



The Troy State University
“A History of Innovation—A Future with Imagination”
A Case for Alabama’s 21st Century University

 **A New Model for the 21st Century**

The Twenty-first Century has brought drastic changes that have forced many education institutions to rethink visions and redesign strategies. Changing societal demands, intense competition, advances in technology, and declining trends in the economy and state funding challenge universities the same as business and industry. Those who refuse to risk change will be left behind. That will not be the case for The Troy State University System.

Troy State University will unite all of its diverse assets to create a new model for higher education -- **The Troy State University**¹ -- that not only better serves Alabama, but also becomes the state’s higher education link to the world. It will become a stronger institution by eliminating duplication and barriers while combining the talents and resources of faculty, administrators, and staff. By merging institutions, campuses, sites, programs, and resources, the new Troy State University will take its best and make it better.

In 2000, the Troy State University Board of Trustees and Chancellor Jack Hawkins, Jr., discussed the future of the Troy State University System and how to make it an even better value for students and the citizens of Alabama. From that discussion it was determined essential that the TSU of the 21st century be agile, innovative, and unique. This realization led to a far-reaching discussion among the board members and resulted in the board directing Dr. Hawkins to develop a strategic plan that would bring the Troy State University System together into a much more focused, integrated, cost-effective, and innovative institution. The plan will transform the Troy State University System into one great university.

Alabama citizens deserve nothing less from their higher education institutions than increasing value while decreasing cost. Growing

¹ The phrase “The Troy State University” is used here to connote the new organizational entity of three merged institutions – one great university.



societal demands and increased competition drive the transformation from a loose system of institutions, The Troy State University System, into a single highly effective and competitive university – the new Troy State University.

The Higher Education Marketplace

The Chronicle of Higher Education is arguably the most influential publication in the field. The Chronicle consistently reports on the increasing competition among institutions offering advanced degrees. For-profit universities have grown significantly and one such institution, The University of Phoenix, has set an enrollment goal of 100,000 students. There are new alliances, strategic partnerships, and mergers within states, across states, and around the world. Just as business and industry are taking this path, colleges and universities are following suit.

Troy State University will remain true to its mission to provide excellence in education for Alabama's students. Today's economy, however, requires a more innovative approach to provide financial resources to remain competitive.

Alabama, like many other states, has suffered from inadequate funding for all segments of education for more than two decades. The state's budget for higher education has proportionately decreased as the state legislature has dedicated an even larger share of scarce education dollars for grades K-12. In recent years state revenue collections have failed to meet expectations, causing reductions even more drastic than those budgeted by the state legislature.

Alabama's universities are not alone in this dilemma. Nationally, some experts have suggested that strategic partnerships, alliances, and mergers of higher education institutions could affect thirty to fifty percent of the 3,700 accredited U.S. colleges and universities over the next twenty years.

Alabama universities have been forced to increase tuition in recent years, causing students and their parents to bear a greater financial burden. Larger research and medical universities have relied more heavily on government and corporate grants and endowments to



sustain operation. The state's community college system already has experienced twenty-one mergers, including two institutions in Montgomery in 2001, and the recent consolidation of campuses in southeast Alabama. This action portends even more and larger mergers in the future.

With proper funding as a prime consideration, a quality-driven consolidation of all the campuses in the Troy State University System would be a positive directional change for the System. For Alabama, this will create a unique university that demonstrates what higher education can achieve when local, national, and international needs and opportunities are addressed collectively.

Campuses of Excellence - One Great University

In the 1980s, Troy State University's expansion transformed former branch campuses at Fort Rucker and Maxwell Air Force Base into two independently accredited campuses in Dothan and Montgomery. At that time, University leadership believed it best for these fledgling campuses to pursue accreditation independently so as not to jeopardize the accreditation of the long-established Troy campus. However, the system of one Board of Trustees and three separate institutions means constant issues of brand identity, self-competition, how legislators view the university, and confusion as to how Troy State University should be counted by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education. It means duplication of resources and effort and in some cases prevents students from taking classes and transferring credit from one location to another. The Troy State University System has less visibility than one large institution. Under the new model, the whole will become more than the sum of the parts. Each entity within Troy State University will speak with one voice while improving delivery of services to students whether they are in Dothan, Montgomery, Phenix City, Troy, or Hong Kong².

The new Troy State University wishes to pursue far-reaching options for service to its students; if given this opportunity TSU will become a model higher education institution of the 21st century, demonstrating

² It should be noted that the University in Montgomery is under a court decree as a result of 'Knight v. Alabama' and that during terms of the decree nothing in this proposal will alter or affect the mission or scope of the University in Montgomery and that all provisions of the Decree and Orders in the case relating to the University in Montgomery will continue to be followed.



how effective academic planning and regional service create new options for students. These options must address the needs of Alabama's citizens; simultaneously, they must focus even greater attention on regional, statewide, national, and international economic development.

