with disabilities from Opelika High School, took the stage, and engaged the crowd, as they chanted the Auburn Tigers War Eagle Fight Song, while holding pom-poms and huge letters, spelling out T-R-A-N-S-I-T-I-O-N, leaving Aubie holding the celebrity guest “N.” At the closing of the appearances, everyone on stage recited “We believe in TRANSITION and support it!”

The conference was then set to begin with an amusing, yet inspirational keynote speaker Johnathan Mooney. Transition updates and content topics such as education, employment, rehabilitation, assistive technology, social support, advocacy, and self-efficacy for youth and young adults with disabilities were covered by national and state leaders filling the meeting space to capacity. Attendees and presenters spanned from Alabama to Washington, D.C., Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia.

The conference must go on…

“This conference provides current information that is invaluable to everyone working in the field of special education and transition. I leave my crimson and white at home each year and bring only neutral colors because we all need to be on the same page when it comes to serving our students. I appreciate what Auburn has done in the field of Transition for our students and teachers in Alabama.”

— 2015 Alabama Transition Conference Attendee
Outreach (continued)

Projects and Activities in Service to the Transition Community

ALABAMA’S YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS IN TRANSITION

March 2015 marked the 25th Alabama Transition Conference and, once again, the Youth and Young Adults in Transition (YAiT) of Alabama were in attendance. This initiative offers youth with disabilities the opportunity to improve their leadership and self-advocacy skills in order to improve their transition outcomes. In an effort to further help the youth and young adults across the state of Alabama better transition from high school, the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) and the Auburn Transition Leadership Institute collaborated to provide youth with disabilities and their families registration fee waivers in order to attend the conference.

As transition stakeholders engaged in the general conference program, simultaneously youth and young adults with disabilities gathered in a designated area of the conference center to participate in the youth conference. Organized with student-focused planning in mind, the 2014-2015 Auburn University Collaborative Approach to Training Transition Specialists (CATTS) scholars led interactive sessions and activities for YAiT. Seventeen YAiT attendees enjoyed their time at the conference by participating in general sessions, a private meet-and-greet with keynote speaker Jonathan Mooney, a tour of Auburn University’s Athletic Complex and Toomer’s Corner, and a poster session competition. Additionally, YAiT students engaged in leadership roles while attending the conference such as: singing and interpreting the national anthem during the opening ceremonies; introducing the keynote speaker; as well as presenting a concurrent session, to a standing-room only crowd. YAiT activities affords the youth and young adults with a group atmosphere that provides encouragement and facilitates the development of self-determination and leadership skills. Making these opportunities available to those who are directly impacted by transition programs, services, and legislative mandates is a priority of ATLI.

COMMUNITY-BASED INSTRUCTION

ATLI is in its seventh year of serving as a community-based instruction site, providing a vocational skills training program for local high school students with disabilities. By establishing a supportive work setting, students are exposed to activities that are similar to external careers in order to enhance their individual work skills and behaviors in a positive environment. These experiences should increase the likelihood of these students entering the workforce during and after high school. Students learn and apply new skills in an office setting by training alongside ATLI staff members on projects and activities, such as producing and assembling materials for the Alabama Transition Conference, unpacking and organizing research surveys, and using various office machines as necessary. Through our community-based instruction program we hope to engage students of all disabilities by providing them with beneficial instruction in areas that will reinforce their goals during and after high school.

THIS IS STUDENT DEVELOPMENT.
Outreach (continued)
Projects and Activities in Service to the Transition Community

ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT • THE TRAINING IN TRANSITION SERIES

In collaboration with the State Personnel Development Grant

Onsite Training. In FY15, an on-site transition training workshop was hosted by the Auburn Transition Leadership Institute. The workshop entitled Community-based Vocational Instruction, presented by Dr. Karen Rabren and Courtney Dotson was held at the Elmore County School System. Eleven transition professionals from two Elmore County high schools, Stanhope Elmore High and Wetumpka High attended the workshop. Three ALSDE representatives, Alicia Hodge, state administrator and transition representative; Kemeche Green, Elmore County’s state regional specialist; and Curtis Gage, State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) project manager and transition team leader were in attendance as well as Sharon Blythe, instructional coach for this SPDG initiative, and Temeyra McElrath, Elmore county’s chief compliance officer. The Elmore County School System was selected as the demonstration site for this initiative. Other SPDG initiatives such as increasing parent’s awareness about transition in Alabama are in development in Elmore county.

All participants earned a training workshop certificate of completion. Participants were also provided with training materials, resources, and a USB flash drive that included marketing brochure templates, the ADA Standards for Accessible Design, ALSDE related documents, the Work Opportunity Tax Credit brochure, a transition resource manual, a task analysis data sheet, and other related materials.

