

# Rural Colleges: Opportunities and Challenges

Randy Smith, Ph.D.  
President, Rural Community  
College Alliance

Holdenville, Oklahoma



**RURAL COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE ALLIANCE**  
creating opportunities in place





# Me

- Member of the Choctaw Tribe of Oklahoma
- Rural higher education leader for 23 years
- Rancher in East Central Oklahoma
- Rural College President
- Frequent presenter to congressional committees as expert on rural Higher education



**RURAL COMMUNITY  
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Me



# Overview

- 64% of all community colleges are rural serving
- 588 institutions
- Rural institutions enroll 36% of student population Urban enrolls 64%
- Rural CCs serve more first time first generation students than urban and suburban community colleges
- Rural institutions serve higher percentage of minority students than urban and suburban colleges

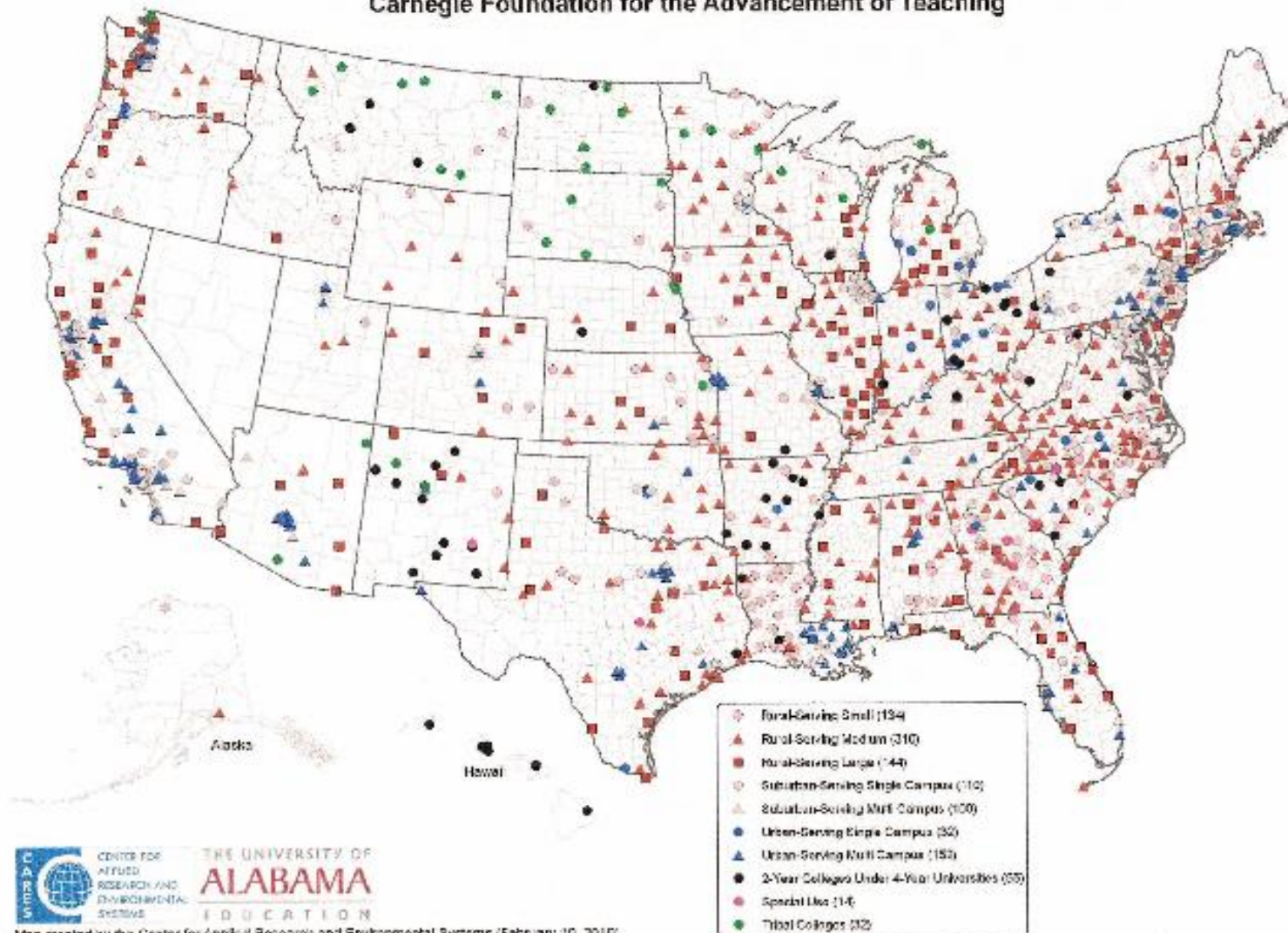


# Who are we?

- 134 Rural Serving Small
- 310 Rural Serving Medium
- 144 Rural Serving Large
- 36 Tribal Colleges



