THE ALABAMA COLLEGE SYSTEM

Two-Year Colleges
- Alabama Southern Community College
- Bevill State Community College
- Bishop State Community College
- John C. Calhoun Community College
- Central Alabama Community College
- Chattahoochee Valley Community College
- Jefferson Davis Community College
- J.F. Drake State Technical College
- Enterprise-Ozark Community College
- James H. Faulkner State Community College
- Gadsden State Community College
- J.F. Ingram State Technical College
- Jefferson State Community College
- T.A. Lawson State Community College
- Northeast Alabama Community College
- Northwest-Shoals Community College
- Reid State Technical College
- Shelton State Community College
- Snead State Community College
- Southern Union State Community College
- H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College
- George C. Wallace Community College-Dothan
- Wallace State Community College-Hanceville
- George Corley Wallace State Community College-Selma
- Lurleen B. Wallace Community College
- Athens State University

Alabama Technology Network Centers
- Central Alabama Community College, Alexander City
- Auburn University, Auburn
- Jefferson State Community College, Birmingham
- Jefferson Davis Community College, Brewton
- George C. Wallace Community College, Eufaula
- Gadsden State Community College, Gadsden
- Wallace State Community College, Hanceville
- The University of Alabama in Huntsville, Huntsville
- Bevill State Community College, Jasper
- Northwest-Shoals Community College, Muscle Shoals
- George Corley Wallace State Community College, Selma
- Northeast Alabama Community College, Rainsville
- Alabama Southern Community College, Thomasville
- The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa

Alabama Skills Training Consortia
- Birmingham Skills Training Consortium
- Central Alabama Skills Training Consortium
- CITY Skills Training Consortium
- North Alabama Skills Training Consortium
- South Alabama Skills Training Consortium
Alabama’s economy is changing rapidly, and the opportunities for good jobs and global economic competitiveness are unprecedented. The unemployment rate is just 3.6 percent, significantly better than the national rate. That represents a dramatic reversal from the familiar trend of Alabama lagging behind other states. What is making the difference? Workforce development and responsiveness to industry training needs are transforming the state by luring new industry and improving the competitiveness of existing companies.

In the last two decades, thousands of jobs in the textile industry, agriculture, and other historically significant sectors have been lost, bringing distress to families and communities. A few months ago, the Mount Vernon Mill in Tallassee, the oldest continually operating textile mill in the state, announced that it would close. More than 300 people in that small town lost their jobs.

Within days, a high-tech aviation company announced it would locate there, bringing new, higher-paying jobs. However, skills and education for the textile jobs are nothing like those needed for the new industry. Affordable and accessible education and training stand in the gap between loss and hope. Without it, there is no way to successfully negotiate these changes. Whether the worker needs a GED, skills assessment and counseling, a chance to go back to college, or technical training for a new job, two-year colleges are the primary community resource.

The Alabama College System is the most affordable and accessible pathway to higher education, offering fully transferable two-year academic degrees, technical degrees, adult education, and extensive workforce training geared to specific, high-growth jobs. The two-year colleges serve thousands of traditional college-age students. They are also the main access point for adults returning to college or upgrading their skills and training.

This year, because of the strong support of the Alabama State Legislature and leadership of the State Board of Education, we did not have to raise tuition. Affordable tuition keeps the door open to higher education. Our citizens need that opportunity, and our economic growth depends on it.

The Alabama College System serves our entire state—not just the 316,090 people we directly served in 2005 with college courses, technical programs, workforce training, and adult education—but also every community that strives for prosperity and every industry that is working here to compete in a global economy. As a public entity, we don’t have shareholders like a corporation. Instead, our students who commit time, effort, and tuition are our primary stakeholders. We also consider taxpayers and citizens who invest and share in the outcomes of the two-year college system our stakeholders.

I am proud to report to you—stakeholders in the Alabama College System—on the extraordinary return on investment accomplished by our students, faculty and staff this year.

