

## SACAD Introduces Special Interactive Newsletter

The past year has been unusually challenging for everyone due to the global pandemic and the impact on the nation's community colleges and their students has been significant. Many faculty have had to adapt their teaching to include remote learning and some faculty in technical fields have had to rethink how they teach the technical subject matter. Significant numbers of students have lost full-time and or part-time jobs. Some students have also found it difficult to pay housing costs and to have enough food for their families. College leaders have had to develop processes to keep their students and employees safe and healthy. Additionally, enrollment at some two year colleges has declined, and budget and personnel challenges have been numerous.

Community Colleges are certainly known for their responsiveness in meeting both student and community needs and they have a history of being nimble and adaptable when faced with such crises. The board of the Southern Association of Colleges with Associate Degrees realized that the pandemic was causing its member colleges to adapt and to explore new ways of teaching and learning as well new ways to serve students. With the premise that we all can become better by sharing and learning from each other, the SACAD Professional Development Committee was charged with developing a plan for the association to assist member colleges with the challenges they were facing.

Their work was presented to the SACAD Board and was approved in fall, 2020. The initiative was to solicit promising practices from member colleges developed during the pandemic and then to share those efforts with other interested parties through an interactive newsletter. Specifically, member institutions were invited to submit proposals for an interactive newsletter to be published by March 15, 2021. The overarching theme was "Promising Practices for Community

Colleges during a Pandemic."

The process that was articulated to SACAD member college Presidents was:

- Institutions were asked to submit a 250 word description of a practice or program initiated in response to the COVID19 pandemic.
- The institutions chosen for inclusion in the Newsletter were asked to develop a 5-7 minute video about the practice that has been submitted.
- The video will become part of the March 15, 2021 interactive SACAD Newsletter. The Newsletter will include an introductory narrative with a link to the institution's video.

Institutions were to focus their submissions on one of the following topics:

- ◇ Safety and Health Practices
- ◇ Impacts on Policy
- ◇ Academic Practices
- ◇ Student Needs
- ◇ Recruitment and Retention of Students

A timeline was provided for each step of the process with the intent to solicit proposals, evaluate the proposals, select several of the best proposals, provide a reasonable timeframe for institutions to develop the YouTube videos, and then to produce the newsletter brief narratives and links to the videos.

Seven institutions were selected to be included in the newsletter. They are Blue Ridge Community College in Virginia, Copiah-Lincoln Community College in Mississippi, Northeast Mississippi Community College in Mississippi, Southern Crescent Technical College in Georgia, Southside Virginia Community College in Virginia, Virginia Western Community College in Virginia, and Volunteer State Community College in Tennessee.

The SACAD Board is happy to present this interactive newsletter, "Promising Practices for Community College during a Pandemic." We hope you enjoy learning about the good work of our member institutions during the past year.

### CURRENT MEMBERS RENEW MEMBERSHIP TODAY

The SACAD Board invites current members to renew their membership with SACAD. Institutional membership dues are \$150.00. Dues notices will be mailed to all potential members by June 1, 2021. Dues may be paid by check or credit card.

Please contact Dr. George D. Edwards, Executive Secretary-Treasurer at [gdedwards930@gmail.com](mailto:gdedwards930@gmail.com), 606-424-8867, or see the SACAD website at [www.sacad.org](http://www.sacad.org) for more information.

## **SACAD BOARD AND OFFICERS SELECTED FOR 2021**

**PRESIDENT:** Dr. Dean Sprinkle  
Wytheville Community College

**VICE PRESIDENT:** Dr. John Enamait,  
Stanly Community College

**PAST PRESIDENT:** Dr. Patricia Lee  
Williamsburg Technical College

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY-TREASURER:**  
Dr. George D. Edwards (Non-board member)



*Dr. Dean  
Sprinkle*



*Dr. John  
Enamait*



*Dr. Patricia A.  
Lee*



*Dr. George D.  
Edwards*

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

#### **Class of 2021**

Dr. James David Campbell, Northeast Alabama Community College, AL  
Dr. Patricia A. Lee, Williamsburg Technical College, SC  
Dr. Dean Sprinkle, Wytheville Community College, VA

#### **Class of 2022**

Dr. John Enamait, Stanly Community College, NC  
Dr. Ingrid Thompson-Sellers, South Georgia State College, GA  
Dr. Michael Torrence, Motlow State Community College, TN  
Dr. Jason Smith, Texarkana College, TX

