

FALL JOURNAL 2023

Alabama Community College Association



**POLISHING OUR
DIAMONDS:**

LEADING FROM EVERY LEVEL

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The ACCA Executive Committee is excited to present the organization's annual conference at the Renaissance Riverview Hotel and Mobile Convention Center, November 19-21. The Committee is hard at work finalizing details to provide you with a beneficial and memorable professional development opportunity—a Diamond experience!

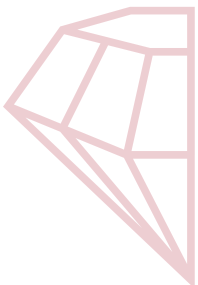
This year's conference will honor and celebrate employees from each college during the Chancellor's Awards and Reception on Sunday afternoon, and the complete schedule will feature three general sessions, over 40 concurrent sessions, several roundtable discussions, as well as commission and association meetings. We have also included networking opportunities to allow attendees to connect with colleagues, sponsors, and vendors. In addition, the Southern Jubilee Reception celebrating 60 Years of the ACCS will take place on Monday evening.

The theme for this year's conference is "Polishing Our Diamonds: Leading from Every Level." Speakers, presenters, and conference activities are designed to assist us to "shine brighter" for our students, for our colleges, and for our state. The Executive Committee is also committed to showcasing the incredible work occurring at our colleges. We believe you will leave Mobile feeling excited about your work, knowing that you are leading students to achieve success, and being proud to be an important part of your college and of the Alabama Community College System.

Conference registration is now open, and hotel reservations can be made through the ACCA website www.alabamacca.org/. The site also includes information on the many activities available near the hotel and the Convention Center.

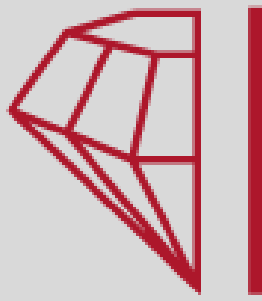
We look forward to seeing you at the 2023 ACCA Conference in Mobile. Thank you for your support of the Alabama Community College Association and for the incredible work you do for the students we serve.

Shine On!



Dr. Ashli Wilkins
2023 ACCA President





Alabama Community College Association



2023 CONFERENCE

Polishing Our Diamonds: Leading from Every Level

REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

**November 19 -
November 21**

**Renaissance Riverview
& Mobile Convention
Center**

Mobile, AL

Keynote Speakers

Ryan Hawk

Author, *The Pursuit Of
Excellence & Welcome
To Management*;
Host, *THE LEARNING
LEADER SHOW*



Rick Bragg

Author, *All Over but the
Shoutin'*, *Ava's Man*;
Pulitzer Prize-winning
Journalist



\$275 EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION

Early Bird registration: July 1 - October 15. \$350 registration after October 15.
Room rates are \$142 per night plus tax.

VISIT ALABAMACCA.ORG TO REGISTER TODAY

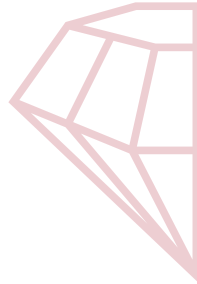
2023 CONFERENCE KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Ryan Hawk is the host of The Learning Leader Show. He has recorded more than 500 episodes over the past 8+ years. Forbes called The Learning Leader Show, "the most dynamic leadership podcast around." Inc Magazine said, "It's one of the 5 podcasts to make you a smarter leader." Apple named it an "all-time best seller" in 2020 and 2021.

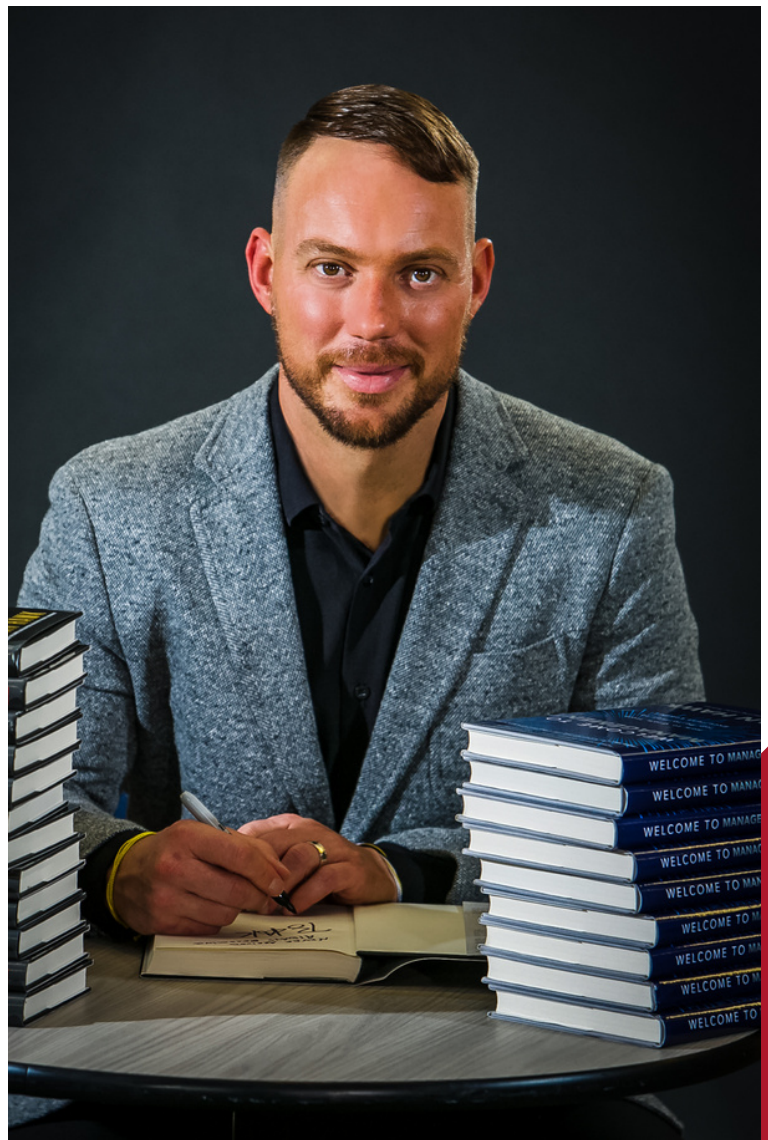
Ryan is the author of Welcome to Management: How To Grow From Top Performer To Excellent Leader. Book Authority recently named it to its 100 Best Management Audiobooks of all time (#25). Forbes called it, "the best leadership book of 2020." Ryan's second book is called The Pursuit of Excellence. It sold out of its first printing in eight hours and was named an instant Amazon Hot New Release. Forbes wrote (about The Pursuit of Excellence), "We're on the receiving end of Hawk surgically deconstructing the best leadership traits from world-class athletes, accomplished military leaders, and CEOs. If Tim Ferriss was coined the Oprah of the internet, Hawk is the Drucker of leadership. Pound for pound, The Pursuit of Excellence is the most dynamic leadership book of 2022 delivering a masterclass on how to apply the most useful habits to real life."

Previously, he worked in corporate America for 12 years. Ryan started as an entry-level telephonic sales rep and worked his way to manager, director, and ultimately VP of sales for a multi-billion-dollar company.

When he's not recording podcasts or writing books, he works to help leaders be more effective. Some of the ways he does that: Leadership Circles, 1:1 advising, and teaching in The Learning Leader Academy (the online school he created). Ryan has delivered hundreds of keynote speeches on leadership and performance excellence all over the world.



RYAN HAWK



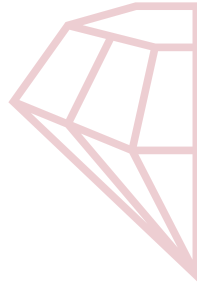
2023 CONFERENCE KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Rick Bragg is a noted journalist and writer who won the Pulitzer Prize for Feature Writing for his work with the New York Times. His most lasting contribution, however, is likely his trilogy of family stories. Initially, Bragg believed these stories would be important only to himself and his immediate family, but they have garnered wide appeal among people who see themselves and their own families reflected in the characters and settings.

Currently a professor of writing at the University of Alabama, Bragg teaches courses in literary journalism and magazine writing. Bragg has won more than 50 writing awards in his 20 years of journalism, including the American Society of Newspaper Editors Distinguished Writing Award twice. He was honored with the Harper Lee Award for Alabama's Distinguished Writer of the Year in 2009.