Roy W. Johnson
Chancellor
BY THE NUMBERS

Number of People Served in the Alabama College System 2004-2005

- College Credit Courses ............... 129,610
- Noncredit Programs/Courses ........... 67,165
- Adult Education and GED Testing ...... 37,680
- Skills Training Consortia ............. 12,644
- Alabama Fire College ................. 43,178
- Alabama Industrial .................. 25,813
- Development Training Institute
- TOTAL .................... 316,090

2005 Student Profile

- 54.7% of all college undergraduates in public institutions in Alabama attend two-year colleges
- 95% of two-year college students are from Alabama
- 27.9 is the average age of students in the Alabama College System
- More than 4,500 students received academic, leadership and performing arts scholarships
- 60% of students in the Alabama College System qualify for financial aid
- More than 304,000 students in the Alabama College System have received STARS (Statewide Transfer and Articulation Reporting System) guides that guarantee the seamless transfer of their community college credits toward a bachelor’s degree at a four-year institution.
- The student enrollment of the Alabama College System mirrors the racial diversity of the state. No other institution or system of higher education reflects Alabama’s racial diversity to that degree. Access to education is one of the critical leverage points for moving beyond historical inequities and toward a future of progress.

Alabama’s General Population Compared to the Alabama College System Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

Source: U.S. Census Data
Historic Merger Returns Resources to the Classroom—Efficiency and Access

Lawson State Community College and Bessemer State Technical College were merged in July to create a stronger, comprehensive community college. The merged college is called T.A. Lawson State Community College, and the Bessemer Campus now offers both academic and technical courses that are fully accredited. The merger will return $3 million to classroom instruction due to the reduction of administrative overhead and duplication. Dr. Ethel Hall, State Board of Education member from District IV, said the Lawson merger was the smoothest and most successful merger accomplished during her 20-year tenure on the board.

Originally, Lawson State was founded as a trade school for African Americans, and Bessemer Technical State College was for white students. Over the years, the colleges became more diverse, but the merger is another step toward overcoming historic divides in Alabama. The community response was phenomenal and tangible in terms of student enrollment. Fall enrollment of the merged Lawson State Community College increased by 13.8 percent.

At one point, there were 43 colleges in the Alabama College System. This merger brought the number of colleges down to 26. The mergers are critical to focusing resources efficiently and effectively. Reducing institutional duplication, especially in the area of administrative costs, is good stewardship. Utilizing all existing facilities, multiple campus sites, and off-campus instructional sites located in high schools, career centers, and in industrial plants reduces transportation barriers and maintains student access.

Tuition Remains Level in 2005

Alabama is one of only two community college systems in the nation that did not raise tuition this year. Alabama's two-year college tuition is 20 percent below the national community college average. Nationally, community college tuition increased 5.6 percent on average. Every public four-year institution in Alabama increased tuition this year. Tuition and fees in the Alabama College System are 59 percent of the average cost of tuition and fees at public four-year institutions in the state.

National Recognition

Wallace State Community College (Hanceville) was named one of ten national finalists for the prestigious 2006 Bellwether Award in the planning, governance, and finance category. The accolade recognizes the efforts of Dr. Vicki Hawsey, President, and Dr. Mell Johnson, Acting Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning, to redesign teaching-and-learning resources and services to improve student outcomes.
ANTICIPATING WORKFORCE TRENDS

“The community colleges are Alabama’s advantage over other states in economic development.”

—Governor Bob Riley (November 7, 2005)

Labor Market Responsive Education and Training

The pace of technological development and the highly specialized needs of industry have changed how workers are trained and prepared for the workforce. Across the nation, community colleges are the focal point for the delivery of education and training to meet the workforce demand in high-growth industries.

The Alabama College System has moved far from educating people and hoping their training fits available jobs to ensuring there is a match from the very beginning. We are reducing the time it takes for training in many technical fields by redesigning curricula and teaching strategies to meet industry demands more efficiently. In many cases, we can successfully train students for industry-standard certification much faster than in older models that assumed a two-year time frame. That saves students tuition, puts them in jobs faster, and fuels industry development.

