SACAD Southern Association of Colleges with Associate Degrees

NEWSLETTER

November 2026 Volume 12 Number 2

SACAD 2026 Annual Membership Luncheon Scheduled

The SACAD board of directors is pleased to announce information regarding its annual membership luncheon. The event will be held on Sunday, December 6, 2026 from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm at the Houston Hilton Hotel in Grand Ballroom C in Houston, Texas. The session is entitled: "These Buildings Still Have Work to Do: Preserving Place, Creating Opportunity."

Madisonville Community College (MCC) embarked on an effort to reclaim and repurpose underutilized community facilities to address workforce development needs while preserving important local assets. This presentation highlights MCC's transformation of a former coal mine facility and an abandoned middle school into innovative workforce training and educational spaces. These adaptive reuse projects demonstrate how strategic investments in renovation, equipment, and community partnerships, can create transformational learning environments at a fraction of the cost of new construction. The result is the preservation of valued community assets while creating opportunities for students, employers, and the regional economy.

The reclaimed mining site project was awarded the Peggy Satterly Spirit of Kentucky Award. MCC received the Bellwether Award for Workforce Development for the project in 2025. The program was highlighted in the October/November 2026 Community College Journal.

The speaker for the luncheon is Dr. Jay Parrent. With more than 25 years of experience in community college leadership, institutional effectiveness, student success, and public education, Dr. Parrent currently serves as Vice Chancellor at Madisonville Community College in Kentucky.



Dr. Jay Parrent

Dr. Parrent holds an Ed.D. from the University of Kentucky, a master's degree in higher education from the University of Louisville, a master's degree in history from Murray State University, and a bachelor's degree in history from Kentucky Wesleyan College. He has extensive experience in institutional accreditation and has served on numerous accreditation review teams.

The session is designed for presidents, vice presidents, deans, department heads, and directors in two-year degree granting institutions.

The SACAD luncheon cost is $50 and interested parties may register and pay by check or by credit card through our PayPal link by clicking on the "Donate" button. If paying by check, please make payable to SACAD for $50 per attendee and send to:

SACAD
P. O. Box 86
Dixon, KY 42409

The deadline for registering and paying for the luncheon is December 1, 2026.

REGISTER

For more information, please contact Raegina D. Scott, SACAD Executive Secretary-Treasurer at sacadsecretary.treasurer@gmail.com or by phone at (270) 213-0164.

SACAD is grateful to the Silver Level Sponsors for the 2026 SACAD Annual Luncheon: EdAmerica and Brazosport College

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RENEW SACAD MEMBERSHIP TODAY

There is still time to join or renew your membership to SACAD for 2026-2027. Institutional dues remain $150 per year. Dues may be paid by check or credit card via link below.

Please contact Raegina D. Scott, SACAD Executive Secretary-Treasurer at sacadsecretary.treasurer@gmail.com or by phone (270) 213-0164. Also, please see the website at sacad.org for more information.

JOIN NOW

SACAD NEWS

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Today over 200 colleges and universities partner with Edamerica to improve the student customer experience, drive completion rates, enhance operational efficiencies and prevent student loan default.

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SACAD LUNCHEON

AGENDA

Hilton Houston Hotel
Grand Ballroom C
Houston, TX

December 6, 2026 11:30AM - 1:00PM

WELCOME
Dr. David Campbell

INVOCATION
Dr. Patricia Lee

BUSINESS SESSION

Financial Report
Raegina Scott, SACAD Secretary Treasurer

Recognition of Sponsors
Raegina Scott, SACAD Secretary Treasurer

Recognition of Board Members and Officers
Dr. David Campbell

INTRODUCTION OF SPEAKER
Dr. Brent Gregory

KEYNOTE ADDRESS
Dr. Jay Parrent
Vice Chancellor, Madisonville Community College, KY

"These Buildings Still Have Work to Do: Preserving Place, Creating Opportunity"

DOOR PRIZES
Dr. David Campbell

News From The States

ALABAMA

ACCS among contributors to new McWane Economic Education Center in Birmingham

The Alabama Community College System (ACCS) is among the state entities to partner with the new Junior Achievement McWane Economic Education Center in downtown Birmingham.

The state-of-the-art, 30,000-foot facility is designed to teach sixth and eighth-grade students about real-world skills through simulations and hands-on activities, preparing them for success before graduating high school.

The ACCS features a pair of spaces within the $18 million project – one each in the BizTown and Finance Park.

“We were approached by Junior Achievement to come in and partner with this facility, and we couldn’t be more excited. It gives us the opportunity to put forth the importance of education and training in the students’ lives as they are going about and trying to navigate what career they want to choose, how to achieve that, and how they budget for their education and life,” said Alan Bates, Executive Director of External Affairs for the ACCS.

In the BizTown section, students will have the opportunity to “attend” the ACCS and learn about the education and training opportunities available through Alabama’s community colleges. Students will experience how earning a certificate, workforce training credential, or degree through the ACCS can help them advance in their career and increase their earning potential.

