

Are Community Colleges Going the Distance? A Descriptive Analysis of Student Support Services for Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee Community Colleges

By

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Abstract

Purpose: This study describes the quality of community college support services available online in Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee using Cherry Beth Luedtke's (1999) student support services model. These states lend themselves to the research because of a lingering legacy of "separate but equal" education policy. In addition, community colleges disproportionately serve low-income students. As community based higher education, community colleges in these states are uniquely equipped to meet higher education needs of African-Americans.

Method: This research, content analysis, uses to analyze online support services for web-based learners at Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee community colleges. A total of fifty-eight community colleges in the four states constitute a sampling frame.

Findings: Overall community colleges in Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi and Tennessee exceed the benchmark in many services within Information/Technical Support and Admissions elements in the conceptual framework. Nevertheless, the areas of online advising and counseling, assessment, registration and other support services need improvement. College advising and counseling can mean the difference between a student's success and failure. Community colleges should focus on improving these services.

About the Author



Amy Denise Duhon was born in Beaumont, Texas. A fascination with public service inspired Amy to volunteer in non-profit and religious organizations and to study communication at Lamar University - Beaumont, information technology at Lamar Institute of Technology and public administration at Texas State University. Her work experiences include asbestos tort litigation, customer service in the food and retail sector, and state government in open records administration. Throughout her professional career, Amy always wanted to pursue the field of education. While studying at Texas State University, Amy has gained experience in public service. Amy plans to remain in Austin, Texas.

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Chapter I: Introduction and Research Purpose

Introduction

Community colleges have contributed to higher education in the United States for over a century. At one time, higher education served only the upper middle class and wealthy. Due to travel distances, as well as the expense of tuition, room and board, a four-year college degree was simply too expensive for most lower income citizens. Community colleges fill this educational gap. Community colleges are often located in a students' hometown, offer flexible classes, and provide relatively low tuition. These benefits make higher education more accessible to lower income students. Specifically, community colleges meet the education needs of African-Americans and Hispanics who are disproportionately lower income. Enrollment of African-Americans in higher education has increased; nevertheless, many minority students lack remedial skills as a result of inadequate secondary education. The *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* reports that "African-American students are almost twice as likely to need remedial courses as whites" (JBHE 1996, 52).

Many African-American students would not pursue higher education, were it not for community colleges. Arthur Cohen and Florence Brawer (2003, 53) describe a singular role of community colleges among minority students, "the choice is not between the community college and a senior residential institution; it is between the community college and nothing."

Community college open door admissions policies create educational opportunities for people from all backgrounds. Community colleges reach out to those "not served by traditional higher education: those who could not afford tuition; who could not attend college full time; whose ethnic background constrains them from

participating; who had inadequate secondary education preparation; whose educational progress had been interrupted by some temporary condition; whose job skills have become obsolete non-existent; who need a connection to obtain a job; who were confined to prisons, physically disabled, or otherwise unable to attend classes on a campus; or who were faced with a need to fill increased leisure time meaningfully” (Cohen and Brawer 2003, 28-29).

The open admissions policy increases diversity in community colleges throughout the country. Cohen and Brawer (2003, 27) describe the community college as a source of opportunity to all of society: “minorities, women, people who had done poorly in high school, and those who would otherwise have never considered further education.” The population demographics in community colleges today consist of recent high school graduates, retired persons, and people seeking professional development for career merits. Jamie P. Merisotis and Stan Jones believe that some of the characteristics of today’s community college students include “a retiree interested in taking a creative-writing class, an immigrant wanting to improve their English, or a recent high school graduate looking to garner college credits inexpensively before transferring to a four-year institution” (2010, 15). Because community colleges offer education and training to students who reside locally, the colleges benefit the immediate city or county. These institutions train and educate the local labor force. A well-trained local labor force powers economic development.

Community colleges flourished through different eras from World War I, to the Great Depression, to World War II, to the Civil Rights movement, and into the digital 21st century. “The American community college dates from the early years of the twentieth century” (Cohen and Brawer 2003, 1).

Penetration of technology in higher education offers advantages and disadvantages. People are now more computer savvy; and take advantage of technology as self-learners, self-starters and self-thinkers. Community colleges should view prospective learners as “customers because they search for the best instructional environment so they may advance educationally and leave with skills that will best prepare them for today’s job market” (Perez-Greene 2005, 4). These tech savvy students often demand online course formats.

Digitization deters some faculty and students who prefer traditional methods of face-to-face communication. Karl Wuensch, et al. (2008, 525) describes some of the differences between online education and traditional methods, but conclude that “both teachers and learners may anticipate that the effectiveness and overall quality of online education is inferior to the traditional face-to-face teaching environment.”

In today’s society, some people do not have access to the Internet. African-Americans disproportionately make up this group. For African-Americans to receive information online, they must own a computer and have access to appropriate technology services. The digital divide means certain consumers do not have the latest computer technology. The divide could also apply to institutions in the sense that cyber services are not as available to some. As the educational marketplace changes, community colleges move into the mainstream; and distance education is now “the driving force of closing the digital divide” (Stumpf et al 2005, 358). Joanna Goode examines how “technology is central to the daily routine of university life” (2010, 583). A great digital divide exists between urban and rural communities’ ability to provide online classes. A challenge within the institutional digital divide is “without any formal technology prerequisites, students come to college with differing technological skills, stratified by

gender, socioeconomic status and racial backgrounds” (Goode 2010, 583). Distance education encourages technological advancement, but students must learn about computers prior to completing intermediate and secondary school. Online classes provide flexibility, convenience, and savings for those who prefer not to travel to regional centers or branch campuses. For individuals in rural communities, online classes are less prevalent due to the lack of widespread Internet broadband access. Without broadband access in rural communities, prospective learners face a learning deficit in attaining a diverse education. “The essential nature of digital divide cannot be measured by tallying hardware, but rather, must be measured by determining access to rich learning experiences in which technology is embedded” (Goode 2010, 586). If the digital divide continues, then the future for an equal opportunity of distance education in two-year institutions is bleak. This issue will negatively impact African-Americans and other minority groups, making it more difficult for disadvantaged groups to obtain an education.

Research Purpose

In 1999, Cherry Beth Luedtke, an experienced librarian at Austin Community College, developed a comprehensive framework to evaluate community college websites in Texas. Luedtke examined online student service functions. In 2005, Allyson Alston used the same framework to do a follow-up study to evaluate whether Texas community college online support services better served their students. In 2005, Allyson Alston found that student services improved compared to Luedtke's study in 1999.

Community colleges are important to the minority community. In addition, the history of education neglect in the African-American community has been particularly problematic in the South. Historically, throughout the segregated south, Whites viewed education for African-Americans "as a threat to their racial hegemony" (Werum 1999, 89). Whites also "had a vested interest in controlling access to public education, especially by African-Americans" (Werum 1999, 89).

This research applies Luedtke's (1999) framework to support services in four Southern states. The objective of this applied research project is to evaluate online student support services in Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee, and therefore how they serve the African-American community of these states. Hence, the purpose of this study is to first describe the state of community college support services available online in Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee and Arkansas. Secondly, this research will make recommendations on how to improve these services for the fifty-eight community colleges in these states.

These four states benefit the research because, compared to many other southern states, Alabama, Arkansas Mississippi, and Tennessee have larger rural communities. In addition, each of these states has a similar number of community colleges in each high

school rank, and a similar percentages of individuals “25 and older who completed high school or earned a Bachelor’s Degree” by the year of 2000¹. Large portions of Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee are in Appalachia. Arkansas’ Ozark region is similar. The Appalachian community in the United States has a reputation of poverty in remote areas. High unemployment in rural areas like Appalachia contributes to a lack of funding for students wishing to pursue higher education. Many areas in Appalachia experience “jobs disappearing, sometimes overseas and sometimes because a natural resource has been depleted” (Chronicle of Higher Education 2006, 64).

Within the last decade computer technology has become ubiquitous in American daily life. Despite the lingering presence of the digital divide between rural and urban communities, the education sector must overcome barriers as online education increases.

In addition, there are a substantial number of communities in the Deep South lacking broadband access preventing many African-Americans from competing in the digital economy. Until federal funding reaches rural communities, the gap will persist.

Jennifer Lorenzetti (2005, 1) argues that some online users are “well into their second decade of experience with the Internet, it is a significant worry that the digital ‘have nots’ may experience trouble catching up or that they may be unable to make the leap into using the Internet for education, research, communication, and recreation.”

The digital divide can take two forms. First, individuals within a community may have less access to personal technology. Second, the institutions that serve a community may have poor or obsolete technology. (Both types of digital divide merit attention because they exist together). Nevertheless, this study focuses on the second type of digital divide – institutional digital divide.

¹ The sixth edition of the State-By-State Profile by Community Colleges is published by the American Association of Community Colleges, www.aacc.nche.edu. The AACC retrieved this information from the 2002 US Bureau of the Census, <http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/c2kbr-24.pdf>.

Distance education is popular among the collegiate-bound students, individuals seeking to continue education for professional development, those who are retired, and individuals taking classes for recreational interests. For an online education class to be successful, Internet interface should be user friendly; the faculty and staff must be readily available; and the student must have Internet access. Wuensch, et al. (2008, 523) see technology as “continuous; therefore, both instructors and students must be adaptable, knowledgeable, and keep up with the pace of the technological advances.”

In order for a community college to attract prospective students, the website navigation should be easy, and the site should feature images of a diverse student body. Katrina Meyer (2008, 142) finds that “the home page does present a ‘face’ to its virtual community which can be termed-given its location in cyberspace-its ‘virtual face’”. Luedtke’s (1999) framework includes technical support; admissions; registration; assessment; accessibility of learning resources; and additional services such as purchasing textbooks, testing facilities, and hour’s availability.

This research is important because it helps provide direction on how administration, faculty, and staff at community colleges should adapt to e-learning and web-based support services for online classes. The ability of community colleges to stay abreast with technology is essential to attracting a new generation of tech savvy high school graduates. Community colleges must also accommodate many stakeholders². In the long run, improvement to community college technology support services is a relatively easy and inexpensive way to improve the college experience for students. This

² John Colborn and Cyrus Driver from the Ford Foundation partnered with Community College Central.org and provided a number of stakeholders: “governors, legislators, state agency officials and staff concerned with the competitiveness of their workforce; business and labor leaders who need skilled labor and adapted employees for the 21st century competencies; social and economic justice advocacy groups for low-income and underserved people; and college presidents, trustees and other education leaders who are seeking ways to better serve their communities and the regional economy” (www.communitycollececentral.org).

study provides useful information to community college administrations in Alabama, Tennessee, Arkansas, and Mississippi; and helps address a problematic educational gap legacy by focusing on how to improve online student support services.

Chapter Summaries

This applied research project contains nine chapters. Chapter one introduces the research purpose of the applied research project. Chapter two discusses the past and current status of African-Americans in higher education. Chapter three discusses the significance of community colleges as well as the characteristics that define the institutions, their evolution, and the Liberal Arts education focus. Chapter four characterizes the digital divide in America existing between rural and urban communities. Chapter five discusses the literature review that supports Cherry Beth Luedtke's model. Chapter six presents the project's content analysis. Chapter seven summarizes the data for community colleges in Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Chapter eight discusses the conceptual framework elements meeting the benchmark expectations of essential services, and important factors and services helpful to the distance learner. Chapter nine summarizes the entire paper, as well as the results from the benchmark chapter. The final chapter also provides recommendations for online support services on how community colleges can influence communities of color.

Chapter 2: African-American Students in Higher Education

Chapter Purpose

This chapter discusses the historical struggle of African-Americans to obtain a quality education for themselves and their children. In addition, the chapter presents some landmark cases and congressional bills intended to protect people of color. Finally, the chapter highlights obstacles African-Americans still face when pursuing higher education.

History

Historically African-Americans have faced challenges in many areas such as voting; being treated as less than a person; and unequal opportunities regarding housing, employment, and education. The 1776 United States Declaration of Independence states “all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights; that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness” (www.ushistory.org). Unfortunately, some of the authors of this document did not mean people of color. The Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement helped move the country closer to this early written ideal.

The Civil War prompted changes in America during Reconstruction. It was during this period that the government abolished slavery, and the country had a chance to grant “African-Americans the potential to enjoy the fruits of citizenship” (Gallagher 2004, 54). Reconstruction was a “period for the potential for freedom and equality to be explored” (Gallagher 2004, 54). Unfortunately, southern white citizens strongly opposed new opportunities for blacks and employed loopholes to revitalize old traditions. For

instance, “some of the States of the former confederacy passed a series of ‘Black Codes’³ that restored many of the restrictions of the slave regime” (Gallagher 2004, 54).

Opponents of civil rights for African-Americans created groups (Ku Klux Klan) and policies (Jim Crow laws) that created defacto slavery conditions in much of the Deep South.

The United States Constitution does not address education, thus it is a responsibility “firmly located at the state and local levels” (Gallagher 2004, 52).

Therefore, state and local power structures could deny or dilute educational benefits to former slaves and their children.

Another obstacle for African-Americans was the “separate but equal” rule. Many whites insisted on separate facilities from blacks. This separation included restaurants, residential neighborhoods, recreation, and especially education. In the case of *Plessy vs. Ferguson*⁴, “the Court ruled that the provisions of separate facilities for different races were consistent with the constitution if they met the standard of being ‘separate but equal’” (Gallagher 2004, 56). The separate but equal ruling of *Plessy vs. Ferguson* gave local southern governments the authority to create separate education systems, which in practice were not equal at all. In the Jim Crow south, not all men were created equal “in a system that has been deliberately constructed and maintained to enforce racial segregation” (Gallagher 2004, 56).

Many white southerners opposed blacks receiving a quality education. Some white southerners thought if Negroes were educated, white property owners would lose a large percentage of menial workers who picked cotton or worked as domestics.

³ Black codes were “intended to assure continuance of white supremacy” (http://history-world.org/black_codes.htm).

⁴ “The case arose from a dispute over separate facilities for White and Black passengers in trains in New Orleans” (Gallagher 2004, 56).

Anderson indicates “many southern white employers clamored for an illiterate, tractable black work force, one with low socioeconomic aspirations” (1988, 96). In Mississippi, for instance, whites oversaw Negro “schools in order to control the thoughts and actions of African-Americans and to best ensure that the type of instruction in these schools adhered to the etiquette, labor demands, and overall expectations of southern whites” (Span 2009, 20). Northern educators, philanthropists, and missionary workers attempted to counter balance repressive practices. Unfortunately, these individuals soon discovered their “fatal miscalculations of the depth and force from the white supremacy movement and soon found themselves overpowered by it” (Anderson 1988, 79).

Many African-Americans, however, were open to receiving an education in their own communities. These students suffered the brunt of segregation in education in the Deep South. To counter the effect of these policies, African-Americans formed their own institutions of higher learning. African-Americans who desired an education would learn from each other. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) emerged in the nineteenth century to promote educational welfare among blacks. According to Brian Armstrong, the “history books record Cheyney University, in Pennsylvania as the oldest HBCU, founded in 1837” (2002, 11). “The Morrill Act of 1862 created land-grant public institutions, and thirty years later Morrill Act II provided for historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) to provide access for the black population, who were not provided access at many land-grant institutions” (Swail, et al. 2003, 11).

In 1910, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, (NAACP) formed to help blacks “restore the weight of the Reconstruction Amendments by targeting legal challenges to discriminatory actions” (Gallagher 2004, 56). During the early twentieth century, members of the NAACP conceived of ways to derail the

“separate but equal” in education rule. The invention of separate facilities limited African-American access to high quality education at colleges and universities throughout the country. Civil rights leaders, through the NAACP, pursued equality in higher education for several reasons. First, “separate but equal” provided a legal opportunity to “be argued” (Gallagher 2004, 56); and second, “Supreme Court Justices were more likely to be sympathetic to the value of education in these institutions” (Gallagher 2004, 56).

Early in the last century, African-Americans won milestone victories and challenged the separate but equal rule; however, disparities in access to higher education continued. Despite the Supreme Court ruling in *Brown vs. Board of Education*, “the Court did not offer specific recommendations on a timetable for desegregation” (Gallagher 2004, 58). Since the Court did not stipulate rules and deadlines for municipal and state government to desegregate, African-Americans continued to experience overcrowding in schools and, inadequate books, supplies, and equipment for many more years. During the 50 plus years when “separate but equal” doctrine influenced education, the quality of education for blacks was often substandard. As a result, generations of African-American children left school with poor or minimal reading and writing skills. These deficits continue to hinder minority communities. Community colleges offer a way to close this gap. African-Americans have an opportunity through the community college to improve remedial skills. One of the goals of a community college is to accommodate “students who are unable to read, write, and compute at a level that would enable them to pursue a collegiate program satisfactorily must be provided with a different curricula” (Cohen and Brawer 2003, 29).

Fifty years after *Brown vs. Board of Education*, blacks still continue to seek equal resources in books; computer equipment; and sufficient skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. On the other hand, generations of white children, from affluent families, “invariably have the best teachers, most up-to-date textbooks and computers, and superior academic faculties” (Journal of Blacks in Higher Education 2010, 40). African-Americans have achieved milestones⁵ in civil rights regarding education, but the legacy of Jim Crow and *Plessy* leave much to be done.

Obtaining equal access in education has been difficult for people of color, but today’s institutions of higher learning in the United States realize that multi-ethnic faculty and student body populations can produce positive outcomes. Cultural diversity in higher education can foster creativity as to how faculty and students communicate, interact and approach teaching and learning” (Colbert 2010, 17). Overall, a legacy of exclusion and neglect toward African-Americans in the world of educational opportunities exists; however, due to the diverse population in higher education among minorities, community colleges serve as gateways. Race continues to be an issue in higher education, especially for African-Americans. During the last century, blacks in this country have made tremendous progress; on the other hand, inequality in education still persists. More than 50 years have passed since *Brown vs. Board of Education*, and people of color are still facing inadequate funding, supplies, and technology. Gary Orfield, author of *The Civil Rights Project* at UCLA, concludes that schools for children of color “remain highly unequal, sometimes in terms of dollars, and very frequently in terms of teachers, curriculum, peer groups, connections with colleges and jobs, and other key aspects of schooling” (Orfield 2009, 6). African-American students, who are ill-prepared to enter

⁵ “Missouri ex rel. Gaines vs. Canada, 1938; McLaurin vs. Oklahoma State Regents, 1950; and Sweatt vs. Painter, 1950” (Gallagher 2004, 56-57).

into four-year institutions, benefit from the community college. Roy Flores and Beth Hagan argue “for many minorities and nontraditional students, the path to a baccalaureate degree, a master’s and even a doctorate begins with the local community college” (2008, 1).

Current Issues Affecting African-Americans in Higher Education

Remedial Education

The goal of remedial college education is to assist students in basic reading, math, and writing skills students did not acquire in secondary school. Remedial classes give students an opportunity to successfully complete advanced classes in degree programs. Community colleges gear remedial classes to students who are “unprepared to do college-level work” (Brock 2010, 116). African-American students in secondary education are more likely than Caucasians to not possess minimum remedial skills. “Large numbers of these youth leave school unprepared for higher education or the workplace” (Townsend 2002, 222). Students may feel a sense of isolation, become discouraged, and then drop out after entering a two-year institution. To increase student retention, institutions of higher learning need to be more creative in teaching remedial courses to those not academically prepared.

Another challenge for remedial educators is the communication barrier between students and faculty. Students in the digital generation communicate differently than students from earlier generations. Therefore, thoughts and ideas may vary. “Students who come from an ethnic, social or linguistic world removed from the special culture of the academic classroom don’t need a remedy; they need a bridge to enable them to move from where they are to where they want to be” (Griffith and Connor 1989, B2). Teachers

should be creative in engaging students in collaboration and group discussions that involve real life situations with less academic terminology.