## 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

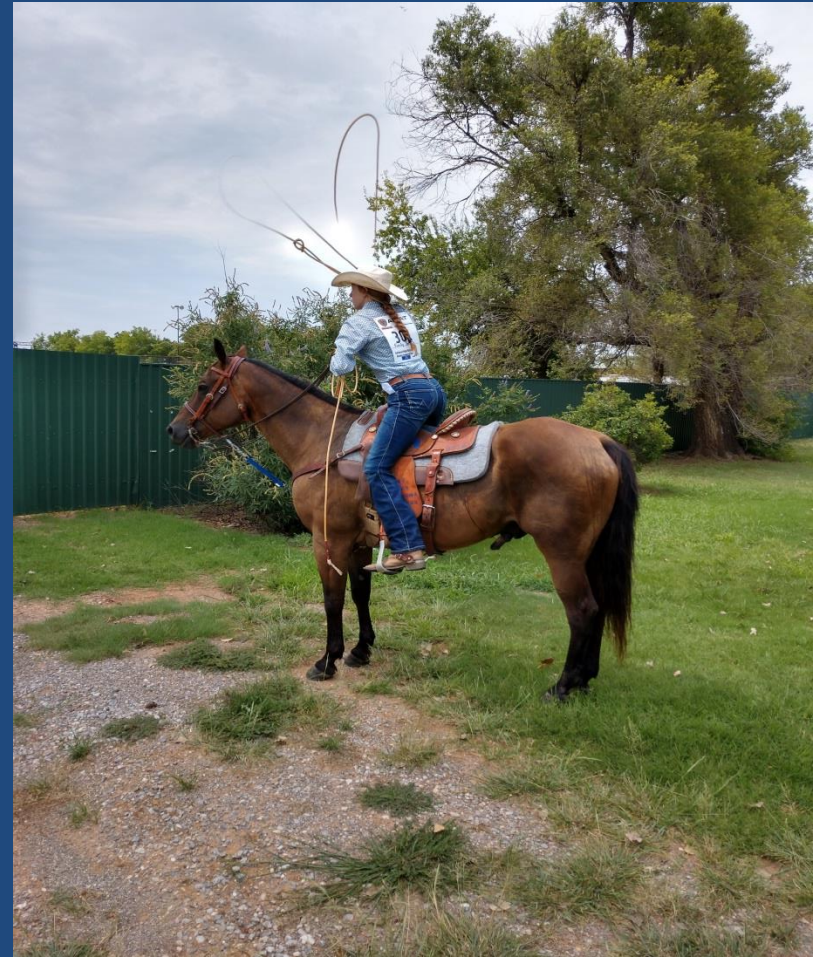
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA EDUCATION

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/center/education-policy-center/>

Source: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching Basic 2005 Classification (May 2008)

# Rural Employment Gap

- Gap between rural and urban economic development continues to widen....
- Rural unemployment typically 3.2% higher than in urban areas.
- *USDA Economic Research Service*



# Rural Population Decline

- Only 15% of US population lives Rural
- The last four years has seen an outflow of over 125,000 residents. 900 counties LOST population in the last four years.
- *USDA Economic Research Service*



# Rural Poverty

- Rural poverty rate for children was 25.2% in 2014. Urban rate was 15.1%
- Child poverty, including deep poverty has increased in rural areas.
- **Lower educational attainment is associated with unemployment and poverty**
- **The adult population with a college degree remains far lower in rural areas than in urban areas.**



# Skills Gap

- **Trades and technology**
  - **Construction**
  - **Agriculture**
  - **Ag mechanics**
  - **Allied healthcare**
  - **Welding**
  - **My picks: Farrier, gunsmith, diesel, ag mechanics, farm ranch management, lineman**
- 
- A woman with long brown hair, wearing a grey t-shirt and blue jeans, is riding a brown horse in a grassy field. The horse is facing right. In the foreground, a speckled dog with a red collar is walking towards the right. The background features a wooden fence and a line of trees under a clear blue sky.



# Skills Gap

- Certificate, AAS programs are where the demand is and will be for the significant future
- Growing, will have more impact on Rural America than any other factor.....



# Issues

- Factors impacting rural colleges the most:
  - Enrollment Management
  - Dilapidated facilities, HVAC, Dorms, Technology
  - Lack of specialty faculty, (nursing, welding, science etc)
  - Money
  - LACK OF STUDENT HOUSING
- How much does an empty seat cost you?? And economic development??



# Our Impact

- Rural community and technical colleges can have more of an impact on economic and workforce development than nearly any other community organization
- Infrastructure and expertise are available at the college

# Economic Development

- Community and Technical Colleges in rural areas are a catalyst in economic and workforce development.
- Industry must have a trained workforce
- Must have community infrastructure. Rural colleges train over 60% of all allied health and first responders (law enforcement, EMS, Fire)



# What we need to market about rural America

- Lower cost of living
- Better life style, quality of life
- Cheaper operating costs, taxes, utilities, land
- Ready and willing workforce
- College partner ready to train workers and contribute to community lifestyle



# Opportunities

- What do two year colleges typically do better than other institutions of higher education?



- 1. INSTRUCTION. We are student centered and focused
- 2. Ability to change and adapt quickly



# Rural Colleges.....

- Do more with less.....
- Are tied into their communities big time
- Operate in a unique way.
- Tied into workforce and economic development
- Participate with the community in numerous ways.....as are the employees

# Needs

- Residence Halls
- Updated facilities / technology upgrades
- Faculty recruitment / comparable wages
- Administrators / Leadership
- Equipment for high cost programs
- Start up funds for high cost programs



Thank you for your participation,  
time and attention!

• [Randy.Smith@ruralccalliance.com](mailto:Randy.Smith@ruralccalliance.com)

• 580-481-0249

• [www.ruralccalliance.org](http://www.ruralccalliance.org)

