Status Report

10-Year Highlights & Current Status

ATLI IMPACT

2000-2011 activities

- Involved all 132 Alabama school systems

- Engaged 56,000 transition-age students, parents, and professionals

- Secured $4.6 million in extramural funding
Our Vision

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.

Our Mission

Our mission 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.
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AU President, Dr. Jay Gogue, provides words of encouragement to Alabama Transition Conference attendees, March 2011

Governor Robert Bentley enjoys talking with a student representative from the Youth & Young Adults in Transition (YAIT) state advocacy group in February 2011 after signing the proclamation for Transition Awareness Month

The Alabama Transition Conference attracts 700-800 attendees each year
Auburn Transition Leadership Status Report

Executive Summary

The Auburn Transition Leadership Institute (“ATLI” or “the Institute”) was established in the year 2000, when Auburn University was recognized by an external review panel as being a leader in transition—an area of education mandated by law to prepare youth with disabilities for employment, greater independence, and other aspects of adult life. Throughout its first decade and into its next, ATLI has conducted its operations in a manner consistent with the University’s criteria for the founding and functioning of institutes and centers. It is guided by the policies and administration of the University, as well as by its own Advisory Board, which provides oversight and recommendations.

The mission of ATLI 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 outreach, research, and instruction activities for students, parents, community leaders, agency representatives, transition practitioners and those preparing to work in education, rehabilitation, and other service agencies. In providing professional and personal development opportunities for these various groups of stakeholders, ATLI significantly advances the mission of both the University and its College of Education, and addresses specific priorities of Auburn University’s Strategic Plan as well.

On a national level, Auburn University is known among educators for its long history and well-respected traditions in the area of transition. Since the founding of the Institute, its instruction, research, and outreach program activities have engaged all of Alabama’s 132 public school systems, as well as 56,000 transition-age students, parents, and professionals. To support these operations, the Institute has secured $4.6 million in funding from the Alabama Legislature, grants, contracts and ATLI internal initiatives. Funds from the Alabama Legislature have provided a steady foundation amid the fluctuations in other funding sources.

The ratio of legislative dollars to dollars obtained by ATLI from self-generated funding is approximately 1:3. That is, for every dollar the Alabama Legislature has provided, ATLI has generated three times that amount of income by soliciting contract work, grant awards, and event fees. This income funds its own activities as well as those of units with shared grant responsibilities. Of the $4.6 million obtained by ATLI to date, $500,000 has been apportioned as indirect funding for the University, the College of Education, and the Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling (formerly the Department of Rehabilitation and Special Education).

The Auburn Transition Leadership Institute has provided eleven years of purposeful services and supports to Alabama’s transition stakeholders. This has been made possible by the vision and pioneering efforts of leaders within Alabama’s state agencies, the Alabama Legislature and Auburn University. Reflecting from a number of perspectives upon the impact this unit has made, it seems reasonable to expect that ATLI will continue to further the outreach, research, and instruction missions of Auburn University, and thereby contribute to the University’s increased national visibility, and—more importantly—to positively influence the lives of persons with disabilities.
Pioneers of Transition—Dr. Mabrey Whetstone, director of Special Education Services, Alabama Department of Education, and Dr. Cary Boswell, commissioner of Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services—at the 2010 conference.

Daniel Ray between vocal performances at the 2009 Alabama Transition Conference; he was chosen 2007 runner-up for the VSA Arts of Alabama International Young Soloist Award.

ATLI directors—Dr. Philip Browning, 2000-2006 and Dr. Karen Rabren, 2006-present—take a moment to reminisce at the 2011 Alabama Transition Conference.
The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the first 10 years and the current status of the Auburn Transition Leadership Institute (ATLI or the Institute), which was established in 2000. This report contains an introduction to transition, background information on the founding of the Institute, highlights of its first 10 years of operation, and an overview of its current activities, outcomes, and accomplishments. In addition, a section on finances indicates the sources and amounts of extramural funding the Institute has secured for its support, and provides a general overview of its operating expenses.

Introduction to Transition

Numerous challenges impact young people with disabilities as they make the transition from child to adult. They often find it difficult to obtain competitive work in integrated settings, and may experience feelings of isolation, dependence, and lack of control over their own lives, above and beyond those experienced by their age-group peers. Congress has enacted a series of laws proposed by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services to help young people with disabilities meet the challenges during this particular transition period in their lives. Thus, they might look forward to having more productive and satisfying lives as adults, and the nation might reap benefits as well from encouraging and enabling all youth to develop to their maximum potential. In 1990, federal legislation was passed mandating transition services to help youth with disabilities prepare for the roles of adulthood. This process, or set of activities, is clarified in the federal definition of transition, excerpted here from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (2004):

**Transition services...means** a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that—

(A) is designed to be within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child’s movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation;

(B) is based on the individual child’s needs, taking into account the child’s strengths, preferences, and interests; and

(C) includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation. [IDEA, P.L. 108-446, 20 U.S.C. Chapter 34, Section 602 (a) (34)]

As the definition above explains, the overall purpose of transition is to prepare young people with disabilities to access supports and services, as needed, so they may become, to the greatest extent of their individual capabilities, integrated and contributing members of society.
Establishment of the Institute

Auburn University took immediate and leading action when transition services were mandated by federal law in 1990. The College of Education’s Department of Rehabilitation and Special Education (RSE, now Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling, or SERC) made considerable impact throughout the 1990s and early 2000s by launching initiatives that served as models for the nation as well as the state.

Within the first year of the mandate, planning began for a statewide conference dedicated to transition issues and stakeholders. In 1991, the Alabama Transition Conference was held in Auburn, attracting nearly 200 stakeholders. This was the start of a well-respected tradition, marking an ongoing commitment to professional development for the betterment of transition services and programs throughout the state. Progress continued with the development of a distance education training program, attracting participants from nine Alabama counties eager to learn more about their transition roles as teachers, coordinators, job coaches, case managers, paraprofessionals, and parents (Browning & Dunn, 1994; Browning, Dunn, Shumaker, & Rabren, 1994).

From 1994 through 2006, funding for a master’s program with an emphasis in transition was secured; during these twelve years over 100 graduate degrees were conferred through this program (Dunn, 1999-2006). In 1996, the University became a collaborative partner in the Alabama Transition Initiative, a statewide systems change grant funded by the U.S. Department of Education; this Initiative was recognized in 1999 as one of the most exemplary transition programs in the nation (Alabama State Department of Education, 1996; Rabren, 2002). Transition leaders at Auburn documented progress and gaps during this decade by conducting in 1992 and again in 2000 comprehensive assessments of transition in Alabama. These studies served as guides for decision-making in program development and improvement (Brown, Browning, & Dunn, 1992; Browning, Rabren, & Hall, 2001).

During the year 2000, Auburn’s president and provost (then Dr. William Muse and Dr. William Walker, respectively) requested a proposal to establish a transition institute as part of the university’s Peaks of Excellence program. Dr. Philip Browning and Dr. Karen Rabren developed and submitted the proposal, and Auburn University contracted with the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences (AAAS) to conduct a third party evaluation. Dr. Edward Derrick of AAAS led a review team that included distinguished national leaders in the field of transition such as Dr. Andrew Halpern, University of Oregon; Dr. James Martin, University of Oklahoma; and Dr. Paul Bates, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. This team highly recommended that the proposed institute be established and funded as a Peak of Excellence. However, due to other and separate circumstances, it was later determined that the Peaks program would not be expanded to include new programs for this designation and funding priority.