In Finance Park, students are given a real-world financial scenario and must build a monthly budget while balancing everyday expenses, helping them understand the value of education, workforce training, financial literacy, and long-term career planning.

The center is available to middle school students within a 100-mile radius, including those in Jefferson County who are already exposed to higher education through Alabama’s community colleges like Jefferson State and Lawson State.

“This center means a lot for Lawson State. We service Birmingham City and Jefferson County Schools, so using this facility to remain engaged with our K-12 partners is very important,” said Dorian Waluyn, Lawson State’s Executive Director of Strategic Initiatives and External Relations. “Early career exposure is important. We want students to be exposed early to different career opportunities and pathways. It’s a natural fit for us to be engaged with the ACCS through this partnership. We love it.”

FLORIDA

Polk State College Names Anastasios “Stasi” Kamoutsas as its Sixth President



Anastasios “Stasi” Kamoutsas

The Polk State College District Board of Trustees named Anastasios “Stasi” Kamoutsas as the institution’s sixth president.

Kamoutsas joined Polk State following Dr. Anne Kerr’s completion of service as interim president in June.

“We are confident in Mr. Kamoutsas’s leadership, experience and vision to move our College forward,” Board Chair Ann Barnhart said. “We look forward to the difference he will make in the lives of our students, faculty, staff and community members, whom we support through the endeavors of our College.”

Kamoutsas is an experienced legal and policy professional with extensive experience in education and public service at the state and local levels. He previously served as Commissioner of Education since 2025 and held several leadership roles within the Florida Department of Education, including Chief of Staff, General Counsel, Chief Litigator, Assistant General Counsel and Legislative Affairs. He also served as Deputy Chief of Staff for Governor Ron DeSantis.

Prior to his service at the state level, he served as Staff Counsel for the Dade County Police Benevolent Association and as an Assistant State Attorney with the Miami-Dade Office of the State Attorney. Kamoutsas earned his Juris Doctor from Regent University School of Law, a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Florida International University and an Associate of Arts in Political Science from Florida State University.

Kamoutsas emerged as the Presidential Search Committee’s sole recommendation for the position following a national search that yielded more than 100 applicants.

“I am grateful for the overwhelming support from the District Board of Trustees, Presidential Search Committee and College community,” Kamoutsas said. “I am committed to building on Polk State’s strong foundation and ensuring that we continue to meet the growing workforce demands of Polk County.”

“It is an honor to join Polk State College on the cusp of significant developments,” he said. “I look forward to supporting student success, the work of faculty and fostering community connections.”

News From The States –continued

J. Alex Kelly Named President of Pensacola State College



J. Alex Kelly

The Pensacola State College District Board of Trustees voted unanimously to appoint J. Alex Kelly as the College's seventh president, selecting Florida's Secretary of Commerce to lead PSC into its next chapter.

Kelly brings extensive leadership experience spanning education, economic and workforce development, public policy and state government. He previously served as Secretary of the Florida Department of Commerce, where he lead the state agency responsible for economic development, workforce and community development programs.

That experience closely aligns with Pensacola State College's role in creating opportunities for students, meeting regional workforce needs and supporting communities across Escambia and Santa Rosa counties.

"I am honored by the Board's confidence and grateful for the warm welcome I have received from the Pensacola State community," Kelly said. "I have spent my career working to connect people with opportunity, and few institutions do that more directly than colleges like Pensacola State. Our students will be the workforce, entrepreneurs and leaders who shape Northwest Florida's future. I look forward to working alongside our faculty, staff, employers and community partners to create even more opportunities for them to succeed."

Before becoming Secretary of Commerce in 2023, Kelly served as deputy chief of staff in the Governor's Office, a position he held beginning in 2021, and as chief of staff to then-Florida Education Commissioner Richard Corcoran.

In addition to other key leadership roles, he previously served as vice president for the Foundation for Excellence in Education and as chief of staff for the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice.

Earlier in his career, Kelly held several positions in the Florida Legislature, including chief analyst for the House Select Policy Council on Strategic and Economic Planning.

Kelly earned a bachelor's degree in political science from York College of Pennsylvania and a master's degree in political science from the University of Florida.

The appointment concludes a national search, attracting 107 qualified applicants from across the country. The Presidential Search Committee selected nine candidates for interviews and brought four highly qualified applicants to Pensacola for a second round of in-person interviews before recommending Kelly as the finalist.

GEORGIA

Coastal Pines Technical College President Lonnie Roberts has Announced his Retirement from the College

Coastal Pines Technical College President Lonnie Roberts announced his retirement from the college, effective September 30, 2026, following more than five years of service as president and a total of 25 years of service to the institution and its predecessor, Altamaha Technical College.



Lonnie Roberts

President Roberts became president of Coastal Pines Technical College on February 1, 2021. In his role as president, he has been responsible for providing leadership for the college and ensuring its day-to-day operations remain consistent with and supportive of the college's mission.