Financial Aid

The changes in federal financial aid may not benefit many African-Americans. In 2006, *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* (JBHE) reported the federal government “announced two new financial aid programs for low-income college students” (2006, 24). New federal grant programs, such as AC⁶ and SMART⁷, will complicate the academic requirements for African-Americans to receive monetary assistance. For a student in higher education to qualify for an AC grant, their secondary school academic record should consist of “three years of mathematics, four years of English, two years of a foreign language, and three years of laboratory science” (JBHE 2006, 24). Few African-American students meet this criterion because “in a number of predominantly black high schools, three laboratory sciences are not offered to students” (JBHE 2006, 24). “SMART grants are earmarked for students in physical, life, or computer sciences, mathematics, technology, engineering, or certain foreign languages deemed important to national security” (JBHE 2006, 24). African-Americans majoring in fields relating to science or mathematics disciplines “is lower, and sometimes significantly lower, than the black percentage of overall college enrollments” (JBHE 2006, 24).

It is important for African-Americans to successfully complete challenging classes in secondary school. Taking more difficult classes helps students prepare for college. In addition, the necessity of registering for developmental classes will not be a

⁶ AC is the acronym for Academic Competitiveness. It is a grant that “awards first –and second-year college students who have successfully completed a rigorous secondary school program” (JBHE 2006, 24).

⁷ SMART is the acronym for National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent. It is a grant “available to third- and fourth-year college students who major in mathematics, science, technology, engineering or critical foreign languages” (JBHE 2006, 24).

top priority. African-Americans could increase their chances of qualifying for federal aid if predominantly black schools offered more challenging programs.

Some of the more recent changes in federal financial aid laws do not benefit everyone. Programs should balance “need-based financial aid” and “merit-based aid” (JBHE 2007, 53).

Chapter Summary

This chapter recounts the history and the current status of African-Americans in higher education. The impact of *Brown vs. Board of Education* is still lingers in education for African-Americans. Although African-Americans have made much progress, there is still a need for improvement in higher education for people of color. The next chapter will discuss community colleges in America and their significance to higher education.

Chapter 3: The Community College

Chapter Purpose

This chapter examines why community colleges are important in higher education. In addition, the chapter discusses community college policies and practices. This chapter also emphasizes the necessity of online services supporting distance learners who are at a geographic disadvantage.

Importance of Community Colleges

In July 2009, President Barak Obama proposed an investment⁸ to assist the growth of community colleges. Obama felt students in higher education needed skills to compete globally. Community colleges need attention because they “already enroll almost half of all U.S. undergraduates” (AACC 2009, 1). The definition of a student in higher education is defined by their income. Two-year institutions now cater to those “who are older, working or need remedial classes” (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/>). These institutions also “work with businesses⁹, industry and government to create tailored training programs to meet economic needs like nursing, health information technology, advanced manufacturing, and green jobs” (Ibid).

Definition and the Evolution of the Community College

Cohen and Brawer (2003, 5) define the community college “as any institution regionally accredited to award the associate in arts or the associate in science as its highest degree.” The community college has become a thriving center: (1) for people who aspire to be first-time college graduates; (2) working professionals needing to hone

⁸ President Obama proposed what is known as “the American Graduation Initiative, a \$12 billion federal investment to substantially expand the capacity of the nation’s community college system” (AACC 2009, 1).

⁹ Community colleges can partner with schools in its “state or region in which they can develop some personal relationships” (Butterfield & Ciampa 2006, 45).

skills, and (3) those seeking remedial and continuing education. Two-year institutions¹⁰ are now America's gateway for many to pursue higher education.

Historically, higher education was available only for the middle and upper classes. Community colleges are an intermediate alternative to more expensive and often distant four-year institutions of higher education. Community colleges make the initial phase of a college degree more accessible to a wider cross section of the population.

Cohen and Brawer (2003, 39) argue that community colleges should be more flexible and create structures that support the community college student body because "everyone is potentially a student."

Curriculum Programs in the Community Colleges

The role of community colleges has never been more challenging. Many two-year institutions have adopted the role of teaching recent high school graduates effective organizational, remedial, and study skills.

Liberal Arts is the focal point in community colleges. Liberal Arts "represent the historical roots of the community colleges; they are the main factor differentiating community colleges from proprietary schools" (Cohen, 1994, 31). Liberal Arts serve as a "link between elementary and secondary schools and the establishment of higher learning" (VanderKelen, 1994, 31).

Many community colleges have an open-door admission policy. Consequently, two-year institutions are characterized by high degrees of diversity. Community college open admission policies provide access to students who are unfamiliar with the norms of higher education. This inexperience may lead some new students to experience culture shock. Community colleges also provide students with the opportunity to grow socially.

¹⁰ Some of the common names affiliated with community colleges include junior college, "branch campus, city college, county college, people's college, democracy's college, contradictory college and opportunity college" (Cohen & Brawer, 2003).

Students have to learn to branch out of their comfort zones to be successful in college. Higher education can give an individual a different perspective on life. Students who are underrepresented, non-traditional, or first in their families to attend college should realize that “the transition to college can literally be life-changing (and life-saving)” (Amaya 2010, 14).

Students need to take advantage of resources that are available to assist them throughout their collegiate career. It is the school’s responsibility to make students aware of educational resources. “When institutions create awareness of these services, even if the student is currently not in need of them, the students gain knowledge and are better prepared to overcome potential obstacles to completion of their degree” (Amaya 2010, 9).

The community college open admissions policy presents two-year campuses with retention problems. These poorly prepared students, often lower income, are less likely to graduate with an Associate Degree and transfer to a university. As a result, community colleges in various geographical locations focus on reducing attrition. The goals of a community college are to “help students better understand the benefits of remediation courses and set realistic targets for their own academic performance” (Moore 2009, 64). Unfortunately, students graduating from high school are often ill-prepared with marginal reading and writing skills. Marcus Simmons believes that “many students enter post secondary education with a severe lack of knowledge and ability to study and learn effectively” (Simmons 2006, 1). These are exactly the students community colleges are designed to serve. Community colleges are open to everyone. A two-year institution must have the ability to teach “students who are unable to read, write, and compute at a level that would enable them to pursue a collegiate program satisfactorily” (Cohen and Brawer 2003, 29).

Community colleges can meet the needs of a diverse student body by providing resources via the Internet. This flexible medium allows students who may be working full time jobs or perhaps have transportation problems to access college counselors. Community college online classes should be supported by online services such as advising and counseling, admissions, and registration.

Chapter Summary

This chapter summarizes the importance of community colleges particularly to disadvantaged students. Two-year institutions provide a window of opportunity for those who need remedial skills and those who wish to develop trade and vocational skills. Community colleges capitalize on diversity through enrollment by African-Americans, Hispanics, and other minority groups; digital technology enhancement to accompany online student support services; convenient local locations of institutions; and flexible class schedules to accommodate the working class. The next chapter discusses the digital divide in America and the negative effects of this divide on African-Americans.

Chapter 4: The Digital Divide

Chapter Purpose

This chapter explores and analyzes the digital divide in America. Computer technology has created Internet social classes of the haves and have nots, negatively affecting underrepresented groups such as African-Americans. For students in rural communities, online education is more challenging because broadband access and financial resources are more limited. One key to a student's success in higher education today is accessibility to technology; however, without high speed Internet access some will continue to disengage with advanced technology. The absence of high speed Internet in rural communities emphasizes the institutional digital divide in higher education.

Digital Divide among Urban and Rural Communities

America's digital divide is defined as "a division between the Internet haves and have nots" (Lorenzetti 2005, 1). People with poor Internet access are at a disadvantage with respect to "education, researching, communicating and recreation" (Lorenzetti 2005, 1).

In America rural communities lack Internet access. Without access to personal and institutional digital technology, rural communities have a limited capacity to provide citizens with quality education. Sink and Jackson (2000) "found that urban community colleges were often better wired than their rural counterparts, preventing the rural institutions from providing their students with the same level of access to technological resources" (Cejda 2007, 292).

Unstable telephone infrastructure contributes to the lack of rural Internet access. Rural communities are less wealthy than their urban counterparts and have fewer resources to upgrade infrastructure. To close the digital divide, Internet access must be

available to all, even those residing in rural communities who have “fewer choices about how they can access the Internet” (Cejda 2007, 294).

Because rural community residents have less Internet access community colleges face different barriers. Some of the challenges described by authors Miller and Tuttle (2006, 57) which:

include recruitment, retention and development of high quality faculty and administrative teams, resources to support advanced technological applications--including the telecommunications infrastructure necessary to support high-speed computing traffic--the availability of trained staff, and the challenges associated with economic development in areas that have historically underperformed or have suffered from prolonged economic depression.

Digital Divide Among African-Americans and Other Minority Groups

A particular minority group in America continues to lag behind in the digital divide: African-Americans. According to a census bureau report from the *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, “blacks remain far behind whites in computer and Internet access in the home and at work” (2004/2005, 36). Those who own a home computer possess gateways to technical sophistication that includes ready access to information. While the racial divide between whites and blacks still exists, progress has been made. For example, another census bureau report from the *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, disclosed “in 2007, 45 percent of all African-Americans over the age of 15 reported that they used a computer at home. For non-Hispanic whites the figure was 65 percent” (2009, 54). On the other hand, a decade ago, “21 percent of white families could access the Internet at home compared to just 7.7 percent of black families” (2009, 54).

Digital training outside of the classroom for the “have nots” can be a problem if tools needed for training are unavailable. With proper tools, some individuals may “end

up frustrated or turned off by technology” (Roach 2003, 31). Adults and children who are technologically deficient will “find it a struggle merely to function in the complex information age that is at hand” (JBHE 2009, 54).

Where there is broadband access, there is digital equity for African-Americans in the classroom, grades K-12. Students in grade school “have caught up with whites in one area-the usage of a computer in school” (JBHE Foundation 2004/2005, 36). In September 2001, “83.6 percent of black children ages 3 to 17 used a computer while in school” (JBHE 2004/2005). This statistic was close to the percentage of non-Hispanic whites “which stood at 86.2” (JBHE 2004/2005). African-Americans have made progress using digital technology in the classroom, but for those not in grade school, the outlook is dim. Technical preparation by institutions of higher learning serves “as an Invisible Academic Prerequisite” (Goode 2010, 584).

The Minority Serving Institution Digital and Wireless Technology Opportunity Act¹¹ (The Act)

The significance of this bill lies in addressing the lack of broadband access for Minority Serving Institutions¹² (MSIs). Much support is needed for institutions that serve African-Americans and Hispanics to compete with institutions serving. In January 2007, several Congressional members¹³ sponsored “a \$250 million technology bill¹⁴ for

¹¹ According to Charles Dervarics “both chambers of Congress have passed a technology bill for MSIs” (2007, 1). Funding for the bill has been an issue.

¹² “In the higher education system of the United States, minority-serving institutions make up a category of educational establishments including historically black college and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions and tribal colleges and universities” (http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Minority_Serving_Institution).

¹³ Congressional members to help spearhead The Minority Serving Institution Digital and Wireless Technology Opportunity Act include “Gordon Smith, John Kerry, Jim Webb and John Warner” (Dervarics 2007, 12).

¹⁴ The objective of The Minority Serving Institution Digital and Wireless Technology Opportunity Act is to “assist eligible educational institutions in acquiring and augmenting use of digital and wireless networking technologies to improve the quality and delivery of educational services at such institutions” (<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h110-694&tab=summary>).

historically black colleges, Hispanic-serving institutions and tribal colleges” (Dervarics 2007, 12). The Minority Serving Institution Digital and Wireless Technology Opportunity Act targets institutions that serve underrepresented groups by providing hardware and software upgrades. This congressional bill has the capacity to refine the quality of education for minority groups. Dervarics (2007, 12) believes that “HBCUs, HSIs and tribal colleges could receive grants for *digital* wireless networks or other technology and communications upgrades to improve teaching and learning.” Since technology is now part of education, it is imperative for all minority groups to receive equal opportunities in higher education. If the racial digital divide can be eliminated, more minorities will attain college degrees. The Act advocates for African-Americans, Hispanics, and tribal groups in higher education. Institutions of higher learning can “utilize the funds to purchase digital and wireless networking technologies and equipment for campus wiring; develop new technology education services; provide technical assistance through face-to-face and distance learning workshops; provide professional development to faculty and administrators; and implement joint projects with other MSIs on technology education” (Dervarics 2007, 14).

Chapter Summary

This chapter discusses how the digital divide affects minority groups, particularly African-Americans. A personal and institutional digital gap in America is visible in several minority groups and geographic regions because fewer citizens in these areas own a computer or have funding to support institutions. If the digital divide continues, minorities in higher education in America will continue to suffer. The next chapter explores Cherry Beth Luedtke’s (1999) student support services conceptual framework.

Chapter 5: Luedtke’s Student Support Services Model

Chapter Purpose

This chapter outlines the descriptive elements of Luedtke’s (1999) Student Support Services Model. The chapter also examines the Texas Community College Experience from Alston’s (2006) applied research project. Alston analyzes the status of student support services of fifty-six Texas Community Colleges and compares the findings with Luedtke’s results.

Luedtke’s Student Support Services Model

Student support services (SSS) is a combination of services that assist students in all levels of higher education. According to Luedtke (1999), “access to student support services is a critical factor in a successful distance learning experience. Institutional planning should address support services that may be necessary or appropriate for distance learners.” Cohen and Brawer (2003, 197) describe support services as “students needing to be managed for the sake of institutional order, a rationale underlying not only the counseling of students into proper programs but also registration, student activities, orientation, student government, and record-keeping functions.” Using the Luedtke criteria, the research examines the web sites of Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi and Tennessee.

Cherry Beth Luedtke (1999) and later Allyson Alston (2006) analyzed student support services provided online in Texas Community Colleges using the following conceptual framework:

Information/Technical Support	Admissions
Registration	Assessment
Advising and Counseling	Learning Resources; and
Other Support Services (Alston 2006, 13).	

The next sections examine the meaning and scope of these support services.

Information/Technical Support

Technology is ever changing and post secondary education students need to obtain competent and acquire technology skills to complete online training. Web-based programs/courses now supplement traditional classroom education. Web-based learning is cost and time effective, reduces transportation costs and saves time because students do not need to physically be on campus. College students can coordinate education schedules in a flexible way. However, if information/technical support services are ineffective, students in a virtual environment will be less likely to participate in distance education. Today many students are “computer-literate, media-centered and contemplate easily navigated courses of study” (Stumpf, et al. 2005, 361). Technology is always changing and college students must remain competent in technology to complete online assignments. Wuensch, et al. (2008, 523) suggests that “both instructors and students must be adaptable, knowledgeable, and keep up with the pace of technological advances.” According to Luedtke’s (1999, 56) summary of the literature “assumptions about technological competence and skills, along with information about communication in a virtual environment, should be clearly stated and available for review prior to enrollment.”¹⁵ According to Wuensch (2008, 526), students who have previously taken online classes “indicated higher levels of satisfaction.”

Administrators in community colleges should realize that not all students are tech savvy; therefore, technical support must be available at all times. “Students should also be provided with the necessary technical support staff by means of online and/or by phone menu or on-demand fax options” Alston (2006, 14). Technical support is vital for

¹⁵ For more information, see (Johnstone & Krauth, 1996, 40; Lewis, Whitaker & Julian, 1995, 27)].

online learners because “technology has changed tremendously during adult students’ lives and can pose problems for adults with little computer experience” (Spellman 2007, 73).

A quality online education requires students possess a high level of information management skills to access information and go online. Luedtke (1999, 55) cites an example from (Lewis, et al. 1995, 27): “the use of online learning resources requires information management skills -- the ability to go online, retrieve and evaluate information.” With the advantage of virtual enhancement Pollard (2009, 1) asserts that “instructors have the opportunity to empower students to take control of their learning, without investing much time or energy prior to their adoption of it.” High quality of hardware and software enhances a student’s learning environment. Students can learn “at their own pace when they can access technology in and out of the classroom” (Milliron and Miles 2000, 114).

When students decide to take online courses, they should ensure the community college web site provides them adequate log-on information, communications parameters, and technical equipment requirements. Luedtke (1999, 56) cites an example from (Johnstone & Krauth, 1996, 49; Lewis, Whitaker & Julian, 1995, 27): “assumptions about technological competence and skills, along with information about communication in a virtual environment, should be clearly stated and available for review prior to enrollment.” Steinbronn and Merideth emphasize that “distinctive hardware parameters are necessary for productive connections” (2005, 64). Floyd and Casey-Powell (2004, 56) cite “successful online students must have access to required software and technological services.”

To support distance learners, a community college web site should have guides, tutorials or instructions for using technology. Online courses that provide tutorials will “allow students and instructors to expand their technological skills” (Steinbronn and Merideth (2005, 66).

Students should have an opportunity to practice sending and receiving files. Students familiar with this technique will be more comfortable with online systems. According to Stella and Gnanam (2004, 153) a “good educational experience also depends on optimum utilization of available technologies and techniques and their judicious combination to effect maximum learning.” If students practice sending and receiving files, then students will be able to “find specific information on the website, retrieve that information, and manipulate it by using a word processor and email client” (Rubens and Southard 2001, 197).

Technology brings an inherent risk of ethical confidentiality and privacy matters. Mississippi State Board member Ray Smith helped integrate a new system to enable “technology initiatives to respond to the changing needs of the community” (Cisco 2008, 1). Security is a way to “keep confidential information safe from unauthorized users, hackers, and other threats” (Cisco 2008, 1). According to The Southern Regional Educational Board, web-based instructors must have the capability of “guiding and encouraging legal, ethical, safe and healthy behavior related to technology use” (SREB, March 2009).

Texas Experience: Information Technical Support

Luedtke (1999) and Alston (2006) conducted applied research projects that evaluated the success of electronic support services in Texas community colleges. Luedtke’s (1999) analysis of forty-four Texas Community College web sites revealed a

weak online presence. For example, 73 percent of community college websites provided no information or technical support of any kind. The study rated essential services such as technical support staff 11 percent and log-on information 9 percent services as poor. By 2006, things had changed drastically for the better. Ninety-six percent of Texas web sites contained some information or technical support services. The use of technical support staff jumped to 82 percent and in log-on information to 89 percent (Alston 2006, 39). Alston (2006) concluded that community colleges in Texas have been “improving their efforts to provide information/technology, support services for the admissions process, registration, assessment, advising and counseling, learning resources and other student support services.”

Admissions

The admissions process is another key area for prospective students to learn about the institution and academic programs. According to Luedtke (1999, 56), “this area of student support services assists students in matching their educational needs, interests and background with programs, requirements and mission of the institution.” To meet the criteria of admission to higher education, students must first obtain a high school diploma or a general education development certificate (GED). Many high school graduates know that the community college “accommodates the different types of students without turning anyone away. They have always tended to let everyone in but have then guided students to programs that fit their aspirations and in which they have some chance to succeed” (Cohen and Brawer 2003, 260). Prospective students also consider costs when deciding where to enroll, therefore college web sites should provide both on-site and distance education costs. Prospective students first complete an online application or

download an application from the community college of their choice. Additional admission procedures include online orientation, financial aid, advising.

To be effective, college websites must present a credible image. Meyer (2008, 142) indicates the “home page is the view that colleges and universities choose to present first to virtual visitors, which makes it a valuable window on the institution, its priorities, and how it wishes to be seen.”

Students investigating programs look for elements such as a comparison of on-site and distance learning costs. Palloff and Pratt (2003, 56) cite “many institutions set higher tuition for online courses. Students may not complain because they are happy with the convenience of taking courses online.”

Courses for degree requirements will continuously be updated as digital technology progresses in higher education. According to Carol Cross (2000, 157) students should be able to “determine quickly whether the college has the courses, programs, or support services they need, as well as the steps they must take to enroll and successfully meet their goals.”

Online catalogs and course guides assist prospective learners in choosing classes. Online grades and deadlines from academic calendars also assist students. Rosenbaum et al. (2006, 77) maintains “the college catalog and course schedule guide students’ decisions and strategies.” The college catalog is the centerpiece of a student’s academic career.