Online Training. Since 2009, the Training in Transition (TNT) online series offers interactive web-based modules and training effectiveness evaluations. During FY15, TNT engaged 554 online transition stakeholders.

This year, the entire TNT website was redesigned, giving participants a more visually appealing and user-friendly learning experience.

Currently, the TNT series includes 10 modules, affording eligible registrants the opportunity to earn continuing education units. The training curricula for TNT are designed to accommodate the transition stakeholders’ needs, as determined from student outcomes data, classroom monitoring records, practitioner needs assessments, and transition best practices.
Outreach (continued)
Projects and Activities in Service to the Transition Community

INTERAGENCY TRANSITION INITIATIVE • THE TRANSITION LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

What happened? ATLI hosted two summer outreach events for local transition programs in Alabama. These hands-on professional development events provided an opportunity for transition stakeholders to learn more intensively about content areas such as special education, transition, career and technical education, mental health, vocational rehabilitation, and postsecondary disability support services, to name a few. This event provided information in many areas and opportunities for collaboration.

When, where, and who attended? The Academies were hosted June 17–19 and June 24–26, 2015 at the Hotel at Auburn University and Dixon Conference Center in Auburn, Alabama. Twenty-nine teams of approximately five diverse members registered for the event, and 122 transition professionals attended each Academy. Together, they represented education and other service provision agencies for the following cities or counties:

- Anniston City
- Autauga County
- Dallas County
- Decatur City
- Dothan City
- Elmore County
- Enterprise City
- Escambia County
- Fairfield City
- Geneva City
- Geneva County
- Haleyville City
- Hoover City
- Huntsville City
- Lanett City
- Lawrence County
- Limestone County
- Marshall County
- Montgomery County
- Phenix City
- Roanoke City
- Scottsboro City
- Sheffield City
- Shelby County
- Tallassee City
- Tarrant City
- Tuscaloosa County
- Tuscumbia City
- Wilcox County

Who else was involved? Thirteen consultants representing Alabama’s State Interagency Transition Team (SITT) provided technical assistance to the teams during the Academies. ATLI staff, Auburn University’s Collaborative Approach to Training Transition Specialists scholars, and rehabilitation and counseling student volunteers facilitated the local transition planning teams in developing their local plans. Each of the 29 teams attending the Academy completed transition plans for their local transition program.

Was it a success? You bet! The structure of the Academy alternated between large group meetings, content roundabouts, and facilitated team planning sessions. After facilitators and team members were introduced to one another, Academy 101 was the final pre-activity to inform all team members about the events that would take place throughout the Academies. Eligible team members could earn one professional learning unit or PLU, 19 continuing education units (CEUs), or up to 15 credits for rehabilitation CEUs. A networking event on Thursday night of each Academy provided participants the opportunity to connect with team members from different communities. Finally, as part of the participation in TLA, each team reported at least three goals for their local transition program. The creative report-out activities on the final day of each Academy allowed teams to share their goals through various formats (e.g., video, song, dance, visual aides, verbal presentation). Each team submitted their transition plans online, providing members a safe place to store planning information as well as permitting both in-person and remote access collaboration.

Will they come back?

“This Academy was great. It was jammed packed with experience and expertise in many areas to better serve our students. We worked hard but after the Academy, I feel good about starting our next school year and implementing our plan.”

— 2015 Academy II Participants
Outreach (continued)
Projects and Activities in Service to the Transition Community

INTERAGENCY TRANSITION INITIATIVE • THE STATE INTERAGENCY TRANSITION TEAM

The Alabama State Interagency Transition Team (SITT) consists of 36 multidisciplinary state transition representatives from 19 state agencies and/or organizations that provide services for youth and young adults with disabilities. The purpose of SITT is to develop a better understanding of each agency’s role and responsibilities in service delivery for Alabama’s youth and young adults, and to seek and implement new and better ways of providing transition services for youth and young adults with disabilities. In order to fulfill their purpose, the SITT convenes quarterly and provides technical assistance to transition stakeholders who serve students with disabilities in Alabama. Overall, SITT aims to promote and assist in the development, coordination and implementation of activities and services which enhance and facilitate community capacity to support effective transition from school to meaningful adult life for youth and young adults with disabilities.

COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS EVENT • FEATURING LINEA JOHNSON

This year, ATLI partnered with Auburn University’s Veterans Resource Center (VRC) and the Student Government Association (SGA) to host a community event to increase awareness of mental health. Lauren Jones of SGA used her platform as Miss Auburn 2015 to bring attention to areas in the Auburn community in need of improving disability services. Dr. Johnny Green of the VRC worked to raise attention to veterans in need of mental health and disability services on campus. He spoke to a group about the outreach of his department and led into the featured presentation from Linea Johnson, a national speaker and disability advocate, author, and college student.