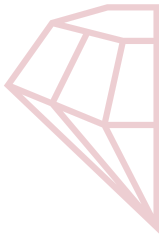
Works

All Over but the Shoutin' (1997)
 Somebody Told Me: The Newspaper Stories of Rick Bragg (2000)
 Ava's Man (2001)
 I Am a Soldier, Too: The Jessica Lynch Story (2003)
 The Prince of Frogtown (2008)
 Jerry Lee Lewis: His Own Story (2014)
 My Southern Journey: True Stories from the Heart of the South (2015)
 The Best Cook in the World: Tales From My Momma's Table (2018)
 Where I Come From: Stories from the Deep South (2020)
 The Speckled Beauty (2021)



RICK BRAGG





2023 ACCA ELECTIONS

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT



Dr. Brian C. Gordon was appointed Dean of Instruction for Jefferson State Community College (JSCC) in June 2021. In this capacity, he provides leadership and direction to the Transfer & General Studies Division, Career and Technical Division, Health – Related Programs, Nursing, and Distance Learning. Dr. Gordon works closely with the VP of Academic Affairs to ensure the academic mission of the college is realized. Prior to joining JSCC, Brian served as the Director of Distance Education for the Department of Health Science at The University of Alabama (UA). Brian has over 20 years of administrative experience in academia and is a Master Certified Health Education Specialist (MCHES) through the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing, Inc.

Dr. Gordon currently serves on the board of directors for the Horizon School and has prior national and local professional leadership experience with the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing, Inc., Society for Public Health Education, American Public Health Association, West Alabama AIDS Outreach (Five Horizons), and the Tuscaloosa Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. Additionally, Dr. Gordon has provided an array of professional services to the university and college community, and to urban and rural communities in the central and western portion of the state. Dr. Gordon has extensive experience in community engagement and policy development. As a public health professional, Dr. Gordon embraces the quest to provide access to educational opportunities to all by working to eliminate external barriers to those opportunities.

Dr. Gordon earned an associate degree from Wallace State – Hanceville, and his B.S. and M.A. degrees in Health Education from UA. Dr. Gordon completed his academic career in 2010 at UA by earning a doctorate degree in Health Education and Health Promotion.

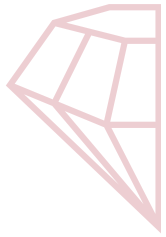


Olivier Charles has served as President of Bishop State Community College, a historically black community college, since July 2022. He has worked in higher education leadership for more than a decade.

Prior to joining Bishop State, Charles was the Vice Chancellor for Student Success with the Alabama Community College System. He has also served as the Dean of Students at Enterprise State Community College, Director of Admissions and Recruitment at Auburn University at Montgomery, and Director of Admissions and Enrollment Management at the University of West Alabama.

Charles earned a Bachelor of Science in Special Education and a Master of Science in College Student Development from the University of West Alabama. He is currently pursuing a doctorate degree.

ONLINE ELECTIONS FOR THE POSITION OF SECOND VICE PRESIDENT WILL BE HELD IN OCTOBER AT ALABAMACCA.ORG. INFORMATION ABOUT THE CANDIDATES APPEARS ABOVE.



CONFERENCE AT-A-GLANCE

Sunday, November 19, 2023

- 12:00 PM - 4:00 PM Registration
- 1:00 PM - 2:15 PM Association Meetings
- 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM Newcomers' Session
- 2:30 PM - 3:30 PM Chancellor's Awards-Bon Secour Bay Ballroom, Renaissance Riverview Hotel
- 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM Chancellor's Awards Reception-Bon Secour Atrium, Renaissance Riverview Hotel

Monday, November 20, 2023

- 7:30 AM - 4:30 PM Registration
- 7:30 AM - 4:30 PM Vendor Expo (*Roundtable discussions set up in this area*)
- 7:45 AM - 8:30 AM Light Breakfast in Vendor Expo
- 8:30 AM - 9:30 AM Concurrent Sessions I/Roundtable Discussions
- 9:45 AM - 11:30 AM General Session - Rick Bragg
- 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Lunch - Diamond Sponsor speakers
- 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM Concurrent Sessions II/Roundtable Discussions
- 2:15 PM - 3:30 PM Commission Meetings
- 3:30 PM - 4:00 PM Refreshment Break in Vendor Expo
- 4:00 PM - 4:45 PM Concurrent Sessions III
- 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM Jubilee Southern Regional Reception-Bon Secour Bay Ballroom
- 7:00 PM- until Conference After Hours Events On Your Own
(*Visit alabamacca.org for a list of Mobile activities to enjoy!*)

Tuesday, November 21, 2023

- 7:45 AM - 8:30 AM Light Breakfast in Vendor Area
- 8:30 AM - 9:30 AM Concurrent Sessions IV
- 9:45 AM - 11:00 AM General Session - Ryan Hawk
- 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM Closing Session - Chancellor Jimmy Baker

ALABAMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

Five Years Later, OneACCS a Solid Foundation for Unified, Interconnected System

The Alabama Community College System Board of Trustees' visionary approach for a unified system brought about a remarkable transformation for Alabama's community and technical colleges. The approach – through OneACCS – was successful because of the concerted efforts from System Office personnel spanning various divisions, as well as dedicated administrators, faculty and staff members at each college.

In a groundbreaking decision in 2018, the Board of Trustees inked a partnership with Ellucian. The objective was clear: to usher in a new era of efficiency and accessibility by implementing a singular enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution across the entire community college system.

The decision was the beginning of OneACCS. By Summer 2020, all ACCS colleges, along with the System Office, had transitioned to the new system. The benefits have been monumental. The adoption of a unified software platform catalyzed a significant boost in the System's overall effectiveness and efficiency, particularly in functionalities such as finance, human resources, purchasing, course directories, data collection, and more.

A remarkable transformation also occurred on the student-facing front. All community college students now enjoy unprecedented access to information through a user-friendly mobile interface. Students can gain details related to registration, financial aid, grades, and progress toward attaining degrees or certifications by simply using their smartphone.

OneACCS undoubtedly united the ACCS as a cohesive and dynamic network that operates as a single entity. Through this technological revolution, ACCS has not only revolutionized its administrative processes but has also reimaged student experiences.

In a world increasingly defined by rapid technological advancements, the system's embrace of OneACCS stands as a testament to our commitment to progress and innovation. OneACCS serves as a monumental moment in the system's 60-year history and reinforces the system's ability to shape the future of education through visionary leadership and cutting-edge solutions.



ALABAMA TECHNOLOGY NETWORK

ATN Impacts Alabama

Alabama Technology Network (ATN) is an entity of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS). It serves as Alabama's center for the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP), part of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST).

Located across the great State of Alabama, Alabama Technology Network is part of 15 Community Colleges and 3 University Campuses. With 54 employees, ATN's mission is to provide workforce training, technical assistance, and engineering services to incumbent workers statewide.

ATN has the most extensive training and service offerings for business and industry, which includes five primary areas of delivery: continual improvement, industrial maintenance & and technology, food safety, environmental health & and safety, and leadership & and management development.

A study published by the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research found that in 2018, ATN provides a sizable net positive economic impact to the State. The Upjohn study examined topline areas of ATN's projected economic impact to the State, including a contribution to Alabama's GDP of \$893 million, an additional personal income of \$437 million, and an effect on the State's gross output of \$2.26 billion.

The study also reported that the \$1.8 million federal dollars invested in ATN during the calendar year 2018 generated nearly a 25.08:1 increase in state personal income tax. Then, the return on investment of state funds was 9.67:1. This created a net positive return to the state treasury of an estimated \$45 million.

In 2022, Alabama Technology Network managed to serve 149 companies with 296 contract projects statewide.

Since 2015 through 2022, the following are client-reported economic impacts:

- 1,181 Independent Client Surveys Completed
- 3,589 New Jobs
- 14,116 Retained Jobs
- \$2.3B Increased & Retained Sales
- \$441M in New Client Investments
- \$805M in Cost Savings

Totals
17,705 Jobs
\$3.6B Client Impacts



In 2023, ATN launched CONNEX™ Alabama, a supply chain database that provides access to thousands of manufacturers to explore production capabilities, find alternate suppliers, and asses their own supply chain visually. By bringing all manufacturers together under one platform, CONNEX will strengthen Alabama by providing a tool where users, large and small, rural or urban, have access to the exact supplier or manufacturer they are looking for, optimizing their supply chain, and growing Alabama's economy. Contact us today at (334) 293-4671 or www.atn.org.

BEVILL STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Adult Education at Bevill State is More Than Earning a GED

Bevill State Adult Education now provides integrated pathways and a full range of academic support to place participants on the pathway to success in the workforce.