When a student is choosing a community college, admissions criteria should emphasize an “open-door policy” including students with a GED and those who may need to improve basic reading, writing, and arithmetic developmental skills. When

community colleges establish admissions criteria, “potential students can determine whether they would be a good fit” for the institution (Davis 2005, 25).

Today’s tech savvy students applying to community colleges will critically evaluate what college websites have to offer. Two-year institutions should provide common online applications for students to “apply online, as well as track the application status online” (Community College Journal, 2008).

Students must adhere to deadlines, academic calendars, and student handbook guidelines. This information should be accessible on-line. Talbot (2007, 50) believes that a handbook “will provide you with a better understanding of what you should expect from your educational institution and what might be expected from you.”

Many community colleges partner with four-year institutions to retain students. Partnerships create a win-win situation, and the ultimate goal is for students to graduate. To assist with keeping students focused, institutional partnerships like Western Kentucky University (WKU) and Volunteer State Community College (Vol. State) established a “block transfer” or a “degree transfer” (Butterfield et al. 2006, 46). Students admitted into Vol. State must complete all classes within the Associate Degree program to receive a transfer of credit. “Students quickly realized that they would need to complete their associate degree in order to take advantage of the block transfer at Western Kentucky University” (Butterfield et al. 2006, 46).

Community colleges are known for open-door policies, and there is no exception in financial aid and tuition fees. Refund policies are an important component in the financial aid process. “The number of prospective partners will grow significantly if the online tuition policy is not prohibitive” (Butterfield et al. 2006, 46). Luedtke (1999, 58)

also believes “students interested in enrolling in a distance education course or program may have questions about the cost of tuition, related fees and financial aid services.”

Online orientation offers indispensable information that is traditionally provided in-person. Community colleges should offer online students web based orientation. The goal of online orientation is to give students information about distance learning before the semester begins. Web-based learners should be able to access information online such as blackboard, technical support, or syllabus information. “Orientation sessions help students understand their new learning environment” (Luedtke 1999, 59).

Online learners with questions about the admissions process should find contact information on the website. Students often need basic information about the institution. Traditionally, this information occurs through in-person orientation. On-line students should find web-based orientation available. In addition, if a student must drop a class (within the time frame) refund policies should be clearly posted. According to Luedtke (1999, 58), “admissions must provide, either through its publications or personal interaction, information about the institution’s policies concerning tuition and fees, refund policies and financial aid.” Posting contact information establishes rapport between students and staff. It is equally important for a student to receive “prompt responses, ongoing feedback, and consumer service” (Schwitzer et al. 2001, 77).

It is much easier for students and parents to the world of higher education to navigate through home pages. The admissions process for students has improved tremendously because colleges constantly update websites. Well designed websites encourage competition between community colleges. It is now evident that four-year institutions can no longer ignore what two-year colleges have to offer. Meyer (2008, 142) believes “for many potential students, the home page may be one of their first views

of the institution; for others, it may be the view most closely associated with the institution.”

Texas Experience: Admissions

Luedtke’s (1999) analysis of forty-four Texas Community College web site rated the sites as fair. For instance, only 5 percent of community colleges provided no information for admission support services. Essential services categories such as course guide/catalog 70 percent, admissions contact information 50 percent, explanation of tuition and fees 57 percent and criteria for admissions 57 percent services were fair.

By 2006, Alston discovered that these services had improved. 93 percent of Texas web sites had information on course guide/catalogs; admissions contact information jumped to 89 percent; admissions criteria increased to 96 percent; and explanation of tuition and fees increased to 89 percent (Alston 2006, 41).

Registration

Mary Fagan (2005, 86) evaluated many community college campuses and determined “each campus has to deal with registration processes that were developed specifically for that campus. Sometimes those processes involve paper forms required by one of the offices to be submitted, even though it’s an online registration process.” After completing the admissions process, a student should receive payment instructions.

“Many colleges and universities keep distance learning course registration open longer than on-campus course registration” Luedtke (1999, 59).

When a student chooses a university and what classes to take, the student should have the ability to pay for registration online. Students should be able to pay with credit card. Students registering for web-based courses at community colleges should have year-round, and twenty-four hour accessibility. Cross (2000, 157) predicts “registration,

in most cases, would be an ongoing process, with the ability to start classes continually throughout the year.” Many community colleges are also adopting text portals¹⁶. Text communication enables “students to elect to receive messages about registration, financial aid, payment deadlines, campus events and much more” (Snyder 2008, 13).

The college must employ policies for students to adhere to for the enrollment process to be successful. Sometimes these “processes mean paper forms are required by one of the offices, even though the registration process is online” (Fagan 2005, 86). Technical support during registration is imperative for the distance learner as well. As registration becomes more electronic, staff will be “able to devote more time to deal with issues that require their assistance or interpretation” (Dear 2005, 116). It is important for community colleges to have online services to increase student enrollment.

Texas Experience: Registration

Luedtke’s (1999) analysis of forty-four Texas Community College web sites indicates a need for improvement in online registration support services. Fifty-nine percent of community colleges provided no type of online support services. For essential services, only five percent provided 24-hour registration; 11 percent made support staff available during registration; and 25 percent of community colleges made registration deadlines available on web sites. Among important services, only 11 percent of community colleges offered year-round registration for distance learning.

By 2006, registration support services in Texas Community Colleges increased. Only 5 percent of community colleges made no information available for online

¹⁶ Ivy Tech Community College (ITCC) in Indiana uses text portals to process messages to the student body in the event of a “major weather emergency” (Snyder 2008, 1). Mobile telecommunications has served as a primary means of catering to the lifestyles of tech savvy students. “Push-technology is a data delivery method that supplies specific data automatically into the user’s computer or other digital device” Lynch et al (2010, 246). Text portals can be described as digital communication via cellular phone or e-mail.

registration support services. For essential services, 56 percent of colleges provided 24-hour registration; 84 percent had online support staff; and 75 percent of colleges had information on registration deadlines. Within online registration support services category 77 percent of community colleges offered year-round registration for distance learning (Alston 2006, 42).

Assessment

Community colleges assess students to improve academic success in post-secondary learning. It is critical that faculty and staff monitor a student's progress during the course of study. Failure to assess a student's progress could damage the reputation of faculty and staff, but could also delay or prevent a student's graduation. Moore (2009, 65) suggests monitoring students will help "faculty move into new levels of comfort with educational technologies such as online chats, e-mail, message boards, and webinars many of which are now used regularly in the classroom with students." "All of the higher education accrediting agencies encourages institutions to design and implement their own unique assessment programs" (Mince, et al. 2008, 14).

As students become more tech-savvy, "traditional students are increasingly enrolling in online classes in order to increase flexibility of their lifestyles" (Stumpf, et al. 2005, 358). An institution's web site should provide ways for the university to assess student learning styles, real-world experience and communication skills. For student written and oral communication skills to improve, administrative staff, faculty and stakeholders of the "community college need a cohesive assessment and communication approach in order to meet their concerns regarding student outcomes" (Syed, et al. 2008, 846). With rising enrollment at two-year institutions the time is now for community colleges to evaluate assessment strategies.

College faculty believes students lack communication, organizational, and study skills. Simmons (2006, 1) found that “professional students are not prepared and not taught appropriate and useful study skills prior to entering college ranks.”

Distance learner’s beginning a college career must choose which placement exams to take. Placement exams help students “to determine if they are ready to tackle curriculum courses or if additional help is needed on basic skills” (Spellman 2007, 67). Placement exams are not mandatory; however, “students may elect to apply for advanced placement” (Luedtke 1999, 66).

Depending on where the student is enrolled he or she may have the choice of taking exams via the Internet or in person at a testing site. Luedtke (1999, 67), argues how “the test proctoring issue -- including policies regarding proctoring, staffing requirements, test material delivery and test retrieval -- must be agreed to by all consortia members prior to course implementation.” For distance learners, test proctoring may be the only alternative to demonstrate what they have learned. “Many community colleges require their distance learning students to travel to campus or a designated location to take their midterm and final exams in a proctored testing center” (Dalziel 2003, 667). To encourage honesty, test proctoring is one way for faculty and staff to determine if test proctoring policies have been successfully implemented.

A student must master basic skills before advancing to more rigorous courses. Counselors sometimes recommend that students enroll in developmental courses such as reading, writing, and mathematics. Cohen and Brawer (2003, 262) argue that students should be advised “to enroll in courses on the basis of entrance tests or prior school achievement.”

As part of the assessment process, faculty may ask students to create a portfolio to track progress in a program. Portfolios assist departmental divisions “learning outcomes assessment for community college students and the policy implications of using standardized procedures for measuring learning outcomes” (Syed, et al. 2008, 854).

Depending on a student’s progress at a community college, their testimonies and comments will vary. Syed and Mojock (2008, 899) maintain “student effort and involvement is the critical determinant of the impact of the college, and it is necessary for institutions to assess how they can shape their academic, interpersonal, and co curricular offerings to encourage student engagement.”

Texas Experience: Assessment

Luedtke (1999) analysis of 44 Texas Community College web sites showed a need for more online assessment. For instance, 86 percent of community colleges did not have any online assessment support services. For essential services, no community colleges provided information on student progress; 9 percent of community colleges provided data on placement; and only 5 percent of community colleges provided information on test delivery/proctoring. For important services, 5 percent of community colleges obtained information on proficiency exams such as CLEP while 5 percent of the colleges provided data about student comments.

By 2006, some of these online assessment services such as student progress, 93 percent, proficiency exams, 30 percent, and grade posting, 89 percent, increased. Only 5 percent of community colleges lacked any online assessment on web sites. For essential services, 93 percent of colleges provided student progress, 54 percent provided information on placement; and 35 percent provided information on test delivery/proctoring. Among important services only 30 percent of community colleges

provided information on proficiency exams, while the percentage offering for student comments dramatically increased to 84 percent (Alston 2006, 44).

Advising and Counseling

Students who pursue higher education need direction in degree planning, career counseling, mastering study skills, and time management. Advising and counseling can help increase student retention and encourage communal environment among students. Luedtke (1999, 60) believes that “counselors and advisors can provide valuable services by helping students identify their needs, offering support in addressing them, and making effective referrals to the appropriate campus or community service or program.”

Because students from different backgrounds have different needs, colleges should customize advising. An “academic advisor must begin an advising relationship with clear knowledge of institutional academic programs and curricular requirements” (Love 2003, 509). In addition, online academic advisors should provide distance learners substantial guidance to avoid pitfalls of registering for classes that are not applicable to the degree program. Schwitzer, et al. (2001, 79) believe “academic advising with adult learners thus must promote students understanding about how specific components of an overall degree program are interrelated.”

The decisions an online student makes can sometimes reflect poor judgment in selecting a class. Advising for distance learners is critical because students “may lean toward *hasty* decisions about coursework and career moves that are unrealistic or do not consider all options” (Schwitzer, et al. 2001, 79). Effective online degree planning affects future choices for the student. Students who make the wrong decisions in selecting classes can feel alone and isolated because of wasted time and money. Amaya (2010, 9) emphasizes when an institution “creates awareness” of student support services,

“even if the student is currently not in need of them, the students gain knowledge and are better prepared to overcome potential obstacles to completion of their degree.”

Colleges should advise students about the advantages and disadvantages of distance learning compared to traditional education. Luedtke (1999, 2) compares distance learning to traditional education which, “include the separation of teacher and student, the use of some type of technology to facilitate communication, and the learner’s role as director of the learning process.” In traditional education, students, advisors, and counselors have the advantage of “face-to-face communication” (Wuensch, et al. 2008, 524). Students benefit from direct contact with advisors and counselors. Advising and counseling online, on the other hand, must be provided “in formats convenient to students” (Spellman 2007, 72).

Given the problems some students encounter with distance classes, an institution should make available the percentage of completed courses within the distance education program. Luedtke (1999, 62) lists several elements prospective learners should consider when pursuing distance learning:

“How many students graduate in relationship to the number entering? What period is needed to achieve a degree? How many course failures are recorded? How many courses are repeated? What is the dropout rate? How do students’ performance in distance courses compare with their performance on campus? How well do they perform on standardized tests? Is there evidence that learning is taking place?”

Community colleges should include previous distance learner’s comments in their online information. It is important for prior students to give comments and suggestions as these students can help community colleges “improve existing programs and learn lessons as they expand into other areas” (Vacik, et al. 2006, 318).

Students need effective study and time management skills in order to be successful in higher levels of education. “Study skills seem to be one thing that most

students need and can benefit from greatly” (Simmons 2006, 2). Today’s distance learner often deals with responsibilities outside of school such as balancing time between work and family. Time management and organizational skills contribute to effective study skills. If distance learners cannot develop study skills and manage time, they may eventually drop out. Web-based learners should take advantage of options such as “tutorials, learning labs, special counseling, peer-group assistance and a variety of other aids” (Cohen & Brawer 2003, 277).

Every community college campus should have a referral services center to assist students. Vacik, et al. (2006, 313) stipulates more students are “arriving on campus with psychological and personal issues that require professional assistance both heightening the demand for counseling services and requiring a different approach to pedagogy.” Counselors must be attentive to student needs. It is the counselor’s responsibility to “safeguard the academic integrity of the institution and all students’ learning environments” (Winston 2003, 497).

Students new to higher education may experience some difficulty learning. It is the counselor’s job to provide support. Distance learners may face unique challenges because “they are often less readily able to distinguish between major and minor assignments, between major course content and less central information, and the most important parts of lectures and readings from less important information” (Schwitzer, et al. 2001, 72). Adult students returning to school may be adjusting to changes in a new education environment. Therefore, adults returning to school can experience a physical, mental, and emotional impact.

A student’s talent contributes to their major or minor of choice. Luedtke debates that “one of the most important developmental tasks a student must complete is related to

career decisions” (1999, 62). A counselor can have a profound effect on a student’s career decision if “information is integrated in a way that is useful for making career decisions and developing plans of action” (Winston 2003, 500).

Feedback from students who graduate from a two-year college is valuable to institutions of learning. This feedback creates strong relationships between teachers and students encouraging mentoring and mediation. The community college class size is often less than the class size at a four-year institution; therefore, a student at a community college is more likely to interact with counselors and faculty. “Faculty can be mentors as well which gives students a sense of connection to at least one of their instructors” (Spellman 2007, 72). “Students can be paired with mentors of similar cultural backgrounds to help them understand and use campus resources” (Spellman 2007, 72).

Tutoring is crucial to a student’s success in a distance learning program. The role of a tutor “is to encourage, facilitate and support online interactions between students to create an online community” (Talbot 2007, 83). Tutors should also provide guidance when a student is experiencing difficulty with a subject matter or an assignment. If faculty and staff cannot help students, a tutor can step in to foster student confidence and retention. Tutors can be highly effective with “regular contact” with a student (Talbot 2007, 63).

Texas Experience: Advising and Counseling

Luedtke’s (1999) analysis of forty-four Texas Community College web sites indicates a weak online presence of advising and counseling. Among essential services such as academic 5 percent; degree planning 5 percent and tutoring 9 percent services was poor. Important services such as career 5 percent; study skills 9 percent and time management 9 percent support services were problematic as well. Services that could be

helpful to the distance learner such as the success rate of previous distance learners 0 percent and referral services 7 percent were poor also.

By 2006, advising and counseling services increased. Thirty-nine percent of community colleges provided information for academic advising; while nineteen percent of community colleges offered degree planning services and 21 percent of colleges had tutoring. Among important elements such as career counseling increased to 68 percent while study skills and time management increased to 26 percent and 21 percent.

For services that could be helpful to distance learners the percentage for success rates remained at zero while referral services jumped to twelve percent (Alston 2006, 45).

Learning Resources

Distance learners must have access to research materials. According to Susan McKnight (2003, 378) libraries should provide the distance learner with “bibliographic and resource materials, principally books.” Web-based information such as the library catalog, online full text databases, supplementary course materials and required texts are available to students who know how to navigate the library website. Christine Dalziel of the Instructional Telecommunications Council emphasized how the ideal library should “provide a variety of online services so distance learning students can renew or order books, documents or other materials online; submit a question to a reference librarian; order books via interlibrary loan; and access electronic reserves, online databases, electronic books, full-text journals, and relevant web sites” (2003, 667).

Texas Experience: Learning Resources

Luedtke’s (1999) analysis of forty-four Texas Community College web sites revealed a fair presence of learning resources. Twenty percent of community colleges provided no informational types of support services for learning resources. Essential

services such as library catalog, 70 percent, and on-line full text databases, 48 percent, services were in good standing. Among important factors in distant learner's success 66 percent of community colleges participated in the TexShare program.

By 2006, many support services increased dramatically. Ninety-three percent of community colleges provided a library catalog while 95 percent of colleges provided on-line full text databases. All fifty-seven of the Texas Community Colleges were participating in the TexShare program (Alston 2006, 47).

Other Support Services

Luedtke (1999) identified a set of additional important student services that did not fit in a single category. These other support services follow.

Because distance learners connect via the Internet, these students should have additional support to purchase textbooks and supplies. Luedtke (1999, 70) states "additional concerns relevant to the distance learner include purchasing textbooks and supplies, support services provided in more than one language, student health insurance policies, and the hours services are available." Students can save time by paying online and having materials mailed to their residence. "Many community college online bookstores offer textbook reservation systems so students can order textbooks online to pick up when they visit the bookstore or receive via mail" (Dalziel 2003, 667).

Laboratory facilities are often a component of foreign language, mathematics or a science classes. Laboratories usually provide computer equipment as well as other resources. Alston (2006) believes "regional centers are also beneficial for community colleges in providing student support services."

Immigrants have significantly increased student enrollment. Large populations of Hispanic immigrants have made Spanish a common language in America and a number

of Latino students face language barriers. “To assimilate with the college culture, Spanish speaking students must be able to communicate effectively” (Spellman 2007, 69).

Student health insurance at community colleges is limited. Some of the contributing factors include “high proportions of students at two-year public colleges attend part-time come from minority groups” (Pekow, 2008). Other students attending community colleges are still living with their parents. According to a survey from the United States Government Accountability Office (USGAO), “80 percent of college students aged 18 through 23 are insured, but most through plans not offered by the college” (Pekow 2008, 1). The USGAO discovered students are “insured by employer-sponsored plans, such as parents’ plans that include dependents, Medicaid, the State Children’s Health Insurance Program and other public health programs” (Pekow 2008, 1).

Texas Experience: Other Support Services

Luedtke’s (1999) analysis of forty-four Texas Community College web sites indicated a need for improvement. For example, 48 percent of community colleges provided no support services. Among essential services such as hours of services available, 23 percent, and purchasing textbooks and supplies, 20 percent, services were poor. Important factors in a distant learner’s success such as regional centers 34 percent services were fair. In addition, services helpful to distant learner’s such as languages other than English, 5 percent, and student health insurance, 7 percent, services was poor.

By 2006, there were slight increases regarding other support services. For instance, the number of community colleges not offering any informational support services decreased to 16 percent. Twenty-three percent of community colleges provided

information on service hours available while, 77 percent of colleges had information on purchasing textbooks and supplies. Important factors in a distant learner's success such as regional centers increased to 37 percent. Lastly, the use of languages other than English and student health insurance increased to 11 percent and 7 percent (Alston 2006, 48).

Summary of Conceptual Framework¹⁷

This chapter explored the framework Luedtke used to assess on-line support services at Texas Community Colleges. The framework is summarized in Table 5.1. Table 5.1 also links each item in the framework to scholarly literature.

¹⁷ For more information on the process used to develop conceptual frameworks for Texas State Applied Research Projects see Shields (1998) and Shields and Tajalli (2006).