Fortunately, soon after the evaluator team completed their report, Alabama State Representative Mike Hubbard of Auburn secured legislative funding in the amount of $150,000, making possible the development of the Auburn Transition Leadership Institute (See Appendix A). This funding, now at $140,000, continues to be a key financial foundation for ATLI.

In late 2000, near the end of the federal grant funding for systems changes, state transition leaders recognized the need to continue many of the programs the Alabama Transition Initiative had implemented. They looked to the new institute at Auburn University to provide sustainability. Thanks to funding from the Alabama Legislature, state contracts, and federal grants, the systemic improvements begun by ATI have continued under the Auburn Transition Leadership Institute.

The Institute is guided by the policies and administration of the University, as well as by its own Advisory Board (see Appendix B), which provides oversight and recommendations.
Five criteria have been set for the founding and functioning of an institute by Auburn University’s Policy for the Establishment of Centers and Institutes (Auburn University Policies, Board of Trustees Section C-6, 1990, revised 2009). ATLI continues to meet these standards.

**CRITERION 1:** “The Center or Institute is consistent with the University's mission and priorities”

These foundational guidelines for ATLI align with Auburn University's vision of being of service to all Alabamians; earning recognition for quality educational programs, effective research and outreach programs; and providing broad access to University resources through information technology.

- ATLI's mission and activities align with and support the University's stated mission to prepare Alabama's human resources for the challenges of a global economy, providing “traditional and non-traditional students with broad access to the institution's educational resources” as it uses new instructional and outreach technologies to provide online training for transition professionals and students with disabilities.
- The Institute provides multiple research and outreach pre-professional practice opportunities for Auburn University students from various disciplines, contributing to the University's mission to provide a “broad and superior education,” to “respond to the changing needs of the society in which we live,” and to “make important contributions to instructional programs through the involvement of graduate and undergraduate students…”

The Auburn Transition Leadership Institute

**Vision and Mission**

The Auburn Transition Leadership Institute envisions a society in which all individuals are valued as contributing members, each dignified by his or her strengths and abilities. In service to this vision, the Institute helps 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 outreach, research, and instruction activities for practitioners and for those preparing to work in education, rehabilitation, and other service agencies.
In addition to aligning with Auburn University’s missions, the Auburn Transition Leadership Institute also addresses a number of priorities in the University’s 2010-2011 Strategic Plan.

- ATLI activities served to increase both external funding for research and the number of grant proposals submitted and funded, to increase the number of graduate students, and to support the development of interdisciplinary research initiatives—addressing “Strategic Priority 2: Build the Foundation for a Stronger and Larger Research Enterprise.”

- ATLI activities served to demonstrate with data the impact of outreach activities, to generate visibility for University outreach with statewide training and conferences, and to develop and implement initiatives to impact virtually all of Alabama’s 132 school systems—addressing “Strategic Priority 3: Expand the Impact of the University’s Extension and Outreach Activities, Better Service Our Communities and the State.”

- ATLI activities contributed to the development of an integrated marketing and communications plan, and attracted funding for graduate scholarships in the College of Education, Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling—addressing “Strategic Priority 6: Continue to Dramatically Expand the Endowment, Annual Fund, and Gifts to the University, To Support Academic Excellence and Increase Scholarships.”

ATLI contributes also to the four main missions of the College of Education (COE), as they are congruent with ATLI’s mission and are being addressed through a number of its projects and activities.

- Recently a $1.2 million U.S. Department of Education teacher preparation grant from the Office of Special Education Programs was awarded to the University, with SERC professors Dr. Karen Rabren (director of ATLI) and Dr. Caroline Dunn serving as Project Directors. This grant, Collaborative Approach to Training Transition Specialists (CATTS), provides funding for up to 32 students to receive master’s-level training in special education with an emphasis in transition. CATTS scholars will be involved in field-based experiences associated with the Institute. ATLI graduate assistants regularly engage in field-based experiences, research, and cross-discipline activities, and all these contribute to the first mission of COE: To provide programs for the pre-service and advanced education of teachers, counselors, administrators, and related human-services personnel who will provide leadership and services in their respective professional fields.

- As part of their evaluation process each semester, ATLI graduate assistants are asked to review their activities with the Institute and reflect upon their own professional development and experiences (see Appendix C). ATLI staff reviews provide feedback regarding each student’s work performance. These activities contribute to the second COE mission: To develop reflective, professional beliefs and practices and the promotion of critical thinking about one’s role as an educator or human-services provider.

- ATLI graduate students are encouraged to present at state and national conferences and publish research. In fact, all GAs with the Institute are expected to deliver a presentation at the annual Alabama Transition Conference and to prepare professional research manuscripts for publication. This addresses the third mission of the COE: To generate knowledge, participate in scholarly forums for the exchange of ideas, and to explore educational goals and methods for the improvement of schooling.

- The Institute hosts the Local Transition Planning Summit, bringing together cross-discipline groups to develop plans for delivering transition services to students with disabilities in their local Alabama communities. ATLI also coordinates the State Interagency Transition Team, composed of state agency representatives who coordinate and oversee transition services in Alabama (also see pages 6 and 16). In addition, for several years now, ATLI staff and a select
number of doctoral students have joined Alabama state agency representatives in attending the National Secondary Transition State Planning Institute. The Alabama planning team shares ideas with other states’ interdisciplinary teams and proposes policy changes with national leaders to improve transition programs and services for students with disabilities.

These activities address the fourth mission of the COE: To inform and advise decision-makers in the development and evaluation of educational policy at the state, regional, national, and international levels.

**CRITERION 2:** “The program represents a well-defined area of instruction, research, or outreach involving faculty and resources from more than one (1) discipline, Department, College, or School.”

The programs and professional staff of the Institute represent the collaborative nature of transition by using resources from a number of disciplines and by addressing all three areas: instruction, research, and outreach.

**Instruction**
- ATLI relies upon interactivity among professionals in education, rehabilitation, mental health, counseling, and instructional technology to carry out its mission, aligning with the federal definition of transition and with the practical aspects of delivering transition services.
- Since 2000, ATLI has employed 37 graduate students and 5 undergraduate students representing 10 disciplines, including special education, rehabilitation counseling, school psychology, computer science, counseling psychology, electrical and computer engineering, higher education administration, radio-television-film, biomedical sciences, and business. While engaging in transition-related activities, they have learned and employed practices that inform their own fields of study as well.
- Graduate students put their knowledge to immediate use by implementing instruction, research, and outreach projects under the supervision of the ATLI director and coordinators.
- ATLI graduate students provide in-office instruction for youth and young adults with disabilities doing community work projects for pre-employment experience.
- Instruction in leadership and self-advocacy is provided for local secondary school students.

While working at ATLI, I have learned how to best serve students by educating teachers, policy makers and the community as a whole. My understanding of disability has increased and I feel more prepared as a Counselor Educator to advocate for individuals with disabilities. In two semesters, I have increased my computer literacy and knowledge of distance education, improved my understanding of account management, and learned how to capture assessment data online. These experiences with ATLI have been life changing and I look forward to sharing my knowledge with future generations.”

Amanda Thomas, Ph.D.
Auburn University Assistant Professor fall 2011, Assistant Professor, Wisconsin University at Stout, 2009-2011, ATLI graduate student worker, 2008-2009
Research

- Research projects are used to propose and execute grant-funded initiatives as well as to assess the efficacy of various transition programs, trainings, and services. These projects are designed, conducted, and directed by professional staff and doctoral-level students with degrees in special education, rehabilitation, higher education administration, and computer sciences.

