Highlights May 1, 2013 through April 30, 2014

CBER
• Conducts an active program of sponsored research primarily focused on the Alabama economy including economic development, socioeconomic data collection, analysis and forecasting;
• Provides outreach activities in support of the State of Alabama and its citizens, including the activities of the Alabama State Data Center (ASDC);
• Manages sponsored research services for the Culverhouse College of Commerce (C&BA) faculty; and
• Assists C&BA international business advisory programs and other selected outreach projects of the College.

CBER’s Role
The Center, established in 1930, conducts sponsored and service-based research and data services for the state and people of Alabama and the region and nation at large in advancing The University of Alabama’s (UA) research and service mission. CBER clientele include federal, state, and local government agencies, private companies, UA and other academic institutions, financial institutions, individuals, the media, and other organizations. The Center is committed to promoting economic development throughout Alabama, and is a member of the Economic Development Alliance, a group of UA centers fully dedicated to economic development in Alabama. CBER also provides students with applied economics experience in carrying out its purpose.

CBER Research Activities
As a resource for in-depth studies and forecasts, CBER provides insight and information to improve the quality of decision-making by our clientele.

During the period May 1, 2013 to April 30, 2014, thirteen proposals totaling $812,621 were submitted. Nine of those projects were funded for a total of $704,893, and one submission for $39,313 (Volkert and Associates) is still under consideration. Additionally, two projects totaling $300,000 from prior year submissions were also approved (one was to ADECA for $175,000 and the other to AIDT for $125,000). Funded projects totaled $1,004,893 from May 2013 to April 2014. Those two projects plus one in the current year are funding a follow-up, two-year study on the State of the Alabama workforce. The workforce study presents workforce reports, including skills gap analysis, on each workforce
development region, Jefferson and Mobile counties, and the state as a whole. CBER collaborates with the Institute for Social Science Research (ISSR) of the UA College of Arts and Sciences (A&S) on the workforce project. C&BA and A&S partnered by having ISSR's Capstone Poll become an interdisciplinary unit of both CBER and ISSR.

Agencies and companies to whom proposals were submitted or that funded research include the following:

- Alabama Agriculture and Mechanical University
- Apex Wind Energy
- National Aeronautical and Space Agency
- Alagasco
- Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs
- Alabama Workforce Development
- Samford University
- Williams Corporation
- Alabama Manufactured Housing Association
- Volkert and Associates
- ADECA, Office of Water Resources
- Alabama Industrial Development Training
- Alabama Department of Labor
- Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
- Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education

In addition to working on sponsored research projects, the Center also produced a report on *The University of Alabama 2011-2012 Economic Impacts* and helped the City of Tuscaloosa with its proposal to the Economic Development Corporation for the new building for The Edge.

The Center has a very active forecasting program that provides quarterly forecasts of the Alabama economy. Short-term forecasts of output, employment, wages, and personal income are produced annually and updated quarterly. Long-term forecasts are typically produced as part of funded projects that require them.

The Center’s forecasts serve as the basis for its annual *Economic Outlook* publication, quarterly updated forecasts and economic outlooks are published in *Alabama Business*, a quarterly publications produced by the Center since 1930. The initial *Outlook* was published in 1980, the year the Center launched its forecasting program.

CBER also continuously maintains and updates an extensive database of economic and demographic data at the county, metro area, state and national levels.
The Center added one new staff member this year—a research associate (Ph. D level), allowing an increase in research and service activities. CBER has also provided applied research experience to four undergraduate students by involving them in various projects.

The Center made academic presentations at conferences for the Association for University Business and Economic Research (AUBER). CBER is a member of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta’s Local Economic Analysis and Research Network (LEARN). The Center together with the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta’s Birmingham Branch and Vulcan Materials Company formed Alabama Economics Club (AEC) which is the Alabama Chapter of the National Association of Business Economics (NABE), Dr. Addy served as AEC President in 2013-2014.

Staff participated in other professional meetings including national State Data Center meetings, the Federal-State Cooperative for Population Estimates (serving on Mentoring Committee), the Federal-State Cooperative for Population Projections, NABE, IHS Global Insight, AEC meetings, and the National Council of University Research Administrators. Staff attended Economic and Workforce Development Training sponsored by the Alabama Department of Labor, and REMI Economic Policy meeting.

**CBER Outreach Activities**

CBER has provided its varied clientele with timely socioeconomic and demographic data and analysis since its founding in 1930. The Center is the oldest outreach program of C&BA. All CBER staff members are involved in serving the public with hundreds of requests for information and other assistance. A detailed list of requestors is available.

The Center has an active and positive relationship with the media. CBER issues press releases which are widely distributed and picked up by both the print and broadcast media in the state. The Center also works directly with business reporters for releases of the Alabama Business Confidence Index (ABCI) and forecast updates.