Linea advocates for understanding and support of people with mental illness and the elimination of stigma. She discussed her personal journey with mental illness and the mental health system. Among her many roles and engagements, Linea co-authored the book *Perfect Chaos* with her mother, chronicling her journey thus far.
Outreach (continued)

Projects and Activities in Service to the Transition Community

**ATLI DIRECTIONS NEWSLETTER**

The ATLI Directions newsletter serves as a venue to highlight transition awareness in Alabama. Two new Directions issues were published during FY15.

Volume 6, Issue 1 features: Richard Anderson, a student transitioning into a career; Karen Jenkins, a rehabilitation specialist and coordinator of transition services at the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services; and James Myrick Sr., assistant commissioner at the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services who was celebrating 25 years of services with the agency.

Volume 6, Issue 2 features: Linea Johnson, a national speaker, mental health advocate and author, and college student; Trovon Reed, 2014 Rehabilitation Services and Disability Studies graduate and former Auburn University football athlete; Dr. Johnny Green Sr., director of the Auburn University Veterans Resource Center, as well as Lauren Jones, Miss Auburn 2015, whose platform focuses on creating an Auburn experience by “…collaborating and creating with the student body an experience for people with disabilities to participate and thrive in.”

“Finding one’s ‘voice’ is critical.” — Linea Johnson

**MARCH IS TRANSITION AWARENESS MONTH IN ALABAMA**

March is transition awareness month proclaims Alabama governors for the past 16 years—urging all residents—leaders in government, business, labor, education, rehabilitation, and the private citizenry—to work together to meet the challenges of ensuring employment and full community inclusion for young people with disabilities who exit our schools.

“ Whereas, it is important to educate communities and employers about the competencies, capabilities and rights of young people with disabilities who are making the transition from teenager to adult; and

Whereas, individuals with disabilities are contributing and valued residents of Alabama who exercise meaningful personal choices as family members, employees, residents, volunteers, consumers and friends; and

Whereas, opportunities for leadership, self-determination and service learning help youth with disabilities abolish barriers to employment and full participation in their communities and dispel any discrimination or prejudice which might confront them; and

Whereas, the state of Alabama provides transition services, as mandated in the Individuals with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act, to prepare these students to exit secondary school capable of achieving independent and productive lives; and

Whereas, representatives of Alabama’s human service systems have formed the State Interagency Transition Team to support continuous quality improvement in services provided to students and families, consistent with respect for individual dignity, personal preferences and cultural differences; and

Whereas, the Alabama Department of Education, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services and the Alabama Department of Mental Health develop the necessary services, supports and opportunities for youth and young adults with disabilities to attain full inclusion and self-determined quality of life; and

Whereas, the Auburn Transition Leadership Institute—within Auburn University’s College of Education and Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation and Counseling—provides research, outreach and instruction services addressing policy and practice issues in transition, and annually in March provides professional development for service providers and personal development for students and families through the Alabama Transition Conference…” [emphasis added]
Outreach (continued)
Projects and Activities in Service to the Transition Community

Outreach Goal 1
PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT EVENT FOR ALL TRANSITION STAKEHOLDERS

The 2015 Alabama Transition Conference (ATC) drew 774 total participants, with 716 being registered attendees and 58 being university volunteers.

A multidisciplinary group of transition stakeholders were well represented. The conference hosted stakeholders from 85% of Alabama counties and 115 of 135 local education agencies in Alabama.

“I believe in the human touch, which cultivates sympathy with my fellow men and mutual helpfulness and brings happiness for all.”

Outreach Goal 2
INSERVICE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: ONLINE AND ONSITE

As of September 30, 2015, a total of 554 online and 11 onsite training experiences have been recorded through the TNT series.

An onsite training workshop was held with the Elmore County School System, sponsored by the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) and spearheaded through the implementation improving community-based work training statewide.

TRANSITION—SOARING TO NEW HEIGHTS!
THE SILVER ANNIVERSARY
Outreach (continued)

Projects and Activities in Service to the Transition Community

Achievements for Outreach Goal 1

Goal 1a: 700 participants
Actual: 774 participants
Goal 1b: 80% of AL counties represented at conference
Actual: 85% of AL counties represented (57 of 67)
Goal 1c: 75% of AL LEAs represented at conference
Actual: 85% of LEAs represented (115 of 135)

“This was my first transition conference. I thoroughly enjoyed the presentations, the fellowships, the motivation, and the banquet. It was a wonderful experience!”

“Loved it all! Great learning experience!”

“This was my first time to attend the transition conference, and it was a wonderful experience. I will be back next year!”

“Fantastic event always!”

