

**ALABAMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY JULY 9, 2025, 10:00 A.M.**

The Alabama Community College System Board of Trustees (also referred to herein as the Board) held a meeting at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, July 9, 2025, in the Board Room of the Alabama Community College System building in Montgomery, Alabama. The meeting was called in accordance with Act No. 2015-125.

PRESIDING: MS. VALERIE GRAY, CHAIR

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Gray.

The invocation was delivered by Pastor Frank Bowling of Eastmont Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, followed by the pledge of allegiance.

On roll call, the following Board members were present:

Ms. Valerie Gray
Mr. Jeb Shell
Mr. John Mitchell
Mr. Britton Lightsey
Mr. Goodrich Rogers
Mr. Ron Houston
Mr. Llevelyn Rhone
Mr. Tim McCartney
Dr. Yvette Richardson

Also present was Mr. Jimmy H. Baker, Chancellor of the Alabama Community College System. Absent was Governor Kay Ivey.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On motion by Mr. McCartney, second by Mr. Shell, the Board of Trustees voted unanimously to amend the agenda to remove Item IX.A.14 - LBW Andalusia Campus Seth Hammett Renovation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On motion by Mr. Rogers, second by Mr. Houston, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the June 11, 2025 meeting as presented without discussion.

**SECTION VI
(PUBLIC COMMENT)**

None.

SECTION VII
COLLEGE SPOTLIGHT – CALHOUN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Dr. Jimmy Hodges, President of Calhoun Community College, introduced a video showcasing one of the college's success stories, Ms. Marcela Dolan. Per Dr. Hodges, the college's slogan is "Transforming Lives and Shaping Futures." Per Dr. Hodges, Ms. Dolan is representative of that, and her journey exemplifies what community colleges do. She is a veteran, artist, wife, and a community college graduate.

Ms. Dolan graduated with a degree in general studies and wishes to transfer to Athens State concentrating in ceramics. She is a veteran and wants to open her own art studio and provide art therapy for veterans with PTSD. She was informed about Calhoun by a friend, and she stated that her experience at Calhoun has been wonderful. She added she is a first-generation high school graduate and now a community college graduate.

Dr. Hodges added that Ms. Dolan's vision of opening a studio to provide art therapy to veterans with PTSD will be a means of providing mental health support to get people back in the workforce. Her vision is rooted in entrepreneurship, community service, and mental health support, which are critical parts of our society now.

SECTION VIII
(EXECUTIVE, LEGAL, AND PUBLIC INFORMATION)

ADOPTED

REID STATE TECHNICAL COLLEGE
STATEMENT OF INTENT TO CHANGE REID STATE TECHNICAL COLLEGE FROM A
TECHNICAL COLLEGE TO A COMMUNITY COLLEGE INSTRUCTIONAL ROLE

On motion by Mr. Mitchell, second by Mr. McCartney, the Board of Trustees adopted the Statement of Intent to Change Reid State Technical College from a Technical College to a Community College Instructional Role and endorsed the name change from Reid State Technical College to Reid State Community College.

Fiscal Consideration: None

On motion by Mr. Houston, second by Mr. Shell, the Board of Trustees adopted the 2025-2026 salary schedules for the community and technical colleges and the Alabama Technology Network.

Fiscal Consideration: The salary schedules for 2024-2025 are hereby extended for 2025-2026. Employees of the Alabama Community College System who qualify for step increases will receive the salary step increase indicated by the appropriate salary schedule. The 2025-2026 salary schedules become effective September 1, 2025, for employees paid from all schedules except faculty schedules, which become effective the first day of the 2025-2026 fall term

SECTION IX

(INSTRUCTION, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, ADULT EDUCATION, FACILITIES, FISCAL, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT)

ALABAMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM ALLOCATION OF THE 2025-2026 TWO-YEAR COLLEGE SYSTEM AND PRISON EDUCATION OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE APPROPRIATION

On motion by Mr. Shell, second by Mr. Rhone, the Board of Trustees approved the allocation of the 2025-2026 Education Trust Fund (ETF) appropriation for operations and maintenance of the two-year colleges and the prison education appropriation as recommended by the Chancellor.