Director of Adult Education Dr. Stephanie Maddox says, "Every Adult Education participant is now served with an integrated approach that synchronizes fundamental workforce skills with education and training preparing our students for a successful future. We have more tools and support available than ever before. Short-term certifications such as Pharmacy Tech, Welding, CNA, Phlebotomy, and HVAC Fast Track are among the options we can fund for our Adult Education students."

Alabama Career Essentials (ACE) has replaced Ready to Work, the soft skills training program that taught entry-level skills for employment for more than a decade. ACE is a free training course designed by the Alabama Community College System with improved content and strategies to teach employability skills. Participants who complete ACE receive the ACT National Career Readiness Certificate, Alabama Certified Employee Credential, one free college course (up to 4 credit hours), and articulated credit for WKO 110 (3 credits) when enrolling in one of Alabama's community colleges.

MAPS (Mobilizing Alabama Pathways) is a relatively new addition to Adult Education. These free short courses prepare students utilizing industry-specific curriculum targeting entry-level competencies in five industry sectors: Construction, Healthcare, Information Technology, Manufacturing, and Transportation & Logistics.

"Adult education programs are crucial to alleviating the education gap by helping individuals achieve economic and social mobility. Not only do these Adult Education programs benefit the participants, they can improve workforce development and drive economic growth. Learning opportunities like ACE and MAP, along with BSCC's other workforce training certifications, serve non-traditional students and ensure that adult learners can access the tools they require to meet Alabama's workforce needs," stated Dr. Joel Hagood, President of Bevill State Community College.

"Adult Education will always be here to provide our core services. However, we are now integrating a workforce perspective to ensure that participants leave empowered with the education and credentials necessary to succeed" says Dr. Stephanie Maddox, Director of Adult Education. "We offer all of our classes and certifications at no cost to our students. From ACE and MAPs to short-term certification funding, Adult Education is ready to help every participant identify a career pathway, train for success, and begin a career."

Adult Education participants may choose to earn a General Equivalency Diploma (GED) and qualifying participants who attended school in Alabama may choose to pursue a High School Diploma Option. With renewed interest, English as a Second Language classes are returning, and adult basic literacy is always available for those who need to improve basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics.



BISHOP STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Bishop State Accepted into Thurgood Marshall College Fund

Residents who choose to attend any of Alabama's six historically black community colleges (HBCCs) will now have access to more scholarships and professional development opportunities through a prestigious national partnership.

The Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCf) announced a resolution Tuesday, June 6, 2023, establishing Bishop State Community College and five other Alabama community colleges as members. Named after the U.S. Supreme Court's first black justice, TMCf is a nationally recognized nonprofit membership organization that supports more than 50 historically black colleges and universities.

"Adding community colleges to our membership is part of an intentional move toward a more inclusive talent strategy. A four-year degree is one path but not the only path to career success," said TMCf President & CEO Dr. Harry L. Williams. "HBCCs play a critical role in local and regional economic development by offering workforce upskilling and reskilling programs. HBCCs across the country offer associate degrees and industry-recognized certificates and credentials that can launch students into the workforce to fill skilled positions that offer good pay without the requirement of a bachelor's degree. HBCCs also offer students the ability to obtain core, academic credits that can be transferred to a four-year university for a bachelor's degree."

Alabama is home to more HBCCs and HBCUs than any other state. Alabama's HBCCs are the first historically black community colleges to be inducted into TMCf. To date, TMCf has provided more than \$300 million in scholarships, programmatic and capacity-building support to its member schools and students.

"This partnership with the Thurgood Marshall College Fund marks a significant milestone for our institution and emphasizes our commitment to providing exceptional educational opportunities to all our students," said Bishop State President Olivier Charles.

"Through this collaboration, we will be able to offer our students access to an array of resources and opportunities that will enhance their academic experiences and prepare them for real-world success. I am truly excited to work with the TMCf and continue to build upon the legacy of excellence that we have established at Bishop State Community College. Together, we will empower our students to achieve their full potential and make a positive impact in their communities and beyond."

"Alabama's community colleges exist to be a pillar of community for students of all backgrounds to be able to have the resources to reach success, and these national relationships help bolster the advantages and access students have to significant opportunities that support their pursuit of excellence," said Jimmy H. Baker, Chancellor of the Alabama Community College System.

"The connections students and Alabama's HBCC leaders will have through the Thurgood Marshall College Fund are bound to strengthen the avenues the colleges provide to residents who trust our colleges with the training they desire for their future."



CALHOUN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Calhoun Hosts Official Building Renaming and Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony for Gene Haas Center for Advanced Manufacturing

The Calhoun Community College Athletics Division is excited to announce that the Lady Warhawks Basketball Team has advanced to the 2023 Alabama Community College Conference (ACCC) State Championship as well as their head coach, Candace Byrd-Vinson, being named Coach of the Year.

"This moment is surreal for the Lady Warhawks Basketball Team, the coaches, as well as our amazing Calhoun family and community fan base. To say we worked hard to get to this place would be a complete understatement," commented Coach Byrd-Vinson. "After being hired as the new head coach, I knew time was not on my side, and that I had to begin recruiting very quickly. Recruiting late in the year can be extremely discouraging as many athletes have already decided where they would go to play basketball, but I truly felt in my heart that we still stood a chance with obtaining athletes that could help us have an amazing season," she added.

For more than two decades, Calhoun had been without a basketball program. After surveying the community, the college acted on the results, and men's and women's basketball was brought back to the college. "There are many decisions made at the college level, and this one ranks high on my list," commented Dr. Jimmy Hodges, Calhoun President. "The college sports experience is just as important as the academic experience. And if there is an opportunity to provide both to a student, I say go for it, which is what we did when we brought back basketball. This program has allowed students to attend Calhoun debt-free while enjoying the game they love and obtaining a high-quality education," added Hodges.

"This season has been magical! I have been blessed to be surrounded by talented, hardworking young women who bought into the vision. This season has exposed what a team can do when everyone is on the same page, working together to accomplish the same goal. I am humbled that the college and athletes placed their faith and trust in me and my amazing coaching staff to guide and direct the new program. My motto has always been that every person is important, regardless of their title or role. The continuous outpouring of support from my President, the faculty and staff at Calhoun, as well as our community and fans, has been nothing short of amazing. CALHOUN BASKETBALL IS BACK", shouts Byrd-Vinson.

The team took on the Bishop State Community College Wildcats on March 8, 2023, at the Alabama A&M Event Center in Huntsville, AL, and won with a score of 83-74.



CENTRAL ALABAMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Central Alabama Community College: Pioneering the Future of Nursing Education

Central Alabama Community College (CACC) may not be the largest institution, but we passionately believe in being the best. As a testament to our commitment, CACC's nursing apprenticeship program stands out as the second largest in the state, setting benchmarks in nursing education.

On August 1, 2023, a significant milestone was achieved as the Coosa Valley School of Nursing at CACC celebrated the graduation of its inaugural class of student nurse apprentices. Established in collaboration with the Alabama Office of Apprenticeship and numerous area healthcare facilities, this transformative program currently supervises over 50 student nurse apprentices across 16 healthcare establishments within the CACC service area.

President Jeff Lynn stated, "Central Alabama Community College is more than just an educational institution. We are a community that shapes the future of healthcare, providing our students with unparalleled opportunities to learn, grow, and succeed." These apprentices engage themselves in long-term and acute care environments, acquiring hands-on experience under the watchful eyes of trained mentors. This unique earn-while-you-learn model provides valuable mentorship and allows students to merge their work hours with the clinical hours essential for their nursing program.

Dr. Jennifer Steele, Director of Nursing, captured the essence of this program, saying, "Our innovative approach transforms the traditional paradigm. It allows our nursing students, who might typically juggle multiple part-time roles, to focus on one well-paying job, seamlessly integrating their academic and professional journeys."

The inception of the student nurse apprenticeship program can be traced back to March 17, 2022, when the Alabama Board of Nursing greenlit the practice. The program has grown exponentially from the initial group of 14 eager learners, boasting approximately 50 apprentices each semester. This remarkable growth not only magnetizes potential nursing students to CACC but also offers healthcare facilities an invaluable marketing tool, enabling them to onboard entry-level professionals with a sincere aspiration for a nursing career.