For example, the current Troy State University System operates programs through technology using microwave, public radio, television, and web-based teaching and learning options. The new University will move to integrate and coordinate these efforts so they are seamless in operation and transparent to students. "Troy State" is a 100-year-old brand of excellence, and its name recognition should not be confusing to anyone.

An integrated set of services to the region is already evolving through The Southeast Alabama Technology Network (SEAL) at Troy State University. This program takes interactive learning options to small towns, rural areas and the cities of southeastern Alabama by connecting with schools, businesses, non-profit organizations, and local governments to help meet the higher educational needs of organizations as well as individuals. In fact, SEAL could be seen as the model for development of the "virtual university" of the 21st century in miniature -- a regionally/nationally/ internationally networked interactive teaching and learning enterprise.

Universities in the 21st century must receive increased revenue and generate new funds in order to boldly address the future needs of public education. Since 1989, state-supported higher education in Alabama has gone from 90% of the regional standard to 52% of the regional standard for universities. While the TSU System currently takes steps to centralize operations, reduce expenses, and invest its resources wisely, merging the institutions should provide greater opportunities for economy without sacrificing quality.

The Facts of the Matter

Currently, Troy State University is composed of the main campus in Troy, which oversees a branch campus in Phenix City, and houses administrative offices for University College, which operates more than 50 program sites in 14 other U.S. states and six foreign nations.



Additionally, Troy State University has plans for expansion into Thailand, Vietnam, and Malaysia.

The old TSU System included Troy State University and two independently accredited campuses, the University in Montgomery (TSUM) and the University in Dothan (TSUD). The main campus in Troy is the largest of the three in terms of enrollment and budget. The Troy headcount enrollment in fall 2002 was 7,500 students, including the Nursing Outreach Program and the Phenix City Campus. University College, the arm of the university that includes national, international and distance education for the military and other selected students outside the state, enrolls 9,443 students. By comparison TSUM enrollment (counted as a separate institution) for the same period was 3,357 and TSUD enrollment (counted as a separate institution) was 1,891.

The new Troy State University will, based on current enrollments, have approximately 22,200 students. Based on fall 2002 enrollments, this is how the new Troy State University would compare with other universities in the state:

Alabama Institutional enrollments (2002 headcount data)

1. Auburn University 23,276
2. **Troy State University 22,191**
3. The University of Alabama 19,584
4. University of Alabama Birmingham 15,579
5. University of South Alabama 12,323

There will be an even more dramatic transformation in the area of graduate degrees awarded. Based on 2001-2002 data from the U.S. Department of Education, Troy State University, when consolidated, would become the Alabama university granting the most graduate degrees.

Graduate degrees awarded by Alabama universities (2001-2002)

1. **Troy State University 2,411**
2. University of Alabama 1,498
3. UAB 1,485
4. Auburn University 1,061
5. USA 627



The Troy State University budget, by combining the old TSU System, would be \$134 million for 2002-2003. The new Troy State University becomes an even more significant partner in Alabama higher education given both its higher enrollment and its larger budget.

What This Means for Students

The new Troy State University will improve service to students in three broad areas:

First, articulation, meaning the way academic coursework transfers from one institution to another, will become seamless. Under the current system, students cannot get credit for certain courses completed at different campuses throughout the TSU System. A single integrated University will eliminate articulation problems.

Second, expanded course offerings for students through both distance learning and traditional classes will be significantly enhanced.

Third, there will be an end to confusion regarding institutional identity. "Troy State University," without qualification, will become the brand name of excellence for potential students, and the seal of quality education that graduates present to the world.

The merging of institutions will lead to improved academic outcomes in six areas:

1. Accreditation. One institution will eliminate the need to seek separate SACS/specialized accreditation processes, resulting in cost savings and a reduction of faculty/staff time.
2. Program viability. Troy State University (main campus) already enjoys the highest program viability among Alabama public colleges and universities. Unification of system campuses would immediately enhance program viability at all campuses and sites.
3. Eliminate duplication. The new University will issue one academic calendar, one faculty handbook, one student handbook, one undergraduate bulletin, and one graduate bulletin across all campuses and sites. Currently, each



accredited campus releases its own version of these publications.

4. Academic excellence. The new Troy State University will be in better position to receive ACHE approval to expand the graduate school to include need-driven doctoral programs. This will build on the University's status as the largest provider of graduate degrees in Alabama.
5. Technology. The new Troy State University will be on the cutting edge of digital academic programming, distance learning, and the development of a "Virtual University" that will be international in scope. In effect, this will be a 24/7 interactive enterprise linking Alabama to the world.
6. Job and career development. A much larger and more visible university will gain even more attention from other graduate schools and corporations. Recognized nationally in *the Kaplan/Newsweek College Catalog* as a "treasure" in its quality and price, the new Troy State University will bring even more resources to bear on job placement and career development.