AIDT Tops National Track Record of Excellence with International Certification

AIDT is an integral component of the Alabama College System for workforce development, and it is known as the best state workforce training program in the nation. Their excellent work plays a lead role in industrial recruitment, which resulted in EADS, an international aviation manufacturing company, locating in Mobile this year: In August, AIDT became the first state workforce training program to receive international certification that verifies the quality of its training through an external audit process. The ISO 9001:2000 certification increases Alabama’s ability to recruit industry on a global scale. In December, EADS landed a major contract for 150 airliners, and their timeline for recruiting engineers moved to the fast-track. They contacted AIDT for help, and Chancellor Roy Johnson made sure AIDT had the resources needed to fill EADS’ tall order. That is a perfect example of the flexibility necessary to keep Alabama’s competitive edge in industry recruitment and support.

The Alabama College System Leads the Nation in Competitive, Federal Job-Training Grants

Just as Alabama’s unemployment rate is leading the nation, the U.S. Department of Labor sees the Alabama College System as a national leader in transforming community colleges into agile, market-responsive workforce and education pipelines. In 2005, the U.S. Department of Labor awarded $17.3 million in competitive job training grants to seven two-year colleges in Alabama, more than any other state.

2005 RECIPIENTS

- Calhoun Community College
  • $3.5 million for advanced manufacturing
  • $2.5 million for nursing and health science careers
- Enterprise-Ozark Community College
  • $1.6 million for aviation technology
- Northwest-Shoals Community College
  • $1.7 million for advanced manufacturing
- Snead State Community College
  • $1.6 million for nursing and health science careers
- Trenholm State Technical College
  • $3 million for advanced automotive manufacturing
- Wallace State Community College (Hanceville)
  • $1.6 million for advanced manufacturing
- Wallace Community College (Dothan)
  • $1.9 million for nursing and health science careers
CARCAM Will Train Workers for Auto Manufacturing Industry Growth

“Traditional manufacturing assembly lines have evolved into modern computerized systems that integrate robots and programmable devices with a workforce that is increasingly expected to engage in lifelong learning in order to keep up with technology. In Alabama, the two-year college system is the focal point for training in automotive manufacturing technology.”

—The Center for Business and Economic Research at the University of Alabama

Alabama’s automotive manufacturing industry is developing quickly, bringing thousands of good-paying, technically skilled jobs with good benefits. Suppliers are locating here, following the lead of Honda, Hyundai, Mercedes, and Toyota. The Center for Business and Economic Research at the University of Alabama says that the auto manufacturing industry in Alabama will employ over 44,000 people by 2025, adding 13,200 jobs in the next two decades. That is a conservative estimate based on the companies located here and their announced plans. The actual anticipated figure is much higher: The need for auto mechanics, technicians and advanced manufacturing workers in electronics, plastics, robotics, industrial machinery mechanics, and welding will increase by at least 10 percent in the next decade.

This year five colleges—Central Alabama Community College, Gadsden State Community College, Jefferson State Community College, Trenholm State Technical College, and Wallace State Community College (Hanceville)—teamed up to create CARCAM (Consortium for the Alabama Regional Center for Automotive Manufacturing) to develop advanced curriculum for auto manufacturing degrees and short-term certificates. The National Science Foundation awarded $3.5 million to CARCAM to support the effort to partner with manufacturers and suppliers, increase the use of the latest technology, and provide training for technical instructors at both the high school and two-year college levels.

The Alabama Automotive Manufacturers’ Association made a commitment to provide 25 annual scholarships for students in the Alabama College System who are preparing for careers in automotive manufacturing. This investment indicates the need for workers and the confidence manufacturers have in the training provided in Alabama’s two-year colleges.

Robotics Programs Train Students on State-of-the-Art Equipment for Advanced Manufacturing

U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao visited Shelton State Community College’s electronics and robotics lab in May. “This lab is among the most impressive that I’ve seen, and I’ve seen a lot of very impressive institutions,” said Secretary Chao. Robotic technology and training is becoming increasingly significant in advanced manufacturing. Robots are used in production, welding, material handling, storage and retrieval systems, and machine tooling. Industry-standard robots are used for training at several colleges, often donated by the industries that utilize them. Nine colleges offer robotics courses. CARCAM and the U.S. Department of Labor grants awarded this year will expand robotics training across the state.