"I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to have served Coastal Pines Technical College and the students, faculty, staff and communities that make this college so special," President Roberts said. "This has been an incredibly rewarding chapter of my life, and I am proud of what we have accomplished together. Coastal Pines is an important part of the future of our region, and I have tremendous confidence in the people who will continue moving the college forward."

Throughout his career, he has been committed to serving his community and the region. A lifelong resident of Hazlehurst and Jeff Davis County, he is a graduate of Jeff Davis High School and holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Georgia and a master's degree from Valdosta State University. He is also a graduate of the Georgia Academy for Economic Development. President Roberts was named one of Georgia's 500 Most Influential Leaders by Georgia Trend Magazine in 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025.

During his tenure as president, the college saw a 15.9% increase in overall enrollment and reached a new record high in enrollment during the 2025-2026 academic year. The college has also expanded program offerings, completed numerous facility upgrades across its seven campus locations, opened a new Precision Machining and Manufacturing Building on the Camden campus, partnered

News From The States –continued

in opening the Southern Pines College and Career Academy on CPTC Baxley campus, and most recently broke ground on the new Health Sciences Building on the Jesup campus. His leadership has helped position Coastal Pines for continued growth and success as the college remains committed to providing accessible, high-quality technical education and workforce training throughout Southeast Georgia.

Thomas A. Fanning Named Chancellor of the University System of Georgia

Georgia Tech alumnus Thomas A. Fanning has been named the 15th chancellor of the University System of Georgia (USG).



Thomas A. Fanning

Starting Jan. 1, 2027 Fanning will lead one of the nation's top public higher education systems, which includes 25 colleges and universities, more than 50,000 faculty and staff, and over 382,000 students across the state.

Fanning brings more than 40 years of leadership experience to USG. He spent over four decades at Southern Company, including 13 years as chairman, president and CEO before retiring in 2023. As CEO, he led the second-largest utility company in the country, serving about 9 million electric and gas customers across nine states.

A product of the university system himself, Fanning earned both a bachelor's degree and a Master of Industrial Management from the Georgia Institute of Technology, as well as an honorary Doctor of Philosophy degree from the institution. His connection to Georgia Tech spans decades, including service on the Georgia Tech Foundation Board of Trustees, the Georgia Tech Advisory Board and the Scheller College of Business Advisory Board. In 2023, the Board of Regents named Georgia Tech's Student-Athlete Performance Center in his honor to recognize his longstanding support and service.

"As a proud USG graduate, I know firsthand the transformative power of this system." Fanning said, "Alongside our regents, presidents, faculty and staff, my priorities are simple: ensure college stays within reach, support groundbreaking innovation on our campuses and graduate the high-caliber talent — from engineers and teachers to healthcare leaders and entrepreneurs — who drive Georgia's economy forward."

Dr. Greg Tanner Named President of South Georgia State College

The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (USG) has named Dr. Gregory M. Tanner president of South Georgia State College (SGSC).

Tanner has served as SGSC's interim president since February 1, 2023. During his time as interim president, Tanner led efforts that resulted in enrollment growth, a national award for student-centered leadership and the successful completion of the college's first-ever major fundraising campaign. He also guided the institution through its recovery following Hurricane Helene, working alongside campus crews to clear debris and ensure the safety of students and staff.



Dr. Greg Tanner

"I'm humbled by the trust Chancellor Perdue and the Board of Regents have placed in me," Tanner said. "Over the past several years, our team has stayed focused on helping students succeed and making sure this college is a vital part of the community. I'm proud of what we've achieved together, and I look forward to working alongside our great faculty and staff to build an even brighter future for Hawk Nation."

Tanner has spent his entire career in education, previously working as a K-12 school principal in Douglas and Nicholls, Georgia, and Ware Shoals, South Carolina. A member of the Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (ABAC) Hall of Fame, he was named the Georgia Region XVII Softball Coach of the Year after leading ABAC to the 1995 NJCAA Softball Championship.

Tanner earned a bachelor's degree from Georgia Southern University, a master's degree in both physical education and education leadership from Valdosta State University, and a doctorate in educational leadership and supervision from Nova Southeastern University.

Read more from Georgia:
Erica Harden to Retire as President of Oconee Fall Line Technical College

TCSG Sets New Records for Graduates, Credentials, and Job Placement

News From The States –continued

KENTUCKY

Dr. Juston Pate Named Interim Chancellor of Maysville Community and Technical College



Dr. Juston Pate

Kentucky Community and Technical College System President Dr. Ryan Quarles has appointed Dr. Juston Pate to serve as interim chancellor of Maysville Community and Technical College.

Pate, who has served as chancellor of Elizabethtown Community and Technical College since 2017, will lead MCTC throughout the national search for the college's next permanent chancellor. The search is expected to launch this fall.

Before joining ECTC, Pate served for 10 years as provost of MCTC. He also previously served as interim president of Hazard Community and Technical College.

"I am honored to support Maysville Community and Technical College and a community that have played such an important role in my career," Pate said. "MCTC has dedicated faculty and staff who care deeply about their students and the communities they serve. I look forward to working alongside them to build on the college's strengths and maintain its momentum during the search for its next chancellor."