Fiscal Consideration: \$450,600,434 - College Operations and Maintenance (ETF)
22,776,380 - Prison Education Operations and Maintenance (ETF)
\$473,376,814 - Total O & M and Prison O & M funds

COASTAL ALABAMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION APPROVING BOND ISSUE

On motion by Mr. Houston, second by Mr. Shell, the Board of Trustees adopted a resolution providing (1) for the construction, renovating, and equipping of facilities on the Coastal Alabama Community College, (2) for the financing thereof by the issuance of revenue bonds in the par amount of approximately \$23,000,000, not to exceed \$24,150,000, (3) for a maximum interest rate, redemption terms, and other parameters, (4) for securing the payment of the principal of and interest on such bonds, and (5) for payment of costs of issuing the bonds.

Fiscal Consideration: Approximately \$23,000,000 in revenue bonds for no more than 30 years with average annual debt service expense of approximately \$1,900,000.

REID STATE TECHNICAL COLLEGE
ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION APPROVING BOND ISSUE

On motion by Mr. Mitchell, second by Mr. McCartney, the Board of Trustees adopted a resolution providing (1) for the construction, renovating, and equipping of facilities on the Reid State Technical College, (2) for the financing thereof by the issuance of revenue bonds in the par amount of approximately \$5,000,000, not to exceed \$5,350,000, (3) for a maximum interest rate, redemption terms, and other parameters, (4) for securing the payment of the principal of and interest on such bonds, and (5) for payment of costs of issuing the bonds.

Fiscal Consideration: Approximately \$5,000,000 in revenue bonds for no more than 20 years with average annual debt service expense of approximately \$400,000.

WALLACE STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE - HANCEVILLE
ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION APPROVING BOND ISSUE

On motion by Mr. Lightsey, second by Mr. Houston, the Board of Trustees adopted a resolution providing (1) for the construction, renovating, and equipping of facilities on the Wallace State Community College - Hanceville, (2) for the financing thereof by the issuance of revenue bonds in the par amount of approximately \$20,000,000, not to exceed \$21,100,000, (3) for a maximum interest rate, redemption terms, and other parameters, (4) for securing the payment of the principal of and interest on such bonds, and (5) for payment of costs of issuing the bonds.

Fiscal Consideration: Approximately \$20,000,000 in revenue bonds for no more than 30 years with average annual debt service expense of approximately \$1,700,000.

BISHOP STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
EQUIPMENT PURCHASE

On motion by Mr. Shell, second by Mr. Rhone, the Board of Trustees authorized the President of Bishop State Community College to expend \$2,000,000 to purchase specific CNC mills, lathes and 3D metal printer and various other equipment to support the new workforce development program and industry for Submarine Construction. The training equipment will support the Gene Haas Center for Advanced Manufacturing Technology at Bishop State Community College.

Fiscal Consideration: \$2,000,000

TRENHOLM STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

EXECUTIVE PARK RENOVATION FOR HEALTH CARE AND CULINARY

On motion by Mr. Mitchell, second by Mr. Houston, the Board of Trustees authorized Trenholm State Community College to proceed with the project named Trenholm Executive Park Campus Renovation for Healthcare and Culinary (Building Renovation Package – Phase III). Construction contracts shall be executed no later than September 30, 2025, or this authorization shall expire.

Fiscal Consideration: PHASE III PROJECT COST \$41,473,000

CALHOUN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
DECATUR CAMPUS PURCHASE OF CSX ROW PROPERTY

On motion by Mr. Rogers, second by Mr. Lightsey, the Board of Trustees authorized Calhoun Community College to proceed with the project named Decatur Campus Purchase of CSX ROW Property. Closing shall be executed no later than October 1, 2025, or this authorization shall expire.

