



Jimmy H. Baker
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PRESS RELEASE

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ACCS board appoints longtime educator Jimmy H. Baker as chancellor

MONTGOMERY, Ala. – The Alabama Community College System board of trustees voted today to appoint acting chancellor Jimmy H. Baker as chancellor starting April 1.

Baker, who has served as acting chancellor for more than six months, will replace Mark Heinrich, who decided to retire after a prolonged illness kept him away from the job.

“Jimmy Baker has done a tremendous job of leading the system during the chancellor’s absence and has been far more than a place-holder,” said Al Thompson, vice chairman of the community college system’s board of trustees. “As we searched for a permanent replacement, we realized we could never find a chancellor who would be more experienced or prepared than Jimmy Baker.”

Baker began his K-12 education career as a teacher and coach at Daleville High School. He quickly moved up the ranks in education administration, first being named superintendent in Daleville, later becoming superintendent for Coffee County, and then moving to the state Department of Education as assistant superintendent for finance. As assistant state superintendent, Baker oversaw all budgets and financial reports for the state education office, local school systems and the community college system.

From 1995 to 1999, he served as state finance director under Gov. Fob James. As the state’s top financial official, Baker had broad responsibilities over a range of government functions, including purchasing, contracting, information technology, insurance, and bonds. As finance director, Baker also developed and secured passage of the Foundation Program to allocate school funds more fairly. He implemented the program during a short-term assignment as a deputy state superintendent.

In addition to his public sector experience, Baker has a significant track record in the private sector. For 10 years, he served as president of the brokerage firm George M. Wood & Co. He also

managed large-scale real estate developments and operated several private partnership businesses, including a medical evacuation company.

“Jimmy Baker understands the important work of community colleges from virtually every angle – from administering the schools and teaching the students, to hiring them when they graduate,” said Milton Davis, a member of the board of trustees who chaired the personnel committee that led the chancellor search. “He brings a unique perspective, and he knows that ultimately the work of our community colleges is about ensuring the success of our students, the success of our businesses, and the success of our state.”

Baker became chief of staff at the community college system in January 2016 and was named acting chancellor in August, after Heinrich developed severe complications from shingles. Heinrich announced in February that he planned to retire April 1 because of ongoing health issues.

“I am honored to be in this position,” Baker said. “Alabama has no greater asset than its community college system, and we are uniquely positioned to ensure our students have the skills they need to meet their goals. While we will continually adapt and upgrade our programs, our basic mission remains the same. We want to provide our students opportunities for success, whether they want to work toward a four-year degree, to get a good job, or to upgrade their skills.”

Cutline: Photo of Mr. Jimmy H. Baker courtesy of the Alabama Community College System

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The Alabama Community College System (ACCS) consists of 24 comprehensive community and technical colleges, Marion Military Institute and the Alabama Technology Network (ATN). ACCS is committed to providing a unified system of institutions delivering excellence in academic education, adult education, and workforce development. ACCS serves approximately 185,000 people annually through all of its entities, with over 83,000 of those served enrolled in credit courses.