CHATTAHOOCHEE VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Chattahoochee Valley Community College's Nursing Program Achieves High Pass Rates, Exceeding National Averages

In healthcare education, one of the most critical milestones is the successful pass rates of students on the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX). These rates reflect the effectiveness of a program in preparing students for the challenges of the medical field. Chattahoochee Valley Community College (CVCC) has emerged as a shining example of excellence in nursing education, with the nursing program consistently surpassing national averages for pass rates.

Nursing programs across the nation often face the challenge of ensuring their students not only acquire the necessary knowledge but also develop the practical skills and critical thinking abilities demanded by the healthcare sector. CVCC's nursing program has risen to this challenge.

Recent statistics paint a vivid picture of the program's success. The pass rates of CVCC's nursing graduates consistently surpass the national averages, a feat that speaks volumes about the dedication of both the faculty and the students. The National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) pass rate for the Direct Entry ADN cohort that graduated in May 2023 is 100% for first-time test takers, while the national average pass rate is 87.62%. The NCLEX pass rate for the stand-alone PN cohort that graduated in December 2022 is 89.5% for first-time test takers, while the national average pass rate is 83.62%.

Dr. Bridgett Jackson, Director of Health Sciences, shared what she feels is the secret to the program's success, "We have committed faculty that take the time to go above and beyond to provide group and individualized tutoring to our students. We also encourage peer mentoring to promote student teamwork and collaboration to enhance the earning process for our students." The success of CVCC's nursing program can be attributed to several factors. First and foremost, the well-designed curriculum encompasses theoretical knowledge and hands-on clinical experience, providing students with a solid foundation that prepares them for the realities of healthcare practice.

Secondly, the CVCC nursing programs also offer Nurse Apprenticeship opportunities. This initiative from the Alabama Office of Apprenticeship is the first of its kind in the nation. Students who qualify for the nurse apprenticeship program are paid for completing their clinical hours through partnerships with various clinical facilities. It's a win-win for the students and the clinical facilities because they can be gainfully employed while fulfilling their clinical hour requirements.

Most importantly, Dr. Jackson's leadership and dedication to fostering an environment of support and excellence among her team is evident in the program's achievements. "The nursing faculty and I are passionate about teaching these students," she said. "We use multiple methods in the classroom, nursing lab, simulation lab, and clinical setting to assist the students with developing strong critical thinking skills that will allow them to demonstrate sound clinical judgment and provide quality patient care. Their success is our success."



COASTAL ALABAMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Introducing the Coastal Alabama Coyotes

Coastal Alabama Community College is ready to meet all challenges, and challengers, as a unified institution under one mascot for the first time in its history. Since its creation from a consolidation of three former colleges in 2017, Coastal Alabama has fielded teams with three different mascots, depending on which campus its student-athletes competed. But after April 26 those teams — which regularly played one another — saw for the first time the new brand of their college, which stretches from Gilbertown to Gulf Shores.

The Coastal Alabama Coyotes have arrived.

The college held a live broadcast event of the college's campuses as well as its social media channels on April 26 announcing the new athletic identity, which will officially take the field and court in August as student-athletes return from the summer.

"From the students, they all wanted to be united under one name, so we can move forward as one institution of strength and be a powerhouse across the state," said Chief Communications Officer Sara Davis. "We're celebrating the history of the past, and understanding the loyalty to all our former mascots.

"But today we make history and all become Coastal Alabama Coyotes, and for generations to come, we will all be very proud of that."

"Go Yotes!" will be a familiar cheer as the teams compete in their familiar colors, but this time emblazoned with a Coyote that was designed to look lean, hungry and aggressive. The new brand was designed by the national marketing firm RARE Design, which is based in the south but creates athletic identities for professional teams spanning the NBA, MLB, NFL, NASCAR and many more.

Representatives of the company traveled to Monroeville, Brewton and Bay Minette, where the three different mascots were rooted, and spoke with individuals ranging from the students and student-athletes to faculty and legacy holders. Above and beyond, they associated the word "family" with athletics, along with "fight" and "aggression." That was rare and informed the college's naming committee's decision to move forward with Coyotes as the mascot, as the beasts are not only very common across the Coastal Alabama Community College footprint in southwest Alabama but are also very loyal to each other.

"Once we started discussing names that hold the characteristics that described the college, the Coyote was the obvious choice," said Director of Marketing Lloyd Wing, who spearheaded the rebranding efforts over the last year. "Coyotes value their pack, their family, and we perfectly understand that."

The prolific animals have other relevant traits as well, according to Coastal Alabama Community College President Dr. Craig Pouncey, who supported the unification and rebranding.

"While we had become Coastal Alabama Community College, we had not fully united as a family, as we now have," Pouncey said. "And coyotes are resilient, and that's something everyone at our entire college — regardless of where they are from — can relate to."

Wing believes the Coyote mascot and subsequent branding sets the entire college apart from its competition, especially within its conference — the Alabama Community College Conference — as well as its governing association, the National Junior College Athletic Association.

"Once we reveal this, it will be obvious that we have the best athletic brand, not only in the ACCC, but the whole NJCAA as well," Wing said. "That's how proud we are of this. Go Yotes!"



DRAKE STATE COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Drake State Breaks Ground on Advanced Manufacturing Facility

Construction is underway on Drake State Community and Technical College's advanced manufacturing center. Officials from Drake State, the Alabama Community College System, the City of Huntsville, Madison County, as well as representatives from Goodwyn Mills Cawood (GMC) and Fite Building Company, celebrated the milestone with a groundbreaking ceremony at the Meridian Street campus on Friday, June 9.

"This leading-edge facility cements our commitment to workforce development in the North Alabama region," said President of Drake State Community and Technical College, Dr. Patricia Sims. "It will help our students secure high-wage jobs and nationally recognized certifications at an affordable cost. With dedicated spaces for various disciplines and top-notch equipment, we aim to equip our students with the skills needed to excel in high-demand fields. We are grateful to our partners, including the Alabama Community College System, the City of Huntsville, Madison County, Goodwyn Mills Cawood, Fite Building Company, and others, for supporting this vision."

The Drake State Workforce Skills Training Center was identified as a needed project through the ACCS ASPIRE 2030 initiative, which provides funding for facility upgrades and new construction for all levels of education in Alabama.

The 50,000-square-foot facility will support the aerospace and advanced manufacturing industries and house the most in-demand training programs, including engineering design and mechatronics. The new building will include dedicated space for machine tool technology, welding, industrial systems and technology, drafting and design and more, as well as lab spaces, classrooms and offices for instructors and administration.

The new advanced manufacturing center will equip students with skills that will help them earn a high wage and gain nationally recognized certifications at a low cost.

GMC is providing architectural, interior design, civil engineering and landscape architecture services for the advanced manufacturing facility, which is being constructed by Fite Building Company. Other project team members include Tucker Jones Engineers, structural engineer; MW/Davis Dumas & Associates, mechanical engineer; and Jackson, Renfro & Associates, electrical engineer.

Construction on the new building is scheduled to be completed by fall 2024.



ENTERPRISE STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ESCC's Liberty Bull Serving as District Circle K Lt. Gov.

Enterprise State Community College alumna Liberty Bull serves as the Capital Division Lieutenant Governor for Circle K International.

According to the organization's website, Circle K International is the college-focused branch of the Kiwanis International family, and it "is the world's largest student-led collegiate service organization, with thousands of members on hundreds of campuses on five continents across the globe."

Alabama is broken into four divisions: Valley Division, Champion Division, Gulf Division, and Capital Division. Member clubs in the Capital Division can be found at ESCC, Troy University, Huntingdon College and Auburn University.

Bull was elected to her new position during the Alabama Circle K District Convention, held in Prattville from March 3-5, where ESCC's club also received the Sam F. Hobbs Most Improved Club Award. Bull has been involved with ESCC's Circle K Club since 2021, where she served as fundraiser chair and secretary. She is currently serving as the club's president for the 2022-23 academic year.

ESCC Circle K Sponsor Ashley Snellgrove called Bull "committed" and a "conscientious student." She also said that Bull was quick to take on leadership roles as the club began rebuilding last year.

"Liberty was quick to volunteer her efforts in reinstating our campus Circle K club after learning of the organization's tenets: leadership, service, and fellowship," Snellgrove said. "She pledged to be more than just a member and took on the responsibilities of secretary and the fundraising chair. She enthusiastically stepped into the role as President this year."

Snellgrove said Bull was "largely responsible" for membership growth in the club since last year. "I have truly enjoyed getting to know Liberty," Snellgrove said, calling Bull a quiet leader. "She really is so special."

Even in her new role, Bull said she hopes to encourage students to participate in Circle K.

"I encourage students to participate in Circle K by reiterating our three tenets: leadership, fellowship, and service," she said. "Students can gain leadership experience and make friends in their club and across the state while serving their community."

She also has several goals she hopes to accomplish in her new role as lieutenant governor of the Capital Division of Circle K International.

"I hope to increase communication between the Key Club, Circle K, and Kiwanis organizations," she said, stating that she also hopes to charter new clubs in the Capital Division. "Through ESCC's Circle K club, I have made life-long friendships and gained a love for service. I can't wait to spread awareness of Kiwanis organizations throughout my term."



GADSDEN STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Gadsden State Offers BOGO Scholarships to Eligible Chamber Members

Savannah Dempsey already has a bachelor's degree but she wants to continue her education by pursuing a degree in accounting. Thanks to the Buy One Get One Free Scholarship at Gadsden State Community College, she's able to take classes toward an associate degree at a drastically reduced rate.

The Buy One Get One Free Scholarship is available exclusively to members of local Chambers of Commerce in Calhoun, Cherokee and Etowah counties. It's also available to employees of the Chambers.

"This program empowers Chamber members and employees to invest in their education by enrolling in two classes and only paying the price for one," said Dr. Kathy Murphy, Gadsden State's president. "The College is taking on the cost of up to half of your tuition. We are asking you to meet us halfway."

Dempsey, who works as the director of member engagement at the Calhoun Chamber of Commerce, was one of the first to apply for the BOGO scholarship.

"Once I heard about the BOGO scholarship, I knew I needed to utilize it," she said. "Why would I pass up the opportunity of getting essentially half of my education free?"

After graduating from Spring Garden High School in 2017, Dempsey enrolled at Jacksonville State University. A first-generation student, she earned her degree in integrated studies in 2021.

"I want to go back to school to potentially earn a degree in Accounting," said the 24-year-old Jacksonville resident. "I think the BOGO scholarship is a great way for me to test the waters and see if going back to school is the right track for me."

Dempsey is no stranger to hard work. During her time at JSU, she worked in the Admissions Office and part-time at a grocery store while being a financially independent, full-time student

"I worked hard to pay for my tuition and to support myself," she said. "As soon as I graduated, I started working at the Chamber and started paying off student debt. I absolutely did not want to take on additional debt for my accounting degree so BOGO is a huge benefit for me."

At the Calhoun Chamber of Commerce, Dempsey is responsible for membership events, programs related to business development and the young professionals group.

"I have been fortunate enough to have a good job and a good education; however, I am excited to see what Gadsden State has in store for me," she said.

-MORE-

Dempsey enrolled in Introduction to Business and Principles of Accounting for the fall semester at Gadsden State. She will have an additional 12 hours of coursework to complete following the fall semester to earn an associate degree.



INGRAM STATE TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Ingram State Holds First Commencement Ceremonies Since Consolidating Correctional Education

J.F. Ingram State Technical College (ISTC) hosted employees, friends, and family for the first graduation ceremony since consolidating correctional education on August 30 and 31.

"Ingram is focused on training students in high-wage high-demand jobs that best benefit the students' success upon release," said ISTC President Annette Funderburk. "When the students are released, they will be equipped with the skill set to gain meaningful employment and become productive members of society."

Ingram State celebrated 207 students who received their technical certificate of completion, GED, or high school diploma from participating locations.

Female graduates were recognized during an in-person ceremony at Draper Instructional Service Center in Elmore on Wednesday.

The male graduation ceremony was held across seven locations through a hybrid-model graduation where all students had the opportunity to be present for a physical ceremony, while the main graduation speakers were streamed from the Draper Instructional Service Center. Each graduate was individually recognized and streamed across the College for everyone to watch.

Valerie Gray of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) Board of Trustees served as the commencement speaker for the female graduation ceremony held on Wednesday. Mrs. Gray spoke about the importance of education and the impact it will have on their future.

"Today signifies the culmination of the hard work and dedication that each and every one of these students have put in to achieve their education," said ACCS Board of Trustees member Valerie Gray. "The ACCS Board of Trustees members are very proud of all Ingram State graduates for taking the first steps in your reentry journey and we wish nothing but success for each and every one of you."

Alabama Department of Labor Secretary Fitzgerald Washington was featured as the commencement speaker for the male graduation ceremony. Secretary Washington spoke to the graduates about how the technical training they receive at Ingram creates opportunities for success in the Alabama workforce.

"Matching employers with jobseekers is one of ADOL's main goals, and I'm proud to be here today to help connect these recent graduates with businesses who want to employ them," said Alabama Department of Labor Secretary Fitzgerald Washington. "The technical skills, along with the soft skills these students have learned here at Ingram will make them valuable members of Alabama's workforce."



JEFFERSON STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Jefferson State Students Benefit from New Success Center

Jefferson State students are benefiting from a wide range of supportive resources provided by a new Regions Foundation Student Success Center. The new Center, which opened in spring 2023, provides no-cost services ranging from emergency grants to food pantry access, mental healthcare, and more.

"Many students face unexpected obstacles and hardships along their educational journey, and the Student Success Center helps students overcome these challenges," said Jefferson State Student Success Center Director Aaliyah Moore. "The Center provides wrap-around support services to all Jefferson State students and helps them stay on track and achieve their goals."

The Regions Foundation Student Success Center is a one-stop facility on Jefferson State's Birmingham campus where students receive free, in-person support in a customized manner, including:

- Emergency grants for qualified students
- Financial counseling
- Food pantry access, with a well-stocked pantry of nutritious food options on-site
- Mental health access
- Confidential peer-to-peer support
- Referrals to additional Jefferson State services providing personal support, as well as to state and federal programs supporting student success

"We want to remove as many barriers as possible to help students complete their education," said Jefferson State President Keith Brown. "Many of our students are the first in their family to attend college, or they are adults who are working full-time jobs and managing households. These challenges often make completing an education and acquiring a stable career difficult. What we're offering here helps keep them on the road toward earning their degrees and building a brighter future."

The Regions Foundation Student Success Center is funded in part by a \$500,000 grant from the Regions Foundation, a nonprofit initiative primarily funded by Regions Bank.

"Jefferson State Community College recognizes that, for students to truly succeed, they need support in ways that go beyond academics," said Marta Self, Executive Director of the Regions Foundation. "Jefferson State is using this understanding to change the way things are done. They are taking a bold step forward, creating comprehensive support and outreach so every student knows the college is in their corner, ready to support them to graduate and build a successful career. That's why the Regions Foundation is honored to support this truly innovative Student Success Center."

"These resources have the power to change the trajectory of one's family for generations to come," said Regions Bank Birmingham Market Executive Alan Register. "Too often, only one life event or one financial challenge can derail a student's plan for completing their degree. Jefferson State is sending a powerful message to students, 'You can complete your education, and we will stand behind you.'"

Students can access services offered by the center at jeffersonstate.edu/ssc.



LAWSON STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Lawson State's Youngest Student Prepares to Start College

Not many fifteen-year-olds are finished with high school and ready to start college, but Christian Malone is the exception. Christian starts classes at Lawson State Community College this fall after graduating this past May from The American Academy for Young Professionals at the age of fifteen.

He has already hit the ground running on Lawson State's campus by taking on the role of a student Ambassador. The ambassadors can be seen around campus, and in the community, lending a helping hand to service projects and fulfilling the needs of the college. So far, Christian has helped with dorm move-in day, attended the ambassador business meeting, and is already working on community service projects with the college. Mr. Malone has done all of this and has not even started taking classes.

Christian's parents, Lonnie and Lynn Malone, are playing an active role in guiding him during this new phase of continual learning. "We're very proud of his academic achievements and expect great things during his time at Lawson State Community College, where we know he will gain necessary knowledge and skills to excel in his future endeavors."

When asked what he is looking forward to most as classes begin, Christian said, "The college experience, growing up and maturing and being prepared to go into the world." Christian's ultimate goal at Lawson State is to get a degree in Computer Science and then attend The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). Computer science is something he has been interested in since a small child and he has always had a desire to make a career out of this passion. Christian prides himself on honesty, loyalty and creativity and is excited about the new experiences and new friendships to come.

While starting college at the young age of 16, after his recent birthday on August 17th, is quite an accomplishment but it can also be intimidating, overwhelming and stressful. When asked how is he handling all the new-found pressures of being the youngest student at the college, Malone said he's "not feeling the pressure at all," because he is well prepared. Christian gives credit to his high school teacher, Dr. Juliet Arrington, for her teaching methods that gave him a college preview, along with details about the college experience and how to adapt.

The student population at Lawson State is extremely diverse. This type of academic atmosphere should make the transition smoother for Christian and others who may not fit into a typical college-aged student category. Lawson State will be the perfect fit for Christian. Our student population quickly notes that we are a caring campus at Lawson State Community College, and Christian will quickly become one of our shining examples.



LURLEEN B. WALLACE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

LBW Announces The “SAINTS IN ACTION” Initiative

LBW was confronted this year with a growing concern many colleges are facing among its student body—addressing reported high levels and frequency of mental health distress. Psychological distress among postsecondary students is increasing at an alarming rate and LBW is no exception. While the need for mental health counseling services at LBW has been discussed for years, its importance was confirmed and amplified by institutional research conducted by the college in 2022 to assess students’ basic needs. The college was further challenged with establishing the ways and means to provide easily accessible counseling services that can be sustained.

The reported levels and frequency of mental health distress was a call to action for LBW staff. In the spring of 2023, LBW submitted a grant proposal for mental health services titled, Saints In Action, under the Liaison IMPACT program; LBW was recently notified its proposal was awarded and is funded in full. Due to the generosity of Liaison International, the grant will fund a total of 260 30-minute counseling sessions by a licensed professional. The community-based partnership that will be employed under this grant will help bring awareness to the resources offered in the service area.

The counseling sessions can be scheduled in person or via telehealth in an effort to remove barriers for access and social stigmas. These essential mental health services will be offered free of charge to students; given LBW’s rural location and high poverty rate within the service area, providing such services free of charge to the student body is groundbreaking.

LBW President, Dr. Brock Kelley, adds, “The well-being of our students is our number one priority. As a rural community college, and true to our core mission, LBW is committed to helping meet the needs of our student body by partnering with outside entities to enhance resources for everyone at LBW.”

The mental health practitioners, along with LBW staff and faculty, are committed to continuing to search for innovative ways to involve at-risk students. Aside from mental health counseling services offered to students on campus and through telehealth options, LBW aims to improve outcomes for students beyond postsecondary education through systemic approaches, including prevention and enhanced coping strategies. Counseling services provided to LBW students will also equip individuals with increased self-awareness and early recognition signs of mental health warning risks and triggers through proactive and integrative care.

LBW aims to positively impact the student population by fostering an environment of support and inclusion for students who suffer from mental illness; by providing these vital services, LBW hopes to improve the overall well-being of students and increase their chance of successful degree completion.



MARION MILITARY INSTITUTE

MMI Hosts USAF Flight Academy, Expands Aviation Program

Marion Military Institute (MMI) is doing its part to combat the national pilot shortage. On July 28, 2023, MMI finished hosting its second three-week session of the Aim High Flight Academy, sponsored by U.S. Air Force Recruiting - Detachment 1. Through this summer program, a total of 18 college students (14 MMI cadets, and 4 University of Alabama Air Force ROTC students) took the opportunity to explore aviation careers via free flight training at Vaiden Field in Marion. Instruction was provided by Aeropro, MMI's new aviation partner for its year-round FAA Part 141 flight training program. All Aim High participants logged flight hours in MMI-owned Cessna 172s, and several were able to reach solo flight status.

For MMI, hosting this summer enrichment opportunity is in line with its workforce development mission to develop pilots for both military and civil aviation careers. The college now offers two flight training options for its "Flying Tigers" depending on a cadet's goal: The 1-year Military Aviation Track is designed mainly for cadets in the Service Academy Program with the intent to demonstrate a cadet's flight aptitude. The 2-year Civil Aviation Track is for cadets interested in commercial pilot positions and is designed to allow cadets to achieve their commercial and instrument ratings in two years, graduate with their associate's degree, and then work as a paid Certified Flight Instructor while accumulating 1,500 hours required by commercial airlines. Additionally, MMI graduates can continue their commercial training at a 4-year university in order to earn a bachelor's degree in Professional Flight, Aviation Management or other related field.

Beginning in the Spring semester of 2024, MMI will expand its offerings to include the possibility of a Rotary Wing Route for aspiring helicopter pilots.

For details on MMI's Flight Training, including costs, visit marionmilitary.edu/fly.



NORTHEAST ALABAMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Northeast Alabama Community College Broke Ground on \$7-8 Million Softball Facility in August

Dr. David Campbell, President of Northeast Alabama Community College, and other NACC officials held a groundbreaking ceremony for NACC's new women's softball facility on Tuesday, August 8, 2023. The event was held on campus at the facility's construction site, located by the walking and nature trail.

The softball stadium will be a \$7-8 million state-of-the-art facility. The stadium will be lighted to allow for late afternoon and evening games and will have artificial turf in both the infield and outfield. Locker rooms and a training facility will also be included on-site.

Sports Turf is the contractor for the project. Architecture services are being provided by McKee & Associates of Montgomery, Alabama. McKee & Associates have designed stadiums for other schools, including Auburn University, Troy University, and Jacksonville State University.

"We are very happy to bring women's softball to the college level," stated NACC President Dr. David Campbell. "There is much excitement in our area in anticipation of our starting a women's softball program at Northeast. I am a real fan of women's softball myself."

As noted by NACC President Dr. David Campbell, the stadium will be located near the popular campus walking/nature trail, and the college has plans to make the entire area a recreational/picnic area for Northeast students, staff, and the community.

Special guests Chancellor Jimmy Baker, Speaker of the House Nathaniel Ledbetter, Senator Steve Livingston, Representative Mike Kirkland, and ACCS Board Member Dus Rogers offered words of encouragement for the project. Many local high school softball coaches also attended.

Dr. Campbell included a word of thanks to supporters, saying, "We owe it to our Legislators, particularly Speaker of the House Representative Nathaniel Ledbetter, for their support financing our women's softball stadium, and of course Senator Steve Livingston and Representative Mike Kirkland. We thank our System Chancellor, Dr. Jimmy Baker, for the authorization of our program."

The college plans for the NACC Mustangs Softball team to compete in the fall of 2024. Coach Joe Guthrie was recently hired as Head Coach of the team. Guthrie says he was intrigued by a sketch of NACC's proposed stadium. "That caught my attention," he said. "I am thrilled to be leading the Mustangs as the first coach. I hope I get to hold the keys of this program for a long time, and what a great place to start."

To learn more about Northeast Alabama Community College, visit nacc.edu or download the OneACCS app in the Apple Store or Google Play Store. Follow NACC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn to keep up with the latest announcements, current events, and more.



NORTHWEST-SHOALS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Northwest Shoals Announces \$30 Million Building and Renovation Project for the Phil Campbell Campus

During a town hall community meeting earlier this year, Northwest Shoals Community College (NWSCC) announced a building and campus renovation project for the Phil Campbell campus that is estimated to exceed \$30 million.

The plans include a new building, Patriot Plaza, which will connect a newly renovated Wallace Administration Building (301) and library (Building 306). The Patriot Plaza will serve as the new centralized point of campus for student life.

NWSCC President Dr. Jeff Goodwin said the infrastructure plan would include the construction of the 5,400 square-foot Patriot Plaza and approximately 60,000 square feet of total renovated space on campus. Site work for stabilizing a retaining wall located at the back of campus is expected to start this summer. However, construction and renovation projects are anticipated to start in late 2023 or spring of 2024.

"It is past time for our facilities to resemble the amazing education that takes place inside our classrooms every day," stated Goodwin. "This campus is where community colleges started in our state and we want it to be the model for community colleges moving forward."

Goodwin continued, "The expectations of our students and the way they take classes have changed a lot in the last 60 years. Many of our courses are taken online and through dual enrollment. However, this plan will help us to give our Phil Campbell campus a nice modern look with upgraded technology while maximizing our space in a very efficient way."

The new plan will turn much of the library (building 306) and building 307 into classroom and lab space which will largely house the Associate Degree Nursing program. Building 305 will be renovated to include office space, classrooms and a community meeting space.

According to Alabama House Representative Jamie Kiel, it is great to see this investment being made in the local community college.

"I am so excited to see this plan come to fruition," said Kiel. "It is so needed. The Phil Campbell campus was really special to me as a student here, and I can't wait to see the newly renovated campus."

"I know that many students in Franklin County and across Northwest Alabama will have their lives changed here like I did."



REID STATE TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Kelly Futch, Pride of the Lions

"To value or admire highly and to recognize with gratitude" are Merriam-Webster's definitions of appreciate. However, this does not begin to express how grateful I am to have had Kelly Futch as a student in the Industrial Electricity/Electronics program.

In addition to being an outstanding student, Kelly worked full-time as an electrical apprentice at a local mill. Despite working long hours, Kelly maintained a 3.94 GPA in the program and displayed enthusiasm in the classroom and leadership in the lab that enriched the learning experience for his peers. His willingness to engage in meaningful discussions and assist his classmates with complex abstracts created a dynamic classroom environment that fostered growth and learning for everyone.



Kelly's efforts set him apart as a role model, and he serves as a shining example of what can be achieved through hard work and dedication. His ability to balance the demands of higher education with the obligations of employment is a testament to his strong work ethic, organizational skills, and determination.

Kelly consistently demonstrated a level of dedication and excellence that serves as an inspiration to us all. His educational and professional commitment contributes to the positive reputation of our institution and demonstrates the real-world applicability of the skills and knowledge he gained while enrolled. His achievements are a source of pride not only for himself but also for Reid State Technical College.

SHELTON STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Shelton State Creates a P.R.I.M.E. Pathway to Success

Shelton State Community College (SSCC) launched the Pathway to Robotics, Industrial Maintenance, and Engineering (P.R.I.M.E.) as an exciting new dual enrollment program for the 2023-24 academic year. The program is available to 10th, 11th, and 12th-grade students in Tuscaloosa City and Tuscaloosa County School Systems.

A rigorous curriculum taught by experienced faculty, P.R.I.M.E. is crafted to equip students with the skills and knowledge necessary for exciting careers in robotics, industrial maintenance, and engineering. Participants will explore basic DC and AC electricity, industrial robotic programming, and installing and maintaining programmable logic controllers (PLCs). Additional material will include the intricate world of microcomputers and how they interface with electro-mechanical devices, troubleshoot machinery, and delve into complex motor control diagrams.

Through P.R.I.M.E., students can earn up to 27 credit hours toward an Industrial Electronics (ILT) AAS degree at Shelton State Community College. All credits earned through the P.R.I.M.E. curriculum are components of all SSCC Industrial Maintenance-focused corporate partnerships with Mercedes-Benz, Nucor Technical Academy, BF Goodrich, and Hunt Refining.

"By successfully completing the program, students are well on their way to obtaining a degree in ILT within just one year of high school graduation," stated Grant Cockrell, SSCC's Associate Dean of Technical Services.

P.R.I.M.E. students will engage in hands-on projects, collaborate with industry experts, and gain real-world experience that will set them apart from their peers. "P.R.I.M.E. will truly give students a competitive edge in their chosen career fields," said Cockrell. Future career opportunities included robotics programmer, engineering analyst, and lineman. "Our ILT graduates are working in practically every field, including hospitals, chemical companies, and manufacturing plants," said Dr. Jon Koh, SSCC Dean of Workforce and Economic Development. "It's exciting to know our high school students will receive the same robust curriculum."



SNEAD STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Snead State Celebrates the Diamonds of its Recent Achievements

Snead State Community College closes its anniversary and opens a new academic year by celebrating its diamonds that have aided the College in achieving new milestones. Partnerships with stakeholders and community leaders have opened new opportunities for students.

·The City of Boaz has supported Snead State in many ways. The city leadership has committed to an annual budget investment in the College's horticulture program, and in return, the students are earning hands-on experience by providing landscaping and beautification services within the city. The College also partnered with Boaz to lease a portion of its former recreation center to use for the Athletic program. The College is repurposing the center to become an indoor training facility for athletes, freeing up space in the gymnasium to use for other needs, such as an additional dressing room for visiting teams and our softball team. The city is also planning to pave several streets that run through the campus and to assist the College in upgrading sidewalks and repairing several parking lots and sidewalks across campus.

·The Marshall County Board of Education donated property to Snead State to use as the site for the new Workforce Training Facility. Construction is already underway, and the tentative completion date is Fall 2024.

·Snead State and the Southern Museum of Flight in Birmingham have partnered to offer Aviation classes at the museum. Currently, dual enrollment students are taking classes at the Southern Museum of Flight, and the College is planning to offer more in the future.

·Snead State received significant financial support from alumni, Rick Baker and Joe Story, along with his wife, Susan Story, who made contributions to the Snead State Foundation. Dr. Story also made a donation that will be used for the purchase of equipment for the Workforce Training Facility as well as other capital improvements.

·Howard Bentley Buick GMC donated \$10,000 to the Parson Athletic Program to offset gate revenue, allowing the College to offer free admission to everyone for all athletic events for the 2023-2024 season.

·Local industries partnered with Snead State's Career and Technical and Workforce Development divisions to provide apprenticeship opportunities for students. Tyson Foods, Atrion Medical, ASP Aviation, Mueller and several local healthcare organizations hired Snead State students to work jobs in their specific fields, allowing them to earn practical experience while completing their degree.

"We couldn't have marked our 125th anniversary any better than by celebrating these partnerships. They have made a significant difference for the College. Community is in our name for a reason, and it takes us working together as a community to meet the needs of our area while providing the best education and experience we possibly can for our students," said Snead State President Dr. Joe Whitmore.



SOUTHERN UNION STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Southern Union Quiz Bowl Places Third in Nation

In June, Anthony Caldwell received the Educational Excellence Award at HOSA - Future Health Professionals' 46th Annual International Leadership Conference in Dallas, Texas. The Educational Excellence Award recipient demonstrates extraordinary leadership in the educational community at an international or chartered association level. The recipient's vision and support enhance HOSA's ability to integrate HOSA into the classroom by providing opportunities and experiences, helping HOSA members achieve their educational goals to become future health professionals.

Anthony Caldwell is an EMS instructor at Southern Union State Community College and functions as the Health Sciences Division's Dual Enrollment Coordinator. As a former secondary Health Sciences teacher, Anthony continues to combine his passions for education and health industry exposure in his current roles at Southern Union. Anthony serves as the vice-chairman of the Alabama State Department of Education's Health Sciences Board of Directors and is a member of the Health Sciences Course of Study and Curriculum Taskforce. Anthony is shown receiving his award from Kartik Tyagi, the International HOSA President for the 2022-2023 academic year.



TRENHOLM STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

HBCU Scholar Program Selects Trenholm State Community College Students

The White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity through Historically Black Colleges and Universities (Initiative) recently selected students Thaddeus Sneed, a CIS major, and Matilda Perryman, a Culinary Arts major, both from Montgomery, Alabama, to represent Trenholm State as members of the 2023 HBCU Scholar Recognition Program.

Dr. Kemba Chambers, President, Trenholm State Community College, stated "Trenholm State Community College is honored to have two of our students selected for this program. We are extremely excited for Thaddeus and Matilda and for the numerous opportunities and resources that this program will afford to them," Chambers continued, "Participating in the HBCU Scholars Program will open doors to many opportunities, including internships, resources, mentorships, and networking opportunities which allow our students to connect with professionals in their field of interest and build a network of like-minded individuals, while offering guidance and support to help them navigate their academic journey and maximize their potential."

This program not only provides a platform to recognize these outstanding student leaders and their academic successes, leadership roles, and civic engagement, but it will also equip them with the resources to maintain and excel in their excellence. This year's cohort, the largest to date, is comprised of 102 students from 70 HBCUs.

Both students are elated to have been selected for this opportunity. "I am looking forward to the connections and the experience that being an HBCU scholar will bring. As a naturally quiet and reserved person, the HBCU Scholars program will help me cultivate my voice and be more open with sharing my thoughts and opinions", said student Matilda Perryman. The students will act as ambassadors for both the Initiative and the college and have been selected to attend the Annual National HBCU Week Conference in September, in Alexandria, Virginia to explore and become acquainted with topics such as leadership, professional development, HBCU excellence, and workforce development.

Student Thaddeus Sneed, states, "I feel honored to be recognized as an HBCU scholar. This moment feels very surreal, and I am happy to be recognized not only for my academics but also for my involvement within the community and my role as a student ambassador for Trenholm State Community College."



WALLACE COMMUNITY COLLEGE-DOTHAN

Governor Ivey Makes Statewide Broadband Access Announcement at WCCD

Wallace Community College-Dothan (WCCD) hosted Governor Kay Ivey on Tuesday, August 8th on the Wallace Campus in Dothan as she made a statewide announcement on the future of high-speed internet connectivity in Alabama. After the announcement, WCCD fiber optic training students provided a demonstration for the Governor and participants on how to deploy the fiber optic cables needed for high-speed internet delivery. This training, developed through the Alabama Community College System's Innovation Center, brings together the state's community colleges, industries and community partners to deliver training offered at no cost to participants thanks to funding provided by Ivey and the Alabama Legislature

During her visit to WCCD, Governor Ivey announced how more than \$400 million in federal funding and over \$1.4 billion from the U.S. Department of Commerce Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment Program (BEAD) will be used to expand access to high-speed internet across Alabama. Governor Ivey also unveiled Be Linked Alabama as the name and hub representing the state's continued efforts to expand access to high-speed internet.

"Wallace Community College is delighted to share in this exciting announcement that will positively impact our entire state," said Dr. Linda Young, WCCD President. "We are so pleased to have been chosen as the site to host this event, and we are especially honored by the presence of our distinguished Governor the Honorable Kay Ivey. The College's workforce development fiber optics training program has enhanced the skills of many in this growing industry," Dr. Young added. "This program is possible due to the support and investment of our industry partners, the Alabama Community College System, and the state. It is truly amazing what we can accomplish together in support of our mission to help our students succeed in their chosen profession. Wallace is excited about the opportunities available through this program and through other programs offered by the Innovation Center. Alabama's community colleges serve as the premier workforce training provider for our state, and we are proud to help meet the needs of the Wiregrass and beyond."

WCCD's fiber optic training was selected by ACCS to pilot a statewide training program for those interested in careers as fiber optic technicians. Skills for Success, the rapid training program developed by the ACCS Innovation Center, brings together the state's community colleges, business and industry, and community partners to deliver industry-recognized, non-credit training for in-demand jobs. The fiber optics training is offered at no cost to participants. The course covers best practices and fundamental principles behind basic data and voice transmission via fiber optic cable, as well as installation and termination techniques. Students learn how to identify fiber types, recognize various connectors used in fiber installation, and install, terminate, splice, and test multimode or single-mode fiber optic networks according to existing standards. The course combines online theory and in-person, hands-on lab activities to prepare students for employment or advancement in the fiber optics industry. Other skills covered include customer service, communication, leadership, attention to detail, and time management. Once students complete the training, they are job-ready and are awarded a credential and an opportunity to earn more certifications at their local community college.



WALLACE STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Wallace State Hosts Grand Opening, Announces \$48.8 Million in Capital Investments

In what college President Dr. Vicki Karolewics described as a historic day, Wallace State Community College celebrated the grand opening of the \$8.8 million Center of Welding Technology and Innovation Center and announced new plans for almost \$49 million in capital investments to build or renovate three buildings on the Hanceville campus. "Our theme for today is rightfully entitled Building the Workforce because as one of Alabama's most ambitious colleges, that is our mission — to build the workforce of the future," Karolewics said.

The 30,000-square-foot Center for Welding Technology and Innovation is the largest training center in the Southeast. The Welding Technology Center includes seven robotic welding stations; nine virtual welding simulators; 81 welding booths; 20 grinding booths; a fabrication area with two welders, a plasma CNC table, and pipe welding equipment; and three state-of-the-art classrooms with built-in cameras, microphones and speakers to allow hosting online classes. The event was held in one of the six pods in the Innovation Center that will be used to incubate businesses. "We began incubating entrepreneurs over a decade ago, and we are proud of the hundreds of jobs created by ZeroRPM, Sequence Health and DB Technologies in this community," Karolewics added. "This Innovation Center project is projected to create 98 jobs and \$25 million in revenue for our area within the first eight years."

Karolewics outlined the three capital investment projects. One is the \$4.2 million expansion and renovation of the Machine Tool Technology building. She expressed her appreciation to partners such as HAAS Automation who have been critical to enabling Wallace State to produce the most advanced machinists in this region.

New building projects include a \$9.6 million facility for Automotive Technology to accommodate the transformation of the automotive industry to electric and autonomous vehicles. Dr. Karolewics thanked partners Mercedes Benz, Nissan North America, Cullman Electric Cooperative and Tennessee Valley Authority. Benton Nissan donated a Nissan Leaf to the Advanced Automotive Service Technology program, as Mercedes-Benz has done in the past. This is the college's first electric vehicle for training. The Cooperative and TVA have committed \$44,000 for two electric vehicle chargers, with another planned in the future.

The largest building project is a \$35 million STEM Gateway Building, which will house all the college's first-year students in mathematics, English, humanities, speech and chemistry, as well as the Culinary Arts program, a digital learning center and tutoring center.

"It's an honor to be a part of this history-making day," said Gov. Kay Ivey. "We are literally standing on ground zero in the campaign to equip new Alabama workers and those who are choosing to reenter the workforce with skills to succeed."

Ivey pointed out the need to increase the state's labor force. While the state's unemployment rate is the lowest in state history at 2.1 percent, there are 50,000 unemployed Alabamians and 120,000 open jobs in the state. "Providing pathways for them to join the workforce is a major priority," Ivey said. "Alabama's 24 community colleges are on the front lines in delivering the training many of these workers need to get to work."

"We're investing in the future of our students," said Lt. Governor Will Ainsworth. "The purpose of education is to get our people ready for a job. I believe everybody's got a God-given ability, everybody's got a passion. The purpose of education is to get them ready for a job."

"What a great day for Cullman County," said Sen. Garlan Gudger, Jr. "Wallace State is the crown jewel of the community college system. This administration, the teachers and support staff continue to find the right formula that makes the state of Alabama and the students that leave here prepared for the state-of-the-art jobs that they have the opportunity to obtain once they leave this campus."

Rep. Danny Garret noted the auto industry is investing \$260 billion dollars in the development of electric vehicles. "If the market takes us there, we certainly want these manufacturers who come to Alabama to stay here. We want them to expand here. We want Alabama to be in front of that issue. So as that market shifts, it's important that we stay ahead of the curve and I see that happening here today," he said. Other speakers included industry partners Jason Schmidt of Lincoln Electric and Dale Benton of Benton Nissan and WSCC Robotic Welding student Annah Reese.

Reese said she hopes her niece and nephew follow in her footsteps and choose Wallace State. "I know, without a shadow of a doubt, that this is a school not only dedicated to student success but always finding innovative ways to improve the quality of student development," she said. "A school where they can invest their goals and ambitions and not only be guaranteed to thrive in their study of choice but also be taught by people who have an abundance of care and consideration for their students."



WALLACE COMMUNITY COLLEGE - SELMA

A Family Affair: Three First-Generation Siblings Graduate from WCCS

WCCS believes in impacting not only our students but also their families and the Almojadid family is a shining example of that belief. Mohammad Almojadid moved from Yemen to New York City many years ago and began working at an early age because he believed success is achieved through hard work. He later married and had a family while in the United States.

Mr. Mohammad did not complete high school nor attend college but, he understood the importance of education and encouraged all six of his children to pursue their education at both the secondary and higher education level. On May 12, 2023, he witnessed three of his daughters graduate from Wallace Community College: Ammer (Associate Degree in Nursing), Sarah (Associate Degree in Nursing), and Suhail (Associate in Science). His eldest son Yosef is currently enrolled at Wallace Community College.

Suhail, who graduated with a 4.0 GPA, enrolled at WCCS as a dual enrollment student and credits the staff and instructors for her success. "Wallace granted me the opportunity to substitute some of my high school classes while obtaining my associate's degree," said Suhail. "The college encourages students to succeed and has an intimate feel which creates a strong bond with inspiring instructors, counselors, and classmates," added Suhail.

"It takes a lot of courage to be a first-generation college student. Not knowing where to start or what questions to ask was very challenging," said Ammer. "My initial plan was to obtain my basics at Wallace and then to transfer to a 4-year institution to obtain my bachelor of science in nursing. However, after obtaining my Associate of Science, my love for Wallace and its staff led me to also obtain my nursing degree from there too."

"The instructors and counselors are like family at Wallace. My counselor, Ms. Chapman is one of the best people I've ever encountered. She goes above and beyond to meet every student's specific needs. Her words of encouragement and love for helping people are truly motivating, especially at times when I felt like I wasn't where I needed to be. I was also honored to be inducted into the Phi Theta Kappa honors society. I was able to recruit members to donate to the blood drive and in the process became a first-time blood donor too! It was a beautiful feeling, the feeling of giving to save a life," said Ammer.

The graduates have not stopped here as they all plan on furthering their goals by attending college in the fall. Suhail is the recipient of a transfer scholarship to the University of Alabama Birmingham. Ammer and Sarah recently passed the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN) and will attend the University of Alabama to obtain their bachelor's of nursing while working as labor and delivery nurses.

Suhail and Ammer represented the college at the June 14, 2023, Board of Trustees meeting in Montgomery and shared their experiences with the Board of Trustees and guests.



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