Fiscal Consideration: TOTAL PROJECT COST \$134,500

CALHOUN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
HUNTSVILLE CAMPUS SPARKMAN BUILDING CHILLER AND MECHANICAL
EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT

On motion by Mr. Rogers, second by Mr. McCartney, the Board of Trustees authorized Calhoun Community College to proceed with the project named Huntsville Campus Sparkman Building Chiller and Mechanical Equipment Replacement (Pre-Purchase of Major Mechanical Equipment). Construction contracts shall be executed no later than September 30, 2025, or this authorization shall expire.

Fiscal Consideration: TOTAL PROJECT COST \$567,786

J.F. DRAKE STATE COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE
BUILDING 800 RESTROOM RENOVATIONS

On motion by Mr. Lightsey, second by Mr. Rhone, the Board of Trustees authorized J. F. Drake State Community and Technical College to proceed with construction of the project named Building 800 Restroom Renovations. Construction contracts shall be executed no later than November 1, 2025, or this authorization shall expire.

Fiscal Consideration: TOTAL PROJECT COST \$589,823
NORTHWEST-SHOALS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
MUSCLE SHOALS CAMPUS STATUTORY WARRANTY DEED OF GIFT TO MUSCLE
SHOALS ELECTRIC BOARD

On motion by Mr. Lightsey, second by Mr. Shell, the Board of Trustees authorized Northwest Shoals Community College to proceed with the project named Muscle Shoals Campus Statutory Warranty Deed of Gift to Muscle Shoals Electric Board. Closing shall be executed no later than September 31, 2025, or this authorization shall expire.

Fiscal Consideration: None

SNEAD STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
PURCHASE OF ALBERTVILLE AIRPORT HANGAR FOR AVIATION TRAINING
PROGRAM

On motion by Mr. McCartney, second by Mr. Shell, the Board of Trustees authorized Snead State Community College to proceed with the project named Purchase of Albertville Airport Hangar for Aviation Training Program. The closing process was completed in June 2025, and this action replaces the Board of Trustees authorization for the project dated April 9, 2025.

Fiscal Consideration: TOTAL PROJECT COST \$1,641,172

ENTERPRISE STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
ENTERPRISE CAMPUS SNUGGS HALL BUILDING RENOVATION

On motion by Mr. Mitchell, second by Mr. Lightsey, the Board of Trustees authorized Enterprise State Community College to proceed with the project named Enterprise Campus Snuggs Hall Building Renovation. Construction contracts shall be executed no later than October 1, 2025, or this authorization shall expire.

Fiscal Consideration: TOTAL PROJECT COST \$8,040,986

LURLEEN B. WALLACE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
ANDALUSIA CAMPUS CONSTRUCTION OF NEW FLAG FOOTBALL FIELD

On motion by Mr. Mitchell, second by Mr. Shell, the Board of Trustees authorized Lurleen B. Wallace Community College to proceed with the project named Andalusia Campus Construction of New Flag Football Field. Construction contracts shall be executed no later than September 1, 2025, or this authorization shall expire.

Fiscal Consideration: TOTAL PROJECT COST \$921,212

SECTION X
PERSONNEL

Charlene Finkelstein, Human Resources Generalist, introduced the following new employee:

- **Christi Ellis – Executive Administrative Assistant**

Chancellor Baker asked Dr. Kathy Murphy, former Gadsden State President, to comment on Mr. Alan Smith, Interim President at Gadsden State. Dr. Murphy stated that Mr. Smith was a former Dean at Gadsden State in Workforce Development and that he was passionate about it. She also learned he is passionate about students, Gadsden State, and the community. She added that working for over four years with Mr. Smith was a privilege and that she learned a lot from him.

Dr. Murphy and Chancellor Baker both recommended Mr. Smith as the next President of Gadsden State, after which Senior Associate Counsel David O'Brien read a brief biography.

On motion by Mr. McCartney, second by Mr. Rogers, the Board unanimously voted Mr. Alan Smith as the new President of Gadsden State Community College.