Table 5.1 Student Support Services Model Linked to the Literature

Information/Technical Support	
Elements	Source
Assumptions about technological competence and skills	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Stumpf et al. 2005; Wuensch 2008
Technical support staff	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Spellman 2007; Stumpf et al. 2005
Information management skills – going online, retrieving and evaluating information	Alston 2006; Lewis et al. 1995; Luedtke 1999; Milliron and Miles 2000; Pollard 2007
Log-on information, communications parameters, technical equipment requirements	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Steinbronn and Merideth 2005
Guides, tutorials, instructions for using technology	Alston 2006; Barratt 2003; Luedtke 1999; Steinbronn and Meredith 2005;
Opportunity to practice sending and receiving files, becoming familiar with system	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Rubens and Southard 2005; Stella and Gnanam 2004
Ethical how-to's; confidentiality; privacy	Alston 2006; Cisco 2008; Luedtke 1999; SREB 2009
Admissions	
Elements	Source
Comparison of on-site and distance learning costs	Alston 2006; Jewett 2003; Luedtke 1999
Course/degree requirements	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Cross 2000
Course guide/catalog	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Rosenbaum et al 2006
Criteria for admissions	Alston 2006; Davis 2005; Luedtke 1999
Additional admissions requirements for distance learning	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999
Application – institution	Alston 2006; Community College Journal 2008; Luedtke 1999
Application – common	Alston 2006; Community College Journal 2008; Luedtke 1999
Deadlines clearly stated	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Talbot 2007
Academic calendar	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Talbot 2007
Student handbook	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Talbot 2007
Transfer of credit – explanation – specific to distance learning	Alston 2006; Butterfield et al. 2006; Luedtke 1999
Transfer of credit – explanation – students leaving	Alston 2006; Butterfield et al. 2006; Luedtke 1999
Financial aid	Alston 2006; Butterfield et al. 2006; Luedtke 1999
Explanation of tuition and fees	Alston 2006; Butterfield et al. 2006; Luedtke 1999
Refund policies	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Meyer 2008

Admissions Continued	
Orientation	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Meyer 2008
Admissions contact information	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Schwitzer et al. 2001
Registration	
Elements	Source
Year-round registration for distance learning	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Milliron and Miles 2000
Registration - deadlines	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Synder 2008
Payment policies	Alston 2006; Fagan 2005; Luedtke 1999
Registration – instructions	Alston 2006; Fagan 2005; Luedtke 1999
Payment by credit card	Alston 2006; Cross 2000; Luedtke 1999
Support staff available during registration period	Alston 2006; Dear 2005; Luedtke 1999
24-hour registration	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Milliron and Miles 2000
Assessment	
Elements	Source
Assessment, learning styles	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Schwitzer 2001; Spellman 2007
Assessment, real-world experience	Alston 2006; Comeaux 2005; Guerin 2009; Luedtke 1999; Syed 2008; Vacik, Nadler and Miller 2007; Wuensch 2008
Assessment, communication skills	Alston 2006; Comeaux 2005; Luedtke 1999; Moore 2009; Simmons 2006; Stumpf et al 2005; Syed et al 2008; Wuensch 2008
Assessment, placement	Alston 2006; Joshi et al 2009; Lester 2006; Luedtke 1999; Moore 2009; Simmons 2006; Spellman 2007
Assessment, information on test delivery/proctoring	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Dalziel 2003;
Assessment, proficiency exams (CleP)	Alston 2006; Cohen & Brawer 2003; Joshi et al 2009; Luedtke 1999; Simmons 2006; Syed et al. 2008
Assessment, basic skills	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Moore 2009; Rosenbaum 2006; Simmons 2006
Assessment, clearly defined guidelines on testing policy	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999
Assessment, performance based (portfolio)	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Syed et al. 2008
Assessment, grade posting	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999
Assessment, student progress	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Syed et al. 2008
Assessment, student's comments program	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Syed et al. 2008

Advising and Counseling	
Elements	Source
Advising, academic	Alston 2006; Love 2003; Luedtke 1999; Schwitzer et al. 2001
Advising, degree planning	Alston 2006; Amaya 2010; Luedtke 1999; Schwitzer et al. 2001
Advising, comparison distance learning and traditional education	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Spellman 2007; Stumpf et al. 2005; Wuensch 2008
Advising, success rate of previous distance learners	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Vacik et al. 2006
Counseling, study skills	Alston 2006; Cohen & Brawer 2003; Luedtke 1999; Simmons 2006; Talbot 2007
Counseling, time management	Alston 2006; Cohen & Brawer 2003; Luedtke 1999; Simmons 2006; Talbot 2007
Counseling, referral services	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Vacik et al. 2006; Winston 2003;
Counseling, learning difficulties	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Schwitzer et al. 2001
Counseling, career	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Winston 2003
Counseling, mediation with instructor	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Spellman 2007
Counseling, mentoring	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Spellman 2007
Counseling, tutoring	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Talbot 2007
Learning Resources	
Elements	Source
Library catalog	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Dalziel 2003
On-line full-text databases	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Dalziel 2003
Supplementary course materials	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Dalziel 2003
Electronic document delivery	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Dalziel 2003
Required texts	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Dalziel 2003
Other Support Services	
Elements	Source
Hours services available	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999
Purchasing textbooks and supplies	Alston 2006; Dalziel 2003; Luedtke 1999
Laboratory facilities	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Milliron and Miles 2000
Regional centers	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999
Languages other than english	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Spellman 2007
Student health insurance	Alston 2006; Luedtke 1999; Pekow 2008

Chapter Summary

This chapter defined the elements of the conceptual framework of online student support services. The chapter also explored assessments of Texas community colleges by Luedtke (1999) and Alston (2006). The research included the Texas statistic to

demonstrate how online support services improved during the time since Luedtke and Alston's applied research projects.

The next chapter discusses the descriptive research method, content analysis, and how online support services in the four Southern states were analyzed.

Chapter 6: Methodology¹⁸

Chapter Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the methodological process that is used to analyze online community college support services in Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi and Arkansas. Like Alston (2006) and Luedtke (1999), this study uses content analysis to examine Community College websites to assess the “level of student support services offered to distance courses” (Alston, 2005). The research analyzes fifty-eight community colleges from May 31, 2010 to July 15, 2010, to determine the status of online student support services for web-based learners.

Research Technique

The objective of content analysis is to “study recorded human communications” (Babbie 2007, p. 320). Content analysis is appropriate for this descriptive project because the project addresses “classic questions of communications research of what, to whom, why, how and with what effect” (Babbie 2007, 320).

Websites pertaining to any agency, organization or company constitute electronic communication. The elements within the conceptual framework are the units of observation, and the electronic support services are the units of analysis. Elements in the conceptual framework are separate entities/units that collect data from different types of online support services. The electronic support services within each unit were given scores to determine their existence. Elements in the conceptual framework include information/technical support; admissions; assessment; registration; advising and counseling; learning resources; and other student support services such as student health

¹⁸ *For more Texas State Applied Research Projects that use content analysis see Stewart (2009), Brady (2010), Goldberg (2009), Zech (2008), Ari (2007), Fields (2006), Martinez (2006), and Bowman (2005).

insurance and laboratory centers. The framework categorizes the content within each of the elements.

This study uses the same coding sheet as Luedtke (1999) and Alston (2006). Luedtke and Alston developed it using the framework outlined in Chapter Five. Table 6.1 presents an operationalization table of the conceptual framework for Luedtke’s Student Support Services Model.

Table 6.1 Operationalization of the Conceptual Framework

Descriptive Type Categories	Research Methods	Evidence	Sources
Information/Technical Support	Content Analysis	<p>Websites with active links to an internal page describing services within the context of a traditional campus-based education setting are assigned a “no.”</p> <p>Items that are accessible by active links from internal pages relevant to the distance learner are assigned a “yes.”</p> <p>Items that are available by way of more than non-print method of interaction are assigned a “yes.”</p> <p>Items that are clearly identified as student support services for distance learners are assigned a “yes.”</p>	Institutional Website
Assumptions about technological staff			
Technical support staff			
Information management skills – going online, retrieving and evaluation information			
Log-on information, communications parameters, technical equipment requirements			
Guides, tutorials, instructions for using technology			
Opportunity to practice sending and receiving files, becoming familiar with system			
Ethical how-to’s; confidentiality; privacy			
Admissions		<p>Websites with active links to an internal page describing services within the context of a traditional campus-based education setting are assigned a “no.”</p>	
Comparison of on-site and distance learning costs			
Course/degree requirements			
Course guide/catalog Criteria for admissions			

Admissions	Content Analysis	<p>Items that are accessible by active links from internal pages relevant to the distance learner are assigned a “yes.”</p> <p>Items that are available by way of more than non-print method of interaction are assigned a “yes.”</p> <p>Items that are clearly identified as student support services for distance learners are assigned a “yes.”</p>	Institutional Website
Comparison of on-site and distance learning costs			
Course/degree requirements			
Course guide/catalog			
Criteria for admissions			
Additional admissions requirements for distance learning			
Application – institution			
Application – common			
Deadlines clearly stated			
Academic calendar			
Student handbook			
Transfer of credit – explanation – specific to distance learning			
Transfer of credit – explanation – students leaving			
Financial aid			
Explanation of tuition and fees			
Refund policies			
Orientation			
Admissions contact information			
Descriptive Type Categories	Research Methods	Evidence	Sources
Registration		<p>Websites with active links to an internal page describing services within the context of a traditional campus-based education setting are assigned a “no.”</p> <p>Items that are accessible by active links from internal pages relevant to the distance learner are assigned</p>	
Year-round registration for distance learning			
Registration – deadlines			
Payment policies			
Registration – instructions			
Payment by credit card			
Support staff available during registration period			

Registration	Content Analysis	a “yes.”	Institutional Website
Year-round registration for distance learning		Items that are available by way of more than non-print method of interaction are assigned a “yes.”	
Registration – deadlines			
Payment policies			
Registration – instructions			
Payment by credit card		Items that are clearly identified as student support services for distance learners are assigned a “yes.”	
Support staff available during registration period 24-hour registration			
Assessment	Content Analysis	Websites with active links to an internal page describing services within the context of a traditional campus-based education setting are assigned a “no.”	Institutional Website
Assessment, learning styles		Items that are accessible by active links from internal pages relevant to the distance learner are assigned a “yes.”	
Assessment, real-world experience			
Assessment, communication skills			
Assessment, placement			
Assessment, information on test delivery/proctoring			
Assessment, proficiency exams (CleP)		Items that are available by way of more than non-print method of interaction are assigned a “yes.”	
Assessment, basic skills			
Assessment, clearly defined guidelines on testing policy		Items that are clearly identified as student support services for distance learners are assigned a “yes.”	
Assessment, performance based (portfolio)			
Assessment, grade posting			
Assessment, student progress			
Assessment, student’s comments program			
Advising and Counseling	Research	Evidence	Sources

	Methods		
Advising, academic	Content Analysis	<p>Websites with active links to an internal page describing services within the context of a traditional campus-based education setting are assigned a “no.”</p> <p>Items that are accessible by active links from internal pages relevant to the distance learner are assigned a “yes.”</p> <p>Items that are available by way of more than non-print method of interaction are assigned a “yes.”</p> <p>Items that are clearly identified as student support services for distance learners are assigned a “yes.”</p>	Institutional Website
Advising, degree planning			
Advising, comparison distance learning and traditional education			
Advising, success rate of previous distance learners			
Counseling, study skills			
Counseling, time management			
Counseling, referral services			
Counseling, learning difficulties			
Counseling, career			
Counseling, mediation with instructor			
Counseling, mentoring			
Counseling, tutoring			

Learning Resources	Research Method	Evidence	Sources
Library Catalog	Content Analysis	<p>Websites with active links to an internal page describing services within the context of a traditional campus-based education setting are assigned a “no.”</p> <p>Items that are accessible by active links from internal pages relevant to the distance learner are assigned a “yes.”</p> <p>Items that are available by way of more than non-print method of interaction are assigned a “yes.”</p> <p>Items that are clearly identified as student support services for distance learners are assigned a “yes.”</p>	Institutional Website
On-line full-text databases			
Supplementary course materials			
Electronic document delivery			
Required texts			
Other Support Services	Research Method	Evidence	Sources

Hours services available	Content Analysis	Websites with active links to an internal page describing services within the context of a traditional campus-based education setting are assigned a “no.”	Institutional Website
Purchasing textbooks and supplies			
Laboratory facilities			
Regional centers			
Languages other than english			
Student health insurance			
	Items that are available by way of more than non-print method of interaction are assigned a “yes.”		
	Items that are clearly identified as student support services for distance learners are assigned a “yes.”		

Strengths and Weakness of Content Analysis

Content analysis contains strengths and weaknesses, just as other research methods. According to Babbie “the greatest advantage of content analysis is its economy in terms of both time and money” (Babbie 2007, 330). Graduate students and/or researchers do not face financial or time constraints with descriptive research. In addition, mistakes in surveys or experiments are permitted. If mistakes are made during the experimental or survey, it is not necessary to “recode all of the data. “A portion of the data can be recoded” (Babbie 2007, 330). Third, Babbie states that content analysis “permits the study of processes occurring over a long time” (Babbie 2007, p. 330). For instance, the history of African-Americans in education from the civil war to present day was observed. A final advantage of content analysis is that information will “seldom have any effect on the subject being studied” (Babbie 2007, 330). Content analysis will not affect community college websites in this research project.

Babbie outlines some disadvantages of content analysis. For instance, the process “is limited to the examination of recorded human communications” (Babbie 2007, 330). A survey of users would perhaps give human insight into web design or accessibility not found through content analysis. Also as technology changes, the elements in the conceptual framework may change as well. Another disadvantage of using content analysis is the limitation of reliability. While researchers can code data at any time, “there’s probably nothing you can do after the fact to ensure greater reliability in observation and categorization” (Babbie 2007, 330).

Some of the study’s community college web sites were very organized while other web sites were not. The average time spent analyzing web sites was approximately an hour and ten minutes. Some well organized institutional web sites took less than thirty minutes to evaluate.

Population of Study

The population of the study is institutional community college web sites in Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas and Tennessee. In the Texas Research project Experience, Luedtke (1999) evaluated forty-four community college web sites and Alston (2006) analyzed fifty-seven community college websites.

This research includes sixty-five community colleges from the Deep South. Eight were eliminated because of some colleges combining into other institutions of learning and “multiple community colleges within a district sharing one-institutional website” (Alston 2006, 35).

The sampling frame for this research consists of fifty-eight community colleges. These institutions originate from a list of websites such as the Southern Region Education Board, American Association of Community Colleges, Commission on Colleges of the

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and the Tennessee Board of Regents Program. Table 6.2 presents a listing of the community colleges.

Table 6.2 Community Colleges used in study

Alabama	Arkansas	Mississippi¹⁹	Tennessee²⁰
Alabama Southern Community College ²¹	Cossatot Community College – University of AR	Coahoma Community College	Chattanooga State Community College
Bevill State Community College	East Arkansas Community College	Copiah – Lincoln Community College	Cleveland State Community College
Bishop State Community College	Mid-South Community College	East Central Community College	Columbia State Community College
Central Alabama Community College	National Park Community College	East Mississippi Community College	Dyersburg State Community College
Chatahoochee Valley Community College	North West Arkansas Community College	Hinds Community College	Jackson State Community College
Enterprise Ozark Community College	Phillips Community College of the Univ. of Arkansas	Holmes Community College	Motlow State Community College
Gadsden State Community College	Rich Mountain Community College	Itawamba Community College	Nashville State Community College
James H. Faulkner Community College	South Arkansas Community College	Jones County Junior College	Northeast State Community College
Jefferson Davis Community College	Univ. of Arkansas Community College - Batesville	Meridian Community College	Pellissippi State Community College
Jefferson State Community College	Univ. of Arkansas Community College - Hope	Mississippi Delta Community College	Roane State Community College
John C. Calhoun State Community College	Univ. of Arkansas Community College - Morrilton	Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College	Southwest Tennessee Community College
Lawson State Community College ²²		Northeast Mississippi Community College	Volunteer State Community College
Lurleen B. Wallace Community College		Northwest Mississippi Community College	Walters State Community College
Northeast Alabama Community College		Pearl River Community College	
Shelton State Community College			

¹⁹ All 15 community colleges in Mississippi constitute the Mississippi Virtual Community College system, www.msvcc.org.

²⁰ All 13 community colleges in Tennessee are a part of the Regents Online Degree Program, www.rod.org. RODP is a consortium of 26 technology centers, 13 community colleges and six universities.

²¹ Ranked 20th in America’s Best Community Colleges in 2010 College Rankings

²² Ranked 39th in America’s Best Community Colleges in 2010 College Rankings

Southern Union State Community College			
Wallace Community College			
Wallace Community College - Selma			

Coding Sheet

A coding sheet assists in the analysis of community college websites in the Southern states. The seven elements from the conceptual framework enabled “the researcher to identify and document whether specific types of information or services are available to distance learners” (Luedtke 1999, 106). If items were available for distance learners then a 1 (yes) was assigned; and if items were not present on a website, then a 0 (no) was given. Luedtke (1999) and Alston (2006) used the criteria below to collect data:

- Websites with active links to an internal page describing services within the context of a traditional campus-based education setting are assigned a “no.”
- Items that are accessible by active links from internal pages relevant to the distance learner are assigned a “yes.”
- Items that are available by way of more than one non-print method of interaction are assigned a “yes.”
- Items that are clearly identified as student support service for distance learners are assigned “yes.”

Some of the community colleges did not provide a search box to locate specific items. Several of the items, such as student health insurance, ethics, on-line self assessment exams, comparison of on-site and distance learning costs, and registration were found using the website’s search box, the student handbook, or the online catalog. Table 6.3 outlines the coding sheet for the descriptive research method.

Table 6.3 Coding Sheet for Collecting Data

Variable	Descriptive Type Categories	Research Method 1(Yes) 0(No)	Notes
Information/Technical Support			
IT 1	Assumptions about technological competence and skills of the student		
IT 2	Technical support staff		
IT 3	Information management skills		
IT 4	Log-on information		
IT 5	Guides, tutorials		
IT 6	Opportunity to practice sending and receiving files		
IT 7	Ethics & confidentiality		
Admissions			
ADM 1	Comparison of on-site & distance learning costs		
ADM 2	Course/degree requirements		
ADM 3	Course guide/catalog		
ADM 4	Criteria for admissions		
ADM 5	Additional admissions requirements		
ADM 6	Application – institution		
ADM 7	Application – common		
ADM 8	Deadlines clearly stated		
ADM 9	Academic calendar		
ADM 10	Student handbook		
ADM 11	Transfer of credit – specific to distance learning		
ADM 12	Transfer of credit – explanation – students leaving		
ADM 13	Financial aid		
ADM 14	Explanation of tuition and fees		
ADM 15	Refund policies		
ADM 16	Orientation		
ADM 17	Admissions contact information		
Registration			
R 1	Year-round registration for distance learning		
R 2	Registration – deadlines		
R 3	Payment policies		
R 4	Registration – instructions		

Registration Continued			
R 5	Payment by credit card		
R 6	Support staff available during registration		
R 7	24 – hour registration		
Assessment			
ASMT 1	Assessment, learning styles		
ASMT 2	Assessment, real-world experience		
ASMT 3	Assessment, communication Skills		
ASMT 4	Assessment, placement		
ASMT 5	Assessment, information on test delivery/proctoring		
ASMT 6	Assessment, proficiency exams (CleP)		
ASMT 7	Assessment, basic skills		
ASMT 8	Assessment, clearly defined guidelines on testing policy		
ASMT 9	Assessment, performance based (portfolio)		
ASMT 10	Assessment, grade posting		
ASMT 11	Assessment, student progress		
ASMT 12	Assessment, student’s comments program		
Advising and Counseling			
AC 1	Advising, academic		
AC 2	Advising, degree planning		
AC 3	Advising, comparison distance learning and traditional education		
AC 4	Advising, success rate of previous distance learners		
AC 5	Counseling, study skills		
AC 6	Counseling, time management		
AC 7	Counseling, referral services		
AC 8	Counseling, learning difficulties		
AC 9	Counseling, career		
AC 10	Counseling, mediation with instructor		
AC 11	Counseling, mentoring		
AC 12	Counseling, tutoring		
Learning Resources			
LR 1	Library catalog		
LR 2	On-line full-text databases		

Learning Resources			
LR 3	Electronic document delivery		
LR 4	Supplementary course materials		
LR 5	Required texts		
Other Support Services			
OSS 1	Hours services available		
OSS 2	Purchasing textbooks & supplies		
OSS 3	Laboratory facilities		
OSS 4	Regional centers		
OSS 5	Languages other than english		
OSS 6	Student health insurance		

Chapter Summary

Chapter six outlines the objective of content analysis performed to this research. Data was collected by evaluating community college websites in Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee.

The next chapter describes the results of essential services, important factors and services helpful to distance learners.

Chapter 7: Results

Chapter Purpose

This chapter summarizes the results of the content analysis of community college web sites in Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, and Arkansas. The analysis focuses on online student support services. First, the research offers an overall analysis of support services of the fifty-eight institutions in the four states. Next, the research analyzes the data by state. Allyson Alston's (2006) Texas system results appear as a point of comparison. Institutional websites with exceptional presentations are highlighted as best practices. Finally, Cherry Beth Luedtke (1999) organized her results by prioritizing services in each category. Using her experience as a community college librarian and administrator, Luedtke classified services as "Essential" to distant learners; "Important" to distant learners; and Helpful to distance learners. This research retains Luedtke's classification scheme.

Information/Technical Support: Overall Results

Table 7.1 Information Technical Support for Community Colleges in Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee

Information Technical Support	N = 58	
Essential to distance learners	Frequency	Percentage
Guides, tutorials, instructions for using technology	55	95%
Technical support staff	54	93%
Log-on information, communications parameters, technical equipment	54	93%
Important to distance learners		
Ethical how-to's; confidentiality; privacy	49	84%
Assumptions about technological competence and skills	49	84%
Information management skills – going online, retrieving and evaluation information	47	81%

Helpful to distance learners		
Opportunity to practice sending and receiving files, becoming familiar with system	42	72%
Number of colleges that do not provide any online support services	22	38%
Number of colleges providing 1-3 services	56	97%
Number of colleges providing 4-7 services	53	92%

Overall 90 percent of the community colleges in Arkansas, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee provide essential information and technical support services such as technical support staff and log-on information to their students. (See Table 7.1) Seventy-two percent of community colleges in the four states offer students the opportunity to practice sending and receiving files prior to the first day of classes. Eighty-four percent obtained information about ethical and confidentiality issues, assumptions about technological competence and skills, and information management skills. To conclude, at least 97 percent of community colleges provide one of three services while 92 percent of community colleges provide four of seven technical support services.

State Analysis

Community colleges in the four states need to increase important services such as information on ethical how-to and confidentiality. Eighty-four percent of the institutions provided these services. As a group, the 2010 Southern Rural States had better online services than the Texas web sites of 2006. Well under 90 percent of the Texas colleges provided these services online (Alston 2006, 39). (See Table 7.2)

Table 7.2 Informational Technical Support: Southern States and Texas

Information Technical Support	N=19 Alabama	N=11 Arkansas	N=15 Mississippi	N=13 Tennessee	N=57 Texas* 2006
Essential to distance learners					
Guides, tutorials, instructions for using technology	95%	82%	100%	100%	63%
Technical support staff	100%	64%	100%	100%	82%
Log-on information, communications parameters, technical equipment	95%	73%	100%	100%	89%
Important to distance learners					
Ethical how-to's; confidentiality; privacy	79%	82%	87%	92%	16%
Assumptions about technological competence and skills	79%	55%	100%	100%	72%
Information management skills – going online, retrieving and evaluation information	84%	64%	73%	100%	39%
Helpful to distance learners					
Opportunity to practice sending and receiving files, becoming familiar with system	74%	45%	73%	92%	23%

*Alston (2006, 39)

Overall results show that Mississippi and Tennessee retain higher percentages of compliance regarding information/technical support. Alabama came in third in this category, and Arkansas last. Some of the technical support services ranked highest among the four states include essential support staff, guides and tutorials and log-on information. Technical support services ranked low for Alabama at 74 percent, Arkansas 45 percent and Mississippi 73 percent. Tennessee scored 92 percent in this category. Mississippi 87 percent and Tennessee 92 percent scored very well in the sub-element of ethics, while Alabama and Arkansas scored only 79 percent and 82 percent. All four states use some type of course management system to assist web-based learning students and faculty; such as WebCT, Blackboard, or Desire2Learn. Many of the community

college websites provide guides, tutorials, and contact information for the helpdesk staff in the event the distance learner has questions about navigating through the site.

Mississippi and Tennessee are doing the best job providing information technical support offering twenty-four seven Mississippi Virtual Community College (MSVCC) and Regents Online Degree Program (RODP). Students who wish to pursue an online education in Mississippi and Tennessee have an opportunity to receive a substantial amount of online technical services.

Admissions

Alston (2005, 40) states “the admissions process is usually the first point of contact for the distance learner.” Therefore, all of the categories listed under admissions must be explained thoroughly on the web site to avoid confusion. Table 7.3 below summarizes the frequency and percentage of admissions.

Table 7.3 Admissions for Community Colleges in Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee

Admissions	N = 58	
Essential to distance learners	Frequency	Percentage
Course guide/catalog	57	98%
Criteria for admissions	57	98%
Financial aid	57	98%
Admissions contact information	57	98%
Explanation of transfer of credit – students leaving program	57	98%
Explanation of tuition and fees	57	98%
Deadlines clearly stated	57	98%
Academic calendar	57	98%
Application – institution	55	95%
Course/degree requirements	54	93%
Important to distance learners		
Refund Policies	54	93%
Application - Common	47	81%
Student Handbook	45	78%
Helpful to distance learners		
Orientation	35	60%
Comparison of on-site and distance learning costs	37	64%

Additional admissions requirements for distance learning	25	43%
Explanation of transfer of credit – specific to distance learning	0	0%
Number of colleges that do not provide any online support services	58	100%
Number of colleges providing 1- 10 services	57	98%
Number of colleges providing 11-13 services	57	98%
Number of colleges providing 14-17 services	41	71%

The distance learner support services findings in the admissions category are excellent in all states in several categories, but there is a need for improvement in other services. Nearly 98 percent of the community colleges in all states provide information online regarding financial aid, course guide/catalog, criteria for admissions, and contact information. In addition, over 80 percent of colleges list refund policies and offer a common application. The accessibility of financial aid online can be credited “Federal Application for Student Aid (FAFSA)” (Alston 2005, 42). However, only 64 percent of colleges list information comparing on-site and distance learning costs and only 60 percent of colleges offer online orientation. Results also reveal at least 95 percent of community colleges provide information on the academic calendar, application for the institution, and admissions contact information. In conclusion, 98 percent of colleges provide 11 of 13 services while only 71 percent provide 14 of 17 services.

State Analysis

Essential services for community colleges in the Texas study revealed good results as compared to the 2010 Southern states study. For example, 96 percent of the community colleges gave online criteria for admissions while 95 percent of the two-year institutions provided information for applications. Seventy percent of colleges provided

information for student handbook and refund policies. On the other hand, 16 percent of Texas community colleges offered information on transfer of credits specific to distance learning, while colleges in the Southern states study provided no information. (See Table 7.4)

Table 7.4 Admissions: Southern States and Texas

Admissions	N=19 Alabama	N=11 Arkansas²³	N=15 Mississippi	N=13 Tennessee	N=57 Texas* 2006
Essential to distance learners					
Course guide/catalog	100%	91%	100%	100%	93%
Criteria for Admissions	100%	91%	100%	100%	96%
Financial aid	100%	91%	100%	100%	100%
Admissions contact information	100%	91%	100%	100%	89%
Transfer of credit – explanation- students leaving program	100%	91%	100%	100%	54%
Explanation of tuition and fees	100%	91%	100%	100%	84%
Deadlines clearly stated	100%	91%	100%	100%	70%
Academic calendar	100%	91%	100%	100%	91%
Application – institution	100%	91%	93%	92%	95%
Course/degree requirements	100%	73%	93%	100%	89%
Important to distance learners					
Application – common	100%	9%	100%	92%	7%
Student handbook	74%	73%	80%	85%	70%
Refund policies	95%	73%	100%	100%	70%
Helpful to distance learners					
Orientation	58%	18%	67%	92%	28%
Comparison of on-site and distance learning costs	53%	55%	73%	77%	25%
Additional admissions requirements for distance learning	42%	27%	40%	62%	9%
Explanation of transfer credit- specific to distance learning	0%	0%	0%	0%	16%

*Alston (2006, 40-41)

Results show that all four states scored well in more than half of the categories: course guide/catalog, criteria for admissions, institution application, deadlines clearly

²³ Mid-South Community College in Arkansas had no distance education classes. Terms such as e-learning, online learning, and distance education were queried in the web site search box and nothing was found.

stated, admissions contact information, transfer of credit, financial aid, academic calendar, refund policies, and tuition and fees.

Again, Arkansas lags behind Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Tennessee and Mississippi score the highest in orientation for online learners, student handbook, and on-site versus distance learning costs. All of the colleges; however, fail to explain transfer credit for distance learning. All four states need to improve online orientation and provide additional admissions requirements.

For some of the community colleges in Mississippi and Tennessee a student ID and password is required. All fifteen colleges in Alabama allow the distance learner to download the institution application; but only 15 percent of the Alabama community colleges provide online orientation.

Registration

Registering online benefits the distance learner because it saves time and money. Community colleges should provide online services 24 hours a day. Web learners should be able to pay with a credit card, register and know who to contact in the event questions arise. Table 7.5 summarizes the results.

Table 7.5 Registration for Community Colleges in Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee

Registration	N = 58	
Essential to distance learners	Frequency	Percentage
Registration – instructions	47	81%
Registration – deadlines	52	90%
Important to distance learners		
24-hour registration	40	69%
Support staff available during registration period	34	59%
Helpful to distance learners		
Payment policies	27	47%
Payment by credit card	24	41%
Year-round registration for distance learning	22	38%
Number of colleges that do not provide online types of support services	58	100%
Number of colleges providing 1–4 services	54	93%
Number of colleges providing 5-7 services	26	45%

Results show that online student support services in the registration process for all colleges need improvement. Only 93 percent of colleges provide one of four services while 45 percent offer five of seven services. Many of the community colleges require a student id and password to register online. Over 80 percent of colleges provide registration instructions and registration deadlines. However, only 41 percent of colleges allow the distance learner to pay online with a credit card.

State Analysis

Essential services for community colleges in Texas did not score as high as colleges in Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Only 75 percent of Texas community colleges offered information regarding registration deadlines. In addition, 70 percent of colleges provided registration instructions. Important factors such as support staff, Texas, scored higher (84 percent) than all of the Southern states. In two services helpful to the distance learner, payment policies (70 percent) and payment by credit card

(88 percent), Texas scored higher than the Southern states as well; but Texas colleges (77 percent) scored lower than Mississippi (87%) in year-round registration. (See Table 7.6).

Table 7.6 Registration: Southern States and Texas

Registration	N=19 Alabama	N=11 Arkansas	N=15 Mississippi	N=13 Tennessee	N=57 Texas* 2006
Essential to distance learners					
Registration – deadlines	89%	64%	100%	100%	75%
Registration - instructions	84%	73%	87%	77%	70%
Important to distance learners					
Support staff available during registration period	63%	18%	67%	77%	84%
Helpful to distance learners					
Payment policies	53%	18%	47%	62%	70%
Payment by credit card	37%	18%	47%	62%	88%
Year-round registration	16%	0%	87%	46%	77%

*Alston (2006, 42-43)

Overall results show Mississippi (87 percent) and Tennessee (46 percent) ranked higher in year-round registration for distance learners than the other states. Registration for colleges in Alabama was limited due to some community colleges not providing any online registration information for prospective learners, students being required to have an id and password prior to registering online, or registration having to be completed in person. Improvement is needed in the category of credit card payment for colleges in all 2010 Southern states. Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee consistently score higher than Alabama in payment policies, support staff, and registration deadlines and instructions.

Assessment

For a web learner to receive a high quality of online education, assessment methods are necessary to monitor a student’s progress. Assessment systems can help

online students grow academically and socially. Table 7.7 lists the frequencies and percentages of online assessment availability.

Table 7.7 Assessment for Community Colleges in Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee

Assessment	N = 58	
Essential to distance learners	Frequency	Percentage
Proficiency exam (CleP)	56	97%
Important to distance learners		
Information on test delivery/proctoring	36	62%
Clearly defined guidelines on testing policy	29	50%
Learning styles	32	55%
Placement	27	47%
Real-world experience	29	50%
Communication skills	29	50%
Grade posting	29	50%
Helpful to distance learners		
Basic skills	14	24%
Performance based (portfolio)	7	12%
Student's comments program	4	7%
Student progress	4	7%
Number of colleges that do not provide any online types of support services	58	100%
Number of colleges providing 1-8 services	57	98%
Number of colleges providing 9-12 services	3	5%

Several community colleges provide assessment tests in many different forms such as Vark Questionnaires and Readiness self-assessment. These tests assess students to determine how much computer knowledge, self-discipline, and communication skills are needed to succeed in an online course. The exams also include a series of questions that encompass learning styles and real-world experience. In addition, “many colleges address testing services on the institution’s website, but the student is required to receive such services on campus” (Alston 2005, 44). At least 97 percent of the colleges list different types of proficiency exams such as the ACT and COMPASS; yet, less than 15 percent of colleges offer performance based exams (portfolio), student comment

programs, and student progress. Only 47 percent of colleges offer testing materials online to help the distance learner determine placement.

State Analysis

In essential services, such as proficiency exams Texas at 30 percent scored lower than all four 2010 Southern states. Texas scored low in a number of services important to a distance learner, as well. For instance, in real-world experience and communication skills, Texas scored only 4 percent. In addition, only 12 percent of Texas two-year institutions provided data for learning styles. Texas scored well in some of the services helpful to a distance learner. In Texas, 84 percent of colleges provided student’s comments, and 93 percent provided student progress. Table 7.8 summarizes the percentages for online assessment services.

Table 7.8 Assessment: Southern States and Texas

Assessment	N=19 Alabama	N=11 Arkansas	N=15 Mississippi	N=13 Tennessee	N=57 Texas* 2006
Essential to distance learners					
Proficiency Exam CLeP	100%	91%	93%	100%	30%
Important to distance learners					
Information on test delivery/proctoring	37%	27%	87%	100%	35%
Clearly defined guidelines on testing policy	32%	18%	80%	69%	39%
Learning styles	37%	27%	80%	77%	12%
Placement	53%	18%	27%	85%	54%
Real-world experience	37%	27%	73%	62%	4%
Communication skills	37%	27%	73%	62%	4%
Grade posting	58%	18%	53%	62%	89%
Helpful to distance learners					
Basic Skills	21%	27%	27%	23%	42%
Performance based (portfolio)	11%	0%	7%	31%	2%
Student’s comments program	5%	9%	0%	15%	84%
Student progress	5%	0%	7%	15%	93%

*Alston (2006, 44)

The analysis shows that Mississippi and Tennessee score higher in assessment than Alabama and Arkansas in more than half of the assessed categories. Some of these categories include learning styles, real-world experience, communication skills, information on test delivery/proctoring, and guidelines on testing policy and student progress. Alabama (53 percent) scored higher than Mississippi (27 percent) in placement and performance based (portfolio) assessment. Arkansas (27 percent) scored lower in many of the categories but scored equivalently with Mississippi in Basic Skills. All four states need improvement in the student comments program, student progress, and basic skills. The highest percentage scored for student progress and student comments is 15 percent. On the other hand, the highest score for basic skills is 31 percent.

A main contributor to Mississippi and Tennessee's high scores in learning styles, real-world experience, and communication skills are the online self assessment exams. Several of the community colleges in Tennessee provide their own self assessment methods, and many of the colleges in Mississippi have Readiness Assessment tool²⁴.

Advising & Counseling

Academic guidance is crucial to the distance learner's academic success. Listed in the chart below are services to assist the online learner and create a sense of belonging within the community college. Some of the services analyzed include academic advising, time management, mentoring, and addressing learning difficulties. Table 7.9 summarizes student support services in the advising and counseling categories.

²⁴ Readiness is a "diagnostic tool used to identify students who are at-risk of not doing well in online courses due to measured sets of traits, skills and knowledge" (www.readiness.info). Readiness is also known as Smarter Measure.

Table 7.9 Advising and Counseling Services for Community Colleges in Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee

Advising and Counseling	N = 58	
Essential to distance learners	Frequency	Percentage
Career	6	10%
Tutoring	10	17%
Academic	5	9%
Important to distance learners		
Study Skills	3	5%
Time Management	1	2%
Degree Planning	3	5%
Mentoring	0	0%
Learning difficulties	2	3%
Helpful to the distance learner		
Success rate of previous distance learners	0	0%
Referral services	1	2%
Mediation with Instructor	0	0%
Comparison distance learning and traditional education	0	0%
Number of colleges that do not provide any online types of support services	58	100%
Number of colleges providing 1-5 services	18	31%
Number of colleges providing 6-12 services	0	0%

Overall results indicate room for improvement regarding advising and counseling services for all the colleges. At least 10 percent of the colleges provide online career and tutoring services. Few of the community colleges offer Smarthinking “an online service for tutorial services” (Alston 2005, 46). Many of the services listed in table such as academic advising and referral services exist for traditional learners. The web-based learner would not benefit from many of these services because students are required to meet with advisors and counselors in person. Results show that only 2 percent of colleges offer referral services online. Overall results show that improvement in this area is needed in all four states. No online services exist for the four states in the areas of cost comparison distance learning and traditional education; success rate of previous distance learners; and mediation with instructors.

State Analysis

Texas Community Colleges scored higher than the deep southern states in essential services: career (68 percent) and academic (39 percent). Although Texas scored fairly low overall on services important to a distance learner, Texas scored higher in some areas than the Southern states. For instance, in the categories of study skills (26 percent), time management (21 percent), and degree planning (19 percent), Texas scored higher than all four deep southern states. As for services helpful to a distance learner none of the schools, in Texas or the Deep South, provided success rates of previous distance learners. Only 5 percent of Texas colleges provided information about mediation with instructors and a comparison of distance learning and traditional education costs. (See Table 7.10).

Table 7.10 Advising and Counseling: Southern States and Texas

Advising and Counseling	N=19 Alabama	N=11 Arkansas	N=15 Mississippi	N=13 Tennessee	N=57 Texas* 2006
Essential to distance learners					
Career	0%	0%	20%	23%	68%
Tutoring	11%	9%	7%	46%	21%
Academic	5%	18%	7%	8%	39%
Important to distance learners					
Study skills	5%	0%	0%	15%	26%
Time management	0%	0%	0%	8%	21%
Degree planning	5%	9%	7%	0%	19%
Mentoring	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%
Learning difficulties	0%	0%	0%	15%	4%
Helpful to distance learners					
Success rate of previous distance learners	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Referral services	0%	0%	0%	8%	12%
Mediation with instructor	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%
Comparison distance learning and traditional education	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%

*Alston (2006, 45)

The overall analysis indicates Mississippi and Tennessee score higher than Alabama and Arkansas in more than half of the categories in this element of the conceptual framework. The categories include learning styles, real-world experience, communication skills, information on test delivery/proctoring, and guidelines on testing policy and student progress.

Alabama scored higher than Mississippi in placement and performance based (portfolio) categories. Arkansas scored lowest in many of the categories but was equal to Mississippi in basic skills.

All four states need improvement in the categories of: students comment's program, student progress, and basic skills. The highest percentage for student progress and student comments program is 15 percent; but the highest score for basic skills is 31 percent.

Tennessee had the highest percentage of the four states with online tutoring 46 percent, time management 8 percent, learning difficulties, 15 percent, and online career counseling 23 percent. Arkansas scored higher than the other states in the category of online academic advising with 18 percent.

Learning Resources

Distance learners must be able to conduct research online. Libraries should be easily accessible and offer online catalogs, databases, and guides/tutorials. Table 7.11 summarizes the frequencies of learning resources for community colleges in Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee.