“Community colleges are agile and flexible. They are part of the community, and they know better than anyone else what skill sets are needed.” —U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao
Aviation Sector Takes Off in Alabama

EADS, the European manufacturer of Airbus, selected a site in Mobile adjacent to the Enterprise-Ozark Community College aviation campus at Brookley Field, choosing Alabama over other competing states. Existing training programs will be retooled to fit EADS' precise aviation manufacturing training needs. Enterprise-Ozark has an articulation agreement with Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University that allows their aviation technology graduates to count their training toward a bachelor's degree in aviation management. A shortage of aviation mechanics guarantees graduates jobs in their field. Enterprise-Ozark is adding a flight simulator technician program this year to support the two local flight simulation companies that received 20-year contracts to train aviation students at Fort Rucker. A grant from Governor Bob Riley and the U.S. Department of Labor will fund the construction of a new aviation technology center to house these programs.

Wallace State Community College (Hanceville) trains pilots through a two-year degree program that has an articulation agreement with Embry-Riddle for flight training. This year Shelton State Community College began a partnership with Wallace State to bring much-needed pilot training to the Tuscaloosa area without the costs of duplicating the program.

Nursing and Health Science Careers—High Quality Programs Address State Shortages

The national shortage of nurses is a critical public health problem. Alabama has major shortages as well, particularly in rural areas, given a rapidly growing elderly population. Alabama's two-year colleges produce 96 percent of licensed practical nurses and 55 percent of new registered nurses. The quality of nursing programs in the Alabama College System is rigorously tested with the NCLEX, the national nursing examination all new nurses must take.

A new, standardized practical nursing curriculum was implemented across the system this year to create efficiencies, increase the capacity to identify the strengths and weaknesses of programs, and support student needs for mobility and flexibility. Northeast Alabama Community College, Snead State Community College, and Faulkner State Community College graduated their first classes of LPNs in 2005. All three programs had 100 percent pass rates on the NCLEX.

The following nursing programs had perfect NCLEX pass rates in 2005:
- Bishop State Community College ...................... RN
- Central Alabama Community College ............... LPN
- Faulkner State Community College .............. LPN and RN
- Gadsden State Community College ............... RN
- Lawson State Community College .................. RN
- Northeast Alabama Community College .......... LPN
- Shelton State Community College ................. RN
- Snead State Community College .................... LPN
- Southern Union State Community College ........ LPN
Meeting the Critical Need for Industrial Maintenance Technicians

Industrial maintenance technicians are cross-trained in electronics, machine tool technology, heating and air conditioning, and welding. These technicians keep advanced manufacturing processes running in the automotive, aviation, shipbuilding, chemical, steel, and paper industries. The need for these technicians is at a crisis point. George Clark, President of Manufacture Alabama, says that well-trained industrial maintenance technicians can earn $50,000 to $70,000 annually.

The Alabama College System is responding by creating more programs to meet the projected job growth. AIDT helped develop both certificate and degree programs in the field. Four colleges have industrial maintenance degree programs, and six more offer courses or short certificates. This year Drake State Technical College received a federal grant to offer industrial maintenance courses in conjunction with high school career/technical instructors in Jackson County, Southern Union State Community College and Drake State Technical College recently received approval to add industrial maintenance associate degree programs.

Center for Manufacturing Innovation Will Transform Technical Training

The Center for Manufacturing Innovation (CMI) was established this year at Calhoun Community College in Decatur with a U.S. Department of Labor grant. CMI will provide training in advanced manufacturing processes running in the automotive, aviation, shipbuilding, chemical, steel, and paper industries. The need for these technicians is at a crisis point. George Clark, President of Manufacture Alabama, says that well-trained industrial maintenance technicians can earn $50,000 to $70,000 annually.

The innovative training will utilize modularized curriculum and flexible delivery options—web-based, industry-based, open lab, and self-directed learning—with multiple entry and exit points that prepare skilled workers more quickly. The training is more intensive and industry-focused than technical programs of the past.
ADULT EDUCATION

Adult Education Aligns with Workforce Development

One out of four adults in Alabama lacks a high school education. Adult education programs can reach undereducated adults and prepare them for entry into the workforce and job training. This year, Alabama’s Adult Education Program shifted its priorities to focus more directly on outcomes and the connection between adult education and the workforce. The target populations are undereducated workers on the job, high school drop-outs, and those preparing to enter the Alabama Army National Guard.