- The Institute’s state-funded research projects use data collection and analysis to evaluate secondary student transition programs, early learning programs, and parent involvement with special education services.

Outreach

- ATLI hosts the annual Alabama Transition Conference, one of the longest-standing and most well-attended conferences of its kind in the nation. Presenters include Auburn University faculty members from several disciplines, transition leaders from other institutions of higher education, and government officials at the state and federal levels (see Appendix D). The current two-day program draws over 700 attendees, including educators, rehabilitation professionals, mental health administrators, agency and community leaders, youth with disabilities, and parents.

- The Institute also offers, through its Training in Transition project, stand-alone workshops and online courses for transition practitioners and students with disabilities.

- The Institute coordinates Alabama’s State Interagency Transition Team (SITT), composed of select statewide leaders representing rehabilitation and disability services, secondary and higher education, advocacy, mental health, workforce and independent living organizations, students with disabilities, and parents. This cross-discipline team has developed a state plan for improving the collaboration, cost-efficiency, and quality of transition services for Alabama’s youth and young adults with disabilities. SITT receives feedback and input from local interdisciplinary teams participating in the ATLI-hosted Local Transition Planning Summit (see page 4 and 16).

“Awesome conference! Thanks so much for inviting me and giving me an opportunity to meet so many of your colleagues and students...you really have something terrific going on there and I was so happy I could be part of it. The Auburn transition program has built quite a nice national reputation and with CATTS coming back in that will give you a chance to expand training initiatives...it’s all about implementation now isn’t it?”

Paul Wehman, Ph.D.
Professor of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
Chairman, Division of Rehabilitation Research
Director, VCU-RRTC
Medical College of Virginia
Virginia Commonwealth University

Dr. Paul Wehman at the 2011 conference with Ms. Betty Schiffer, 2011 conference volunteer, SERC Outstanding Undergraduate Student of the Year in 2011, and CATTS Scholar
CRITERION 3: “The University has existing strengths and resources in the programs, including a critical mass of faculty and a demonstrated commitment on the part of the involved faculty and administration to actively participate in the Center or Institute”

The University has provided structure and support for the development and activities of ATLI since its establishment in 2000.

- University administration and faculty have provided critical support for ATLI’s ongoing partnerships with the Alabama Departments of Education and Rehabilitation.

- Administration and faculty members have engaged in many activities to support the annual transition conference, from addressing and welcoming the audience, to inviting and making presentations, to aiding student volunteers.

- Various University units and faculty have demonstrated ongoing commitment to the Institute through their willingness to collaborate in grant proposals, articles for publication, conference presentations, reports to the state, advisement for student dissertations, and the preparation of a licensed software product.

- The Institute is a featured outreach unit within the Web sites and publications of the Auburn University College of Education and the Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation and Counseling.

Governor Bentley joins youth with disabilities and state leaders in proclaiming March 2011 as Transition Awareness Month in Alabama
For University students, faculty members, and programs, the Institute serves as a dependable resource, offering collaborative work on products and publications in the areas of instruction, research, and outreach.

- Since 2000, the Institute has funded 37 graduate students and 7 undergraduate students engaged in activities which provide opportunities for the practical application of their classroom instruction. Furthermore, the Institute's personnel have assisted the college and its departments in proposing and securing federal grants.
- Data compiled through ATLI research activities have been used in numerous theses and dissertations, journal articles, presentations, grant proposals, and annual state reports—contributing to the improvement of transition services and programs in the state, and to the effectiveness of transition instruction in the university.

ATLI outreach activities encompass issues of interest to many disciplines, including education, rehabilitation, counseling, sociology, and psychology. Its conference, one of the largest hosted by Auburn University, provides a unique outreach opportunity for faculty members to disseminate findings and information to diverse groups.

The activities of the Institute have brought extramural funding, recognition, and visibility—on both the state and national levels—to Auburn University, the College of Education, and the Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling.

- ATLI outreach activities provide statewide exposure for the University; stakeholders representing almost every Alabama county and school system participate annually in one or more offerings such as TNT or the conference.
- Auburn University has gained national and state exposure as a leader in special education data collection, analysis and reporting due to the Institute's well-established role in the collection of post-school outcomes and its collaboration with the Alabama Department of Education in developing an online parent survey and collecting early childhood data.
- The Institute has developed statewide transition education standards for persons with disabilities, enhancing Auburn's involvement with education policy at the local, state, and national levels.
- The Institute has been recognized as an important resource of Auburn University by the Alabama Governor's Office, the Alabama Legislature, the U.S. Department of Education, and many national centers and associations. (e.g., Governor's proclamation of March as Transition Awareness Month since 2000).
- The ATLI staff were invited to develop white papers supporting reauthorization of federal legislation.
NATIONAL LEADERS MEET IN AUBURN TO DISCUSS TRANSITION ISSUES

Dr. Melody Musgrove, Director of the Office of Special Education Programs, and Commissioner Lynnae Rutledge, Rehabilitation Services Administration, U. S. Department of Education, speak at the 2011 Alabama Transition Conference

The Honorable Madeleine Will, former Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, provides keynote presentation at the 2006 Alabama Transition Conference

Alabama Transition Conference 2007, ATLI staff and special guests
Front row (left to right): The Honorable John H. Hager, Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services; Mr. Carl Suter, Executive Director, Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation
Back row (left to right): Dr. Karen Rabren, Associate Professor, Rehabilitation and Special Education, Auburn University; Dr. Bill East, Executive Director, National Association of State Directors of Special Education; Dr. Mabrey Whetstone, Director of Special Education Services, Alabama State Department of Education; Dr. Phil Browning, Wayne T. Smith Distinguished Professor and Head, Department of Rehabilitation and Special Education, Auburn University; Mr. Steve Shivers, Commissioner of Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services
10-Year Highlights and Current Updates

The first decade of the Institute’s work witnessed great strides in the development of services and products designed to assist transition stakeholders. In the eleven years since the establishment of the Institute, ATLI’s activities have engaged about 56,000 transition-age students, parents, and professionals. Of these, 4,600 have been engaged in activities during the current year, Fiscal Year 2011 (October 1, 2010 to present). This growth has been made possible through the achievements of the Institute’s instruction, research and outreach programs. The following program highlights and updates illuminate the leadership roles that the Auburn Transition Leadership Institute has assumed for improving transition services and programs for Alabama’s youth and young adults with disabilities.

Instruction

Auburn University students perform many of the Institute’s research and outreach activities and are given instruction in how to produce scholarly publications and deliver professional presentations, how to conduct outreach activities, how to work collaboratively with other disciplines, and how to develop policy to improve the delivery of transition services for youth and young adults with disabilities. Since 2000, ATLI has employed 44 University students from 10 fields of study as graduate assistants or student workers. In addition, Dr. Karen Rabren, ATLI Director, has infused Institute activities into the transition classes she has taught, increasing by 374 the number of university students directly impacted by ATLI activities during the past decade.

The number of graduate assistants and student workers employed by ATLI increased from 7 to 10 in FY 2011. Time spent instructing these students has also increased, as has the range of activities in which they were involved. ATLI graduate assistants developed and implemented, under guided instruction, a community-based training program serving five students with disabilities from area high schools. These activities are mutually beneficial to the graduate assistants and the high school participants, as each learns new skills and gains valuable experience for future employment opportunities.