Originally from Harlan, Pate began his career teaching English and humanities at the high school level. He started his college education at Southeast Community College and earned a doctorate in higher education leadership and organizational development from the University of Louisville.

During his tenure at ECTC, Pate has led the college to move to an eight-week schedule, partner to build a residential complex for student parents struggling with housing insecurity, develop the college's foundation, establish the ECTC Robbins University Center and centralize student support services.

MCC Receives Over $4.7 Million to Strengthen Student Support

Student achievement and educational opportunity are at the center of two U.S. Department of Education grant awards representing more than $4.7 million in new and continued investment in programs and resources at Madisonville Community College (MCC).

The TRIO Talent Search program has been fully funded for another five-year grant cycle, allowing the program to continue supporting middle and high school students throughout the region. Separately, a Title III Strengthening Institutions Program grant awarded to MCC will strengthen teaching, learning, and student support through the responsible use of artificial intelligence and expanded access to academic support services.

The TRIO Talent Search program at MCC will receive $2,182,500 to fully fund the program through 2031. The funding will allow Talent Search to serve 873 students in grades 6–12 at 16 middle and high schools across Hopkins, Muhlenberg, Webster, Crittenden, and Caldwell counties, as well as Dawson Springs Independent Schools. Caldwell County and Dawson Springs are new to the program beginning this year.

"We are incredibly excited to continue the 41-year legacy of Talent Search at Madisonville Community College," said Temesia Perdue, director of MCC TRIO Programs. "For more than four decades, this program has helped students recognize that higher education and meaningful career opportunities are within their reach. This award allows us to continue that important work, strengthen our partnerships with local schools and communities, and empower the next generation of students to believe, achieve, and succeed. We are grateful for the opportunity to continue investing in the future of our region."

The Title III grant will provide MCC with $2,560,543 to enhance The Learning Space as a central hub for student support services and expand access to academic support across MCC locations. It will also create an institutional framework for effective and ethical AI use, provide professional development for faculty, and introduce new tools and resources to support teaching, student engagement, and academic success.

Read more from Kentucky:
Dr. Steve Flouhouse named Vice-Chancellor of Academic Affairs at ACTC

New $1 Million Endowment at ACTC will Provide Life-Changing Scholarship Opportunities for Non-Traditional Students

BCTC Receives $1.7 Million to Continue TRIO Educational Talent Search Program

LOUISIANA

Delgado Prepares Students for Many of the Jobs at SpaceX

Delgado Community College Chancellor Dr. Larissa Littleton-Steib sees the proposed SpaceX spaceport as a significant opportunity, to connect Delgado's existing

News From The States –continued

workforce and technical programs with emerging jobs in the region. SpaceX has indicated that the project could create 3,000 to 10,000 jobs, and those positions will extend far beyond engineers and rocket scientists to include technicians, welders, electricians, HVAC workers, builders, hospitality workers, and other support roles.

Littleton-Steib says Delgado is already preparing students for many of these careers. The college has strategically aligned its technical programs, including welding, electrical, HVAC, instrumentation, automation, robotics, engineering and technology, with STEM fields and the kinds of skills SpaceX is expected to need.

Perhaps most importantly, Delgado hopes to work directly with SpaceX to identify its specific workforce needs. Littleton-Steib says she and her team are already pursuing a meeting with the company to determine what skills and training will be needed immediately. If SpaceX requires training that Delgado does not currently offer, the college says its workforce-development arm can quickly customize of create programs to fill those gaps.

The larger goal is to make sure Louisiana residents are prepared to take advantage of these opportunities rather than leaving the state to find good-paying careers elsewhere. Delgado wants to be an adaptable workforce partner for SpaceX, helping students move from classroom and technical training into the new jobs created by the spaceport.

Delgado sees SpaceX not simply as an employer, but as an opportunity to expand and tailor its educational programs, so that local students have the skills needed to fill the thousands of jobs potentially coming to Louisiana.

BRCC Officially Opens Capital City Construction Lab

In what marks a huge boost for workforce development in skilled trades, Baton Rouge Community College has officially opened the Capital City Construction Lab at the Mid City campus.

Funded in part by an $850,000 Gable Grant from the Lowe's Foundation, the Capital City Construction Lab is a hands-on, open-air learning environment where students gain practical skills in carpentry, electrical, HVAC, construction management and plumbing.

"The Capital City Construction Lab is a game changer for our students and for the future of our region's workforce," BRCC Chancellor Willie E. Smith, Sr. said. "This facility gives BRCC students the opportunity to move beyond the classroom and gain hands-on experience in real-world conditions, preparing them with the skills, knowledge and confidence they need to succeed in careers in the skilled trades and construction industry."

The new lab is designed to feel more like a real construction site than a traditional classroom. The lab features a waterproof canopy, making it usable in most weather conditions, and wide entryways to allow heavy equipment and machinery to move in and out for students to learn on actual job-site equipment.