The new core measures for adult education are outcome-based and focused on workforce development. Beginning this year, adult education program success will be measured by:

- Number of clients gaining employment
- Number of clients retaining employment
- Number of clients entering postsecondary/job training
- Number of clients obtaining the GED

In the classroom, these changes mean that GED preparation becomes more intensive, direct instruction that helps learners obtain their GED quickly. Fast-track programs will target those who are closest to GED readiness. Adult education classes will integrate WorkKeys assessment and broaden the definition of “basic skills” to include computer literacy and pre-employment skills.

Alabama offers GED preparation through an interactive online program that allows students to move at their own pace, stay in contact with an instructor, and work from any site that has internet access. Outreach to industry is bringing adult education programs to work-sites to improve employees’ basic skills and make self-improvement easily accessible. ACIPCO, a major employer in Birmingham, just partnered with Lawson State Community College’s adult education program to make the online program available within their plant.

Education and Training—Part of Alabama’s Solution

Prison overcrowding is at a crisis point in Alabama. Chancellor Roy Johnson serves on the Governor’s Task Force on Prison Overcrowding, and he is bringing the training and education resources of the Alabama College System to bear on the issue. Job training is demonstrated to reduce the odds that a parolee will return to prison. Ingram State Technical College has provided technical training to inmates for years. Frank Clem, an author and graduate of Ingram, is now a free man and a developmental education instructor at the college. Clem spoke to Ingram students at their graduation last spring reminding them that the choices they make can change their lives.

Last year, LIFE Tech, an education and job training program that prepares paroled prisoners to enter the workforce, was piloted with several groups of female prisoners with great success. This year, the LIFE Tech program received the Governor’s Award for Partners in Progress for Workforce Development. Plans are underway to expand the program next year to serve male parolees at several sites as part of the overall state strategy to reduce overcrowding and prevent recidivism.

Keyasha Erby, a 27-year-old woman who was paroled from prison last year, credits LIFE Tech with giving her a chance to change her life. The young mother graduated from the program last spring and was successful in earning her GED. She gained confidence and direction from her success. The American Council on Education awarded her a scholarship, and she will begin her second semester at Trenholm State Technical College in the spring.
The number of adults in Alabama with a college degree lags behind the rest of the nation, and the mission of community colleges includes changing that. Outreach programs to K-12 students encourage youth to set career goals and plan to enter higher education. Wallace State Community College (Selma) received a major grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to create the Selma Early College High School Program (ECHS), an innovative bridge program that allows students in the heart of the Black Belt to earn a high school diploma and an associate degree at the same time.

One hundred ninth-graders currently enrolled in the ECHS program spend longer hours at school each day, take college-prep courses, and go to classes almost year-round. Last summer, ECHS students continued their college education through a “Summer Bridge” program at Pennsylvania State University. By the time they graduate, these students will have earned two-year degrees in the fields of agribusiness, agricultural engineering, aquaculture, chemistry, engineering and computer science. The program is one of a handful in the nation, blurring the lines between high school and the workforce to increase educational attainment in economically distressed areas.

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Students Serving Communities

Students on every campus participate in service projects that serve children; raise money for the March of Dimes, the American Cancer Society, and the Salvation Army; and engage in hands-on efforts like Habitat for Humanity. Every college participated in efforts to help the survivors of Hurricane Katrina by collecting donations, food, clothing and personal items.

Sometimes students can put the skills they are learning directly to work in community service. Shelton State Community College’s truck driving students actually transported relief items to the coast. Welding students at Jefferson Davis Community College constructed playground equipment for the Gulf Shores Elementary School, saving the local school system nearly $30,000. With the students’ help, the equipment cost only $1,500 for pipe materials.
Art and Culture Enhance Communities’ Quality of Life

The arts play a central role in the quality of community life, inspiring young people and enriching life experiences that develop a love for learning and exploration. Alabama is still a mostly rural state, and small communities need access to the arts and cultural experiences that are generally available in big cities. Transportation and socioeconomic factors often limit access to the arts. However, the pool of talent in small towns and low-income communities is unlimited, and community colleges are access points for tapping it.