Table 7.11 Learning Resources for Community Colleges in Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee

Learning Resources	N = 58	
Essential to distance learners	Frequency	Percentage
Library catalog	53	91%
On-line full-text databases	53	91%
Supplementary course materials	50	86%
Helpful to distance learners		
Electronic document delivery	41	71%
Required texts	33	57%
Number of colleges that do not provide any online types of support services	34	59%
Number of colleges providing 1-3 services	56	97%
Number of colleges providing 4-5 services	43	74%

Overall results show that over 74 percent of colleges have at least four of five services. At least 90 percent of community colleges give access to research via library catalogs and full-text databases. At least 86 percent of colleges offer students supplementary course materials. However, only 57 percent of colleges allow distance learners to select textbooks for online courses. Students at community colleges in Alabama can research library materials online via the Alabama Virtual Library²⁵ system. Students at community colleges in Mississippi can research library materials online via the Mississippi Electronic Library On-line²⁶ system; and students in Tennessee can research materials by utilizing the Regents Online Degree Program (RODP) virtual library²⁷. There is no virtual library for community colleges in Arkansas.

State Analysis

Texas Community Colleges scored relatively well in essential services compared to the Southern states. Ninety-three percent of community colleges offered online library

²⁵The Alabama Virtual Library System “provides all students, teachers and citizens of the State of Alabama with online access to essential library and information resources” (www.avl.lib.al.us).

²⁶MELO is “an initiative of the MSVCC containing web pages, databases and MS community college library catalogs” (www.colin.edu/vcclib).

²⁷RODP Virtual Library is a collaboration of libraries for students and faculty that “provides online search capabilities, reference materials, databases, journals and other research services” (www.vl.rodp.org).

catalog services. Schools in Texas scored higher in the library catalog category than Alabama and Arkansas. Ninety-five percent of Texas schools scored higher in on-line full-text databases than two-year institutions in Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Eighty-four percent of community colleges in Texas scored evenly with schools in Alabama. Services important to a distance learner such as electronic document delivery and required texts were in good standing for Mississippi, 87 percent, and Tennessee, 85 percent. Eighty-four percent of schools provided electronic document delivery, while only 77 percent of colleges in Tennessee offered the same service. Seventy-five percent of Texas colleges offered online data regarding required texts while Alabama, Arkansas and Mississippi scored 42 percent, 55 percent and 53 percent. Table 7.12 provides the results.

Table 7.12 Learning Resources: Southern States and Texas

Learning Resources	N=19 Alabama	N=11 Arkansas	N=15 Mississippi	N=13 Tennessee	N=57 Texas* 2006
Essential to distance learners					
Library Catalog	89%	73%	100%	100%	93%
On-line full-text databases	100%	82%	87%	92%	95%
Supplementary course materials	84%	73%	87%	100%	84%
Important to distance learners					
Electronic document delivery	58%	64%	87%	77%	84%
Required texts	42%	55%	53%	85%	75%

*Alston (2006, 47)

The analysis reveals all four states scored well in the library catalog and on-line full-text databases categories. However, all four states need to improve selecting required texts online. Mississippi and Tennessee ranked higher than Alabama and Arkansas in library catalog, electronic document delivery, supplementary course materials and required texts.

Other Support Services

Web learners should be able to purchase textbooks online and take proctored exams at regional centers. Purchasing textbooks via the Internet and taking exams at regional centers is another way for distance learners to save time and money. Browsing community college websites in another language is beneficial. Table 7.13 summarizes the results of other services.

Table 7.13 Other Support Services for Community Colleges in Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee

Other Student Support Services	N = 58	
Essential to distance learners	Frequency	Percentage
Hours services available	50	86%
Regional centers	45	78%
Important to distance learners		
Purchasing textbooks and supplies	34	59%
Laboratory facilities	29	50%
Helpful to distance learners		
Student health insurance	7	12%
Languages other than english	2	3%
Number of colleges that do not provide any online support services	58	100%
Number of colleges providing 1-3 services	55	95%
Number of colleges providing 4-6 services	19	33%

The results reveal at least 95 percent of colleges provide at least one to three types of services. Fifty-nine percent of colleges provide online bookstores, and 78 percent of the colleges have regional centers for those who live in remote areas to take exams in person. Only 3 percent of the community colleges have provide pages in other languages such as Spanish. The number of community colleges providing student health insurance is only 12 percent.

State Analysis

Community colleges in Texas did not perform well in providing essential services such as hours of services available (23 percent) and regional centers (37 percent). None

of the schools in Texas offered web-based data regarding online laboratory facilities. Only 7 percent of community colleges provided information about student health services. Some of the on-line services in the 2010 Southern states were better than web-based services for Texas community colleges. Table 7.14 describes results among the community colleges.

Table 7.14 Other Support Services: Southern States and Texas

Other Support Services	N=19 Alabama	N=11 Arkansas	N=15 Mississippi	N=13 Tennessee	N=57 Texas* 2006
Essential to distance learners					
Hours Services Available	95%	73%	73%	100%	23%
Regional Centers	89%	27%	80%	100%	37%
Important to distance learners					
Purchasing textbooks and supplies	47%	55%	53%	85%	77%
Laboratory facilities	63%	18%	40%	69%	0%
Helpful to distance learners					
Student health insurance	5%	9%	7%	31%	7%
Languages other than English	11%	0%	0%	0%	11%

*Alston (2006, 48)

The overall results show that Tennessee ranked the highest among all four states. No websites for Tennessee, Mississippi, or Arkansas community colleges provided foreign languages, such as Spanish, on any web pages. Alabama is the only state with a community college offering a web page in Spanish. Arkansas and Mississippi need to improvement in the category of hours of operations regarding Student Support Services. All four states need to improve student health insurance and online laboratory facilities.

Chapter Summary

Chapter seven provides aggregated percentages for the seven elements in the conceptual framework. The research provides current statuses of online support services in Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi and Tennessee and compared to Texas results. The next chapter discusses the benchmark findings for the Southern states.

Chapter 8: Benchmark Results

Chapter Purpose

This chapter presents a summary of the data results in Chapter seven. In addition, the chapter compares benchmark results to online student support services in Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee.

Benchmark Definition

The purpose of a benchmark is to summarize results to help a community college improve its performance. “Benchmarks are quantitative measures that reflect an institution’s performance, but do not provide insights into what influenced that performance” (Bers 2006, 85). Due to high student enrollment at community colleges, “there is a significant need for benchmarks of educational quality that are appropriate for these important institutions” (McClenney 2006, 47). A set of four benchmarks determine the current status of online support services in Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee: Exceeds benchmark, Meets benchmark, Close but not at benchmark, and Fails to meet benchmark. Online services must meet a high standard to be effective. Table 8.1 summarizes the benchmark scores used for online support services.

Table 8.1 Benchmark Scores for Essential, Important and Helpful Services

Benchmark	Essential	Important	Helpful
Exceeds	95%	85%	75%
Meets	85%	75%	65%
Close	75%	65%	55%
Fails	Less Than 75%	Less Than 65%	Less Than 55%

Information/Technical Support

The analysis of technical support services entailed strong ratings for guides, tutorials; support staff and log-on information in Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee.

Websites scored lower in the areas of ethics and confidentiality, information management and technological competence.

Alabama and Mississippi were successful in meeting the benchmark for students to practice sending and receiving files prior to classes beginning online. Tennessee is the only state in the information/technical support to exceed the benchmark in all categories.

Table 8.2 interprets the results for information/technical support in all four Southern states.

Table 8.2 Benchmark Results for Informational/Technical Support

Information Technical Support	Alabama 2010	Arkansas 2010	Mississippi 2010	Tennessee 2010
Essential to distance learner (95%)				
Guides, tutorials, instructions for using technology	Exceeds	Close	Exceeds	Exceeds
Technical support staff	Exceeds	Fails	Exceeds	Exceeds
Log-on information, communications parameters, technical equipment	Exceeds	Close	Exceeds	Exceeds
Important to distance learners (85%)				
Ethical how to's; confidentiality; privacy	Meets	Close	Exceeds	Exceeds
Assumptions about technological competence and skills	Meets	Fails	Exceeds	Exceeds
Information management skills – going online, retrieving, and evaluating information	Meets	Fails	Close	Exceeds
Helpful to distance learners (75%)				
Opportunity to practice sending and receiving files, becoming familiar with system	Meets	Fails	Meets	Exceeds

Admissions

Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee Services exceed the benchmark in several categories essential to the distance learner. The admissions process for online learners is very accessible in all four states. However, there is a need for transfer credits

information specific to distance learning in online orientation as well as a comparison of on-site and distance learning costs. The results show Arkansas met benchmark expectations in several of the essential services for distance learners; however, Arkansas consistently scored below the other states.

Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee exceed the benchmark results for refund policies and application –common. Table 8.3 analyzes the results for Admissions.

Table 8.3 Benchmark Results for Admissions

Admissions	Alabama 2010	Arkansas 2010	Mississippi 2010	Tennessee 2010
Essential to distance learner (95%)				
Course guide/catalog	Exceeds	Meets	Exceeds	Exceeds
Criteria for admissions	Exceeds	Meets	Exceeds	Exceeds
Financial aid	Exceeds	Meets	Exceeds	Exceeds
Admissions contact information	Exceeds	Meets	Exceeds	Exceeds
Explanation of transfer of credit – students leaving program	Exceeds	Meets	Exceeds	Exceeds
Explanation of tuition and fees	Exceeds	Meets	Exceeds	Exceeds
Deadlines clearly stated	Exceeds	Meets	Exceeds	Exceeds
Academic calendar	Exceeds	Meets	Exceeds	Exceeds
Application – institution	Exceeds	Meets	Meets	Meets
Course/degree requirements	Exceeds	Fails	Meets	Exceeds
Important to distance learners (85%)				
Application – common	Exceeds	Fails	Exceeds	Exceeds
Student handbook	Close	Close	Meets	Exceeds
Refund policies	Exceeds	Close	Exceeds	Exceeds
Helpful to distance learners (75%)				
Orientation	Close	Fails	Meets	Exceeds
Comparison of on-site and distance learning costs	Fails	Close	Meets	Exceeds
Additional admissions requirements for distance learning	Fails	Fails	Fails	Close
Explanation of transfer credit – specific to distance learning	Fails	Fails	Fails	Fails

Registration

Only Mississippi and Tennessee exceeded the benchmark for registration deadlines. All four states need to improve in the categories of registration instructions, support staff, payment policies, and payment by credit card. Mississippi is the only state that exceeded the benchmark for year-round distance learning. Table 8.4 summarizes the results for online registration services.

Table 8.4 Benchmark Results for Registration

Registration	Alabama 2010	Arkansas 2010	Mississippi 2010	Tennessee 2010
Essential to distance learner (95%)				
Registration – deadlines	Meets	Fails	Exceeds	Exceeds
Registration - instructions	Close	Close	Meets	Close
Important to distance learners (85%)				
Support staff available during registration period	Fails	Fails	Close	Meets
Helpful to the distance learner (75%)				
Payment policies	Fails	Fails	Fails	Close
Payment by credit card	Fails	Fails	Fails	Close
Year-round registration for distance learning	Fails	Fails	Exceeds	Fails

Assessment

In the essential services category, only two states, Alabama and Tennessee, exceeded the benchmark in proficiency exams. Arkansas and Mississippi came close to meeting the benchmark for essential services. All four states allow students to view online which exams (such as the CleP or the ACT) to take prior to enrolling in online classes.

In the important factors category, Alabama, Arkansas, and Tennessee failed to meet benchmark expectations in real-world experience, communication skills, and grade posting. Mississippi and Tennessee exceeded the benchmark in the category of test delivery and proctoring.

In the services helpful to the distance learner category, all four states failed to meet the benchmark in basic skills, performance based (portfolio), student comments program, and student progress. “Most of the institutions require distance learners to travel to campus to receive such services” (Alston 2006, 53). Table 8.5 summarizes the results for the assessment category.

Table 8.5 Benchmark Results for Assessment

Assessment	Alabama 2010	Arkansas 2010	Mississippi 2010	Tennessee 2010
Essential to distance learner (95%)				
Proficiency exam CleP	Exceeds	Meets	Meets	Exceeds
Important to distance learners (85%)				
Information on test delivery/proctoring	Fails	Fails	Exceeds	Exceeds
Clearly defined guidelines on testing policy	Fails	Fails	Meets	Close
Learning styles	Fails	Fails	Meets	Meets
Placement	Fails	Fails	Fails	Exceeds
Real-world experience	Fails	Fails	Close	Fails
Communication skills	Fails	Fails	Close	Fails
Grade posting	Fails	Fails	Fails	Fails
Helpful to distance learners (75%)				
Basic skills	Fails	Fails	Fails	Fails
Performance based (portfolio)	Fails	Fails	Fails	Fails
Student’s comments program	Fails	Fails	Fails	Fails
Student progress	Fails	Fails	Fails	Fails

Advising and Counseling

“Advising and counseling services are important in retaining students and creating a student-centered environment” (Alston 2006, 53). Community colleges in all four Southern states failed to meet the benchmark in essential services, important factors, and services that are helpful to the distance learner. Several of the community colleges offer advising and counseling services but “distance learners have to travel to the campus to

receive them” (Alston 2006, 53). None of the community colleges provide information on the success rate of previous distance learners, referral services mediation with instructor, or comparison of distance learning and traditional education. Table 8.6 consolidates the benchmark results for advising and counseling.

Table 8.6 Benchmark Results for Advising and Counseling

Advising and Counseling	Alabama 2010	Arkansas 2010	Mississippi 2010	Tennessee 2010
Essential to distance learner (95%)				
Career	Fails	Fails	Fails	Fails
Tutoring	Fails	Fails	Fails	Fails
Academic	Fails	Fails	Fails	Fails
Important to distance learners (85%)				
Study skills	Fails	Fails	Fails	Fails
Time management	Fails	Fails	Fails	Fails
Degree planning	Fails	Fails	Fails	Fails
Mentoring	Fails	Fails	Fails	Fails
Learning difficulties	Fails	Fails	Fails	Fails
Helpful to distance learners (75%)				
Success rate of previous distance learners	Fails	Fails	Fails	Fails
Referral services	Fails	Fails	Fails	Fails
Mediation with instructor	Fails	Fails	Fails	Fails
Comparison distance learning and traditional education	Fails	Fails	Fails	Fails

Learning Resources

The overall results for essential services reveal Mississippi and Tennessee exceed the benchmark in the library catalog category. Alabama was the only state that exceeded the benchmark in on-line full-text databases. Alabama, Arkansas, and Mississippi fail the benchmark in required texts.

For services important to the distance learner, Mississippi exceeded the benchmark in electronic document delivery. Tennessee was the only state to exceed the benchmark in required texts. Table 8.7 outlines the results for Learning Resources.

Table 8.7 Benchmark Results for Learning Resources

Learning Resources	Alabama 2010	Arkansas 2010	Mississippi 2010	Tennessee 2010
Essential to distance learner (95%)				
Library catalog	Meets	Fails	Exceeds	Exceeds
On-line full-text databases	Exceeds	Close	Meets	Meets
Supplementary course materials	Close	Fails	Meets	Exceeds
Important to distance learners (85%)				
Electronic document delivery	Fails	Fails	Exceeds	Meets
Required texts	Fails	Fails	Fails	Exceeds

Other Support Services

Essential services revealed that Tennessee exceeded the benchmark in regional centers and hours of services available, while Arkansas and Mississippi failed to meet the benchmark. Services important to the distance learner show that Tennessee exceeded the benchmark in purchasing textbooks and supplies. All four states need to improve in online laboratory facilities.

Services helpful to the distance learner show that community colleges in the southern states should provide languages other than English. Table 8.8 reviews other support services.

Table 8.8 Benchmark Results for Other Support Services

Other Support Services	Alabama 2010	Arkansas 2010	Mississippi 2010	Tennessee 2010
Essential to distance learners (95%)				
Hours services available	Exceeds	Fails	Fails	Exceeds
Regional centers	Meets	Fails	Close	Exceeds
Important to distance learners (85%)				
Purchasing textbooks and supplies	Fails	Fails	Fails	Exceeds
Laboratory facilities	Fails	Fails	Fails	Close
Helpful to distance learners (75%)				
Student health insurance	Fails	Fails	Fails	Fails
Languages other than english	Fails	Fails	Fails	Fails

The overall results described in Table 8.9 will summarize for community colleges in each state the strengths and weaknesses for online support services.

Table 8.9 Benchmark Overview for Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi and Tennessee

Informational/Technical Support	Alabama 2010	Arkansas 2010	Mississippi 2010	Tennessee 2010	Summary 2010
Essential Services (95%)	Exceeds	Close	Exceeds	Exceeds	Exceeds
Important Factors (85%)	Meets	Fails	Exceeds	Exceeds	Mixed
Admissions					
Essential Services (95%)	Exceeds	Meets	Exceeds	Exceeds	Exceeds
Important Factors (85%)	Exceeds	Close	Exceeds	Exceeds	Exceeds
Registration					
Essential Services (95%)	Meets/Close	Fails/Close	Exceeds/Meets	Exceeds/Close	Mixed
Important Factors (85%)	Fails	Fails	Close	Meets	Mixed
Assessment					
Essential Services (95%)	Exceeds	Meets	Meets	Exceeds	Mixed
Important Factors (85%)	Fails	Fails	Meets/Close/Fails	Exceeds/Fails	Mixed
Advising and Counseling					
Essential Services (95%)	Fails	Fails	Fails	Fails	Fails
Important Factors (85%)	Fails	Fails	Fails	Fails	Fails
Learning Resources					
Essential Services (95%)	Mixed	Fails	Meets	Exceeds	Mixed
Important Factors (85%)	Fails	Fails	Exceeds/Fails	Exceeds/Meets	Mixed
Other Support Services					
Essential Services (95%)	Exceeds/Meets	Close/Fails	Close/Fails	Exceeds	Mixed
Important Factors (85%)	Fails	Fails	Fails	Exceeds/Close	Fails

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented and classified benchmark results. Online services were categorized as essential, important, and helpful. The benchmark measures appear in four categories: exceeds benchmark, meets benchmark, close but not at benchmark, and fails to meet benchmark.

This chapter analyzes benchmark results in all four states using the elements from the conceptual framework. Overall findings reveal all states need to improve in all areas of support services. The next chapter provides a conclusion and offers recommendations to the colleges.

Chapter Nine: Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

This research analyzed online services at community colleges in Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee. The overall results show many elements in the categories of Registration, Advising and Counseling, Assessment, and Other Support Services failed to meet benchmarks. The research compares the results from the Southern states to Texas community colleges using Alston's 2006 applied research project. There is a need for improvement in online support services for community colleges in Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee were compared to Texas in 2006. The number of Arkansas institutions skewed the percentages.

In the Information/Technical Support category, distance learners were unable to access information prior to the first day of class. Students should have ample time to familiarize themselves with software and ethical guidelines. Many institutions offer web-based learners online guides, tutorials, ethical practices and log-on information. Community colleges, however, must add the ability to send and receive files to help increase student success.

Essential services and important factors for Admissions categories show technological growth. For instance, students have the option to apply for financial aid; study the deadlines and refund policies in the catalog; and evaluate the admissions criteria for the community college.

The results for online registration essential services were mixed in the four states. The distance learner should be able to review all guidelines and policies prior to registering for classes. Mississippi and Tennessee rated strongly in registration deadlines; however, a distance learner needs more guidance in completing the process.

Alabama and Arkansas failed to meet the benchmark in the area of registration support staff. Support staff would help alleviate confusion of how to pay for an online course, register for online classes and understand registration guidelines and policies.

Essential Services in the Assessment category reveal a mixed rating. Distance learners may choose from different types of entrance exams required by community colleges. Tennessee and Alabama exceeded the benchmark in this category. On the other hand, online support services important to a distance learner failed to meet the benchmark in several areas such as grade posting, communication skills, and real-world experience. Two-year institutions should administer more online assessment exams for web-based students to determine real-world, technical, and communicative competency. Community colleges should also give students access to semester grades online.