Through the Capital City Construction Lab, BRCC is helping students turn classroom lessons into real-world skills and giving them a clear pathway to high-demand, high-wage careers in the Capital Region and beyond.

MISSISSIPPI

Northwest Mississippi Community College Strengthens Executive Leadership with Appointment of Two Vice Presidents

Northwest Mississippi Community College has announced the appointment of two accomplished higher education leaders to its executive leadership team. Dr. Brad Smith has been named Vice President of Institutional Affairs, and Dr. Ginger Robbins has been named Vice President of Instruction.



Dr. Brad Smith

The appointments reflect Northwest's continued commitment to strengthening its leadership team as the college advances its mission of transforming student lives, enriching communities, and striving for excellence in its educational programs and services.

As Vice President of Institutional Affairs, Dr. Smith will provide executive leadership for the college's external relations initiatives, including institutional advancement, marketing and communications, athletics, community affairs, alumni relations, campus leadership, community partnerships, and strategic outreach efforts.

Dr. Smith brings more than 15 years of leadership experience in higher education with an extensive background in external affairs, intercollegiate athletics, fundraising, marketing, advertising, promotions, name, image and likeness (NIL) initiatives, capital campaigns, and institutional branding. His experience in cultivating partnerships and advancing institutional visibility positions Northwest for continued growth and engagement across the region. He comes to Northwest from the University of Texas, San Antonio, where he most recently held the position of Deputy Athletics Director for External Affairs.

"It is an incredible honor to join Northwest Mississippi Community College as Vice President of Institutional

News From The States —continued

Affairs," said Dr. Smith. "I am deeply grateful to Dr. Michael Heindl and his confidence in me, and I look forward to serving an institution with such a strong legacy of excellence and commitment to student success."

As Vice President of Instruction, Dr. Robbins will oversee the college's instructional and workforce training operations, providing leadership for faculty, curriculum development, instructional quality, institutional research, instructional outreach, economic development and student learning across Northwest's campuses.



Dr. Ginger Robbins

Dr. Robbins brings more than 20 years of higher education leadership experience, with expertise in workforce education, instructional leadership, course and curriculum development, strategic partnerships, strategic planning, student services leadership, community and government relations, and grant development. Throughout her career, she has focused on building innovative programs that align educational excellence with workforce needs while expanding opportunities for students and employers alike. She comes to Northwest from Hinds Community College, where she most recently held the position of Vice President of Workforce Development and Governmental Affairs.

"I am honored and excited to join Northwest Mississippi Community College as the Vice President of Instruction," said Dr. Robbins. "The college has a proven history of excellence, and I am thrilled to partner with a team so deeply committed to student success. I look forward to collaborating with the Northwest family to continue aligning instructional excellence with evolving workforce needs. By embedding career relevance throughout all levels of our curriculum, we will strengthen student outcomes, prepare students for economic mobility, and provide business and industry with exceptional graduates."

East Central Community College Sets New Enrollment Record With 3,324 Students

East Central Community College (ECCC) has set another enrollment record, enrolling 3,324 students for the Fall 2026 semester, an increase of 308 students from Fall 2025 and the highest student headcount in college history.

ECCC's enrollment increased 10.2% from Fall 2025 to Fall 2026, the second-highest growth rate among Mississippi's 15 community colleges during that period. The increase builds upon several years of sustained enrollment growth at the college.

Since Fall 2022, ECCC's enrollment has increased 28.48%, the highest growth rate of any community college in Mississippi during that timeframe. ECCC has grown from approximately 2,377 students in Fall 2022 to 3,324 students this fall, adding more than 900 students in four years.

"This continued growth is a tremendous reflection of the confidence students and families have in East Central Community College," said ECCC President Dr. Brent Gregory. "Setting another enrollment record is exciting, but what is most encouraging is the sustained growth we have experienced over the past several years. Students are recognizing the quality, affordability, and opportunities available to them right here at East Central."

The Fall 2026 enrollment total continues a period of historic growth for ECCC. After surpassing 3,000 students for only the second time in college history in Fall 2025, the college added another 308 students this fall to establish a new all-time enrollment record.

Read more from Mississippi:
Hinton named Executive Director of Workforce Education at Copiah-Lincoln

ICC choirs selected to perform at White House

From Coach to Campus Leader: Dr. Jeff Long Earns Forever Young Mentor Honor

NORTH CAROLINA

State Board selects Monty Sullivan to lead NC Community Colleges



Dr. Monty Sullivan

The State Board of Community Colleges selected Dr. Monty Sullivan to lead the North Carolina Community College System, choosing a leader who spent more than a decade as head of Louisiana's statewide system and nearly doubled its annual graduates.

Sullivan led the Louisiana Community and Technical College System for 12 years, serving under both Republican and Democratic governors and working with legislators of both parties prior to his retirement in January 2026. He also served as a community college president and held senior leadership roles in the Virginia Community College System, giving him more than 30 years of higher education and workforce development experience.

