Gregory G. Fitch, Ph.D. was named Executive Director of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education in July, 2006, having served as a state higher education executive officer (SHEEO) in two other states, Missouri and Idaho. He has been president of four colleges, including the founding of a multi-college system emphasizing the balance between workforce development and research. A Viet Nam war veteran and former police officer, Fitch began his education career in 1974 as a public school teacher.
### ACHE Responsibilities

- Coordinate statewide planning efforts in higher education with K-12 and education partners
- Approve new academic programs, new units of instruction, and off-campus instruction
- Review and make recommendations concerning existing programs
- Facilitate coordination for higher education that utilizes institutional planning efforts to support a statewide plan
- Prepare an annual budget recommendation for the governor and the legislature
- Review institutional facilities masterplans and report to trustees and the legislature
- Maintain an electronic student unit record system to provide instructional information and student data to assist in decision making

### Alabama Higher Education State Plan 2009 — 2014

- Cooperate with PK-12 to increase students’ preparedness for college and career
- Establish a PK-20 council
- Increase graduates in Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) fields
- Seek financial resources for education
- Establish Workforce Development Plan

### Disciplines of Top 5 Degrees Awarded in Alabama in 2014-2015

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>8,554</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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<td>Liberal Arts</td>
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<td>Engineering</td>
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<td>2,537</td>
<td>2,692</td>
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</table>

*Total number of completions was 53,949


### ACHE Administrative/Fiscal Responsibilities

- Alabama Resource Conservation and Development Council
- Soil and Water Conservation Committee
- Alabama Forestry Foundation Black Belt Initiative
- Civil Air Patrol
- National Computer Forensics Institute
- Black Belt Treasures
- Black Belt Adventures
- Adaptive and Disability Sports Education
- Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR)
- Alabama Agricultural Land Grant Alliance
- School and University Partnership Education Renewal Program
- Articulation and General Studies Committee / Statewide Transfer and Articulation Reporting System (AGSC/STARS)

### Statewide Boards/Committees

- Alabama Workforce Investment Board
- Alabama Virtual Library
- Forever Wild (Alabama’s Land Trust Program)
- Network of Alabama Academic Libraries
- EPSCoR
- AGSC/STARS
- Alabama Blackbelt Workforce and Education
- Alabama ACT Council
- Broadband Commission
- Alabama Literacy Alliance
- Prepaid Affordable College Tuition (PACT)
- Alabama 529 Savings Plan CollegeCounts

### Legislative Activities

- An essential legislative function of ACHE is to submit the Consolidated Budget Recommendation for the public two- and four-year institutions to lawmakers. Part of the funding process involves open-ended appropriations that may be jeopardized by the limitations of the Rolling Reserve Act. ACHE is committed to supporting the legislature by identifying those line items and the services they support.
- A law (Act No. 2015-122) was passed during the 2015 legislative session to allow Alabama to join the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA). On January 1, 2016, ACHE began operating as the designated state portal agency. SARA was established to make distance education courses more accessible to students across state lines and to allow non-Alabama institutions, qualifying under any SARA state portal authorization, to offer degree-level programming in Alabama. Likewise, this agreement allows Alabama institutions to offer programs outside Alabama in any SARA state. Serving as the portal agency, ACHE will be responsible for the review and recognition for qualified public and private Alabama institutions to operate outside of Alabama under the SARA agreement.
- ACHE continues to promote state-supported financial aid through the student financial aid programs administered through the Commission.

### Financial Aid

ACHE is responsible for the administration of the following state-level student financial aid programs:

- Alabama Student Assistance Program
- Alabama Educational Grants Program
- Alabama National Guard Educational Assistance Program
- Police Officer’s and Firefighter’s Survivor’s Educational Assistance Program
- Minority Doctoral Scholars Program (through SREB)

### Additional Information:

[Find out more about Pell Grant Eligibility: http://www2.ed.gov/programs/fpe/index.html](http://www2.ed.gov/programs/fpe/index.html)

### ACHE Partnerships

- Alabama State Department of Education
- Alabama Community College System
- Alabama Independent Colleges
- A+ College Ready
- Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama (PARCA)
- Southern Regional Education Board (SREB)
- State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO)