Daniel York graduated from Northeast Alabama Community College in 2002 and went on to study pre-med at UAB. He started medical school this fall as one of only 10 scholars in the Alabama Rural Medical Scholars Program. He said, “The community college gave me the foundation for it all!” York credits the financial aid, accessible faculty and administrators, and strong math and science programs at NACC for his success.

Dawn Brown lost her job in 2002 as a supervisor in a sewing plant in Rutan, Alabama, in Washington County. The mother of four took advantage of services for laid-off workers provided by The Alabama College System and went back to school. She commuted 125 miles round-trip to Bishop State Community College in Mobile. She just earned her Associate Degree in business administration. She also won the James B. Allen Award for the graduating student with outstanding academic, service, and honor achievements.

Sherri Kyle, a Native American from Gadsden, wife and mother of five, graduated from Gadsden State Community College in December 2003 with an Associate Degree in Machine Tool Technology. Sherry was a non-traditional, older student who took advantage of community college resources that helped her succeed. She accessed childcare on campus, found tutoring, book loans, and advising at the Arledge Center for Adult Learners at GSCC. She was selected for the National Technical Honor Society, and she graduated with a GPA of 3.65.
Mission Statement

The Alabama College System, consisting of public two-year community and technical colleges and an upper division college, seeks to provide accessible quality educational opportunities, promote economic growth, and enhance the quality of life for the people of Alabama.

In 1947, President Truman called for the creation of more two-year colleges—community colleges—to improve access to education beyond high school. The Truman Commission found a huge opportunity gap between high schools and the limited array of universities. If you couldn’t move to a university, even for a four-year degree, you were often out of luck. That gap was a monumental barrier for thousands, and it was certainly a reality in Alabama.

The Truman Commission coined the term “community colleges,” advocating for more accessible and affordable higher education located in the heart of communities. The Alabama College System, founded in 1963, was part of the national response to President Truman’s call.

The Alabama College System has bridged the gap for thousands of Alabamians. As you can see in this annual report, 2004 was a remarkable year with particular emphasis on workforce development in our system. Alabama has too much potential to allow gaps in educational access to hold back our families, communities, and state economy.

There are two Alabama—the Alabama that is part of the New South with high incomes, high-tech companies, and a more educated population. The other Alabama has been left behind—with high poverty, poor infrastructure, low educational attainment, and few jobs that can support families.

The Alabama College System is a vital bridge between the two Alabamas.

In 2004, we served more than 367,000 people with:

- freshman and sophomore transfer programs that serve 52% of all college freshmen in Alabama
- guaranteed transfer credit in public universities
- a wide range of technical degrees in high demand
- adult education that brings high school drop-outs back to education and job training, and
- workforce training customized to meet industry needs and place workers in jobs with good wages.

The 27 colleges, adult education programs, ADT, and the other workforce development components of The Alabama College System provide the most affordable and accessible postsecondary educational opportunities to the state. Education is essential to the American dream. It is also essential to closing the gap between the two Alabamas, and we have our eyes set on that dream every day.

Mey W. Johnson
Chancellor, The Alabama College System
2004 Progress Report

Excellence and Accountability

Excellence and accountability are top priorities for the Alabama College System. Every dollar invested must pay off, and our students must have the very best education possible. Management strategies that continually “raise the bar” are priorities for The System, and great strides have been made in 2004.

Student Success: Our graduates are competitive with students at four-year institutions. For example, students transferring from community colleges do at least as well as native four-year university students on the Teacher Basic Skills Test and the NCLEX, the national exam for nurses.

Affordable Access: STARS is the articulation agreement between two-year and four-year colleges that ensures that community college hours transfer seamlessly toward bachelor’s degrees. More than 250,000 community college students have received their STARS guides, guaranteeing they can get halfway to a bachelor’s degree for half the cost—no surprises and no delays.

Professional Development: Research indicates that investment in professional development yields high returns for student success. We are increasing our focus on faculty professional development and finding creative ways to stretch resources. For example, a professional development consortium that includes Wallace State Community College (Hanceville), Calhoun Community College and Gadsden State Community College delivered high quality professional development to more than 1,100 employees by pooling resources and striving together for excellence.

Management: A new evaluation and management plan for the colleges—Quality, Performance and Accountability (QPA)—was developed in 2004. Colleges will be measured by nine key indicators of educational quality based on outcomes of graduates who transfer to four-year colleges, graduates’ job placements, success of student advisement and developmental courses, and financial accountability.

QPA will allow us to quickly identify and respond to shortcomings as well as identify best practices that should be shared across The System. QPA will be piloted in 2005, and it will focus every college on continual improvement.

Finance: Most recently published audits identified only six findings across the entire system, including 26 colleges, Athens State University, and AIDT. The financial health of all colleges continued to improve in 2004 as evidenced by balanced budgets and strong contingency balances, achieved in a period of level funding through efficient management and stretching existing resources.
More than 132,000 students were enrolled in two-year academic, allied health and career technical degree programs this year. Diplomas and associates degrees in arts, sciences and applied sciences give students the skills they need to enter the workforce with technical licenses and credentials or transfer smoothly to a four-year institution for a bachelor's degree.

The quality of education at Alabama's community colleges produces competitive, measurable student outcomes. For example, community college transfer students passed the Teacher Basic Skills Test at the same rate as those who started their degrees in four-year institutions. Students who completed technical coursework passed licensure and certification tests at a rate of 89 percent, and 78 percent were immediately placed in employment. The System's nursing programs are superior, with 91 percent of graduates passing the national licensing exam compared to a state average of 85.5 percent and a national average of 84.4 percent. Calhoun Community College's surgical tech program received national recognition for their 100 percent pass rate on the national certification exam.

The Chancellor is sharpening The System's capacity to assess program quality. This year, he requested that the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) have state universities track transfer students and report subject by subject outcomes. This data will be used in the Quality, Performance and Accountability evaluation system to assess educational quality at each college. The Department of Postsecondary Education is systematically updating and standardizing academic, technical and health courses across the System. The curriculum development project supports the articulation agreements and meets industry standards. In 2004, 81 courses were revised—bringing the total number of revised courses to 217 in the curriculum development project.

Access, particularly in a rural state like Alabama, is critical to increasing educational attainment. A new partnership between city government and Alabama Southern Community College created an instructional site in Demopolis in Marengo County, expanding higher education access in the heart of the Black Belt. Jefferson State Community College is adding an instructional site in Pell City to meet demands fueled by the growing automotive industry in the region. Bringing education to underserved areas and responding to economic opportunities in local communities overcomes transportation, childcare and work schedule conflicts that limit educational advancement.

“The need in Alabama, with a large number of undereducated adults, is for two-year colleges,” said Jim Williams, executive director of the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama, responding positively to the new instructional site in Demopolis. Williams pointed out the cost-effectiveness of the two-year system in delivering freshman and sophomore level education. In 2004, tuition at Alabama's two-year colleges was 62 percent of the average tuition rate at four-year public colleges and universities. System institutions serve 42 percent of Alabama students enrolled in higher education with only 22 percent of the state's Education Trust Fund dollars available for higher education. That is an astounding measure of affordability—both for students and Alabama taxpayers.

Nurses are in short supply, and many small towns and local hospitals depend on community colleges for their allied health professionals. The Alabama College System produced 98 percent of all new practical nurses and 55 percent of new registered nurses in Alabama in the last three years. This year, Snead State Community College and Northeast Alabama Community College received approval from the Alabama Board of Nursing for new programs. A standardized curriculum for nursing programs was completed in the summer of 2004, with six colleges piloting its implementation this fall.
Adult Education

In 2004, The Alabama College System’s adult education program enrolled 21,155 people seeking basic education skills or preparation for the GED exam. Twenty-five programs provide free access to adult education with sites in every county. This year the System received a glowing review from the U.S. Department of Education. Every ten years, a team from Washington, D.C. visits state adult education agencies for in-depth monitoring and evaluation. During Alabama’s visit, Cheryl Keenan, Director of Adult Education at the federal level, said, “Alabama has one of the best reports I have ever seen.”

The Adult Education program was commended for meeting all of the goals established by the U.S. Department of Education for student progress at every level. The Department of Postsecondary Education also received certification by the American Council on Education’s GED Testing Service, becoming the scoring agency for the GED in Alabama.

Only 12% of people enter adult education programs functioning at the ninth grade level or above, meaning they are ready for GED preparation. The vast majority need basic literacy and math skills. It can be a long road to a GED, requiring demanding persistence and skilled instruction. The majority of adult education instructors in The Alabama College System have at least a master’s degree, with a high degree of expertise in adult learning. Classes are small and widely available.

Starting in 2004, an incentive for higher education awaited those who earned their GED. The Alabama College System began offering one free course in any college or technical program to everyone who earns their GED. Chris M. Iler, Director of Adult Education at Calhoun Community College, notes that, “We are seeing more of these students going on to enroll in degree or certificate programs,” because of that reward.

Technology is increasing educational access and improving program tracking. The Alabama College System launched GED preparation on-line, so any adult learner who can access the Internet can learn on a flexible schedule and progress at their own pace. The program provides interactive educational content and a connection to a professional GED instructor. A new web-based information management system called the Alabama Adult Education System for Accountability and Performance (AAESAP) was implemented this year to track every program and the progress of every student.

English as a Second Language

The Hispanic population in Alabama almost tripled in the last decade. In some regions of the state, the increase is even more dramatic. Classes in English as a Second Language and ELC/Mics, a basic civics course for non-English speakers are important components of adult education in 16 of the 25 adult education programs. The courses address language barriers, and they cover basic education skills, since many learners have low educational attainment, even in their native language. Northeast Alabama Community College serves a large Hispanic community with outreach efforts that include a Latin Culture Festival on campus.

Coordinated Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities

Research indicates that 25 percent of people in adult education programs have undiagnosed learning disabilities. The Alabama College System is ahead of the curve nationally in implementing a collaborative approach to identify and serve adult learners with disabilities.

Services introduced this year are breaking down barriers to educational progress. Adult education instructors received intensive professional development to help them identify possible learning disabilities. If a teacher detects a significant problem, an Adult Education Assessment Specialist goes to the learning site and evaluates the student. No costs are passed on to the student. Adult Education Assessment Specialists, instructors, professionals from the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation and other agencies develop an individualized learning plan and coordinate services to help the student make progress. Teaching methods are adapted to meet the learner’s special needs.

Previously assessment fees and the complicated process of finding services kept many people from getting the help they need to achieve their educational goals. Sixty assessments were completed last fall.

- Damion Jones

“A Fresh Start..." I was at the end of the road running the job gadget with no education. I had heard from a friend about the free GED classes offered at Shelton State Community College-Fredric Campus. When I walked in the door, I learned instantly that the instructors had a dedicated and compassionate style of teaching.

After being out of school for eight years, I knew I was intelligent but thought I was beyond help. After two short months of working hard and studying, I wasn’t just ready to take the test; I aced the GED test. That made me feel really good and confident about myself. Mrs. Wright and Miss Walters were truly wonderful and concerned teachers. I tell everybody I know about the classes because they are a beacon of light in the community. I am now pursuing a college degree.

- Shirley Reed
Workforce Development

The Alabama College System reaffirmed its mission to provide educational opportunities and enhance Alabama’s economy through coordinated workforce development programs. In 2004, national recognition for AIDT’s high tech training and the creation of the Focused Industry Training Program for people just entering the job force illustrate the range and quality of the workforce development component of The System.

This year, The Alabama College System welcomed the Alabama Technology Network (ATN) when budget cuts put this vital provider of training and technology transfer in jeopardy. Governor Bob Riley named Chancellor Roy Johnson to chair the Workforce Development Planning Council that coordinates and leads workforce development efforts across the state.

Johnson has led consolidation efforts to eliminate duplication of services and create the most efficient and comprehensive workforce development system possible. Under his leadership, more than 300 separate training programs have been consolidated into 37 sites for worker assessment, advising, training and referral. One-Stop Centers are increasing the collaboration between The Alabama College System, ADECA, the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, and the Department of Industrial Relations to make job training more accessible and efficient.

The best workforce training program in the nation

The Alabama Industrial Development Training Institute (AIDT) was rated the best workforce recruitment and training program in the nation by Expansion Management magazine. AIDT trained 14,391 individuals this year through 109 projects in 41 counties. AIDT services are provided at no cost to trainees. Since 1971, more than 200,000 workers have received training through AIDT’s services.

This year AIDT developed a specialized industrial maintenance curriculum and certification program in partnership with Tenholm State Technical College to meet the needs of Alabama’s growing automotive industry. The new program will expand to the other community and technical colleges across the state in 2005.

Ten technology centers serve existing industry with high tech solutions

The Alabama Technology Network is comprised of ten centers that link two-year colleges, the University of Alabama System, Auburn University and the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama to provide technical assistance, workforce training, and technology transfer to meet the needs of existing industry.

Each center tailor its services to meet local needs. ATN provides innovative and cost-effective solutions to make existing industry more globally competitive. This year more than 1000 businesses received assistance from ATN, bringing the latest research and technology from the lab and the classroom straight to local industry. The result is job creation, retention and increased capital investment.

Customized Training for Business and Industry

Training for Business and Industry (TBI) provides training, assessment and solutions to companies through each college. Training for workers may be offered on-site, provided through courses for college credit, or taught in short-term classes. Colleges conducted a total of 2,420 TBI projects this year, serving 42,709 individuals.

Almost half of those projects were customized to meet a need identified by a particular company. Ninety-seven percent of business clients reported satisfaction with the help they received through TBI. The TBI network supports continuous professional development for technical instructors at colleges across the state. In 2004, the Best Practices Conference served more than 75 instructors with the latest manufacturing knowledge.

FIT brings people into the workforce

Focused Industry Training is a career pathway for adults with limited education and employment experience. It provides training required for entry-level jobs that become vacant as workers move on to higher skilled jobs, particularly in the automotive industry. The full-time, intensive 10-week, small group training leads to the Alabama Certified Worker credential.

Almost 1,200 people have completed the program since April, and 88 percent of those passed the certified worker exam. Half of those completing the program found jobs immediately after receiving certification, and another 30 percent went directly into higher level job training.

College/industry partnership means scholarships, cutting edge training and jobs

Alabama Southern Community College and ten forest industry corporations have created an alliance for technical training that provides scholarships and internships leading directly to jobs. Students who complete the technologically advanced program can land jobs locally with a starting pay of over $30,000 a year.

The alliance began ten years ago as a partnership with CIBA Specialty Chemicals. A $5 million National Science Foundation grant made Alabama Southern a National Center for Pulp and Paper Technology Training to receive a $5 million National Science Foundation grant that made Alabama Southern a National Center for Pulp and Paper Technology Training to receive a $30,000 a year.

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Responsive leadership and coordinated education and workforce programs can change Alabama. The creation of BuildMobile is one of the best examples of that this year. The growing shipbuilding industry in Mobile needed welders with very specific technical skills for aluminum welding and flux cored welding. Alabama College System Chancellor Roy Johnson reviewed the System’s welding program, listened to industry leaders, and revamped training programs.

BuildMobile, an intensive, eight-week welding training program leading to certification by the American Welding Society, went from concept to reality in less than three weeks. People eager for higher wage employment showed up to learn. With funding from The Alabama College System and ADECA and technical assistance from AIDT, the existing welding program was revamped, and free training was announced. Only forty slots were available, but almost 600 applicants applied. More classes were added, and by the end of 2004, 86 students had completed the program.

The students showed great determination. One man worked days at a produce market and went to class at night. He had to walk to class, but he was never late and never absent. He is now a certified welder employed at Austal Marine. A woman who worked nights at a seafood processing plant attended welding classes during the day, keeping up an exhausting pace for the eight-week class. Now she works for Wallace Fabrication, commanding higher wages.

The training program boast a passage rate of 76 percent, compared to a national average of 66 percent. High-tech shops and other area employers hired 85 percent of the students as soon as they finished training. “It’s very good to see the state of Alabama is doing everything it can to make sure its citizens have the training they need to succeed in the workforce,” said Herschel Vinyard, vice president of Atlantic Marine Holding Co.

The program is a partnership between Enterprise-Ozark Community College and Bishop State Community College. It is housed at the Aviation Center of EOC’s Brookley Field Campus in Mobile.

Alabama Southern Community College is one of ten finalists for the 2003 Bottawah Awards. The Bottawah Awards annually recognize outstanding and innovative programs and practices that are successfully leading community colleges into the future. The Center for Digital Education and the American Association of Community Colleges named Jefferson State Community College in the list of the ten state digital savvy cutting edge community colleges in a national survey. The survey examines and assesses how community colleges have progressed in using information technology to deliver services to their students, faculty and staff.

Dr. Corredor Wynne, former president of Stillman College and currently special assistant to the president of Faulkner State Community College, received the Presidential Leadership Award from the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, the highest-ranking award presented by the organization.

Snead State Community College recently gained approval from the Electronics Technicians Association International for three of its Electronics Engineering Technology, Electronics and Computer Service Technician programs. Redstone Arsenal is the only other location in the state to hold ETA certifications.

The Institute of Management Accountancy, Alabama State University, accounting professor Linda Henning received the Outstanding Mentor of the Year Award. This award is presented each year to an IMM student chapter advisor who demonstrates exceptional commitment to IMM student chapter members. It is presented to an IMM student who demonstrates leadership qualities and provides career guidance.

Calhoun Community College received a $450,000 grant from the National Science Foundation for the Project “Computer Science, Mathematics and Technology Academic Rewards Program.” The program is designed to increase the number of well-prepared graduates in technology, computer sciences and mathematics by offering 40 annual scholarships and a variety of support activities to targeted students.

The National Council on Black American Affairs of the American Association of Community Colleges recently honored Dr. Fred Williams, Southern Union State Community College’s diversity programs coordinator and director of Community College’s new Welding Training Institute, the Moonshiner Rudder campus, with the Johnnie Ruth Clarke Award for Excellence in the Community College.

Chattahoochee Valley Community College has been awarded a $1.75 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education through the Strengthening Institutions Program. CVCC was also awarded a $950,000 Education Talent Search grant that is currently being used to encourage at-risk high school students to attend college.

Snead State Community College’s low bomb team recently finished its regular season with a final national ranking of 6th among all junior colleges, and 13th among Division II four-year colleges. The team finished 6th out of a field that included such colleges as Harvard University, Georgetown University, and Emory University.

Snead State Community College was recently awarded a $1.38 million Title III Federal Grant. With the Title II funds, the College will create a state-of-the-art Faculty Technology Center and add 20 "smart" classrooms and 40 technology-enhanced courses over the next five years.

Dr. Dave McWhorter, president of J. F. Drake State Technical College, accepted an invitation from Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld to participate in the Defense Department’s Joint Civilian Orientation Conference (JCOC). This was the second time the Drake State Technical College team was invited to participate in this annual event during the College’s tenure on this prestigious national stage.

The latest graduate of the Northeast Alabama Community College Nursing Program received a 97 percent pass rate on the national examination for registered nurses. The state passing rate average was 85.5 percent and the national passing rate average was 84.4 percent.

Alfredo L. King, instructor in the Business Technology Department at Faulkner State Community College, was selected as the Southeastern Regional student winner for the Teaching Excellence Award for his work with the College’s Business Technology student services program. The Tennessee State Board of Education presented the student with the Teaching Excellence Award and grants him recognition in the Tennessee College of Applied Technology’s Annual Report.

Northwest Florida Community College was awarded a Title III grant to enhance computer science and technology-related courses at the College. A member of the National Technical Prep Network for the past five years, the College is one of 46 institutions receiving grants.

Bevill State Community College broke ground in December in the new Alabama Center for Advanced Manufacturing and Technology (ACMAT), a division of the College. Bevill State is a member of the National Coalition of Advanced Technology Centers (NCATC), a network of higher education resources that promotes the use of technology applications in economic and workforce development programs and initiatives.

Student athletes from eight Alabama community colleges are among the 1,600 community college students in 49 states who have earned Academic All-American status, named recently by the National Junior College Athletic Association. The 57 student-athletes achieved Academic All-American honors for maintaining a 3.4 or better grade point average. Those students compete in baseball, softball, men’s golf, women’s basketball and women’s volleyball. The colleges represented are Wallace Community College (Dothan), Bishop State Community College, Coastal Alabama Community College (Mobile), Wallace State Community College and Bevill State Community College.

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The members of the Alabama State Board of Education serve as trustees for The Alabama College System. The Department of Postsecondary Education is the agency that administers The Alabama College System. The Alabama Legislature created the public two-year college system in May 1963. The State Board of Education governs The Alabama College System, and the Governor serves as chair of the Board by virtue of his elected office. The other board members are elected from eight districts. Monthly public work sessions and board meetings are held in Montgomery, and at times, in various districts around the state to discuss and act on the business of The Alabama College System.

The Alabama State Board of Education

Governor Bob Riley, president of the Alabama State Board of Education

Mr. Randy McKinney
District 1

Mrs. Betty Peters
District 2

Mrs. Stephanie Bell
District 3

Dr. Ethel H. Hall
District 4

Mrs. Ella B. Bell
District 5

Mr. David F. Byers
District 6

Mrs. Sandra Ray
District 7

Dr. Mary Jane Caylor
District 8

Community Colleges
1. Alabama Southern Community College
2. Bevill State Community College
3. Bishop State Community College
4. John C. Calhoun Community College
5. Central Alabama Community College
6. Chattahoochee Valley Community College
7. Jefferson Davis Community College
8. Enterprise-Dalke State Community College
9. James H. Faulkner State Community College
10. Gadsden State Community College
11. Jefferson State Community College
12. T.A. Lawline State Community College
13. Northeast Alabama Community College
14. Northwest-Shoals Community College
15. Shelton State Community College
16. Snead State Community College
17. Southern Union State Community College
18. George C. Wallace Community College-Dothan
19. Wallace State Community College-Hanceville
20. George Corley Wallace State Community College-Selma

Technical Colleges
22. Bessemer State Technical College
23. J.F. Drake State Technical College
24. J.F. Ingram State Technical College
25. Reid State Technical College
26. H. Council Trenholm State Technical College

Senior University
27. Athens State University

Industrial Training
28. Alabama Industrial Development Training Institute

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