News From The States –continued

"North Carolina's Community College System has built something the rest of the country watches," Sullivan said. "That work happens across North Carolina — in welding labs, nursing programs, and early college classrooms. I'm committed to reaching every student who wants a better job and every employer who can't find enough skilled workers. I'm grateful to the State Board for its confidence, and we will deliver."

The Board's selection followed a national search guided by a leadership profile built through engagement with business, education, workforce development, and state government leaders across North Carolina.

Upon confirmation, Sullivan will serve as president and chief executive officer of the North Carolina Community College System.

Building Careers, Building Neighborhoods: Pitt Community College Sets a Statewide Model for Affordable Housing

On the morning of Aug. 6, a house built by Pitt Community College students rolled off campus and onto a vacant lot in West Greenville, where a qualifying family will buy it.

The home is part of a partnership between the college and the City of Greenville that pairs two of North Carolina's most pressing needs: housing and the skilled workers to build it. The state faces a shortage of more than 750,000 housing units through 2029, according to the Office of Gov. Josh Stein.

While residential home construction has been a part of the college curriculum since 1988, a new partnership with the City of Greenville allows students to build affordable housing on campus as part of their coursework. Once completed, the homes are relocated to city-owned lots, allowing qualifying families to purchase them as part of the city's affordable housing strategy.

The program directly supports Greenville's 50-in-10 Affordable Housing Initiative, a long-term plan to deliver 50 affordable housing units in the West Greenville area over the next 10 years.

The program allows students to gain authentic, credit-bearing learning experiences as they work through the entire process of building a home. Students rotate through every phase of construction, meeting the exact same inspection requirements and codes as a private contractor. The initiative also engages local high school students through multiple summer academies, expanding the region's workforce pipeline.

Read more from North Carolina:

Ahead of the Anniversary of Helene, Good Jobs WNC Expands Funding to Invest in the Workforce of the Future

SOUTH CAROLINA



WTC and FCI Williamsburg Launch Innovative CDL Program to Expand Career Opportunities

On Tuesday, September 8, 2026, Williamsburg Technical College (WTC) and Federal Correctional Institution (FCI) Williamsburg officially launched an innovative Occupational Education Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Program designed to provide eligible inmates with the education, technical training, and practical skills needed to pursue careers in the commercial transportation industry upon release.

Members of the FCI Williamsburg executive staff joined the inaugural cohort of students and WTC executive staff to commemorate the launch. The program represents the first collaborative technical college CDL program in South Carolina specifically designed to provide CDL training to incarcerated individuals. Upon successful completion of the program, participants are eligible to sit for the South Carolina Commercial Driver's License exam and skills test.

The Advanced Occupational Education CDL Program builds upon the success of WTC's established CDL program. Through the Workforce Development and Continuing Education Department, WTC has provided CDL training since 2022, achieving a 96% program-completion rate and a 95% licensure rate. The program has become a valuable workforce resource for Williamsburg County and surrounding communities, with demand strong enough to generate a waiting list as class sizes remain intentionally limited to provide each student with the necessary behind-the-wheel training and driving time.

The need for qualified commercial drivers makes

News From The States –continued

this training particularly timely. According to the South Carolina Trucking Association, the need for professional driving careers is increasing as experienced drivers retire and age out of the profession, creating a growing need for a strong pipeline of qualified and motivated drivers. The Association describes the truck driver shortage as a significant challenge, noting that professional drivers are essential to the state's economy and to the supply chains that keep South Carolina communities moving.

"The goal is straightforward: prepare individuals for success before they leave the institution, rather than waiting until after release to begin the process. A CDL can be more than a license. It can represent a second chance, a career opportunity, and a direct pathway from incarceration to meaningful employment," said FCI Williamsburg Warden James Taylor.

The CDL program with WTC and FCI Williamsburg has the potential to become a model for correctional workforce development by demonstrating how educational institutions and correctional facilities can join forces to address both reentry and workforce needs.

Through this partnership, FCI Williamsburg and Williamsburg Technical College are investing in the future of program participants while also investing in the communities to which they will return.

NETC Announces Dr. Melissa Frank-Alston as New President



Dr. Melissa Frank-Alston

Northeastern Technical College Board of Area Commissioners has selected Dr. Melissa Frank-Alston as its seventh president following a national search, making her the first woman in the college's history to lead the institution. She started on July 1.

Frank-Alston brings 30 years of higher education experience to the position. She joins NETC from Augusta Technical College, where she has served in several vice-presidential roles since 2005. Most recently, she served as provost and institutional accreditation liaison to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. She also served as interim president of Augusta Technical College from April through December 2025.

Frank-Alston earned a doctorate in workforce education and development with an emphasis in training and human resources from Pennsylvania State University. She also holds a master's degree in college student personnel from Western Illinois University and a bachelor's degree in anthropology from Northwestern State University of Louisiana.

In a statement, Dr. Frank-Alston said she is honored to take on the leadership role at NETC and looks forward to serving students and the surrounding communities.