What this Means for Faculty

Faculty of the new Troy State University will work as one unit—rather than as separate small groups seldom interacting—to build a more extensive academic program. There will be more opportunity for collegial activities, more attention to issues of college and school development and more ways to build disciplines across the University, not just at one or two locations. In addition, opportunity for advancement will increase.

With the enhancement of technology-based learning, faculty may choose to be engaged in local or international teaching/learning options. *eArmyU*, a virtual university developed by the US Army, currently serves more than 20,000 Army personnel. Troy State University, the second largest provider among 20 universities, serves 4,723 (22%) of these *eArmyU* students. With the total enrollment of *eArmyU* projected to be 80,000 in the next three years, this bodes well for Troy State University as a leader in distance learning. This



program alone will allow faculty to hone their teaching skills to a new set of students through unique delivery methods.

Throughout this transformation, quality teaching will continue to be the distinguishing characteristic of Troy State University, and the opportunity for motivated faculty to be a part of a larger enterprise will be central to the continued growth and success of the institution. Emerging opportunities in Asia and the Western Pacific will provide new opportunities for faculty.

What this Means for Communities

First and foremost it means that Troy, Dothan, Phenix City, and Montgomery will continue to meet the demands of their local communities.

The Montgomery campus will still be the vital link to both downtown Montgomery and the Tri-County area – a beacon of higher education lighting not just the night, but the lives of everyone it touches. The Phenix City campus will continue to be unsurpassed in its programs for teachers and principals, setting the tone for community college-university interface. The Dothan campus will continue developing new and innovative approaches to community service, among other things, rethinking how to link community economic development and higher education.

One such possibility is a *Center for International Economic and Business Development*. Housed in existing facilities on the main campus in Troy, the center will operate to take advantage of local economic capabilities and help link these with global business needs. This is a meaningful way to think globally and act locally. Efforts such as this will mean more, not less, involvement between local community leaders and the University in the continuous search for new and better ways to address community interests.

In addition, more programs will be available for students, and more events from one campus (athletic events from Troy, continuing education activities from Dothan and activities from the Rosa Parks Library and Museum from Montgomery) will be offered to the other campuses.



What this Means for “Troy State University”

In summary, this change will place the new Troy State University in an enviable position. The Institution will be the second-largest university in Alabama based on headcount enrollment. Even more important, this system consolidation will ensure continued growth in two important areas outside traditional state boundaries—the international marketplace (University College) and cyberspace (Virtual University).

While the University currently operates successfully in these areas, it can only achieve meaningful expansion if all the resources of the old Troy State University System are united. Unlike most universities, Troy State University has the national and international infrastructure and the experience of sustained growth in these vital areas. This experience, combined with faculty and staff resources from multiple campuses, allows for a synergy that will propel the University into this new century.

What this Means for Alabama

Troy State University by any objective measure will be stronger than a network of three separate institutions: more cost-effective, eliminating duplication of services, creating a more efficient operation including financial aid, payroll services, purchasing, accounting, fund-raising, administrative computing services, alumni affairs, and governmental relations. All of this will enable students to take advantage of the strengths of programs on all Troy State University campuses while removing any barriers to addressing their individual needs.

The State of Alabama will realize a reduction in the number of accredited four-year public universities with the creation of this unique university that is neither a regional institution nor an attempt to be a major research university.

The name Troy State is well known in state, national, and international circles for outstanding programs in teacher education, music, fine arts, accounting, and journalism. It is also known for



dedicated service to the United States military and because of the move to Division I-athletics. The Dothan campus brings a strong teacher education program, a commitment to community service and an outstanding continuing education program to strengthen this reputation. Likewise, the Montgomery campus provides a premier reputation of service to non-traditional learners and its national and international acclaim as home of the Rosa Parks Library and Museum.

What is even more apparent is the idea that Troy State University is understood in different countries as a symbol of quality American higher education, the idea that links common values from different countries with the state of Alabama. As Alabama takes steps to become a stronger player on the international scene, it can have no stronger partner than the new Troy State University.