The Center’s web site (http://cber.cba.ua.edu) is very popular and assists in serving individual requests more efficiently. The Center also offers an electronic notification service when items are added to its web site. In addition the Center’s publications are available for sale via the web. The Center has a social media presence with Facebook and Twitter. The Center also started a blog on al.com to distribute ABCI and Alabama Business results.
CBER houses the Alabama State Data Center (ASDC). The Center’s data resources are enhanced by ASDC’s participation as Alabama’s lead agency in the U.S. Bureau of the Census State Data Center Program.

The Federal-State Cooperative for Population Estimates and Projections is another cooperative program that CBER has with the Census Bureau. Activities conducted by the Center include collecting group quarters data and data review of Census Bureau population estimates and building permits.

A third federal cooperative arrangement that is housed in CBER is the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis’s State User Group. Through that arrangement, CBER receives the benefits of the Department of Commerce’s Regional Economic Information System.

The Center produces population projections for Alabama and its counties. These projections also serve as the basis for some Center contracts and are used by state agencies as the official state projections.

CBER collects, maintains, analyzes, and releases business and economic data. More than 1,000 monthly and quarterly data series are stored in the Center’s network databanks from the federal sources mentioned above, other federal sources, and state sources. The wealth of data and analyses makes CBER a frequent background source for business writers across the state and the nation.

The Center continued its successful annual Economic Outlook Conference program (146 attendees) in Montgomery in January. This year marked the 27th conference. David Altig of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta was the keynote speaker and Tom Broughton, CEO of ServisFirst Bank was the luncheon speaker. Conference presentations can be accessed online. The 2014 program was supported in part by grants from the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, Alabama International Trade Center, Alabama Power, Alabama SBDC Network, BlueCross BlueShield of Alabama, Boeing, Hyundai Motor Manufacturing Alabama, Lockheed Martin Space Systems, PowerSouth Energy Cooperative, ServisFirst Bank, Sterne Agee, and Vulcan Materials. The Center’s 2014 Alabama Economic Outlook was presented at the conference and is available for purchase online.

The Center’s quarterly publication Alabama Business contains a forecast update and is available electronically on the web at http://cber.cba.ua.edu.

The Center continued to administer and maintain the Alabama Business Confidence Index (ABCI) < http://cber.cba.ua.edu/abci/index.html>, a quarterly survey that measures economic expectations for the upcoming quarter gathered from a broad group of business executives across the state. In addition to producing the ABCI general newsletter, the Center partners with chambers in the four largest metro areas to introduce newsletters highlighting each metro’s index.
The Center is working to increase panel participation especially in the four major metro areas.

Center staff spoke at and participated in events throughout Alabama, including:

Aerospace Alliance
Alabama Center for Real Estate 14th Annual Commercial Real Estate Conference
Alabama Department of Transportation, Small Business Procurement Conference
Alabama Economics Club
Alabama Industrial Relations Research Association
Alabama Trails Commission and Trails Commission Advisory Board
Birmingham Business Journal Economic Forum
Capstone Business Leadership Academy
Culverhouse College of Commerce Board of Visitors
J. F. Drake State Technical College Summer Technology Institute
Leadership Alabama
Leadership Tuscaloosa
North Alabama African American Chamber of Commerce Conference and Expo
UA Office of Financial Affairs
UAB New Horizons
The 4th Biennial Regional Economics and Education Symposium

C&BA Sponsored Programs

During the period May 1, 2013 to April 30, 2014, C&BA faculty submitted 78 proposals for a total of $3,739,745 and received $871,855 in funding for 59 projects. Eight projects from a previous year submissions were also funded for $77,000. These totals represent proposal submissions by faculty and other Culverhouse Centers and do not include proposals submitted by CBER.

Agencies and companies to whom proposals were submitted or that funded research include:

ADECA
Alabama Industrial Training and Development
Alabama Power Company
Alabama Revenue Department
Alabama Technology Network
Alloys and Coke
Ameribolt
Appalachian Regional Commission
Austal USA
Birmingham Fastener
BLG Logistics
C&BA Sponsored Programs assists faculty in their pursuit of research funding opportunities through online databases and publishes a monthly newsletter, Research Notes.

The office maintains a web site to provide faculty with a convenient gateway to contract and grant information. The site, http://research.cba.ua.edu, has links to searchable databases, select funding agencies, and a C&BA Faculty Guide to Sponsored Research.

The office also provides assistance to faculty with post-award budgeting, expenditures, and effort reporting.

C&BA International Programs and Selected Outreach Projects

Dr. Addy serves as Associate Dean for Research and Outreach (ADRO) for the Culverhouse College of Commerce. ADRO office staff provide clerical,
accounting, editing, and other support for the College’s international business program including hosting two meetings and awarding scholarships as well as graphic design services to College departments, programs, and College-related student group activities. The ADRO office also oversees the accounting functions of other College outreach units—the Alabama Productivity Center, the UA Small Business Development Center, and the Alabama Center for Real Estate.

Dr. Addy serves on the board of the Alabama Council of Economic Education.

CBER houses a staff member from AlabamaREAL and provides budgeting and graphic design support for some of their activities.