

# ECUA

## Western Pennsylvania's Workforce Developer and Economic Catalyst

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PRINCESS 2014



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# Facts

- Of the 860 districts nationally, 553 are rural or 64% and they serve over 3.6 million students.
- Rural community colleges are growing faster than any other type of higher education.
- 140 rural small, 303 rural medium, 110 rural large college in the U.S.

# Sustainable Rural Communities

- Sustainable Rural Communities have a rural community college with active workforce and economic development activities. Keep your rural residents!
- Current migration OUT of rural America. We are losing our citizens

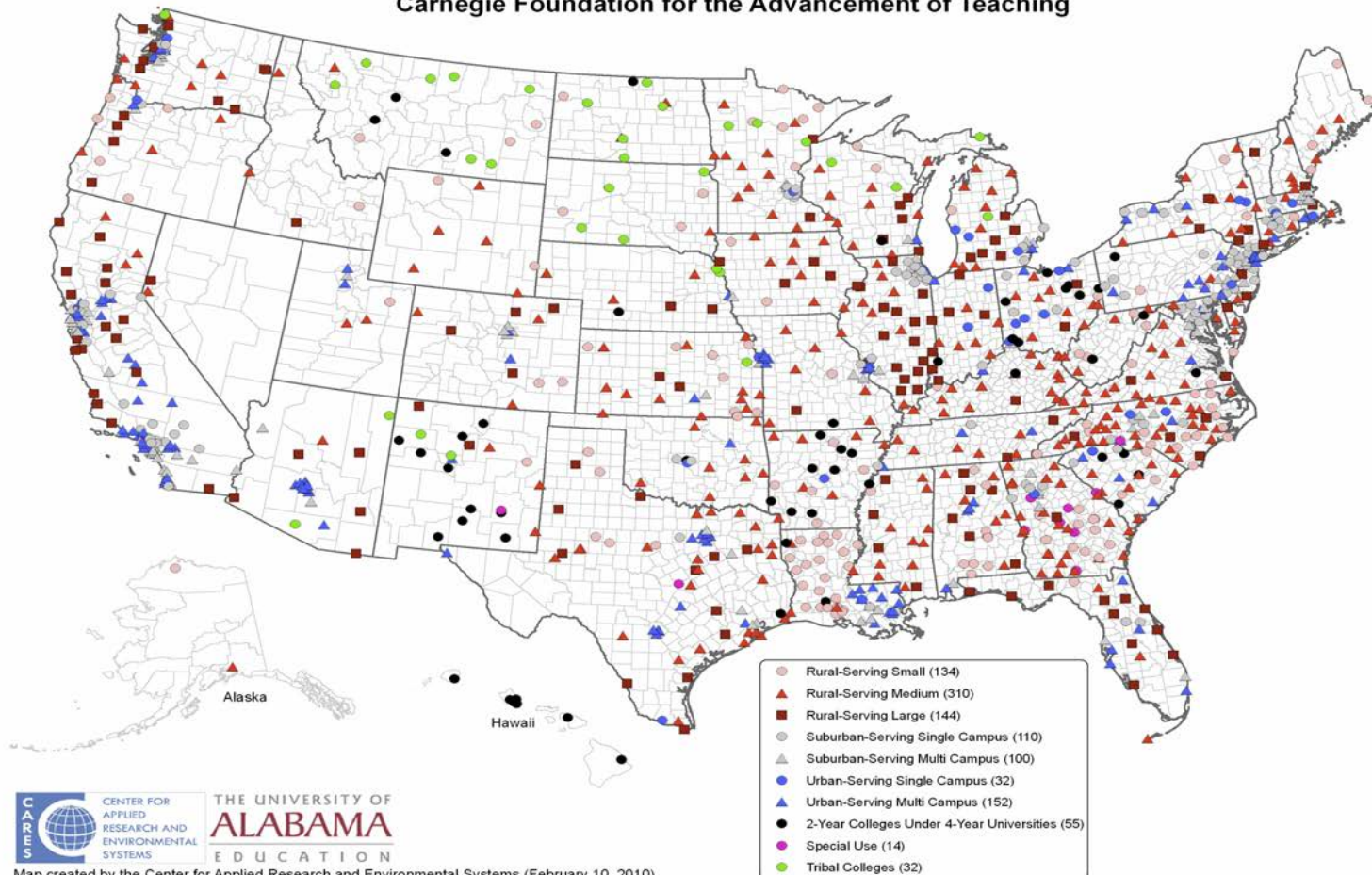
# Why UACC

- Look at a MAP!!
- Accessibility / Underserved
- Community Needs
- Desperate need for technical programs and workforce training
- UACC = **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**



# Why UACC

Associate's Colleges in the United States According to the 2005 Basic Classification of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching



CENTER FOR  
APPLIED  
RESEARCH AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
SYSTEMS

THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**ALABAMA**  
EDUCATION

Map created by the Center for Applied Research and Environmental Systems (February 10, 2010)  
based upon analysis of the Education Policy Center at The University of Alabama  
<http://education.ua.edu/centers/education-policy-center/>

Source: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching Basic 2005 Classification (May 2006)

# Importance of Community Colleges

- Train over 64 % law enforcement, fire, EMS, allied health professionals (which are necessary in rural economies!!)
- Provide required continuing education
- Rural CC serve higher percentage of minority students than urban and suburban CCs.

# Importance of Rural Community College

- Rural Community Colleges have seen an enrollment increase of 42% since 2001!!!
- Rural Community Colleges serve 48% of all first time first generation college students
  - Urban: serves 24%
  - Suburban: serves 27%



# Importance of Rural Community Colleges

- Affordability
  - Lower tuition, more accessible
- Rural residents earn 26% less than urban residents.
- COST and ACCESSIBILITY are MAJOR ISSUES for working adults

# Rural Community Colleges

- Average age is 29
- Average driving distance is 25 miles one way
- Local needs, local control, local business / industry needs.
- Critical for Economic Development.