States failed to meet essential and important services in online Advising and Counseling benchmarks because “the institutions require distance learners to travel to campus to receive such services” (Alston 2006, 53). States need to improve online advising and counseling access. Distance learners need advice and counsel to prevent bad decisions.

The overall benchmark results for the states in essential and important factors category in Learning Resources were mixed. Availability for online library catalog was strong in Mississippi (100 percent) and Tennessee (100 percent), but community colleges should offer more on-line full-text databases and required texts. Administering electronic document delivery and required texts would improve state’s online research for distance learners.

Many of the states failed to meet the benchmark in services important and helpful to the distance learner in Other Support Services. Community college websites must

increase accessibility to purchasing textbooks and supplies as well as online laboratory facilities. Traditional students have the advantage of attending reading, math, writing and science lab classes on campus. Community colleges must be able to provide online laboratory classes for distance learners. Distance learners have an advantage to reduce travel expenses. All community colleges do not offer student health insurance. A survey by the U.S. Government Accountability Office discovered many students are “insured by employer-sponsored plans, such as parents’ plans that include dependents” (Pekow 2008, 1). The Southern states do not have other support services that are beneficial to the distance learner.

Online student support services at community colleges in Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee should improve due to federal grant funding. This funding will provide African-Americans and other minority groups opportunities in the world of technological advancement. These opportunities will encourage competition in the digital world, higher standards of education, and better employment. Underrepresented groups now anticipate overcoming issues that have hindered fairness and equity.

Recommendations

- Based on the benchmark results and the coding sheet for all four states the following recommendations emerged:
- Web-based learners should be given the opportunity to become familiar with sending and receiving files as well as retrieving and evaluating information prior to the first day of class;
- Community colleges must increase the availability of online orientation for prospective learners, giving students the opportunity to see what teachers expect;
- Websites should provide a list for students to compare costs of taking traditional versus online classes; Admissions web pages should provide information regarding additional requirements of distance learning and an explanation of how to transfer credits from or to distance learning;
- The websites should provide more information for online registration for prospective web-learners such as deadlines, payment policies, credit card information, and availability of support staff; Students should not need an ID to see registration information; Online catalogs should provide year-round registration deadlines for web-based learners and traditional students;
- The websites should provide more online self-assessment exams for distance learners to test their communication, real-world, and learning skills. Websites should obtain information on student comments assessment, basic skills, and post grades;
- Community college leaders should keep in touch with previous distance learners to establish rapport and develop new concepts and ideas from alumni students who have entered the workforce;
- Advising and counseling are two different entities so community college websites should provide individual web pages; and
- All community college websites should have a search box on the home page for general to query keywords.

There are communities in Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi and Tennessee that do not have enhanced digital technology; therefore, community college leaders need to be creative in reaching out to African-Americans and other ethnic groups. For instance, community colleges can work with churches in rural communities to establish partnerships. Churches “in the south are well recognized as central to the social order and character of their region” (Blank, et al. 2002, 1672).

- For communities that are digitally advanced, community colleges can have recruiters initiate online orientation sessions via the Internet. Community college campuses may also want to advertise academic events on Facebook and Twitter.

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Appendix A

Listing of Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi & Tennessee Community Colleges

Institution	URL Address
Alabama Southern Community College	http://www.ascc.edu
Bevill State Community College	http://www.bscc.edu
*Bishop State Community College	http://www.bscc.cc.al.us
Central Alabama Community College	http://www.cacc.edu
Chatahoochee Valley Community College	http://www.cv.edu
Enterprise Ozark Community College	http://www.escc.edu
Gadsden State Community College	http://www.gadsdenstate.edu
James H. Faulkner State Community College	http://www.faulkner.cc.al.us
Jefferson Davis Community College	http://www.jeffdavis.cc.al.us
Jefferson State Community College	http://www.jeffersonstate.edu
John C. Calhoun State Community College	http://www.calhoun.cc.al.us
*Lawson State Community College	http://www.ls.cc.al.us
Lurleen B. Wallace Community College	http://www.lbwcc.edu
Northeast Alabama Community College	http://www.nacc.edu
Northwest-Shoals Community College	http://www.nwscc.edu
Shelton State Community College	http://www.sheltonstate.edu
Southern Union State Community College	http://www.suscc.edu
Wallace Community College – Dothan	http://www.wallace.edu
Wallace Community College – Selma	http://www.wccs.edu
Wallace Community College – Hanceville	http://www.wallacestate.edu
Cossatot Community College – University of Arkansas	http://www.cccua.edu
East Arkansas Community College (AR)	http://www.eacc.edu
Mid-South Community College (AR)	http://www.midsouthcc.edu
National Park Community College (AR)	http://www.npcc.edu
North West Arkansas Community College (AR)	http://www.nwacc.edu
Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas (AR)	http://www.pccua.edu
Rich Mountain Community College (AR)	http://www.rmcc.edu
South Arkansas Community College (AR)	http://www.southark.edu
University of Arkansas Community College – Batesville (AR)	http://www.uaccb.edu
University of Arkansas Community College – Hope (AR)	http://www.uacch.edu
University of Arkansas Community College – Morrilton (AR)	http://www.uaccm.edu
*Coahoma Community College	http://www.coahoma.cc.edu
Copiah – Lincoln Community College	http://www.colin.edu
East Central Community College	http://www.eccc.edu
East Mississippi Community College	http://www.eastms.edu

*Hinds Community College	http://www.hindscc.edu
Holmes Community College	http://www.holmescc.edu
Itawamba Community College	http://www.iccms.edu
Jones County Junior College	http://www.jcjc.edu
Meridian Community College	http://www.meridiancc.edu
Mississippi Delta Community College	http://www.msdelta.edu
Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College	http://www.mgccc.edu
Northeast Mississippi Community College	http://www.nemcc.edu
Northwest Mississippi Community College	http://www.northwestms.edu
Pearl River Community College	http://www.prcc.edu
Southwest Mississippi Community College	http://www.smcc.edu
Chattanooga State Community College	http://www.chattanoogastate.edu
Cleveland State Community College	http://www.clevelandstatecc.edu
Columbia State Community College	http://www.columbiastate.edu
Dyersburg State Community College	http://www.dscc.edu
Jackson State Community College	http://www.jscc.edu
Motlow State Community College	http://www.mscc.edu
Nashville State Community College	http://www.nsccl.edu
Northeast State Community College	http://www.northeaststate.edu
Pellissippi State Community College	http://www.pstcc.edu
Roane State Community College	http://www.roanestate.edu
Southwest Tennessee Community College	http://www.southwest.tn.edu
Volunteer State Community College	http://www.volstate.edu
Walters State Community College	http://www.ws.edu

* HBCU Community Colleges

All Arkansas (AR) community colleges are accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (www.ncahlc.org)
Community colleges in Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee are accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) www.sacscoc.org

Appendix B

The purpose of Appendix B is to provide snap shots of Community College websites.

This section of the Applied Research Project displays an array of examples of the seven elements of the conceptual framework.

Appendix B-1
Informational/Technical Support

James H. Faulkner State Community College

Faulkner State
A Tradition of Excellence...

Home Online Support My Support Welcome Guest, [Sign in](#) | [Exit](#)

Search

Advanced Search

Faulkner State

- Compatibility with Browsers/Software
- Instructors
- Students
- SafeAssign
- Scholar
- Known Issues / Release Notes

Support Center

Welcome to the Faulkner State Community College Help Desk. Please click one of the icons below to access your Support Tools. You may also contact us toll free 24 hours a day – 7 days a week by calling: 1-866-518-3957.

You can also access our Knowledge Base articles for helpful instruction with your software applications by using the folder structure in your left-hand navigation.

 **Submit a Ticket**
Submit a trouble ticket to our service representatives. You can track the status of your ticket in My Support.

 **Live Chat**
Chat with a service representative live over the web.

Most Popular Topics

	Viewed
1. Scholar - Login Issues	589
2. 0. My Courses Page (Course List, etc.)	207
3. Mail: *Where do I go to send mail to my instructor? To other students?	103
4. Mail: My campus has assigned me an "official" e-mail address, but I would prefer to use my private e-mail address (such as user@yahoo.com) instead. Is this OK? What's the difference which e-mail account I elect to use?	78
5. Computer Requirements - What are the minimum computer requirements for using CE 8 / Vista 8?	61

Done Internet 100%

Appendix B-1
Informational/Technical Support

Bishop State Community College

BISHOP STATE
ESTABLISHED 1937
MOBILE, ALABAMA

BISHOP STATE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Home | Online Support | Request Support | My Support | Welcome Guest. [Sign in](#) | [Exit](#)

Search

Advanced Search

Bishop State

- [Release 9.1 Resources](#)
- [My Places](#)
- [Course Delivery](#)
- [Community Engagement](#)
- [Content Collection](#)
- [System Requirements](#)
- [Blackboard Mobile Learn](#)
- [Sync to Facebook](#)
- [Issues and Release Notes](#)
- [Registration](#)
- [Academic Calendar](#)

Bishop State Community College Online Support Center

Welcome to our Online Support Center! Here, you can browse helpful guides and material and contact the support team directly - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week!

You may chat live with a support team member, submit a ticket with your issue or concern, or call directly, toll-free: **1-866-940-8994**.

Live Chat
Chat with a service representative live over the web.

Submit a Ticket
Submit a trouble ticket to our service representatives. You can track the status of your ticket in My Support.

Most Popular Topics

	Viewed
1. Bishop State Registration Information	88
2. Bishop State Academic Calendar	31
3. Sync to Facebook: What is Blackboard Sync?	10
4. Course Menu: How do I use the Course Menu? (Students)	10
5. Release 9.1: Blackboard's Video Tutorials and Tip Sheets	8

Done Internet 100%

Appendix B-1
Informational/Technical Support

Enterprise State Community College



The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the 'WebCT Online Instructions' page for Enterprise-Ozark Community College. At the top left is a photo of graduates. To its right is a green banner with the college name. Below the banner is a navigation menu with links: 'Current Students', 'Future Students', 'Student Lifestyle', 'Directory', 'Special Programs', and 'About'. The main heading is 'WebCT Online Instructions'. Below this is a row of links for different campus locations: 'Enterprise', 'Ozark', 'Fort Rucker', 'Mobile', 'Albertville', 'Andalusia', and 'Online Learning'. A green L-shaped graphic is on the left side of the main content area. Inside this graphic is a 'BROWSER CHECK' icon and text advising on compatible browsers: Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, AOL, Opera, Google Chrome, and Safari. To the right of the graphic, there is a link to 'webct@esc.edu' for questions, an important note in red text about checking in with the instructor via email, and a section titled 'LOGIN INSTRUCTIONS' with a paragraph of text.

Enterprise-Ozark Community College

[Current Students](#) | [Future Students](#) | [Student Lifestyle](#) | [Directory](#) | [Special Programs](#) | [About](#)

WebCT Online Instructions

[Enterprise](#) | [Ozark](#) | [Fort Rucker](#) | [Mobile](#) | [Albertville](#) | [Andalusia](#) | [Online Learning](#)

BROWSER CHECK

It is very important that you use a compatible browser and configure your browser setting to work effectively with WebCT. Some popular browsers include: Internet Explorer (most popular), Mozilla Firefox (most popular), AOL, Opera, Google Chrome and Safari

If you have questions or problems, email us at webct@esc.edu.

***IMPORTANT: Students must check in with their instructor during the first two days of class via WebCT email.**

Once you have registered for your online course and the semester has started, here are your instructions for logging on to your course:

LOGIN INSTRUCTIONS

To find your WebCT sign-on information go to www.esc.edu. Click on the Student Information Center link. At the login screen, enter your User ID and PIN (social security number OR student ID and birthdate or the new PIN you created). At the **Student Information Center** page under **Student Records**, click on **My Schedule**.

Appendix B-1
Informational/Technical Support

John C. Calhoun State Community College



The screenshot displays the Calhoun Community College website. At the top, there is a banner with the college logo on the left, the text "CALHOUN COMMUNITY COLLEGE education works." in the center, and the "Apply Online" button on the right. Below the banner is a navigation menu with links for "About Us", "Admissions", "Programs of Study", "Student Services", "Athletics", and "Workforce/Community". The main content area features a heading "Technical Requirements for Distance Learning at Calhoun" and a list of requirements. To the right of the text is an image of a computer workstation. The browser's address bar shows "Done" and the status bar shows "Internet" and "100%".

Technical Requirements for Distance Learning at Calhoun

- All students taking any class which delivers content over the Internet should review the instructions and requirements posted at <http://www.calhoun.edu/Blackboard/>
- Hybrid and online courses require basic computer literacy.
- Computer requirements for hybrid and online classes:
 - Minimum of 1 gig memory /recommended: 2 gig memory
 - Reliable internet connection—broadband/high-speed
 - Microsoft Office: Minimum of 2003 with plug-ins such as file format converters.exe, available from Microsoft.com / recommended: Office 2007.
- Students are responsible for confirming that their web browser is properly configured by the first day of class by going to <http://www.calhoun.edu/Blackboard/> and following the directions for browser checks and system plug-ins. These are located at the bottom of the page.
- Information necessary for successful course completion is provided through the course

Appendix B-1
Informational/Technical Support

Northwest Arkansas Community College

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Future Students Current Students Faculty & Staff Visitors & Alumni

Technology Services

What's Up in I.T.?

my.nwacc.edu

NWACC's new portal goes LIVE December 28, 2010. Log-in to the BETA site now and follow the development.

Why a new portal for NWACC?
The Information Technology department strives to provide the best and most reliable interface for students, faculty and staff in regards to registration, information and communication. We received a grant opportunity for the CampusEAI/MyCampus portal in Spring 2010. We held several collaborative campus meetings involving Faculty, Staff and Students. The overall consensus revealed that the MyCampus portal exceeded expectations in service, reliability and functionality. We pursued the grant and were awarded the grant.

Resources:
- Communication Flyer - 11/1/10

How are we doing on this project? We want to hear from you. On the left side of this screen is a link titled 'Feedback/Comments' - or direct link is here <http://www.nwacc.edu/ITFeedback.php> - drop us a line.

If you have any questions please call Paige Francis (619-4337) or email pfrancis@nwacc.edu.

!DOWNTIME ALERT!
Weekly Maintenance Plan: Friday, November 5, 2010
Area: Banner Financial Aid Upgrade, CampusEAI Test

ITS Home
Helpdesk
Change Request Form
Policies & Procedures
FAQ
Contact Us
Feedback/Comments

Fac/Staff Helpdesk
on-campus: 4357
off-campus: 619-4357
Help Line Hours:
7:30am - 7:00pm /M-TR
7:30am - 5:00pm / Fri
10:00am - 2:00pm / Sat

Student Helpdesk
BH 1214
479-619-4376
Email us
Help Line Hours:
7:00am - 7:00pm /M-TR
7:00am - 5:00pm / Fri
10:00am - 2:00pm / Sat

<http://its.nwacc.edu/index.php> Internet 100%

Appendix B-1
Informational/Technical Support

South Arkansas Community College

Friday, November 12, 2010 Text Size

 Search The SouthArk Website
Search...

Home Academics Library Continuing Education Administration Events Calendar Email Files Blackboard Campus Connect Help

▶ Online Application
▶ Apply to SouthArk
▶ Student Services
▶ Faculty and Staff
▶ College Information
▶ Current Publications
▶ Class Schedules
▶ Giving to SouthArk
▶ Construction Photos
▶ Conference Center

Blackboard Help

Your SouthArk Username & Password

Your username is the 1st letter of your first & last names and the last five (5) digits of your SouthArk student ID number (e.g. az12345). Your password will be same as that used to access SouthArk email, Campus Connect, and your home drive from off campus. You must enter your complete user name to access the L drive (.ZZ12345.students.southark).

SouthArk Blackboard Tutorial Videos

- Online Welcome and Tour of SouthArk Blackboard
- Access SouthArk Blackboard Tutorial
- Logging Into SouthArk Blackboard Tutorial

SouthArk Blackboard Links & Documents

- Frequently Asked Questions About SouthArk Blackboard
- Common Blackboard Login Errors (and what they mean)
- Getting Started with SouthArk Blackboard (PDF)
- Taking Tests On SouthArk Blackboard (PDF)

Need More Technical Help...

If you have issues with your password, please contact the Office of Computer Services for assistance (workorder@southark.edu / 870-864-7120)

 Error on page. Internet  100%

Appendix B-1
Informational/Technical Support

Mississippi Delta Community College

The screenshot displays the website for Mississippi Delta Community College. At the top, the college's name is written in a large, red, serif font. Below the name is a navigation bar with links for Search, Site Map, Email, My Access/My Banner, Events Calendar, and Quick Links. The main content area is titled "Distance Learning" and features a vertical sidebar on the left with red buttons for various services: 24/7 Support, ADA Information, Blackboard Manual, Class Log-In Instructions, Contact Us, Desire2Learn, FAQs, MDCC Blackboard, MDCC Testing, and MSVCC Calendar. The main content area includes a sub-header "Distance Learning", a photograph of a student at a computer, a yellow callout box with the text "Click here for BlackBoard Log-in Instructions ***New for Fall 2010***", and a notice stating "The Last Day to Officially Withdraw from a Fall Distance Learning class is November 3, 2010." Below this notice is a link to "Class Log-in Instructions and MDCC Testing pages for demonstrational videos." At the bottom of the page, there is a small paragraph about the Distance Learning computer lab located in Horton 129B. The browser's address bar shows "Internet" and the page is zoomed to 100%.

Mississippi Delta Community College

Search | Site Map Email My Access/My Banner Events Calendar Quick Links

Distance Learning

- 24/7 Support
- ADA Information
- Blackboard Manual
- Class Log-In Instructions
- Contact Us
- Desire2Learn
- FAQs
- MDCC Blackboard
- MDCC Testing
- MSVCC Calendar

Distance Learning



[Click here for BlackBoard Log-in Instructions](#)
New for Fall 2010

The Last Day to Officially Withdraw from a Fall Distance Learning class is **November 3, 2010.**

Visit our [Class Log-in Instructions](#) and [MDCC Testing](#) pages for demonstrational videos.

The Distance Learning computer lab is located in the **Horton 129B** and is available for students that are enrolled in distance learning courses.

Internet 100%

Appendix B-1 Informational/Technical Support

Pellissippi State Community College



**PELLISSIPPI STATE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE** [home](#) | [search](#) | [a-z directory](#) | [contact](#)

Our central point for supporting students, faculty and staff using online resources for teaching and learning at Pellissippi State.
[Interested in learning more about our online courses?](#)

[Support Site home](#) :: [Student Support](#) :: [Faculty Support](#) :: [Log into your Class](#)

Student Tutorials

FIRST - If you are brand new to this stuff. Watch The [ONLINE STUDENT ORIENTATION](#)

- The **INFO PAGES** are web pages.
- The **MOVIES** are Flash. (Get [Flash](#))
- The **HANDOUTS** are PDF. (Get [Acrobat Reader](#))

The Quick Start Guides are from the course management system vendor. **SOME OF THE OPTIONS MENTIONED ARE NOT AVAILABLE AT PSTCC** - check with your instructor if you have questions about a certain tool.