#### **Class of 2023**

Dr. Jane G. Hulon Sims, Copiah-Lincoln Community College, MS  
Dr. Cynthia S. Kelley, Madisonville Community College, KY  
Dr. Tonjua Williams, St. Petersburg College, FL  
Louisiana Board member to be determined, LA



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Campbell*



*Dr. Jane G.  
Hulon Sims*



*Dr. Cynthia S.  
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*Dr. Jason  
Smith*



*Dr. Ingrid  
Thompson-  
Sellers*



*Dr. Michael  
Torrence*



*Dr. Tonjua  
Williams*

# Promising Practices

## VOLUNTEER STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE BECOMES A COMMUNITY FOOD DISTRIBUTION PARTNER

Engaging students and supporting them at a community college can be challenging. Engaging and supporting students during a pandemic felt like an insurmountable feat and would have not been possible without community strategic partnerships.

The College quickly realized meeting the food insecurity need of our students was a top priority. As more requests for unmet basic needs were reported to faculty and staff, the College set up a weekly drive-thru food distribution.

The weekly event grew into a much larger effort both within and outside the college community. Unlimited Potential, a local nonprofit and college partner, secured a food grant that allowed us to serve our students each week with 30-pound boxes of food. Volunteer State Community College (VSCC) was able to continue this grant and build a new partnership with Farmers to Families through Break-Thru Nashville.

The College was able to not only serve our students and feed their families, we were able to also provide assistance to non-affiliated members of our community. Through these supportive relationships, we were able to feed our students and the College became a food distribution center for community members in our service area. Since March 2020, we have assisted over 342 students and have passed out over 664 food bags directly to Vol State students. In November, through our partnership with Break-Thru Nashville, Portland Cares, and Unlimited Potential, we continued our perishable food box distribution that provided approximately 1,294 food boxes a week throughout our service area.



Dr. Jerry L. Faulkner

Dr. Jerry Faulkner, President of Volunteer State Community College, stated "What started as an effort to help our students with food insecurity blossomed into an opportunity to assist many more members of our community. We are honored that this expanded role allowed us to truly be a community college."

See the video on this promising practice at <https://youtu.be/Zw9MitKpMLSM>.



## VIRGINIA WESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE RESPONDS DURING PANDEMIC

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Virginia Western Community College Educational Foundation suspended two major fundraising campaigns and devoted its

focus to strengthening and elevating its student emergency fund. The goal was to ensure students receive assistance (of up to \$500) within 48 hours of the request.

The results of the foundation's efforts are:

- Awards to students increased exponentially, from just 3 students served in fall 2019 to 20 in spring 2020 and 36 in fall 2020. Early in the 2021 Spring semester, 27 students have already been served.
- Donations to the student emergency fund saw a 557 percent increase. Two new donors, both alumni, reached out to the Foundation and contributed significant gifts. One also established a fund to support the student tutors whose assistance remains essential in an online-only learning environment.
- Responding to student technology needs, the Foundation established a laptop loaner program in partnership with the College library.

The Foundation can attribute this success to three factors:

- The Hope Center for College, Community and Justice provided invaluable guidance as we overhauled the existing application with equity and accessibility in mind. The new online application presents applicants with a few simple questions and reduces red tape.
- Faculty and staff pitched in with remarkable urgency and commitment. An IT developer built the new application from scratch, deftly tying it to the student information system. A team of evaluators worked diligently through a backlog of applications that arrived when the new application went live.
- We know this is just the beginning. The Foundation currently is developing a recipient survey to gauge and increase the impact of our support.



Dr. Robert Sandel

Dr. Robert Sandel, President of VWCC, said "Virginia Western is proud to have its Educational Foundation honored as a SACAD Promising Practices institution for its dedication to help students in need during the pandemic."

See the video on this promising practice at [https://youtu.be/KKw4b\\_DV40k](https://youtu.be/KKw4b_DV40k).



## TRANSITIONING TO ONLINE LEARNING AND SUPPORT

Blue Ridge Community College (BRCC) took a holistic approach to preparing faculty and students to transition to online learning during COVID 19. One-on-one assistance and professional development opportunities were provided to help faculty to meet course learning objectives, while



engaging students and maintaining academic integrity in the online environment.