Bernice Sims, a now-famous Alabama artist, is a prime example. One of ten children, Ms. Sims dropped out of the ninth grade to get married. After having six children and going through a divorce, she got her GED. She enrolled in her first art class at Jefferson Davis Community College in Brewton. This year one of her paintings was selected to appear on a U.S. postage stamp.

Southern Union State Community College has an extensive fine arts program that has produced stars like country music star Brad Cotter, who attended the college on a performing arts scholarship. Andrea Browning Shakir, a former Southern Union dancer who transferred to the University of Alabama on a dance scholarship, appeared as a featured dancer in Radio City Music Hall's “Christmas Spectacular” in New York City. Shakir returned to Southern Union last fall to teach a master class for the dance department.

Every college in the Alabama College System provides programs that serve students and the larger community. That is at the heart of what it means to be a community college. This year Wallace State Community College (Hanceville) held its first annual Cultural Arts Week in April, bringing renowned chef and author Frank Stitt to town along with the Alabama Symphony Orchestra, visual arts presentations and noted authors. Evelyn Burrow donated her art collection valued at $9.5 million to Wallace State, and the college broke ground on the Burrow Center for the Fine and Performing Arts, which will house the collection, a new auditorium, and classroom space for music and theater programs.

Wallace Community College (Dothan) received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to start a series of faculty workshops and public lectures on Alabama folklore featuring scholars in Southern Studies. Choral students from Southern Union and Shelton State Community College performed at Carnegie Hall in New York this year. Alabama Southern Community College has sponsored the production of “To Kill a Mockingbird” at the courthouse in Monroeville for 15 years, and it is one of the most notable presentations of southern literature and drama in the country.
Athletics Create Opportunity

The Alabama Community College Conference (ACCC) is made up of athletic teams from twenty different colleges, featuring softball, men’s and women’s basketball, baseball, volleyball, track and cross country, golf, tennis, and men’s and women’s soccer. ACCC is part of the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA), providing Alabama two-year college athletes the chance to showcase their skills nationally. This year more than 1,900 students earned Alabama community college athletic scholarships. The conference has produced professional athletes and transfer students who earn athletic scholarships at major four-year universities. For most community college athletes, sports participation helps students gain confidence and self-discipline that enables them to reach their educational and career goals.

The baseball team of Wallace State Community College (Hanceville) finished third in the NJCAA World Series in June of this year. Dozens of Lions’ supporters traveled to watch the series in Grand Junction, Colorado. The top finish—oh, so close—was worthy of a mile-high celebration. Baseball and fast-pitch softball will return to Calhoun Community College in the spring, and Lawson State Community College is fielding a baseball team for the first time in decades on a brand new field. Chattahoochee Valley Community College resumed women’s basketball this year.

“Many young people have athletic talent that can be focused to help them succeed, stay out of trouble, and gain access to college. Community college athletics give more kids a chance, and for some, it is a ticket to play in the pros or at a major university. For most, it’s a chance at college and experience that builds leadership skills and instills life lessons,” said Chancellor Roy Johnson.

Blair Potter, pitcher for the Wallace Community College (Dothan) fast-pitch softball team, was nationally ranked throughout the season and named Alabama Sportswriters’ Junior College Player of the Year. This fall she entered the University of Alabama on an athletic scholarship, and she will be pitching this spring. Faulkner State Community College’s men’s golf team finished fourth in the NJCAA tournament this year. The men’s track and field team at Wallace State Community College (Hanceville) finished sixth in the nation.

This year, 42 athletes in the Alabama Community College Conference were nationally recognized as Academic All-Americans, meaning they participated in conference play and maintained a grade-point average of at least 3.6. That is up from 22 athletes in 2004.
HIGH YIELD STRATEGIES

SMART INVESTMENTS FOR BIG RETURNS
Alabama Technology Network—Giving Alabama Business an Edge

The Alabama Technology Network (ATN) links two-year colleges, the University of Alabama System, Auburn University and the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama to help existing industry become more competitive. Each of the 14 centers specializes in a high-need area: business consulting, engineering technical services, environmental health and safety, human resources and organizational development, information technology, lean manufacturing, or quality systems.