Early this year, 17 doctoral students received instruction and guidance from ATLI leadership as they prepared and delivered presentations for the 21st annual Alabama Transition Conference, held in March. Three doctoral students participated over five semesters in the development of Alabama’s Transition Standards. These standards, the draft of which is being submitted to the Alabama Department of Education for general review by September 2011, will provide guidance and structure for transition instruction for students with disabilities throughout the state. A brief description of what this work has entailed appears in the Outreach section, page 17.
The recently awarded four-year federal grant, Collaborative Approach to Training Transition Specialists (CATTS), augments the Institute’s instructional activities. The CATTS master’s degree program, housed in the SERC department, supplements scholars’ classroom and practica experiences with specific transition-related research and outreach activities. CATTS scholars are required to complete at least three field-based projects during their degree program. There are currently 9 scholars in the program, which is designed to graduate 32 scholars through the funding period.

As indicated in the grant proposal, CATTS scholars are encouraged to engage in and further develop ATLI activities in order to complete their assignments. The first group of these scholars recently completed a teacher’s handbook to accompany the Training iN Transition module, “My Plan,” which is designed to help students with disabilities lead their own Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings.

CATTS scholars have also participated in the State Interagency Transition Team meetings where state policy for transition service delivery is reviewed and developed. These applied activities enrich the CATTS scholars’ teacher training program and provide them with a more comprehensive and enriched set of experiences.

Research

Uniquely qualified as one of only a few university-based institutes or centers in the nation focusing on transition, ATLI performs an essential function for the state by gathering, analyzing and reporting special education program data that are required by the federal government. In fact, Alabama is one of the few states to collect data for more than 15 years on the post-school outcomes of former students with disabilities. Auburn University’s collaboration with the Alabama Department of Education (ALSDE) for this purpose extends back to the mid-1990s.

Shortly after the Institute was founded in 2000, the Alabama Department of Education contracted with ATLI to administer the Alabama Student Tracking System, now known as the Alabama Post-school Outcomes Survey Program. During the past decade, data on the outcomes of over 17,000 students and/or former students with disabilities have been comprehensively collected, analyzed, and reported to all Alabama public school systems, the Alabama State Department of Education, and the United States Department of Education. Alabama’s post-school outcome data collection and reporting system was one of the first of its kind in the nation,

“Working with…ATLI…I had the opportunity to travel around the state of Alabama collecting data and seeing first-hand how important research is to education….I also continue to use what I learned in my everyday teaching.”

Terri Evers Norris
Special Education Teacher, Alabama
ATLI graduate student worker, 2002-2003

CATTS scholars show their enthusiasm for their program and spell out “CATTS!” after a long hot morning at summer camp in June 2011
and served as one of the models for the current federal system of program accountability.

During the years the Alabama Post-School Outcomes Survey was implemented, 9,409 former students with disabilities responded to questions about their employment status one year after exiting high school. Of these, about 40% indicated that they were employed, with as many as 60% reporting they were employed in 2007. Among other findings regarding employment, a hierarchical logistic regression analysis of 1,393 former students from 37 of Alabama’s 128 school systems, conducted between 1996 and 2000, found that there was an 87% probability that these students would be employed one year after high school if they held a job at the time they exited school.

Regarding formal learning experiences after high school, about 70% of the 15,683 former students who have responded to questions in this category reported that they were engaged in some kind of postsecondary education or training. A study of 1,250 youth with disabilities conducted from 1996 to 2006 found that 392 (74%) of 527 who had exited high school with an occupational diploma reported having a job one year after exit. In comparison, only 104 (44%) of the 234 students who exited high school with a graduation certificate reported having a job one year after exit (Hall, 2010). Both of these findings support the need for vocational preparation practices and work experiences as part of student high school experiences.

In addition to assisting the state in providing information to report to the federal government regarding the post-school outcomes of students with disabilities, ATLI has also been contracting with ALSDE to collect, analyze, and report data regarding parent involvement in special education (Alabama Parent Survey since 2004) and the early transition of pre-school children to kindergarten or first grade who receive special education services through the public schools (Early Learning Progress Profile, or ELPP). During the past 10 years, ATLI has gathered information from almost 23,000 parents representing all Alabama public school systems.

An analysis of the 2010 Parent Survey data found that among the 5,358 responding parents from the 34 participating school systems, 74% of them agreed or strongly agreed with the survey’s statements of parental involvement in the school program for students with disabilities. For two questions answered by the 1,162 parents of transition-grade (9-12) students with disabilities in pre-school, 78% of these parents agreed or strongly
agreed that, “The school encourages student involvement in IEP meetings.” and that, “Services are provided to help students become self-sufficient after high school.”

The ELPP data collection is scheduled to occur next year, through a Web site developed by ATLI during 2009-2010. A factor analysis of extant 2009 ELPP data accounted for 63% of the ELPP data variance. Using Cronbach's coefficient alpha, the internal consistency of the instrument was shown to be reliable with correlations from .95 to .97. These results support the reliability and validity of the ELPP instrument.

ATLI research activities in FY 2011 continue and build upon those of previous years, focusing on three of Alabama's federally required education reporting requirements: post-school outcomes, parent involvement, and early learning progress. For the Post-School Outcomes (PSO) Survey, this year represents the 11th consecutive year of the Institute being responsible for the analysis and reporting of statewide PSO Survey data, and is expected to add approximately 650 survey response records from students with disabilities who have exited public schools.

For Alabama's parent involvement survey data, the current fiscal year represents the seventh consecutive year in which ATLI has been responsible for the collection, analysis, and reporting of Parent Survey data to federal, state, and local governments. This year, almost 5,300 additional survey records have been submitted to the Parent Survey database, hosted at ATLI.

The third federally-required education reporting requirement being handled by ATLI for the Alabama Department of Education concerns progress made by early learning students who receive special education services through the public schools. As of last year, ATLI is developing a new online data collection, analysis, and reporting Web site for the Early Learning Progress Profile (ELPP) instrument, which is expected to receive several thousand records annually, beginning in the fall of 2011.

These cumulative databases and other research activities have served as the basis for at least 10 theses and dissertations, over 40 publications, 10 grant proposals, and hundreds of annual state reports authored by faculty, ATLI staff and graduate students. Among the research advantages of ATLI having responsibility for this range of longitudinal state databases is the potential to analyze data from multiple perspectives (e.g., former students, parents, service providers) to more comprehensively evaluate the effectiveness of services provided to students with disabilities.

ATLI graduate students Jian Fang and Claytonia Samuels discuss Web-based data collection methods
Outreach

The outreach activities of the Institute serve all groups of transition stakeholders, and provide participants with reciprocal teaching/learning experiences. Offering structured University resources to communities and individuals can, in turn, provide “real-world” feedback to the University and State agencies. ATLI’s outreach services focus on professional and personal development and training, as well as on policy development and interagency collaboration. More specifically, the on-site and online Training iN Transition (TNT) program and the annual Alabama Transition Conference are currently the Institute’s primary training activities. Developing the Alabama Transition Standards, coordinating the local Transition Planning Summits, and planning the State Interagency Transition Team meetings are currently the primary policy development and interagency collaboration activities. Other ATLI outreach activities have included developing and implementing projects such as WorkLinks, Local Transition Partnerships, Career Connections, and My Voice.