As it relates to fostering the economic development of Alabama, the new Troy State University will launch six (6) new initiatives that will fuel the economic engine of the state with an emphasis on partnerships with other state agencies, colleges and universities, K-12, and business and community interests. This new University will be available to the Governor and Legislature to strengthen and develop Alabama's economy:

1. Given the level of coordination and integration of programs and services around the state, nation, and world, the new Troy State University will take this capability and work with community colleges to create programs whereby students can complete four-year degrees on community college campuses in rural areas of the state. This approach is being discussed in Florida and Georgia, and Alabama's competitive posture with these states for attracting economic investment can be significantly enhanced with a fast-paced effort to put these programs in place as soon as feasible.
2. For over fifty years, Troy State University has been a leader in workforce education and in educating future leaders. The United States military has had no better partner in higher education than Troy State University. This highly successful model of workforce education has also been effectively translated to small and large businesses in Alabama. In Montgomery alone more than 900 different businesses have



their employees strengthen their skills every night at the University. The Troy State University System serves more adult learners, men and women in the workforce, than any other state university. The University also has, through its distant learning/ “virtual university” networks, the opportunity to build workforce training, day, night, in person, and online- 24 (hours)/7 (days a week)/365 (days a year). Troy State University is vital in building a stronger Alabama workforce through positioning the adult education thrust on the Montgomery, Dothan and Phenix City campuses to do even more by “reviewing, revamping and reinvigorating” partnerships with corporations to meet workplace needs. This model will mean retraining and retooling adult learners to support economic development efforts. These initiatives, coupled with results defined in other parts of this case statement, are “hands-on” action items, not concepts. To move this strategy more quickly, The University will establish a “*Work Force Alabama Roundtable*”³ that will have sites on each campus. The vision is to have every major corporation represented along with community leaders and other partners in Postsecondary Education. This group will identify needs, and programs will be created accordingly. This initiative is a serious attempt to significantly strengthen Alabama’s workforce-- now.

3. Because Troy State University will operate as “Alabama’s Higher Education Link to the World,” it will engage its worldwide infrastructure to benefit the economic development of the state. A “Center for International Economic and Business Development” will be created that uses all institutional capabilities and will include placing international development specialists in Troy State University locations around the world and, in turn, work with businesses and industries to enhance international trade and business interactions. Troy State University will become a key partner in encouraging international business interests to relocate in Alabama.
4. There is a great need in workforce development for certain professionals to gain and continue their education required for state certification and licensure. Troy State University will

³ These will work with the new Center for International Economic and Business Development



establish a comprehensive “Center for Testing and Licensure” that will provide such testing for several other professions modeled on the recognized work of the Troy State University Insurance Testing Service.

5. The University’s highly successful Southeast Alabama Network (SEAL), currently delivers six (6) advanced high school courses to 12 counties and 14 school districts. This program will be expanded to reach rural high schools throughout southeast Alabama. By doing so, Troy State University will expand the academic and economic potential of rural high school students who would otherwise be limited in their opportunities for career development.
6. Troy State University is currently exploring opportunities to expand offerings in technology-based programs. It is essential that the institution work with others in the state to ensure that Alabama not fall behind in developing graduates with the ability to use technology to make a significant contribution to the economy. This effort is now producing graduates with unique technology skills. The degree in Geomatics has helped revolutionize land surveying through use of Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) enhancements. Troy State University’s new degree in Graphic Design has the same impact and is supporting the development of the graphics design industry in Alabama. Additionally, the University in Dothan has partnered with the University of Alabama to provide access to an engineering degree in an effort to support a number of major industries in the Dothan area. The University will create additional technology programs that will enable graduates to expand their value to employers that in turn will stimulate further economic development in the state.

Alabama should be known by the businesses it keeps. Troy State University’s capability and strong track record of successful business partnership with different organizations speak loud and clear about this University’s values and priority of moving the State of Alabama forward. What must be apparent is the new Troy State University will be a place of vision, teamwork, effectiveness, and excellence. The citizens of Alabama want the best combination of talents, resources, and creativity working on their behalf. Troy State University will meet and exceed these expectations.



The Vision for the New Troy State University

The new Troy State University will be a premier higher education model for the 21st century. Focused on student-centered service, faculty will be advisors and mentors as they work with individual students to reach common educational goals. This will require monitoring the changing demand of student needs in continuing education, undergraduate, and graduate education through traditional and non-traditional teaching/learning delivery options. At a time when educational technology will significantly expand learning options, Troy State University will carefully balance on-line access with personal attention ensuring value and integrity through traditional and non-traditional programs.

Attuned to community needs, the University will develop strategic partnerships throughout Alabama while assisting with community, cultural, and economic development on a variety of levels through new centers of excellence. Working as “Alabama’s Higher Education Link to the World,” Troy State University will ensure that all partnering possibilities look also to national and global options.

In all that is done, Troy State University will be the place where traditional values are successfully merged with cutting-edge technology through a rededication to student and community service.

*“Troy State University - Forging the Higher Education
Delivery System of
the 21st Century.”*