Mr. Smith thanked the Board and Chancellor for the opportunity. He stated he is a product of Gadsden State which helped him start a career in Education. He added he is very connected to the community in Calhoun County, and said he is enthusiastic about the opportunities ahead at Gadsden State. He recognized his wife, Leah, and his youngest son, Cooper, who is a Gadsden State Mechanical Design Technology dual enrollment student. His oldest son, Caleb, could not attend. Mr. Smith said he is committed to giving everything he has as a leader.

SECTION XI
CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

Chancellor Baker asked Dr. Neil Scott, Vice Chancellor for Student Success, to speak on enrollment numbers.

Per Dr. Scott, 2025 Summer enrollment is up with an 11.2% increase over Summer 2024 headcount, which is over 5,400 more students. There was an 11.6% increase in credit hours over Summer 2024. Fall 2025 numbers indicate a 14% increase over Fall 2024, which is 6,384 more students. Credit hours show an increase of 13.4% over Fall 2024. Dr. Scott thanked the

Presidents and their staffs for the great work they are doing in recruiting and retaining students and being laser-focused on student success.

Chancellor Baker added that these increases are not the trend across the country. He stated that thanks to our staff, Presidents, and communities, we are going against the grain, with a lot of people doing a lot of work to let their communities and schools know what is happening.

Next, Chancellor Baker asked Mr. Boone Kinard, Executive Director of External Affairs, to give an update on Legislative issues. Per Mr. Kinard, a lot has happened at the Federal level including the approval of President Trump's "Reconciliation Bill." He added that several provisions of this bill impact the Pell grant program. Changes include Congress providing an extra \$10.5 billion to shore up funding shortfalls in the program, and the passing of a "Workforce Pell" program which allows more short-term programs to be included in coverage. These are programs between 8 and 15 weeks long. There is also a provision that students who receive any scholarships or grants from non-federal sources that cover the full cost of attendance will now not be eligible to receive Pell. This should not have a major impact on our colleges.

Mr. Kinard added that the more concerning items related to Pell grants included in the original version of the bill were not included in the final version.

Federal loan changes in the bill were specifically targeted at graduate and doctoral-level programs which do not impact the ACCS colleges. New accountability metrics in the final bill include earnings of students who have gone through programs will be tracked on the federal level more closely. Per Mr. Kinard, the overall bill did not impact the community colleges in a major way.

Mr. Kinard further added that the bill did not include proposed cuts in TRIO, Title III, and Adult Education. These will be handled through a different process, likely later this month. FY25 funding has been delayed, but awards are starting to come out. The TRIO Student Success Services grants notifications were sent out. Alabama received 24 awards, 17 of which were community college programs. One ACCS college received the largest award in the entire country. Per Mr. Kinard, Adult Education currently has a freeze on funding while the Federal Government conducts a review. This should be finalized soon. The final takeaway is that no matter what the final numbers are, there will be changes to Federal funding. Updates will be forthcoming.

Chancellor Baker next asked Audrey Webb, Director of Work-Based Learning, to speak. She stated that she assists the colleges with work-based learning programs, such as FAME. She also works with the Alabama Office of Apprenticeships. Ms. Webb introduced a new program, the CTE Externship Program, in which she and Dr. Veronica Morin, Associate Director of STEM and Distance Learning are involved. For the last two years, this project has served over 40 instructors at 75% of our colleges. The goal is to reach 100% of the colleges and as many instructors as possible. The Externship project started with Barry May and the Automotive

group joining with the Alabama Automotive Manufacturing Association to determine a way to get instructors more immersed in our OEM's to determine what they needed from the students. This program is a key component of work-based learning, but for instructors and not students. Per Ms. Webb, many instructors have come from industry but have been out of it for 10+ years, and technology has advanced during that time. The externs are given six days to work alongside industry partners to bring what they learn back to the classroom. This is not just for automotive, but all industry partners all across the state. This program integrates real-world context into teaching and strengthens partnerships.