Professional and Personal Development Training. The Alabama Transition Conference predates the Institute by 10 years and, in fact, was one of the first statewide conferences in the country devoted to transition. When ATLI was established, its staff took responsibility for coordinating the conference, which became one of the largest of its type in the nation, annually drawing from 650 to 800 participants. The presentations, workshops, and training sessions are scheduled over two days—minus or plus a half-day, depending upon the economic health of the state and professional development and travel budgets. Since the Institute was founded, 58 presenters have travelled to Alabama from 23 states and the District of Columbia to deliver their presentations at the conference (see Appendix D).

Four Assistant Secretaries of the U.S. Department of Education have been keynote speakers, including Madeleine Will, who was instrumental in creating federal policy prompting the transition movement. Other noteworthy featured speakers have included leading researchers in the field (e.g., Drs. Andrew Halpern, James Martin, Jim Patton, Paul Wehman, Michael Wehmeyer), and outstanding persons with disabilities (e.g., Heather Whitestone—Miss America 1995, and LaDerick Horne—poet and entrepreneur) as well as other accomplished young adults with disabilities, and national leaders in education, rehabilitation, mental health, and advocacy.

In March 2011, the Institute hosted the 21st annual Alabama Transition Conference, where over 700 transition stakeholders participated in 40-plus conference workshops and sessions. The participants included students, parents, and professionals from 60 of Alabama’s 67 counties, as well as eight other states. Among significant con-

From 2000-2011, 58 presenters for the Alabama Transition Conference traveled from 23 other states and the District of Columbia
ference activities were a presentation by 27 transition-age students on how to start local transition self-advocacy groups, and presentations by the Director of the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs and the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration.

The Training in Transition (TNT) project was launched in the fall of 2007 with a series of workshops across the state for teachers and administrators, who filled the classrooms and auditoriums to capacity. The training series went online in 2009, offering interactive Web-based modules and training effectiveness evaluations. To date, TNT has provided over 2,000 training sessions for classroom and online participants. In 2010, a student module in the series was developed by the statewide Youth and Young Adults in Transition (YAiT) advocacy group with facilitation by ATLI and the Alabama Department of Education.

2011 Alabama Transition Conference

Dr. Betty Lou Whitford, Dean of Auburn University’s College of Education, makes opening comments

Youth & Young Adults in Transition (YAiT) members Joseph Lafond and Ethan Keller from the Jefferson County chapter

Deputy Commissioner Jim Carden, Alabama Department of Rehabilitation, shares a laugh with Wayne T. Smith Distinguished Professor Everett D. Martin, Department Head of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling, Auburn University
During the current fiscal year, three new modules have been developed for the online Training iN Transition series, as have updates for the original two modules. Modules I and II guide participants through an introduction to transition and the use of assessments for transition planning. Module III, mentioned above, engages students with disabilities as they provide their perspectives on transition planning. Modules IV, V, and VI—in final development and soon to be available online—continue to focus and build upon each major activity of the transition process. At the end of each calendar quarter, participant training data is sent to Auburn University Outreach for continuing education credit awards and to the Alabama Department of Education for record-keeping and certificate distribution. To date, almost 300 transition stakeholders have completed a TNT course or module in FY 2011.

Policy Development and Interagency Collaboration. The Local Transition Planning Summit first convened in 2010 with over 35 school systems participating (see also pages 4-6). Running concurrently with the Alabama Transition Conference, the Summit provides tested and effective ways for each local education agency team to improve its system’s transition program—assessing current implementation and effectiveness, identifying program strengths and needs, then setting measurable goals with objectives and timeframes for completion of each. The response from participating teams was enthusiastic, and the Summit was again held in 2011, with plans to continue as long as there is an interest and need for this type of capacity-building activity.

The Alabama State Interagency Transition Team (SITT), first formed in 1983 as the State Transition Task Force, found itself in need of coordination and, in 2009, ATLI contracted with ALSDE to provide these services. SITT is a multidisciplinary group of representatives from state agencies providing services for youth and young adults with disabilities (also see pages 4 and 6). The purpose of this group is to develop a better understanding of each agency’s role and responsibilities in service delivery for these young people, and to seek and implement new and better ways of providing secondary special education and transition services. Membership in SITT has since grown and become more active; a steering committee has developed vision and mission state-
ments and long range goals; and the team of agency and community leaders in transition has become a solid resource and booster for programs, services, and stakeholders across the state.

The Alabama Transition Standards project has developed a continuum of transition standards that provide a common framework for school systems and communities to use in identifying what youth need for successful transitions to adult life. The standards are divided into four strands to be used for grades 9 through 12: Personal/Social, Daily Living, Career Development, and Postsecondary Education or Training. ATLI has contracted with the Alabama Department of Education to develop a draft set of standards; convene a task force of state practitioners and administrators to review and/or continue developing standards; present the developed standards to national leaders for continued development, review, and editing; present a draft version to the Institute of Higher Education Task Force; and make final revisions before submitting the Alabama Transition Standards to the Alabama Department of Education (ALSDE) for approval.

Care has been taken to develop research-based standards that also correlate with guidelines set forth by the National Alliance for Secondary Education and Transition (NASET). After eighteen months of work, the participants in this project are close to producing an approved set of standards for the state.

Other Outreach Activities. ATLI has administered a number of other outreach activities, fully or in collaboration with secondary schools, agencies, or other university units. For example, ATLI staff coordinated activities and produced materials for WorkLinks and Local Transition Partnerships, two federally funded projects awarded to Auburn University and Auburn City Schools, respectively.

The WorkLinks project was chosen as a model demonstration project by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. Funded from 2001-2005, WorkLinks provided an occupational preparation program for youth with moderate to severe disabilities. Developed during 13 task force meetings throughout the state from 2001-2002, WorkLinks produced a continuum of services and programs, a functional curriculum, a multidisciplinary approach, an interagency implementation plan, and a standards-based structure. The project was pilot tested in 10 secondary schools throughout Alabama and one in Mississippi.

Local Transition Partnerships (LTP), another proposal developed by the Institute, was funded from 2004-2007 as a model demonstration project by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs. LTP, administered in partnership with local school systems, demonstrated how to build community support for youth with disabilities through job coaching and
employment preparation, advocacy and leadership clubs, school discussions including peers without disabilities, and recognition and support through dynamic community transition team meetings. Under the direction of ATLI staff, graduate assistants published seasonal newsletters for LTP, participated in job coaching and in community transition teams, and developed a community resource manual for parents and transition-age students in Lee County.

My Voice, 2008-2009, was a collaborative effort among ATLI, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, and the Alabama Department of Education’s Special Education Services. This project was funded by the Secondary Transition State Capacity Building Initiative, a partnership of the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, the National Association of State Directors of Special Education, and the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation. My Voice—through workshops and leadership trainings with nationally recognized experts in self-determination—advanced the development of self-determination and self-advocacy in Alabama youth and young adults with disabilities.

The Post-school Outcomes Database System (PODS) is a Web-based software application ATLI created to assist states to comply with federal reporting requirement for Indicator 14 (measuring young adult participation in employment and college one year out of high school transition services). The Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network contracted with ATLI from 2007 to 2009 to create PaPODS for their state.

These accomplishments and successes serve as inspiration for current and future projects of the Institute. Dr. Cinda Johnson of Seattle University was invited to conduct a third party review of ATLI activities in 2007. She oversees the Center for Change in Transition Services (CCTS)—one of the few transition centers or institutes in the nation that is similar to the Auburn Transition Leadership Institute. In her 2007 “Third Party Evaluation Report of ATLI,” Dr. Johnson gave a positive review of the Institute’s activities and progress (see her comments in the box below).

