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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**ALABAMA’S COMMUNITY COLLEGES TAKE SIGNIFICANT STEPS TO IMPROVE SERVICE AND STABILITY**

At a meeting on Wednesday, the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) board of trustees voted to approve two significant initiatives which will fundamentally change and enhance the student experience at every community college across the state.

Through the approval of a $10 per credit hour tuition adjustment, the System and its colleges will begin the process of implementing comprehensive advancements at both the statewide and local levels geared towards improving every aspect of engagement with current and potential community college students.

The board also approved a five-year contract with Ellucian, the leading national higher education software and services provider, to implement a single enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution across the entire community college system.

The creation of an independent board of trustees in 2015 began an intensive period of assessment and evaluation at ACCS to determine how to create a more unified community college system to best fulfill the unique needs of Alabama’s citizens, businesses and industries throughout the state.

The expansion of services and programs and the implementation of a single administrative software system approved today signifies a systemic change within the ACCS to provide significant, strategic improvements in the delivery of high quality, affordable, and local education and training to every Alabamian.

“Our efforts today will do more to change the impact and long-term stability of Alabama’s community colleges than any other action we’ve taken as a board of trustees,” Blake McAnally, ACCS trustee and chair of the board’s Audit and Finance Committee, said. “Alabama’s landscape is changing and it’s not enough for us to simply catch up, we must stay a step ahead and be innovative to ensure we’re making data-driven decisions that deliver a workforce that has the education and skills required for the future.”

A $10 per credit hour tuition adjustment will bring the average cost of tuition and fees at Alabama’s community colleges to $153 per credit hour, an amount less than half the average per credit cost at the state’s four-year public institutions.

Half of the additional funding will be divided among each college and half will be used for statewide college support. Local funding will be focused on upgrading the student experience through campus improvements including technology advancements, renovations and construction projects, and safety enhancements. The remaining funding will be used to advance the establishment of a unified and collaborative community college system by increasing the services provided at the state level to increase each college’s ability to focus on student services and instruction.

“Every organization comes to a point where they decide if they’re satisfied with the way things have always been done or if they want to make changes to improve their outcomes – and the ACCS is no different,” ACCS Chancellor Jimmy Baker noted. “We’ve spent a great deal of time reviewing our efforts and while we have pockets of excellence, we’ve determined we can do much more to have a positive impact on our students and the state. Implementing a single ERP system and providing additional funds devoted to student services can revolutionize our delivery of education and training to every Alabamian who enters our doors.”

The approval of the Ellucian contract to implement a single ERP solution across the ACCS is the culmination of a two-year process which included engagement from every college and hundreds of faculty and staff from across the state.

The implementation of a single, cloud-based, software-as-a-service ERP solution will completely transform the ability of the ACCS and its colleges to function as a unified system. Implementation of the ERP will streamline processes and information by integrating areas within each college and the entire community college system including finance, human resources, purchasing, course directories, data collection, and other services into one uniform platform across the system. The ability to operate under the same software and with the same operating procedures will dramatically increase the System’s effectiveness and efficiency leading to improved service delivery.

Additionally, with the rollout of the upgraded system, all community college students will have unprecedented access to information whether it’s registration, financial aid, grades, or even progress towards degrees or certifications, all from their mobile device.

Dr. Reginald Sykes, president of Bishop State Community College in Mobile and president of the Alabama Community College Presidents’ Association, explained, “When the System improves, every college improves, and I’m proud to be part of the vision and mission to propel the Alabama Community College System and all of its colleges into the future. Our students deserve the absolute best we can provide and today’s efforts by the board of trustees will help us to deliver an improved experience to every student at every college across the state.”

The tuition adjustment will go into effect at every college this fall. The implementation of the systemwide ERP solution is expected to begin this summer and is projected to be complete by summer 2021.

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