

**FROM CHANCELLOR
JIMMY H. BAKER**

Hi [INSERT NAME],

Everyone is bound to know someone who has been impacted by a local community college, and there are more who still need to know that we're here for them. The Alabama Community College System (ACCS) offers more than 1,728 unique training opportunities statewide, and many of these are already in partnership with more than 5,300 businesses who depend on the ACCS for training.

In addition, nearly a half million students have been able to benefit starting college courses from their local community college that transfer to Alabama's four-year colleges and universities.

We are Alabama's workforce plan, but more importantly, we're here for anyone who wants to better their lives for themselves and their families. This newsletter provides a small glimpse into the stories that make up why the ACCS exists.

Photo: Braxton Clines, a Northeast Alabama alum, receiving his white coat at Auburn University.

The dual advantage: community college graduate on fast track to career after Auburn

The transition after high school graduation is a pivotal moment for any student.

Some are jumping directly into the workforce, while others are gearing up to further their education at universities this fall. Dual enrollment graduates are often able to transition with a distinct advantage over their classmates.

Before even receiving his high school diploma in 2023, Braxton Clines had already crossed the stage at Northeast Alabama Community College (NACC).

"I really enjoyed the way that I could adapt my schedule around my classes because most were available online," said Clines. By securing a head start, he not

only saved time and money but also swiftly earned his white coat at Auburn University's Harrison College of Pharmacy. It typically takes up to seven years of schooling, but he found a way to reduce it by three years when starting at an Alabama community college.

"I am extremely grateful," said Clines. "Dual enrollment has shaped the way that I've learned material and has been a necessary part of my training for pharmacy school."

Over the past decade, Alabama's community and technical colleges have served as the launching pad for over 400,000 transfer students. Clines is among the 14% of ACCS students who transferred to a

four-year institution and entered a health care program. "I really enjoyed the faculty at NACC," he said. "There were so many teachers and advisors that helped my education flourish in a meaningful way."

The path to success frequently starts within one's own community. Students, regardless of their future goals, can lay a strong foundation for their journey at any Alabama community college. This solid groundwork supports them no matter where their academic and professional pursuits may lead.

‘Don’t Drop It on Alabama’: community colleges take lead in litter pickups

In a significant stride toward a cleaner and greener state, the annual Alabama PALS (People Against a Littered State) “Don’t Drop It on Alabama” Statewide Spring Cleanup reached record achievements this year.

The initiative, known for rallying community members across Alabama to combat litter and promote recycling, led to greater participation from Alabama’s community and technical colleges. This is thanks to Alabama PALS, Coca-Cola Bottling Company UNITED, Paths for Success Foundation, and a new partnership with the Alabama Association of Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Councils.

The Alabama Community College System collected more than 18,377 pounds (nine tons) of trash, debris, and recyclables in 2024. This represents a 67% increase from the previous year’s total of 11,000 pounds (5.5 tons).

Lt. Gov. Will Ainsworth applauded the spring cleanup initiative.

“From its mountains in the north to beaches in the south and all points in between, Alabama ranks among the nation’s most beautiful states, and it’s important we take every measure to keep it that way,” he said.

As Alabama’s community colleges band together in this clean-up mission for years to come, they are setting the stage for a future free of litter, emphasizing the belief that maintaining the state’s beauty is a collective responsibility.



Photo: Enterprise State student club members and athletes picked up litter to help keep the community looking its best.

ACCS Diamond Jubilee Golf Scramble a resounding success

The Diamond Jubilee Golf Scramble kicked off with an impressive turnout, bringing together over 380 golfers across the state for a memorable event. The enthusiasm and support significantly benefited student success through the Paths for Success Foundation.

Four tournaments were held at four Robert Trent Jones (RTJ) Golf Trails: Hampton Cove, Oxmoor Valley, Capitol Hill, and Magnolia Grove. Countless volunteers spent months planning to ensure the Golf Scramble ran smoothly. Sponsors and participants praised the massive effort.

“It was a HUGE success,” said EBSCOed via Facebook. “As a Diamond Sponsor for the event, EBSCOed is proud to have supported this milestone celebration, as well as be in partnership with the ACCS, creating equitable opportunities for academic and professional growth of Alabamians.”

This blend of strong golfer participation, outstanding organization, and significant sponsor support set the stage for a celebration that extended beyond the courses themselves.



Photo: Golf Scramble tournament players completing their round at the RTJ Magnolia Grove course.

Mastering the game and the workforce simultaneously

The Alabama Community College Conference (ACCC) has seen a remarkable surge in sports popularity, adding 46 teams across 92% of the state's community colleges in recent years.

This growth not only highlights the growing enthusiasm for collegiate sports across Alabama but also serves to dismantle the outdated belief that students must choose between their academic pursuits and their passion for sports.

Tuscaloosa News reported that the Shelton State women's basketball team has been the epitome of success both on and off the court in representing two-year colleges.

"I knew that we were going to be disciplined," said player zero Kaleah Taylor. "It was so dominating, like they haven't lost a game in 8 years."

Even though most student athletes



Photo: Calhoun Lady Warhawks vs Shelton State Lady Buccaneers at the ACCC Division I Basketball Tournament in March.

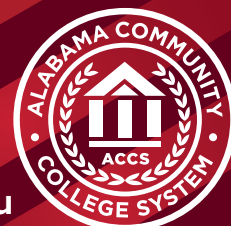
will not continue in their sports professionally, many are still choosing to go pro in something other than basketball. For example, Wallace State graduate Najee Davis has used the valuable lessons from playing ball to become a successful owner of a Chick-Fil-A franchise in Vienna, Virginia.

"As soon as I got in a corporate career track that I wanted to be in, I said I'm going to take the same approach as basketball," said Davis. "I just took that same work ethic."

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ACCS COMMUNICATIONS

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Patriots in pre-school gain college experience early

At the heart of Northwest Shoals Community College, the Child Development Center shines as a model of excellence in early childhood education. The center stands out as the sole preschool within the Alabama Community College System, earning widespread acclaim throughout Muscle Shoals for its remarkable structure.

Erin Davis is among countless parents who believe the program sets their children up for success, even before they start kindergarten.

"The Child Development Center has been a major stepping stone in learning for my daughter," said Davis. "I can't say enough good things about this program."

Word travels fast, as parents share their experience with other parents who enroll their children in the program.

"My kids have very different personalities and Northwest Shoals was more than accommodating to both of them," said Elle Lawler. "They learned so much about structure, how to appropriately treat peers and teachers, and how to handle their emotions."

In 1993, not long after its establishment, the center earned accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Such accreditation is recognized as the highest benchmark of excellence in early childhood education.

"The fact that I've been with the center for 17 years and have hired only four people during that time is a testament to our commitment," said Jacque Jefferys, Director of Child Development Programs. "My staff's longevity demonstrates

their dedication to the center's mission and their passion for providing quality care and education to the children and families they serve."

Research shows that consistency plays a crucial role in fostering a sense of trust and security among young children. This stability helps to minimize anxiety and stress, making it easier for them to focus on learning and exploration.

"They not only teach the children," said Davis. "They love each and every one of them."

With the foundation laid at Northwest Shoals, these young Patriots are navigating their way towards a radiant future.



Photo: Northwest Shoals preschool students discover the joy of learning at Chick-Fil-A.