“The Transition Institute is contributing significantly to this work [of assessing and reporting transition outcomes for national comparisons] and providing transition services at the local, state and federal level and, in supporting these efforts, Auburn University is in a position to impact positive outcomes for children with disabilities through instruction by supporting pre-service training for graduate and undergraduate students, contributing to a national body of research that directly affects special education practices, and through outreach.”

Dr. Cinda Johnson
Principal Investigator
Center for Change in Transition Services (CCTS)
Seattle University
ATLI Funding

From 2000 to 2011, the Auburn Transition Leadership Institute has increased its annual funding level by nearly $500,000. Contracts with the Alabama Department of Education have provided the most dramatic growth in ATLI funding, as the Institute assumed greater responsibility for the training of transition stakeholders, as well as the collection, analysis, and reporting of essential federal education indicator data for the state. As depicted in Figure 1, support from the Alabama Legislature has provided a steady foundation amid the fluctuations in funding from other sources.

![Graph showing annual amounts and sources of extramural funding]

**Figure 1.** Annual amounts (in $1,000s) and sources of extramural funding secured by the Auburn Transition Leadership Institute from 2000-2011.

**Note 1:**
- **Grants** - awarded by the federal agencies or national organizations
- **Contracts** - with Alabama state agencies and organizations (e.g., Alabama Department of Education, Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, and the Developmental Disabilities Council)
- **Legislative** – funds appropriated by the Alabama State Legislature for the Auburn Transition Leadership Institute
- **Institute-Generated** - dollars generated from Institute-sponsored activities and products (e.g., Alabama Transition Conference registration fees and software licensing fees)

**Note 2:** In Spring 2011, a four-year personnel preparation grant from the U.S. Department of Education was initiated to provide master’s level training with an emphasis in transition for collaborative special education teachers. Although the $1.2 million grant is housed in the SERC department, a portion of the funds are allocated to ATLI to help scholars meet specific requirements of the program.
FY 2000–FY 2010 Funding

During the initial ten years of Institute operations, over $4 million in funding was received from all sources (federal, state, and other). This total included Alabama Legislature funds, which provided a foundation for ATLI to expand its responsibilities for transition instruction, research, and outreach. The ratio of Legislature funding to total funding has been almost 1:3 during this first decade; that is, for every dollar funded by the Legislature, three additional dollars have been received from contracts, grants, and Institute initiatives. These dollars helped fund units with shared grant responsibilities, as well. Of the $4 million brought in by ATLI, $500,000 of this (12.5%) has been allocated to the University, the College, and the Department for the indirect costs of administering programs.

The annual amounts of ATLI funding have fluctuated between $164,000 and $501,000, with the most noteworthy annual growth resulting from the FY 2010 doubling of contractual responsibilities for the Alabama Department of Education. This, along with the steady funding from the Alabama Legislature, has enabled the Institute to expand its responsibilities for statewide transition training and data processing.

FY 2011 Funding

The doubled level of contractual responsibilities for ALSDE continued in FY 2011. As shown in Figure 2, the Alabama Department of Education and the Alabama Legislature provided the majority (95%) of this year’s funding, with limited funding from the CATTS four-year federal grant and the 2011 Alabama Transition Conference (which netted a small remainder from registration and exhibitor fees after expenditures).

![Figure 2. ATLI's major funding sources and percentages for FY 2011.](image)
As shown in Figure 3, the major Institute expenditure for FY 2011 has been for personnel, with operating expenses and indirect costs comprising the remainder.

Figure 3. FY 2011 ATLI expenditures, apportioned.

An analysis of FY 2011 expenditure categories by funding source, as shown in Figure 4, reveals that the majority of funding dollars from all sources are used for personnel costs.

Figure 4. ATLI FY 2011 expenditures ($1,000s) by funding source.
A categorical analysis of personnel expenditures by role, distributed across legislative, contractual and grant funding sources, is illustrated in Figure 5. The assignment of costs for administrative support staff highlights the importance of legislative funding to the operations of the Institute.

Figure 5. Percentages of ATLI funding sources allocated to personnel by role.

* The allocations for the part-time director represent only time committed to ATLI activities, apart from other faculty responsibilities.

ATLI Staffing

Beginning in FY 2001, the Institute staff comprised two faculty members (able to devote only a fraction of their time to directing ATLI activities), one full-time research coordinator, and two part-time graduate assistants (GAs) who helped administer the Student Tracking System—sustaining this project (which later became the Post-School Outcomes Survey) beyond the funding of the state systems change grant. As the Institute’s responsibilities grew, additional full-time staff and student workers were employed.

In 2002, an outreach coordinator was hired, increasing to two the number of full-time personnel responsible for coordination of ATLI projects under the supervision of the part-time directors over the next seven years. In 2009, the second year of the TNT training contract with ALSDE, a full-time instruction coordinator was hired. One year later, the number of ALSDE contracts doubled from three to six, challenging the capacity of the existing staff. With the continuation of six technology-dependent ALSDE contracts for FY 2011, and the assumption of its own administrative support duties, ATLI hired two additional full-time staff to manage Web technology requirements and to handle administrative tasks.

In a similar fashion, the number of graduate assistants has increased. Starting with two GAs in 2000, the number of graduate student workers has grown to ten in the current year. The Institute’s
support of graduate and undergraduate student workers produces short-term and long-term benefits for the students as well as for Alabama’s transition stakeholders. During their employment with ATLI, these students gain practical experience in their fields while contributing directly to Alabama transition activities.

The responsibilities of the director’s position have increased along with increases in staffing and projects. The policies of the Auburn University Board of Trustees speak to this issue: “Each Center or Institute will have a Director who is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the program. Such arrangements may vary from a part-time director who receives release time from other University responsibilities to a full-time director whose primary responsibility is the administration of the Center or Institute. While ordinarily all Centers and Institutes will ultimately be the responsibility of a Vice President or the Provost, it is essential that the academic deans be directly involved in the administration of Centers and Institutes.” (Auburn University Policies, Board of Trustees Section C-6, 1990, revised 2009). The ATLI directorship has been a part-time position, assumed by Dr. Philip Browning in 2000, and then by Dr. Karen Rabren from 2006 to the present. Under Dr. Rabren’s leadership, ATLI’s contribution to Alabama transition products and services has more than doubled, as reflected by the increase in total extramural funding received from 2006 to the current year.

The productivity of ATLI staff members and student workers is notable, engaging all of Alabama’s 132 school systems and 56,000 of the state’s transition stakeholders in instruction, research, and outreach activities over the past eleven years. Even more noteworthy is that much of this impact has been achieved with part-time student workers, three full-time staff members (before 2010), and under the direction of a part-time director with concurrent faculty requirements in teaching, advising, and research.