"Accepting the presidency of Northeastern Technical College is both humbling and exciting," said Frank-Alston. "I believe deeply in the transformative power of education, and I am eager to serve alongside a dedicated team committed to student achievement and community impact."

She added that she plans to work closely with students, faculty, staff, and community leaders to strengthen workforce partnerships, enhance academic excellence, and support student success.

Read more from South Carolina:
S.C. Department of Veterans Affairs Presents Award for TTC's Support of Veterans

TENNESSEE

Tennessee's Community Colleges Awarded Record Number of Degrees and Technical Certificates During 2025-26 Academic Year

Tennessee's community colleges awarded 16,240 associate degrees and technical certificates to graduates in the 2025-26 academic year, the highest number ever conferred – a 9 percent increase over the previous year and 19 percent growth from a decade ago.

In addition, preliminary enrollment at the 13 community colleges for the current fall semester totals 82,127 students – up 3 percent over the same time last year. The strongest growth is among first-time freshmen, a 4 percent increase over last year. It is the fourth consecutive year of enrollment growth at the community colleges.

Preliminary enrollment at the 22 Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCATs), which start their fall trimester later than the community colleges, is up 14 percent compared to the same time last year. The strongest enrollment growth at the TCATs is among high school students who are dual enrolled in TCAT courses, an increase of 38 percent. Final fall enrollment numbers will be presented at the board's December meeting.

The degree and certificate awards and enrollment numbers are among the highlights presented to the Tennessee Board of Regents during its quarterly meeting Thursday and Friday. The board, which governs the state's public community and technical colleges, met at TCAT

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Shelbyville's new campus. The meeting was hosted by TCAT Shelbyville, TCAT McMinnville and Motlow State Community College.

TBR - The College System of Tennessee Launches Academic Leadership Collaborative in Partnership with Vanderbilt University

TBR – The College System of Tennessee is launching the Academic Leadership Collaborative, a new professional learning opportunity developed in partnership with Vanderbilt University to support academic deans and leaders at Tennessee's community colleges.

The Academic Leadership Collaborative is the newest of four programs offered through the Maxine Smith Leadership Series, the Tennessee Board of Regents' (TBR) broad initiative to strengthen leadership capacity across the state's community and technical college system.

Developed in partnership with Vanderbilt University's Office of Faculty Affairs, the collaborative brings together academic leaders from Tennessee community colleges for a professional development experience focused on reflection, problem-solving, and peer learning.

The inaugural 2026-27 cohort includes deans from all 13 Tennessee community colleges, selected by their presidents and senior leadership teams based on their roles and commitment to professional growth and collaboration.

They are:

- Dr. Jimmy Barham – Dyersburg State Community College
- Dr. Caitlin Chapman – Northeast State Community College
- Dr. Anna Esquivel – Jackson State Community College
- Dr. Christie Ferguson – Nashville State Community College
- Dr. Sandra Godsey – Cleveland State Community College
- Dr. Geol Greenlee – Roane State Community College
- Tracey Hines – Columbia State Community College
- Dr. Lindsay Holland – Chattanooga State Community College
- Dr. Merve Kester Thomas – Pellissippi State Community College
- Dr. Devissi Muhammad – Southwest Tennessee Community College
- Dr. Laura Booth Patterson – Motlow State Community College
- Dr. Matthew Smith – Walters State Community College
- Dr. Shane Talbott – Volunteer State Community College

All TBR sessions will be facilitated by partners from Vanderbilt University, who bring extensive experience in leading this collaborative leadership model. Vanderbilt has successfully implemented this program internally with its own leaders over the past several years.

Read more from Tennessee:
Belmont University and TBR Launch Transfer Pathways for Students who want to Become Teachers

Awesome August: TBR Celebrates Three New Projects with Ribbon Cuttings

Tennessee Statewide Dual Enrollment Conference Shares Best Practices to Support High School Students Dual Enrolled in College

TEXAS

Alamo Colleges District Northwest Vista College to Lead Statewide Workforce Training Initiative

Northwest Vista College, part of the Alamo Colleges District, has been awarded approximately $10.4 million through the U.S. Department of Labor's Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants program to lead a statewide initiative supporting the development and expansion of short-term workforce training.

The project, Building Local Capacity for Workforce Pell Data in Texas, will help participating Texas community colleges strengthen programs seeking Workforce Pell eligibility and improve their capacity to track student employment outcomes. The initiative will focus on healthcare and allied health, advanced manufacturing and industrial trades, and artificial intelligence infrastructure and information technology.

The project is expected to serve 22,532 participants, helping colleges connect more Texans with training that prepares them for opportunities in these industries.

"Our students come to us looking for an opportunity to build a better future for themselves and their families," said Dr. Mike Flores, Alamo Colleges District Chancellor. "This investment will help community colleges across Texas expand access to training that connects students with meaningful careers. We are proud that Northwest Vista College is leading this work, which advances our Moonshot of ending poverty through education and training."