# Economic Development

- 2012 Survey of 49 State Directors:
  - 45 responded that community colleges are the PRIMARY workforce training provider based on industry feedback.
- Visiting team of experts found the economic development potential of region served by ECUA to be very high.

# Economic Development

- The **single** most important factor in economic and workforce development is the community college. Its that simple!!

# Summary

- Visiting team of experts found:
  - Extreme need for workforce and economic development in the region
  - Lack of access to higher education
  - Lack of access to technical programs
  - Extreme need for comprehensive community college, that is LOCAL to serve changing needs of LOCAL stakeholders.
  - Enrollment numbers that will easily sustain a college in the region



# Others May Say.....

- We cant afford it.....Rural Community College Technical programs produce a 400% return on investment to the local economy (2005 study)
- 4 to 1 ratio for state dollars invested.
- Economy BOOSTERS. We put people to work in livable wage jobs!
- Majority of our students are working adults

# Others May Say.....

- We can serve the area from outside..... Don't need to create a new college.....
  - Different needs, different priorities
  - **MUST** have local control and input
  - Needs change and vary from one community to the next, adaptability and local control are the key
- That is why we call ourselves COMMUNITY Colleges!

# Why Not?

- Can you afford NOT to do it.....
- Its about the student....the stakeholders.....the commonwealth
- OR
- Is it about politics and selfishness (don't take a slice of my pie!!)
- Its simple and straightforward, these residents deserve an accessible college and the stakeholders deserve economic development!

# The Bottom Line

- Community Colleges exist to serve students and stakeholders. Its time Northwest PA residents were served.
- State and education organizations should focus on the needs of the student, stakeholders, and commonwealth.
- If they do then they should completely support creation of UACC. **FOCUS ON STUDENT**

# Summary

- Study and data highly support the need for a regional community college.
- Please support a much needed community college to serve the rural residents of this region. They need their OWN college.
- Remember the return on investment! You CAN afford it!



# Summary

- Strong LOCAL community colleges help to create strong, viable, innovative, SUSTAINABLE rural communities!
- Its time these rural residents had access to higher education and to opportunity!!!
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