ATLI professional staff, 2000-2009, left to right:
Diane Glanzer, Outreach Coordinator (2001-2011)
Dr. Karen Rabren, Director (2006-present), Associate Director (2000-2005)
George Hall, Research Coordinator (2000-present)

Not pictured: Dr. Philip Browning, ATLI Director (2000-2005)

ATLI professional and administrative staff, 2011, left to right:
Deborah Henthorne, Administrative Assistant
Courtney Dotson, Instruction Coordinator
Gregory Jones, Technology Coordinator
Myra Thomas, Outreach Coordinator
George Hall, Research Coordinator
Dr. Karen Rabren, Director of the Institute
Conclusion

Through the vision and pioneering efforts of leaders from Alabama’s state agencies, Legislature, and Auburn University, the Auburn Transition Leadership Institute has provided eleven years of meaningful services and supports to Alabama’s transition stakeholders. Reflecting on the impact this unit has had from a number of perspectives, it seems reasonable to expect that the Auburn Transition Leadership Institute will continue to further the outreach, research, and instruction missions of Auburn University, thereby contributing to the university’s increased national visibility, and—more importantly—positively influencing the lives of persons with disabilities, in Alabama and beyond.

Table 1: Analysis of Transition Stakeholders Engaged in Institute Activities 2000-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th># Persons</th>
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<td>Outreach</td>
<td>Transition Conference</td>
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<td>TNT Training</td>
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<td>State Interagency Transition Team</td>
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<td>Research</td>
<td>Post-school Outcome Survey</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>Instruction</td>
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<td>Undergraduate student workers</td>
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References


Appendix A
Establishment of the Institute
August 7, 2000

Representative Mike Hubbard
Auburn Network, Inc.
PO Box 950
Auburn, AL 36831-0950

Dear Mike:

Please accept my congratulations and thanks for your efforts to obtain state funding in support of the Auburn Transition Leadership Institute.

Auburn University remains committed to programs and services designed to assist individuals with disabilities in reaching their personal and professional goals. The Transition Leadership Institute, with its mission of assisting students to become responsible and productive adults, is but one example of the ways in which Auburn seeks to serve the disabled community.

Your efforts in obtaining a $150,000 state allocation for this Program will certainly impact our ability to assist young people with disabilities. Thank you for your continuing support of Auburn University.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

William V. Muse
President

cc: Mr. Phil Browning
MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Don Large
   Executive Vice President

From: Rep. Mike Hubbard

Date: June 20, 2001

Re: 2001-02 Education Trust Fund Budget

The 2000-01 Education Trust Fund Budget contains three special line item appropriations for Auburn University. As you know, these items include a $45,000 appropriation to assist in the production, publishing and editing of The Alabama Review; $150,000 for the College of Education to insure students with disabilities are prepared for a successful transition from school to work and community life; and $35,000 to the Agricultural Experiment Station for turf grass research.

The 2001-02 Education Trust Fund Budget rolled these monies into the University’s operating budget without specific designation for the coming fiscal year. All of these amounts were reduced by 6.2%.

Thus, the amount for The Alabama Review is $42,210 and the amount for the College of Education Transition Program is $140,700.

The turf grass research appropriation for 2000-01 was a one-time item. There is $32,830 that is in the Agricultural Experiment Station line of the Auburn University appropriation that is intended for economic development in Alabama by the Auburn University Economic Development Institute.

Let me know if you have any questions or need additional information.
Appendix B
ATLI Advisory Board
“Through the vision and pioneering efforts of leaders from Alabama’s state agencies, Legislature, and Auburn University, the Auburn Transition Leadership Institute has provided eleven years of meaningful services and supports to Alabama’s transition stakeholders.

Reflecting on the impact this unit has had from a number of perspectives, it seems reasonable to expect that the Auburn Transition Leadership Institute will continue to further the outreach, research, and instruction missions of Auburn University, thereby contributing to the university’s increased national visibility, and —more importantly—positively influencing the lives of persons with disabilities, in Alabama and beyond.”
AUBURN TRANSITION LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

ADVISORY BOARD

Dr. Cary Boswell
Commissioner
Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services
Montgomery, Alabama

Dr. Phil Browning
Professor Emeritus
Auburn University
Montgomery, Alabama

Mrs. Trisston Wright Burrows
Advocate
Birmingham, Alabama

Mr. Brian Burrows
Advocate
Birmingham, Alabama

The Honorable Mike Hubbard
Alabama House of Representatives
Auburn & Montgomery, Alabama

Dr. Joyce Ringer
Executive Director, Retired
Georgia Advocacy Office
Auburn, Alabama

Dr. Mabrey Whetstone
Director, Special Education Services
Alabama Department of Education
Montgomery, Alabama

Dr. Paul Bates
Professor Emeritus
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
Carbondale, Illinois

Ex Officio

Dr. Karen Rabren
Director, Auburn Transition Leadership Institute & Professor, Auburn University
Auburn, Alabama
Appendix C
Graduate Student Reflections & Evaluation
Special Education, Rehabilitation, Counseling/School Psychology Department

GRADUATE ASSISTANT EVALUATION REVIEW & PLANNING FORM

Graduate Assistant's Name: ____________________________________________

Graduate Assistantship Site: __________________________________________

Graduate Assistant's Supervisor's Name: ________________________________

Graduate Assistant's Primary or Immediate Supervisor Name: __________

(if different from above)

Time Period under Review: ______________________ to ____________________

month/year  month/year

REFLECTION: Summarize your graduate assistantship activities during this reporting period.

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Describe what you have learned during this period of review.

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Identify what could be done to improve your graduate assistantship experience.

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

GOALS: Set three professional goals to obtain during the next semester.

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________
“What ATLI Means To Me”
Reflections from Student Staff Members

**Mridula Allani**
“Working at ATLI has given me a unique opportunity to know what I can do and how fast I can learn things. The hands-on experience I am getting in web-designing is never learned in any classroom. I have learned how to manage the registrations for a huge conference, set up the event schedules, and keep records. Most important is the awareness about the students with disabilities and ‘Transition’, which I knew nothing about before joining ATLI. I thank Dr. Rabren, Diane, George and all the student staff for being encouraging and helpful. ATLI for me is all about learning and making things work as a team.”

**Jian Fang**
“ATLI provided me the opportunity to apply my IT knowledge in real world applications. I have participated in the development and maintenance of PAPODS, ALPODS, and ATLI web registration systems. The cooperation with organizations outside campus helped me in learning what software applications and tools, other than what I learned in class, are needed in the real world. I have learned much in the field of transition and special education, which used to be an area I knew nothing about. Working in ATLI is a nice experience and I will definitely benefit from it for my future career.”

**Shelley Henthorne**
“While working in the Auburn Transition Institute I have assisted with research for grant proposals and other projects, as well as data collection for the Alabama Parent Surveys. I have also assisted with plans and preparation for the Alabama Transition Conference for 3 years. My responsibilities included organizing and supervising volunteers for this statewide event. I have also had the opportunity to participate in the National Transition State Planning Institute and have attended and presented a poster at the International DCDT Conference in Orlando, FL.”

**Sarah Smith**
“There is so much potential in transitioning youth, and ATLI works very hard to get students to strive for their highest. It is quite an honor to be able to work for a department that is so passionate about transition, and on a personal level, it’s great to learn about the different types of programs available. I feel like the Transition Institute is allowing me to get involved in serving the community and preparing to work with people with disabilities in a professional setting after school. It is an experience that I feel many students studying medicine and biomedical sciences should have.”

**Amanda Thomas**
“While working at ATLI, I have learned how to best serve students by educating teachers, policy makers and the community as a whole. My understanding of disability has increased and I feel more prepared as a Counselor Educator to advocate for individuals with disabilities. In two semesters, I have increased my computer literacy and knowledge of distance education, improved my understanding of account management, and learned how to capture assessment data online. These experiences with ATLI have been life changing and I look forward to sharing my knowledge with future generations.”