Ms. Webb introduced Ms. Brandy Snipes, Technical Program Management Specialist at Mercedes-Benz. Ms. Snipes stated that she works with Shelton State, Wallace State, Lawson State, and several other colleges, and oversees all the student programs. She has worked with Shelton State for the past three years with the externships to connect real-world industry needs to the classroom. She stated that technology changes at Mercedes constantly and, if instructors cannot see that, their curriculum will be outdated. Having students seeing their instructors working alongside them is an added benefit. Additionally, this program also gives instructors the chance to emphasize soft skills, such as being on time, listening, communicating, etc.

Ms. Webb next introduced Mr. Matthew Jones, Welding Instructor at Calhoun Community College. Mr. Jones externed at Mazda-Toyota. Mr. Jones stated that his background is in the Aerospace Defense field, working with construction contractors in the welding field. He added that when he started his externship with Mazda-Toyota, it was a totally different world for him. The externship helped him learn skills that his department was lacking. He stated it was eye-opening for him, because he identified early on that he needed to move into the area of robotics. The externship taught him that what he was currently doing was not matching the industry. He added that this semester, he will begin teaching a completely different set of standards and lab tasks and helping to grow robotic welding.

Ms. Webb added that this program has a huge impact on our CTE instructors and industry partners across the State. CTE externships build bridges between our colleges and industry partners. It better prepares the instructors and students to enter the workforce. She thanked the Board and Chancellor Baker for the opportunity to speak about the program.

Chancellor Baker next introduced Mr. Todd Shackett, President of Southern Union State Community College. President Shackett recognized Mr. Rosario Thomas, Director of Veterans Affairs at Southern Union. Mr. Thomas was recently voted the Veteran Friendly Veteran of the Year for Alabama. Per Mr. Shackett, Mr. Thomas is incredibly dedicated, hard-working, and passionate about his work. He added that when he first met Mr. Thomas, he was a one-man show, but he found time to create a Veterans Day celebration in the community.

President Shackett added that Mr. Thomas is married to Dr. Alecia Thomas, who recently retired from Southern Union and currently is an adjunct there. They have three children and energetic grandsons. He has an associate degree from Southern Union and a Bachelor's degree from

Huntington College in Criminal Justice. He is a graduate of Leadership Lee County and serves on the Board of Village Friends of Auburn and has been recently honored as the Southern Representative for the Alabama Veteran Affairs Association. He enjoys yoga, baking and takes pride in maintaining his yard. He is currently committed to supporting military families as the Veteran Specialist at Southern Union to give back to those who have served.

Mr. Thomas briefly stated that he is honored to be awarded the Veteran of the Year and to be able to give back to the United States, which has given him an opportunity to grow and learn from the best. He thanked the community college system and stated it allowed him to integrate back into a society he had forgotten since he had been in the military from his young adult life. He said it taught him how to talk to people and share his story with others and gave him his sense of purpose back after leaving the military. He stated that all veterans are “Veterans of the Year” and that we need to honor them 365 days a year.

Chancellor Baker next asked Dean Myrick, ACCC Commissioner, to speak. Mr. Myrick introduced several exceptional coaches and student athletes for the 2024-2025 year. He began by mentioning that during the 2024-2025 athletic year, the 22 conference members accounted for 2,337 total student athletes and 156 teams. Of those student athletes, 1,514 (65%) earned over a 3.0 GPA. Of the 156 teams, 88 accumulated a 3.0 GPA. He also congratulated the Shelton State Women’s Basketball Team who were National runner-up in the Division 1 National Championship Tournament at the National Junior College Athletic Association, and the Wallace State Softball Team who finished third in the Division 1 National Championship Tournaments.

Mr. Myrick introduced three groups of individuals who earned national acclaim in 2025. The Shelton State Women’s Golf Team won the 2025 National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Division 2 National Championships in Boone, IA, winning by 34 strokes over Mesa, AZ. Shelton State’s National title was the first earned at this inaugural Division 2 National Championship. Of the top ten teams in the National Championships, five were from the State of Alabama and the ACCS Conference. The Bucks saw all five of their golfers finish in the top 18 of the tournament. Seven of the top 14 ranked players in the country were led by #1 ranked Peyton Mariman of Shelton State and #2 ranked player Mallory Brooks of Wallace State.