To address faculty challenges, BRCC created two courses in the LMS. One that models best practices in course design based on the Quality Matters rubric, is required for all faculty (fulltime, adjunct, and dual enrollment) to support faculty in effectively engaging students. A second that contains videos from BRCC's SALT (Symposium for the Advancement of Learning & Teaching) Series, focuses on peer-to-peer conversations about exceptional pedagogy. This course also includes recordings/videos and written instructions of how to use specific tools/resources available for effectively teaching and learning in the online environment.

BRCC also focused on our commitment to provide support for students enrolled in online learning. To address student challenges, BRCC leveraged EAB Navigate software to collect data on student performance, technology needs and COVID related issues. The Student Success Team assists students by providing tools and resources to support students in overcoming barriers to achieve their educational goals. The team also created a series of virtual workshops for students that focus on topics identified by faculty and students, as well as created a one stop Student Success website with all related resources. This holistic approach ensured BRCC faculty were continuing to deliver quality education while supporting students in this new pandemic environment.



Dr. John Downey

Dr. John Downey, President of Blue Ridge Community College stated: "The COVID pandemic has left many people feeling isolated as they lack the relationships and interactions experienced during "normal" day-to-day life. That is why employees at Blue Ridge Community College (Virginia) felt so strongly about personalizing services to create online interpersonal interactions with our students. Please view our video which outlines just a few of the innovative ideas our faculty and staff implemented to improve services, courses and programs during the pandemic."

See the video on this promising practice at <https://youtu.be/7O81VTzkCmw>.



## STUDENT SUCCESS AND RETENTION INCREASES WITH PANDEMIC INITIATIVE

Due to Northeast Mississippi Community College's 1:1 iPad initiative launched in 2018, the college was poised to easily transition to fully online and seamlessly continue with instruction when COVID19 abruptly sent every-

one home during the spring 2020 semester. Equity issues related to device access and course materials were non-existent, which allowed the college to focus on issues such as Internet access for students and the conversion of in-person student services to online formats.

Further, the college offered professional development to improve remote instruction and worked closely with Student Services to develop and implement a text-messaged health screening form to document COVID cases in an effort to keep students and faculty as safe as possible. Orientation was redesigned to digitize forms and minimize traffic on campus without interruption of workflow.

Student success has also been on the rise during the tumultuous spring and fall 2020 semesters. Since the 2018 technology initiative, success rates of courses increased from 72% to 80% of students scoring A, B, or C in the class, and during the pandemic, the success rate remarkably up ticked further to 81%. Northeast has also seen retention increases during the pandemic. As compared to previous semesters, spring and fall 2020 cutouts for failing to regularly attend class decreased from 4.5% of the overall class enrollments to 3.9%, and withdrawals decreased from 9.3% of the overall class enrollment to 5.7%. Northeast believes that with improved communication and workflow, students were able to make better informed decisions about staying in class.



Dr. Ricky Ford

Dr. Ricky Ford, President of Northeast Community College remarked, "Northeast was poised to be in a position to counteract the problems associated with COVID-19. With the one-one iPad initiative we had in place, our conversion to fully online instruction was very seamless. Please see our video to learn more about our successful initiative."

See the video on this promising practice at <https://youtu.be/jbFVK89l8F4>.



## INGENUITY IN A TIME OF ADVERSITY

Southern Crescent Technical College (SCTC) has adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic by implementing innovative academic practices. These practices were designed to safeguard the well-being of its faculty, staff and students, while supporting students' goals, and maintaining the integrity and rigor of its programs.

SCTC prepared its faculty and students for the necessary move to remote and enhanced online learning through the development of numerous virtual trainings. These trainings covered teaching/learning components of Blackboard Learn, as well as other virtual modalities and learning platforms. This enabled faculty to be creative in the conversion

of face-to-face classes and lab experiences to remote and online using Blackboard Collaborate, WebEx, videos and a host of other interactive techniques to keep students engaged and supported at a distance. Synchronous instruction allowed students who were apprehensive about attending live classes to attend lectures and lab experiences remotely in real-time, mastering course competencies from afar. Further, some programs offered drive-through pick up of supplies needed for seamlessly creating lab experiences remotely. Additionally, students, faculty and staff were loaned laptops to ensure access. Moreover, students in the Allied Health programs continued to enter hospitals to aid healthcare workers on the front lines – serving the community, while completing their requisite practical hours.