**Stephanie Zito**
“While at ATLI, I have had the opportunity to teach special education courses and supervise students. I have also assisted with advising, lesson planning, and grading. I have consulted with local schools about transition services for students such as peer mentoring and self-determination. This has led to the improved inclusion of students with disabilities at the Alabama Transition Conference. I have organized students participating in the "My Voice" grant, which was designed to teach students about leadership and self-advocacy skills, and has worked with state agencies to develop Alabama’s transition plan.”
Special Education, Rehabilitation, Counseling Department

GRADUATE ASSISTANT EVALUATION FORM SUMMARY

Graduate Assistant’s Name: ____________________________________________
Evaluator’s Name(s): ________________________________________________

Time Period under Review: ___________________________ to ____________
Date of Review: ____________________________________________

Graduate Assistantship: ______% # of Evaluations: ______

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Subtotal

COMMENTS: ____________________________________________________________

This evaluation has been reviewed by the graduate assistant and supervisor. The graduate assistant is obligated to sign this evaluation; however, the graduate assistant’s signature is only a confirmation of having seen it and receiving a copy, not an agreement or disagreement with the contents of the evaluation summary. A copy of this evaluation summary will be placed in the graduate assistant’s departmental folder and a copy will also be sent to his or her advisor.

Supervisor’s Signature _______________________ Date ____________

Graduate Assistant’s Signature _______________ Date ____________
Appendix D
Alabama Transition Conference
Out-of-State Presenters
2000-2011
Arizona
Voiron, Susan, 2005 - TCoP Member

California
Buckley, Kathy, 2003 - Glendale, Actress, Comedienne, Inspirational Speaker
Hansen, Dan, 2002 - Carmichael, Consumer
Richards, Curtis, 2009 - Director, Center for Workforce Development of the Institute for Educational Leadership

District of Columbia
Halloran, William, Ph.D., 2000 - Director, Secondary Programs for Students with Disabilities
Kester, Marty, 2005 - TCoP Member
McCorkle, Dick, 2005 - TCoP Member
Musgrove, Melody, Ph.D., 2011 - Director, Office of Special Education Programs
Posny, Alexa, Ph.D., 2010 - Assistant Secretary, OSERS
Ruttledge, Lynam, 2011 - Commissioner, Rehabilitation Services Administration

Georgia
Best, Cheryl, 2009 - Special Educator
Crawford, Mavis, 2009 - Special Educator
Hill, Patricia De'Shazior, 2009 - Special Educator
Levert, Ellen Porter, 2009 - Special Educator
Lewis, Letitia, 2009 - Assistant Principal
Moody, Willie, 2006 - Albany Musician

Outman, Cynthia, Renee, 2006 - Atlanta, Recipient of Atlanta Alliance on Developmental Disabilities’ Outstanding Achievement Award
Porter-Levert, Ellen, 2009 - Special Educator
Ringer, Joyce, Ph.D., 2000 - Executive Director, Georgia Advocacy Office

Illinois
Renzaglia, Adelle, Ph.D., 2002 - Urbana - Champaign, Professor, University of Illinois

Indiana
Grossi, Teresa, Ph.D., 2003, 2010 - Bloomington, Director of the Center on Community Living and Careers, Indiana Institute on Disability and Community

Iowa
Blanck, Peter, Ph.D., 2005 - Iowa City, Director of The Law Health Policy And Disability Center, Iowa College of Law
Agran, Martin, Ph.D., 2003 - Cedar Falls Professor of Special Education, University of Northern Iowa
Wooderson, Stephen, 2010 - Des Moines, President, Council for State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation

Kansas
Morningstar, Mary, Ph.D., 2006 - Lawrence, Associate Professor, Special Education and Director of Transition Coalition, University of Kansas
Weymeyer, Michael, Ph.D., 2000 - Lawrence Research Associate, Beech Center on Families and Disability, University of Kansas

Maryland
Leone, Peter E., Ph.D., 2006 - Rockville, Professor, Special Education, and Director of the National Center on Education, Disability and Juvenile Justice, University of Maryland
Suter, Carl, Ph.D., 2004, 2007, 2008 - Bethesda, Executive Director of the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation
Will, Madeleine, 2006 - Director, National Policy Center, National Down syndrome Society

Minnesota
Johnson, Dr. David R., Ph.D., 2005 - Director, National Center on Secondary Education and Transition

Missouri
Burch, Pat, 2000 - Farmington, Council for Exceptional Children’s LCCE Consultant

Montana
Griffin, Cary, 2006 - Florence, Senior Partner, Griffin Hammis Associates

New Hampshire
Huff, Anne, 2005 - TCoP Member
Huff, Emily, 2005 - TCoP Member

New Jersey
Horne, LeDerrick, 2008 - Board Chair of Project Eye-To-Eye
New Mexico
Blalock, Ginger, Ph.D., 2010, 2011
Albuquerque, Emeritus Professor of Special Education, University of New Mexico

North Carolina
Kortering, Larry, Ph.D., 2008, 2010
Boone, Professor of Special Education and Co-Principal Investigator for the National Technical Assistance Center

Fowler, Catherine, 2005 - Charlotte Project Coordinator, Self Determination, Technical Assistance Centers Project, University North Carolina, Charlotte

Oklahoma
Martin, Jim, Ph.D., 2005, 2007 - Norman Zarrow Endowed Chair in Special Education and Director OU’s Zarrow Center for Learning, University of Oklahoma

Oregon
Bullis, Mike, Ph.D., 2005 - Eugene Professor and Director Secondary Special Education and Transition Research Program and Director National Post-School Outcomes Center, University of Oregon

Halpern, Andrew, Ph.D., 2000
Professor, University of Oregon

Unruh, Deanne, Ph.D., 2010 - Eugene Project Co-director, National Post-School Outcomes Center and Research Associate and Assistant Professor, Secondary Special Education and Transition Research Unit, University of Oregon

Pennsylvania
Stoehr, Michael, 2005
TCoP Member

South Carolina
Bost, Loujeania Williams, Ph.D., 2009, 2010 - Clemson, Director National Dropout Prevention Center for Students With Disabilities

Tennessee
Baird, Melinda, 2004
Attorney at Law and Associate Publisher for LRP Publications

Texas
Patton, James, Ph.D., 2011 - Austin Independent Consultant and Adjunct Associate Professor, Special Education, University of Texas

Virginia
Brooke, Valerie, 2006 - Midlothian Director Training on Workplace Supports and Job Retention, Rehabilitation, Research and Training Center, Virginia Commonwealth University


East, Bill, Ph.D., 2004, 2007, 2008, 2010 Alexandria, Executive Director of the National Association of State Directors of Special Education

Hager, the Hon. John, 2007
Assistant Secretary, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

Wehman, Dr. Paul, 2011 - Richmond Professor and Chair Division of Rehabilitation Research, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Medical College of Virginia; and Appointment Special Education and Disability Policy, School of Education and Department Rehabilitation Counseling, School of Allied Professions, Virginia, Commonwealth University

Washington
Johnson, Cinda, Ph.D., 2010 - Seattle Professor, Special Education
Johnson, Linea, 2010 - Seattle Musician, University Student
Auburn Transition Leadership Institute
Annual Goals
2010—2011

INSTRUCTION
I-Goal 1: Provide pre-service practicum and internship opportunities 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

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: Participate in the development of local, state, and national transition policies and practices

RESEARCH
R-Goal 1: Involve local, state, and national transition stakeholders with the design, development, and/or conduction 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