—Participants’ comments from the 2015 conference evaluations

Achievements for Outreach Goal 2

Goal 2a: 500 online trainees
Actual: 554 online trainees
Goal 2b: 50 onsite trainees
Actual: 11 onsite trainees
Goal 2c: 85% report moderate to much increase in knowledge
Actual: 86% reported moderate to much increase in knowledge
Outreach Goal 3

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS IN TRANSITION

Four events were coordinated by ATLI to serve youth and young adults in transition: the youth conference held in conjunction with the 2015 Alabama Transition Conference, a community awareness event, community-based instruction (CBI) work experiences, and participation in Governor Bentley’s proclamation signing ceremony.

ATLI hosted 17 youth and/or young adults at the conference; two young adults with disabilities and their family members attended the community awareness event; nine local high school students with disabilities received work experiences at ATLI; and four students with disabilities attended the governor’s proclamation signing ceremony.

Outreach Goal 4

INTERAGENCY DIALOGUE AND LEADERSHIP ON LOCAL, STATE, AND NATIONAL LEVELS

The 2015 Transition Leadership Academy drew 29 teams with 122 participants to set goals and objectives for their local transition programs. Of the 29 teams, 27 were new this year.

ATLI coordinated all four meetings for Alabama’s State Interagency Transition Team.

ATLI’s director, Dr. Karen Rabren, continues to serve on the editorial boards for the Journal of Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals, and the Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation. During this fiscal year, ATLI’s instruction coordinator, Courtney Dotson was invited to serve as a member and on the editorial board for the Journal of Physical Medicine, Rehabilitation, & Disabilities.

Outreach Goal 5

PROMOTE TRANSITION AWARENESS IN LOCAL, STATE, AND NATIONAL COMMUNITIES

During FY15, ATLI published two more issues of Directions—it’s transition awareness newsletter, and Governor Robert Bentley signed the proclamation for March as Transition Awareness Month in Alabama while transition stakeholders looked on including: members of Alabama’s YAIT groups, along with transition leaders from Auburn University, the Alabama Department of Mental Health, Education, and Rehabilitation Services.
Outreach (continued)

Projects and Activities in Service to the Transition Community

Achievements for Outreach Goal 3

Goal 3a: 2 events will be coordinated for youth in transition
Actual: 4 events were coordinated

Goal 3b: 40 youth/young adults in transition will participate in direct services/opportunities
Actual: 23 youth/young adults in transition participated in conference

Goal 3c: 5 high school students will be provided community-based instruction
Actual: 9 high school students were provided CBI

Achievements for Outreach Goal 4

Goal 4a: 30 Local Education Agencies (LEAs) receive interagency transition planning support
Actual: 29 LEAs received interagency transition planning support

Goal 4b: 4 quarterly meetings will be coordinated annually for SITT
Actual: 4 meetings were coordinated

Goal 4c: 1 national leadership position
Actual: 3 national leadership positions held in 2014-2015

Achievements for Outreach Goal 5

Goal 5a: 2 issues of an ATLI newsletter will be published
Actual: 2 issues were published and disseminated locally and statewide

Goal 5b: 1 statewide proclamation on transition will be issued
Actual: 1 statewide proclamation was issued

Goal 5c: 1 presentation at a national conference or meeting
Actual: 0 presentations at a national event
PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS


FUNDING AND EXPENDITURES

The Institute’s contractual responsibilities for the Alabama State Department of Education were continued for FY15, as was funding from Auburn University, College of Education. As shown in Figure 1, these two sources comprised the majority of ATLI funding, with limited funding from the CATTS federal grant no-cost extension and the Alabama Transition Conference revenues after expenses. In addition, we received a $20,000 contract from the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services’ (ADRS) deaf services unit to support training and deaf awareness at the 2015 conference. As seen in the figures below, the major Institute expenditure for FY15 is for personnel, including part-time employees from the university’s Temporary Employment Services, with operating expenses and indirect costs comprising the remainder.

Figure 1. FY15 ATLI Funding Sources

Figure 2. FY15 ATLI Expenditures

Figure 3. ATLI Expenditures by Funding Source ($1,000s)
Auburn Transition Leadership Institute
Annual Goals
2015 - 2016

INSTRUCTION

I-Goal 1: Provide experiences in instruction, research, and service delivery to Auburn University students
I-Goal 2: Integrate ATLI research into publications and presentations
I-Goal 3: Provide university students with pre-service experiences using research-based methods

RESEARCH

R-Goal 1: Involve local, state, and national transition stakeholders with designing, developing, and/or conducting of research
R-Goal 2: Share transition research results with local, state, and federal agencies
R-Goal 3: Disseminate transition research findings at state, national, and international forums

OUTREACH

O-Goal 1: Engage transition stakeholders in professional or personal development
O-Goal 2: Provide resources to public school systems to improve their transition programs
O-Goal 3: Provide personal development opportunities for youth and young adults in transition
O-Goal 4: Engage in interagency dialogue and leadership on local, state and national levels
O-Goal 5: Promote transition awareness in local, state and national communities