ATN is a high-yield strategy because it brings together a wide range of technical assistance in a non-duplicated, responsive delivery system. The ATN Centers served 394 clients this year. According to independent surveys of clients, ATN assistance saved local industries $5,292,100, and helped increase their sales by $42,725,000. ATN services helped create 412 jobs and retain another 953 jobs.

Strategies that create access—flexible, demand-driven instructional sites and high-tech distance learning

For college students who plan to pack up and move into a dormitory, the distance between home and campus is not an issue of daily concern. From their beginning, community colleges have been concerned with geographical access to education, as it is their mission to serve people in communities who are often handling family responsibilities and jobs. Nationally, the average community college student must drive 25 miles to a two-year college, but in Alabama the average student must travel 40 miles. Transportation simply must not be an insurmountable barrier to increasing Alabama’s educational attainment levels.

The number of colleges in the Alabama College System has been dramatically reduced through mergers. That saves resources and avoids duplication. However, access needs must be balanced in the process, and the use of instructional sites is an efficient strategy. When demand for classes reaches a critical point in an area, the State Board of Education authorizes instructional sites to meet the need. The Board also eliminates sites that are no longer needed. Often courses are offered in a high school or another existing facility, and instructors go to the students.

Sometimes, colleges build instructional site facilities as demand requires. Gadsden State Community College just entered into a partnership with the local governments in Cherokee County, the State Board of Education, and the Governor’s office to develop an educational center in the city of Centre that will house a new instructional site offering nursing classes, workforce training, adult education and college transfer courses. Until now, citizens had a 50-60 minute commute one way to reach a community college. The new center will create unprecedented educational access.

Online classes are another key strategy for making college more accessible. Athens State University will make four complete bachelor’s degrees in business available online beginning in 2006. Athens State University offers junior and senior level instruction toward a bachelor’s degree.

Twenty-four of 26 colleges offer online courses. Jefferson State Community College and Enterprise-Ozark Community College are both part of the Sloan Consortium, a national network of two-year colleges offering online classes.

INVESTING IN HOPE
Tuition Waivers Granted to Students Displaced by Hurricane Katrina

The Alabama College System offered tuition waivers to students in public two-year colleges in Louisiana and Mississippi displaced by the hurricane. Barriers to admission were eliminated and the red tape was cut to help students quickly get back to class. More than one hundred students took advantage of the offer at colleges across the state. In some cases, colleges were able to offer dorm rooms and help with the cost of books.

Is a tuition waiver really a smart strategy with big returns? Absolutely. Being a good neighbor and helping students stay on track when almost everything else is lost is an investment in hope in the midst of tragedy.
Proven Results from the Alabama College System—A Better Alabama

The Alabama College System offers a substantial return on its investments, including a more competitive environment for attracting new business and industry by developing:

- More educated students
- Better trained, skilled workers
- Higher adult educational attainment levels
- More competitive industries

Financial Resources

Community and Technical Colleges Unrestricted Revenue Sources

Total unrestricted revenue amounted to $495,105,089 this year. The total budget expenditures for the Alabama College System for Fiscal Year 2005 is $704,997,134 which includes Education Trust Fund allocations, restricted grants, tuition and fees, federal Adult Education funding, and workforce development funds. These resources enabled the Alabama College System to serve 316,090 students this year.

The Department of Postsecondary Education oversees the colleges and workforce development programs under the direction of the State Board of Education. The Department of Postsecondary Education is also the state and federally designated agency for Adult Education funds which are redistributed to local adult education programs through a competitive grant process.

Note: ETF is the Education Trust Fund
ALABAMA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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 under the direction of the Board. The State Board of Education governs the Alabama College System with the Governor serving as chair of the Board by virtue of 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 MISSION OF THE ALABAMA COLLEGE SYSTEM

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, to promote economic growth, and enhance the quality of life for the people of Alabama.

This publication of the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education is produced in fulfillment of section 16-60-111.5 of the Code of Alabama (1975). It is the official policy of the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education, including all postsecondary institutions under the control of the Alabama State Board of Education, that no person in Alabama shall, on the grounds of race, color, disability, sex, religion, creed, national origin, or age, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program, activity, or employment.