Mr. Myrick introduced Head Coach Chris Sanford of Shelton State and some players on that team. Coach Sanford thanked Chancellor Baker and the Board for the opportunity to speak. He congratulated the honorees, Emmy Long and Coach Chris Christian from Enterprise State, and Luke Fernandez and NJCAA Hall-of-Famer Randy Putman from Wallace State. He also thanked Shelton State President Koh; his Athletic Director, Cara Crosslin, for her tireless work and support; and Coach David Zalchin, Assistant Coach, who volunteers his time without receiving a dime.

Coach Sanford added that when he started this program in Fall 2023, he had five ladies to commit to the program. In the first year, they had four tournament wins with a 13th place finish. This year, two freshmen were added. They won 8 of 11 tournaments, one back-to-back ACCC

crowns, the South District title, and the first ever NJCAA Division 2 National Championship. All five ladies made the All-American team. For the year, all seven players finished in the top 20 of at least one tournament, with many winning all tournament awards and titles. Coach Sanford stated how proud he is of his team.

Coach Sanford introduced several team members who could not attend: Sophomore Mia Hobbs will attend the School of Radiology in Tuscaloosa; Sophomore Aubrey Medford will play golf at Auburn University Montgomery; Sophomore Ashley Allen will major in Early Childhood Education; and Sophomore Peyton Mariman will continue her career at Columbus State University in Columbus, GA.

Freshmen Sawyer Hobbs and Katy Hallmark will be returning leaders, while Sophomore Jordan Ranstell will attend the University of Alabama majoring in Finance. Ms. Hallmark thanked everyone for hosting the Shelton State Women's Golf Team. She stated that playing golf at Shelton State is a family and a home away from home and she is forever thankful. Jordan Ranstell briefly stated that she just recently graduated from Shelton State, and that Shelton State had become her second home. She added that she has grown not only as a golfer, but as a person, and it was one of the best experiences of her life. She loved her teammates because they pushed each other to get better every day.

Mr. Myrick stated that the NJCAA Champion Award was established to honor a member or former member of the NJCAA community who exemplifies resilience, excellence, and passion. The 2025 award recipient is Enterprise State Women's Cross-Country runner Emmy Long, who was honored in Charlotte, NC in June. Head Coach Chris Christian of Enterprise State introduced Ms. Long. He first relayed a story of a race at Montevallo, where she stopped to help a fellow runner who was injured, sacrificing her chance to run her own personal best.

Ms. Long briefly thanked the ACCS for honoring her, and thanked her coach for helping her to grow as a runner and a person. She thanked her teammates for being her second family and supporting her.

Mr. Myrick next introduced former NJCAA Hall-of-Famer and Wallace State Head Coach Randy Putman. Coach Putman stated he has been a Baseball Coach for 36 years at Wallace State and two years as a baseball player. He added he has seen tremendous improvements over the years, and he believes that athletics can present the opportunity for students to excel. Coach Putman introduced Wallace State All-American pitcher Luke Fernandez who was the 2025 NJCAA Division 1 National Baseball Pitcher of the Year, and the Conference Pitcher of the Year for the last two seasons. Coach Putman believes that Mr. Fernandez will have a great future in professional baseball.

Mr. Fernandez thanked the ACCS for updating the Wallace State baseball and softball fields with turf and adding a new weight room. He thanked Coach Putman for giving him the opportunity to play at Wallace State. Mr. Myrick added that he was impressed with Mr.

Fernandez's character when he witnessed him stand on the side of the field and congratulate every team mate and then help clean the dugout.

Mr. Myrick summarized by stating that the ACC Conference gives student athletes opportunities to realize their greatest potential in pursuing the sport they love.

SECTION XII
COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

SECTION XIII
(DATE AND LOCATION OF NEXT MEETING)

The next Board meeting will be held in Montgomery at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, August 13, 2025. A work session will follow at 10:20 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The Board meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

Chairman

Chancellor