Evidence of the success of the efforts of SCTC is shown by enrollment. Fall 2019, SCTC had an enrollment of 5,246, and fall 2020 an enrollment of 5,232, a decline of 0.3%. The Technical College System of Georgia showed an 8.5% enrollment decline over the same period.



Dr. Alvetta Thomas

Dr. Alvetta Thomas, President of Southern Crescent Technical College, stated, "This past year has been unlike any other in our lifetime. I am incredibly proud of the commitment from Southern Crescent Technical College faculty and staff to ensure student success. Indeed, we build strong students, strong careers and strong communities- even during a pandemic."

See the video on this promising practice at <https://youtu.be/SUsYuZ10ceY>.



## PROTECT OUR PACK: COPIAH-LINCOLN COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S PLAN TO RETURN TO CAMPUS

As events unfolded across the country with the COVID-19 pandemic, Copiah-Lincoln Community College worked to determine the best path for keeping everyone safe while continuing to provide students, faculty/staff, and community with services needed to be successful.

Administration worked closely with local and state healthcare professionals to develop procedures and protocols to promote safety and created the Protect Our Pack plan, which refers to the college mascot, wolves/wolfpack. This document guides faculty, staff and students to a safe return to campus.

An overview, health and safety protocols, student responsibilities, instruction and advisement, residence halls, dining services, athletics and employee responsibilities is included in the document.

The College contracted with vendors to provide additional cleaning services for high traffic areas in addition to enhanced cleaning and sanitization schedules performed by the college's maintenance staff. Signage providing instructions on safety and health measures was posted across campuses. Floor markings were placed to indicate proper physical distancing and flow of traffic in high traffic areas.

Class schedules were designed with safety in mind, in order to maximize the safety of the student environment while continuing to provide quality education. Students could choose from three different types of course delivery methods: face-to-face, online and hybrid.

Policies were created for residence halls, dining services, and athletics regarding operational protocols related to COVID-19 for the health and safety of all athletes and staff. A series of videos was also released by the college to communicate and demonstrate safe practices.



Dr. Jane Hulon Sims

Dr. Jane Hulon Sims, President of Copiah-Lincoln Community College said: "I am so proud of all our students, faculty and employees for rising to the occasion in making the past year a success despite being in the midst of a pandemic. This success is certainly a reflection of this year's college theme, "Teamwork Makes the Dream Work"! I am grateful to have the opportunity to lead at such a great institution."

See the video on this promising practice at <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=h6wgeU7K9Wg&feature=youtu.be>.



## CREATING HIGH-TOUCH IN A NO-TOUCH WORLD

As did most in higher education, Southside Virginia Community College (SVCC) made a sudden, complete shift to online coursework in March 2020, continuing through the summer semester. Given the demographics of the rural, ten-county, economically- and internet-challenged service area (the largest geographic one within the Virginia Community College System), SVCC made a commitment early in the fall semester planning process to offer socially-distanced, seated class sections at all of its campuses and off-campus centers and to create new Zoom-to-Home options. Pre-pandemic, the college had robust online offerings, and those continued, so the college identified and/or created extended WiFi access points throughout the region.

The SVCC COVID-19 Team met weekly to plan and implement actions that would allow students, faculty, and staff to safely return to campus for fall semester. Faculty who did not have prior experience zooming to multiple locations were offered professional development opportunities,

## Promising Practices

including best practices for active engagement. The majority of courses that were offered as seated pre-pandemic were offered in that modality during the pandemic. The college invested in a symptom-reporting, contact tracing application that was required prior to coming to campus, and all classrooms were set up with adequate spacing and with wellness shields available for faculty desks. During fall pre-registration, students enrolled in the type of section that best met their needs. Students and faculty followed all protocols, allowing the campus to remain open through to semester's end.



Dr. Quentin R. Johnson, President, Southside Virginia Community College stated, "In March of 2020, the way we operated as a community college had to abruptly change because of COVID-19. But, one thing that didn't change was our mission to provide higher education to the people of southside Virginia. We set out to do what was best for our students;

which was offering classes online, in-person and a hybrid of the two. Countless hours of planning and hard-work went into making the various class options a reality, especially in-person classes. These classes would not have been possible if it wasn't for the extra hours put in by our dedicated Buildings and Grounds professionals. Our entire team of faculty, staff, and administrators has persevered through many obstacles along this journey, and I couldn't be more proud to be a Panther,"

See the video on this promising practice at <https://youtu.be/g6BfbhenhJg>.



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