In partnership with the Texas Association of Community Colleges (TACC) and the Ray Marshall Center at The University of Texas at Austin, this four-year project provides community colleges with technical support and data systems to evaluate student outcomes. By expanding Workforce Pell eligibility to short-term certificate programs, the initiative removes tuition barriers for high-demand career training. This enables more Texans—especially working adults and non-traditional

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students—to quickly gain credentials for immediate entry into high-paying fields.

Lamar Institute of Technology Healthcare and Sciences Department Recognized by Healthcare Network Association

Lamar Institute of Technology (LIT) Healthcare and Sciences department was nominated for an Impact Award at the Healthcare Network Association (HNA) Impact Awards on October 23 for their contribution to healthcare education and the preparation of future healthcare professionals.

The HNA is a nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening the healthcare community of southeast Texas by investing in the professionals who serve it and the students who will shape its future.

“We work hard to provide students with a quality education and the preparation they need to succeed in their chosen professions,” said Richard Fruscione, Department Chair of Healthcare and Sciences. “It was gratifying to know that the work being done by our faculty and staff was recognized within the regional healthcare community.”

Fruscione says that the recognition they received is a testament to the impact that LIT has on the future of healthcare in southeast Texas.

“Our department plays an important role in feeding the healthcare workforce pipeline. Our graduates enter the workforce as nurses, respiratory therapists, radiologic technologists, sonographers, dental hygienists, medical assistants and other healthcare professionals who serve our region,” said Fruscione. “Healthcare providers need qualified, well-prepared professionals and our programs help meet that need. Recognition like this reinforces the importance of investing in healthcare education and developing the next generation of professionals who will care for our families, friends and neighbors.”

Read more from Texas:
Galveston College and Gulf Copper Strengthen Partnership to Prepare Shipbuilding Workforce

VIRGINIA

Virginia Business’s 500 Power List Recognizes a Record Four Leaders Affiliated with the Virginia Community College System

VCCS State Board Chair Mark J. Hourigan, Chancellor David Doré, and college presidents Marcia Conston and Anne Kress have each been named to Virginia Business magazine’s Virginia 500: The 2026-27 Power List, an annual ranking of the commonwealth’s most influential business and civic leaders.

Mr. Hourigan serves as chair of the VCCS State Board and founder and CEO of Hourigan Group in Richmond. He was recognized in the Real Estate | Architecture | Construction | Development | Engineering category. Hourigan has led the Richmond-based development and construction firm for more than 30 years and serves on the Advisory Board at the Virginia Tech School of Building Construction.

Dr. David Doré, chancellor of the Virginia Community College System, was recognized in the Education category. Doré became chancellor in April 2023 and oversees a system that serves more than 230,000 degree-seeking and workforce-training students annually across 23 colleges and 40 locations statewide. This marks Doré’s third consecutive year on the Virginia 500, having also been recognized in 2023-24 and 2024-25.

Dr. Marcia Conston, president of Tidewater Community College, was also recognized in the Education category. Conston leads Tidewater’s five campuses serving Hampton Roads. She became TCC’s sixth president in January 2020 and guided the college through the COVID-19 pandemic in her first months. Before joining TCC, Conston spent nearly 20 years as vice president for Enrollment and Student Success Services at Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Dr. Anne Kress, president of Northern Virginia Community College, was also recognized in the Education category. Kress leads Northern Virginia Community College, the largest of Virginia’s 23 community colleges, serving more than 70,000 students across six campuses. A champion for student success with over three decades of experience in higher education leadership, she has testified before Congress on issues affecting community colleges and serves on the boards of the American Council on Education, the Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Washington Board of Trade, among others.

“It’s a proud moment to see the leadership of our State Board, our colleges and our system recognized alongside the commonwealth’s top business and civic leaders,” said Chancellor Doré. “I am grateful to serve alongside our system’s strong leaders and proud of what we are building together for Virginia’s students.”

VCCS Hosts 60th Anniversary Governor’s Luncheon

The Virginia Community College System (VCCS) will celebrate its 60th Anniversary with a Governor’s Luncheon. The event will be held at the Jefferson Hotel in Richmond on November 12th. The ticketed event will

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benefit the VCCS Strategic Plan, Accelerate Opportunity, and will include a panel of past Virginia Governors.

For six decades, the VCCS has fulfilled its founding mission of expanding access to education and empowering Virginians with the skills that strengthen families, uplift communities, and drive our state's economy. The VCCS is the Commonwealth's leading provider of workforce training, serving more than 230,000 students annually across its 23 colleges, representing 46% of all public undergraduate students in Virginia.

This historic meeting of Virginia's Governors will highlight the essential role of Virginia's Community Colleges in expanding the Commonwealth's workforce talent pipeline.

Every ticket purchased supports the Virginia Foundation for Community College Education's Accelerate Opportunity Fund. This provides the VCCS with the agility to innovate, adapt, and pursue strategic opportunities that will increase student success, prepare or strengthen the workforce, and drive Virginia's prosperity.

SACAD

Southern Association of Colleges with Associate Degrees

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