

ACHIEVE Conference Planning Sub-Committee Report

Report provided by Dr. Keith Sessions

The 2026 ACHIEVE Transfer Student Success Conference marked another milestone in Alabama's ongoing commitment to improving transfer student success. Hosted virtually by Alabama Transfers on March 3–5, 2026, the conference brought together higher education leaders, faculty, advisors, registrars, student services professionals, and policymakers from across the state to explore innovative strategies for strengthening transfer pathways and increasing college completion. This year's conference theme emphasized innovation, collaboration, and celebration as the foundation for advancing transfer student success throughout Alabama.

The decision to offer the conference at no cost and in a virtual format resulted in record-breaking participation, with 497 individuals registering for the event—nearly doubling the previous attendance record of 265 participants. Across the three-day conference, attendees logged into 1,268 individual session participations, demonstrating strong statewide engagement and a continued demand for professional development focused on student transfer and articulation. Conference sessions remained available for on-demand viewing following the event, extending the conference's impact well beyond the scheduled dates.

The conference featured nine presentations covering a broad range of timely topics affecting transfer students and institutions across Alabama. Highlights included keynote presentations from national higher education leaders, discussions on the Alabama Transfers–EdVisorly AI Pilot Project, innovative scheduling strategies, the future of transfer in Alabama, statewide transfer data, updates to the Alabama Transfers website, and the Phi Theta Kappa Direct Admission initiative. These sessions encouraged collaboration among institutions while providing practical strategies that participants can implement to improve transfer student outcomes.

In addition to achieving record participation, the 2026 conference demonstrated significant fiscal efficiency. The virtual conference was conducted at a fraction of the cost of previous in-person events while continuing to provide high-quality programming and statewide accessibility. The reduced operating expenses allowed Alabama Transfers to maximize available resources while ensuring that institutions of all sizes could participate without travel or registration barriers.

Overall, the 2026 ACHIEVE Conference successfully advanced the mission of Alabama Transfers by fostering collaboration, sharing innovative practices, and strengthening partnerships among Alabama's two-year and four-year institutions. The record attendance, outstanding participant engagement, and positive feedback reinforce the conference's growing role as Alabama's premier professional development event dedicated to transfer student success and increasing college completion across the state.

RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS:

Begin the planning process for the next ACHIEVE ONLINE conference or speaker series to be held in the Spring of 2027.