Getting Started

- What do you need to have? - [info page](#)
- Activating Your Account (changing your password) - [info page](#)
- Browser Check - [info page](#) | [Perform the browser check](#)
- Make the site a Trusted Site - [info page](#)
- How to Log In and Get Started - [info page](#) | [Logging In Movie](#) | [Getting Started](#)

COMMONLY USED TOOLS

Calendar/Schedule - [info](#) | [Quick Start Guide](#) | [Movie](#)
Classlist - [info](#) | [Quick Start Guide](#) | [Movie](#)
Course Content - [info](#) | [Quick Start Guide](#)
Dropbox - [info](#) | [Quick Start Guide](#) | [Movie](#)



**STUDENT
HELP**

Appendix B-1
Informational/Technical Support

Central Alabama Community College

The screenshot displays the website for Central Alabama Community College. At the top, the college's name is written in yellow on a black background. Below this is a large banner image of a basketball court. To the left of the banner is the college's logo, a stylized 'CA' in blue and yellow. Below the logo is the date 'November 14, 2010'. A navigation menu is located below the date, with options for Home, Contact Us, Directory, Class Schedule, Library, and Calendar. A search bar is positioned to the right of the navigation menu. Below the navigation menu is a 'SITE NAVIGATION' section with a list of links: Home, About CACC, Academics, Admissions, Adult Education, Advanced Visualization Ctr, Athletics, Bookstore, CACC Employees, Catalog, Community Services, and Employment. The main content area features the heading 'Internet Classes' and 'Plagiarism Policy'. Below the heading is the name 'Director of Distance Education: Dr. Richard Wilmarth'. The text of the policy states: 'Plagiarism is a sensitive issue with Distance Education students. Plagiarism, or any other act of academic dishonesty, will not be tolerated. Students found guilty of plagiarism will receive a grade of "F" on the assignment which was plagiarized and may receive a grade of "F" in the course as well. Consult the Student Handbook section of CACC's catalog for a complete discussion of academic dishonesty and the penalties involved.'

Appendix B-2
Admissions

Cleveland State Community College

Cleveland State Community College search GO
Home | Site Map | Text only

» Application
» Forms
» Admission Requirements
» Articulation Agreements
» Catalog
» Confidentiality of Student Records
» Misrepresentation of Academic Credentials
» Fees
» Graduation Procedures
» Dual Studies
» RODP Program
» Transfer Credit
» Transcript Request
» Veterans Assistance
» Staff
» Web For Students

Admissions & Records

Home > departments > admissions records

Admission Requirements

Regular admission as a candidate for an associate degree, associate of applied science degree, or certificate will be granted to applicants who follow the procedures and meet the requirements under one of the following subcategories.

All students are required to complete a Health Information Waiver regarding Hepatitis B immunization.

Full time students are required to provide proof of two doses of the Measles/Mumps/Rubella vaccination. Student's who attended a public school in Tennessee after July 1, 2001 for any period of time while in grades kindergarten through grade 12 are not required to provide proof of MMR immunization. Also any student who registers as part-time (less than 12 credit hours) will not be required to provide proof of MMR immunizations.

The following information is not intended to be a complete list of requirements. There are a number of different types of admission categories and all applicants are reviewed on an individual basis depending on the category of admission. For additional information

Appendix B-2 Admissions

Alabama Southern Community College

The screenshot shows the Alabama Southern Community College website. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for Home, News, About Us, Programs, Current Students, Future Students, and Community. A search bar is located in the top right corner. The main content area is titled "Steps to Admission" and includes a sidebar with various links. The main text describes the admission process and lists three steps: 1. Apply for Admission, 2. Apply for Financial Aid, and 3. Take the Asset/ Compass Placement Test.

ALABAMA SOUTHERN
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

SEARCH Go
Advanced Search Site Map

Home News About Us Programs Current Students Future Students Community

Admissions
Steps to Admission
Applications & Forms
Placement Testing
Transcripts/Student Records
Transcript Guide
College Catalog
Financial Aid
Student Development
Eagle Athletics
Library Services
Alabama Writers Symposium
Honors Program
Directory
Eagle's Web
National Center for Pulp and Paper Technology Training
Employment Opportunities
American Recovery and Reinvestment Act 2009
Higher Education Opportunity Act

ASCC Events
Calendar

Sites
Am I ready for Online Learning?

Steps to Admission

Applying for Admission to Alabama Southern is easy. Alabama Southern has an open-door admission policy. Admission to college coursework may require graduation from high school or a General Education Diploma (GED). Students without a high school diploma or GED may apply for selected programs after passing the Ability to Benefit Test. An official transcript of all previous academic work is also required. Various programs of study have different admission requirements. Effective immediately, December 2008, all new applicants must present a photo i.d. prior to admission.

- 1. Apply for Admission**
Submit your application for admission to the Admissions Office and have your official high school transcript, GED documentation, and/or official transcripts from all other colleges attended sent to the Registrar's Office. In addition, you must also submit a completed residency verification form and selective service verification.
- 2. Apply for Financial Aid**
All students are required to apply for financial aid. Submit your application and financial documentation to the Financial Aid Office. It is necessary to apply for financial aid well before your planned date of enrollment. Visit the Financial Aid section for complete instructions. Students may also apply for financial aid at www.fafsa.ed.gov.
- 3. Take the Asset/ Compass Placement Test**

<http://www.ascsc.edu/?PN=Pages&SubP=Level1Page&L=1&DivisionID=640&PageID=909&ToggleSideNav>ShowAll> Internet 100%

Appendix B-2
Admissions

Holmes Community College

The screenshot shows the Holmes Community College website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Future Students, Current Students, Alumni & Friends, Faculty & Staff, Athletics, eLearning, General Info, and Workforce. The Holmes Community College logo is on the left, and a search bar is on the right. Below the navigation bar, the breadcrumb trail reads: Home -- Future Students -- Financial Aid. On the left side, there is a vertical menu with various links including Academic Calendar, Admissions & Records, and Financial Aid. The main content area is titled "Financial Aid" and contains a paragraph of introductory text, a "Getting Started..." section with three numbered steps, and a photograph of a student and a staff member at a desk. The browser's address bar shows "Internet" and the page is zoomed to 100%.

Future Students | Current Students | Alumni & Friends | Faculty & Staff

Athletics | eLearning | General Info | Workforce

Holmes Community College

Search Holmes GO

[Home](#) -- [Future Students](#) -- Financial Aid

- Academic Calendar
- Academic Offices
- Admissions & Records
- Bookstore
- Bulletin
- Business Office
- Campus Housing
- Campus Locations
- Career/Technical Offices
- Departments/Programs
- Disability Services
- Dual Enrollment
- e-Learning
- Financial Aid
 - Documents & Forms
 - Financial Aid Staff
 - Costs & Scholarships

Financial Aid

Don't let finances get in the way of achieving your dreams—there's help available. The Office of Financial Aid at Holmes Community College administers a variety of programs to assist students with the costs of attending college. Applications and explanations of the aid available can be found here. We encourage you to stop by one of our locations in Goodman, Grenada, and Ridgeland or email us with questions.

Getting Started...

Step 1 Apply for [Admission](#) to Holmes Community College

Step 2 Apply for a [PIN](#).

We encourage students and parents of dependent students to apply for a PIN (personal identification number) and to use the PIN as the electronic signature when filing your FAFSA online. Note: Both the student and one parent need their own PIN.

Step 3 Complete the [FAFSA](#) (Holmes' School Code is 002408)*.

You may complete a FAFSA via the FAFSA website. You should



Appendix B-2
Admissions

Itawamba Community College

ITAWAMBA Community College

Home Students Alumni/Foundation Athletics Faculty/Staff Workforce

Quicklinks

- Go2ICC portal
- ICC Blackboard
- e Learning
- Class Schedule
- CAMPUS MAPS
- Learning Resource Center
- Emergency ALERT
- GRADUATION... IT MATTERS!

Fees, Expenses and Estimated Cost of Attendance

Itawamba Community College is a public tax-supported institution. Every effort will be made to keep fees and expenses in accordance with the cost stated in this section; however, the college reserves the right to institute increases should it become necessary. Fees and expenses are due at registration. Meal cost for residence hall students may be paid according to the published schedule. Residence hall students are required to purchase a meal ticket. Students who qualify for Deferred Payment Plan may use this plan as outlined under Payment of Fees and Expenses.

Tuition	
In District	\$800
Out of District	\$800
Out of State	\$1675
Out of Country	\$1775
Part-Time (Day)	\$85 per semester hour
Evening Academic, Technical, and Vocational	\$85 per semester hour
Summer Academic, Technical, and Vocational	\$85 per semester hour
Summer Evening Vocational	\$85 per semester hour
Internet Classes	\$85 per semester hour
Summer Internships	\$65 per semester hour
<hr/>	
Board (Per Semester) (Fulton Campus)	\$705 (15 Meal Plan) \$855 (19 Meal Plan)

Appendix B-2
Admissions

Meridian Community College

The screenshot shows the Meridian Community College website header with the logo and tagline "Experience The One". The date is November 14, 2010, 5:48:16. The main content area is titled "FALL 2010" and contains a table of key dates for the semester.

FALL 2010		
Faculty on 195 Day Contract Report	Monday	July 26
Faculty on 185 Day Contract Report	Monday	August 2
Faculty on 175 Day Contract Report	Monday	August 9
Faculty Workshop	Monday-Friday	August 9-13
Classes Begin	Monday	August 16
MSVCC Registration Ends	Friday	August 20
Last Day to Register for Classes	Friday	August 20
MSVCC Classes Begin	Monday	August 23
MSVCC Drop/Add Period (5:00 pm)	Monday-Tuesday	August 23-24
Labor Day Holiday	Monday	September 6
Late Start Classes Begin	Monday-Tuesday	September 20-21
Last Day to Receive "W" in Term I	Monday	September 27

Appendix B-2
Admissions

Cossatot Community College

CCCUA CATALOG AND STUDENT HANDBOOK 2010 - 2011	
 TABLE OF CONTENTS	
Points of Contact.....	Inside front cover
TDD Information.....	Inside front cover
Chancellor's Greeting.....	1
Board of Visitors.....	2
Institutional Memberships.....	2
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	3
Why should I complete my AA/AAS degree at Cossatot?.....	6
Fall 2009 Semester Calendar.....	7
Spring 2010 Semester Calendar.....	7
Summer 2010 Semester Calendar.....	8
Mission And Purposes.....	9
Statement Of Core Values.....	10
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Concurrent Enrollment.....	19
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To enroll in Communications or Technology* classes.....	19
To enroll in Mathematics, Computer Sci., or Natural Sci. classes.....	19
To enroll in all other courses, i.e. speech, health, etc.....	19
Special Admission Requirements for Persons 60+.....	20
Financial Aid Appeals Committee.....	29
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Course Load.....	40
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Auditing Courses.....	40
Grades.....	40
Calculation Of GPA.....	41
Student Grade Appeal Procedure.....	41
Formal Grade Appeal Process.....	41

Appendix B-2
Admissions

Chattanooga State Community College

Chattanooga State
Community College

A National Leader in Technology

Home Academics Admissions Catalog Schedules People Finder Giving Students Contact Us Search

home > onlineorientation

Welcome

Any problems with holds not being released
Please call 697-2652 or 697-4475

ChatState ORIENTATION

Video Modules

- What Students Should Know
- Student Success/Registration
- Money Matters
- Student Support Services
- Student Life
- Academic Divisions
- Online & Site-Based Learning
- International/Multicultural Services
- Conclusion/Orientation Quiz

Text for Transcript

Next

Information

See the links on the left side of the screen. The first four video modules are mandatory. Choose the Academic Division(s) that interest you. The "Online and Site-Based Learning" module is optional. Complete your cruise with the "Conclusion and Orientation Quiz" module.

Sponsored by:
Comcast

Produced by:
Video 2Go
Real Generation

Appendix B-3 Registration

Columbia State Community College

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the Columbia State Community College website. The header is green with the college logo on the left, the slogan "Success Starts Here" in the center, and navigation buttons for "FUTURE STUDENTS", "SITE SEARCH", "CURRENT STUDENTS", "CAMPUS LOCATIONS", "ALUMNI/COMMUNITY", and "FACULTY WEBSITES" on the right. Below the header is a gold navigation bar with links for "HOME", "my/CN LOGIN", "CALENDAR", "CATALOG/HANDBOOK", "DISTANCE/ONLINE EDUCATION", "CONTINUING EDUCATION", "LIBRARY", "ATHLETICS", "ABOUT US", "CONTACT US", "A-Z INDEX", and "SEARCH".

Registration: Contact Us

MORE INFO

- Registration
- Registration Help
- Class Schedule
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Adding, Dropping, Withdrawing

Need help with something?

If you require additional information or assistance, please call any of Columbia State's five locations or the Office of Admissions and Recruitment:

PHONE:

- Columbia Campus: (931) 540-2540
- Williamson County Campus (Located in Franklin): (615) 790-4400
- Lawrence County Campus (Located in Lawrenceburg): (931) 766-1600
- Lewisburg Campus: (931) 359-0351
- Clifton Campus: (888) 346-6581

E-MAIL:

- If you have any questions about your transfer credit, please contact records@columbiastate.edu.
- All other inquiries pertaining to admissions or registration can be asked to admissions@columbiastate.edu.

HELPFUL LINKS

- ACT Test Prep Classes
- Adding, Dropping, Withdrawing Advising Center
- Apply Now
- Bookstore
- Campus Technology (AV)
- Campus Technology (IT)
- Campus Tours
- Catalog & Student Handbook
- Choose Degree/Major/Career
- Classes Offered
- Continuing Education
- Costs
- Degree Checksheets
- Distance/Online Education
- Dual Enrollment
- Employment Opportunities

Appendix B-3
Registration

Dyersburg State Community College

FUTURE STUDENTS | CURRENT STUDENTS | ABOUT DSCC | ALUMNI/PARENTS | FRIENDS/VISITORS | HOME

DSCC

Dyersburg State Community College

CURRENT STUDENTS

My dscc website search go! ONLINE CLASSES

Apply/Register/Pay/Confirm
Athletics
Business Office
Calendar/Event Sign Up
Centers, Maps and Contacts
Employment
Frequently Asked Questions
Giving Opportunities
LRC/Library
News Releases
Paying for College
Programs of Study
Resources/Services

Business Office

Welcome to the Dyersburg State Community College Business Office. Each student pays his or her tuition and fees through our office, so we are one of your very first stops before the beginning of each semester. Please know that you must pay the tuition amount due before the due date to reserve your classes.

Click here to learn about current FEE INFORMATION.
Click here to see FEE CHART.

To assist our students, we provide a number of payment options. Please click on the links below to learn about each:

- CONFIRMING REGISTRATION
- PAY BY CREDIT CARD
- DEFERRED PAYMENT

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- BOOK VOUCHER
- CREDIT BY DEPARTMENTAL EXAMINATION
- DIRECT DEPOSIT FORM
- FEDERAL AID AUTHORIZATION FORM
- FEES FOR 2010-2011
- HOW TO CONFIRM
- PARKING VIOLATION APPEAL FORM
- TRAFFIC AND PARKING REGULATIONS

Appendix B-3
Registration

North West Arkansas Community College

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Future Students Current Students Faculty & Staff Visitors & Alumni

1) How do I get enrolled at NWACC?
2) How much is Tuition?
3) What are my options for attending classes?
4) What are my options for Financial Aid or payments?
5) What can I do at NWACC?
6) Where can I go from NWACC?
7) Online advising

[Homepage](#)

Academic Calendar
Registration Steps

Log in to My NWACC Connection for more information. Just click on the Eaglenet tab.

Burns Hall	Washington County Center	College at the Crossings
One College Dr (Exit 86) Bentonville, AR	Central Plaza 693 White Road, Suite B Springdale, AR 1 mi. east of Exit 73 on I-540	1801 Forest Hills Blvd (Highlands Crossing) Bella Vista, AR 72714

Appendix B-3 Registration

Hinds Community College



The screenshot shows the registration page on the Hinds Community College website. The header features the college logo, navigation links (Home, Sitemap, Search Hinds), and an Eagle One ALERT logo. Below the header are tabs for Prospective Students, Current Students, Faculty & Staff, and Alumni & Community. A secondary navigation bar includes links for About Hinds, Admissions, Maps and Locations, Departments, Athletics, Student Life, Contact Us, Login, and Quick Links.

Registration

Registration occurs in three (3) four-week periods during the year:

- Late March to late-May (for summer terms)
- Late March to early August (for fall term)
- Mid-November to early-January (for spring term)

Late registration occurs during the first few days of each semester. Students registering during late registration will incur additional fees. Students are encouraged to register early to avoid lines and filled classes. Before registering, you must complete all admission requirements.

Prior to your first semester of enrollment, you will be advised by a Hinds CC counselor in your chosen field of study as to what courses you need. You can then utilize web registration to create your class schedule, or the counselor or advisor can do it for you. Finally, you will pay some fees.

The registration fee is no longer required prior to registration. The fee is due on the payment due date along with all other fees. The payment due date is ten days prior to the start of traditional classes (May 21 for full or 1st-4 week summer term, June 18 for 2nd 4-week summer term, and August 6 for fall term).

Students who have not paid in full by the payment due date will lose their classes if they have not met one of the following conditions:

Registration

Web Registration
Get Enrolled
Registration Checklist

Appendix B-4 Assessment

Phillips Community College – University of Arkansas

Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness

[Angelo's Principles](#) [Assessment Links](#) [Assessment Changes](#) [CAAP](#) [CATS](#) [College Committee](#) [Committee Minutes](#) [Core Competencies](#)

[Goals for Assessment](#) [Higher Learning Comm](#) [Newsletters](#) [Other Sources](#) [Program Assessment](#) [Student Learning Pro](#) [Surveys](#) [Techniques](#)

[Training](#) [Misc. Data](#) [2008-09 assessment](#) [2009-10 Assessment](#) [PCCUA Home](#)

Assessment of Student Learning

Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas believes that its assessment of student academic achievement is closely linked to and directly supports the mission and objectives of the institution.

The mission of PCCUA emphasizes a commitment to individual, organizational, and community development. The college provides accessible, affordable education, training, and public services that are consistent with the goal and objectives of its students and the communities it serves.

Three key purposes of assessment:

- ✦ **To Inform** - Assessment activities show a clearer picture of what is really happening in a program and informs others of contributions the program makes.
- ✦ **To Improve** - This evaluation is formative. Assessment activities provide a

2008-09 Assessment

2009-10 Assessment

What is Assessment?

Assessment is the ongoing process of establishing clear, measurable expected outcomes of student learning; systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and using the resulting information to understand and improve student learning throughout the college.

Appendix B-4
Assessment

South Arkansas Community College

The screenshot shows the South Arkansas Community College website interface. At the top, there is a banner with a photo of a woman and the college logo. Below the banner is a navigation menu with links for Home, Academics, Library, Continuing Education, Administration, Events, and Calendar. A search bar is located on the right side of the banner. The main content area is titled 'Grades and Transcripts' and contains two sections: 'Obtaining Grades from Campus Connect' and 'Obtaining Unofficial Transcript on Campus Connect'. Each section provides a list of steps to follow. A left sidebar contains a 'Student Services' menu with various options like Bookstore, Catalogs, and Counseling.

Sunday, November 14, 2010 Text Size

Search The SouthArk Website
Search...

Home Academics Library Continuing Education Administration Events Calendar Email Files Blackboard Campus Connect Help

Student Services Grades & Transcripts

Grades and Transcripts

Obtaining Grades from Campus Connect

To obtain a copy of your grades for the semester you will need to complete the following steps:

1. Go to the website www.southark.edu
2. Click on Campus Connect
3. Enter your new student id# as your id# and all eight digits of your birthdate and three capitalized initials as your pin. Click Access.
4. From the main menu click Grade Report
5. Choose the semester that you have just completed and click submit.

As soon as your instructors have entered their grades into the computer the grades will show up on Campus Connect.

Obtaining Unofficial Transcript on Campus Connect

To obtain an unofficial copy of your transcript you will need to complete the following steps:

1. Go to the website www.southark.edu
2. Click on Campus Connect
3. Enter your new student id# as your id# and all eight digits of your birth date and three capitalized initials as your pin. Click Access.
4. From the main menu click Registration, the unofficial transcript
5. You may print an unofficial transcript from your computer.

Obtaining Official Copy of your transcript

Left Sidebar: Student Services

- Online Application
- Apply to SouthArk
- Student Services
 - Bookstore
 - Catalogs
 - College Access
 - Concurrent Credit
 - Credits, Transferability
 - Credit Transfer
 - Counseling
 - Commencement
 - Upward Bound
 - Organizations
 - Pre-Admissions
 - Information Technology

Appendix B-4
Assessment

Motlow State Community College

The screenshot shows the Motlow State Community College website. At the top, the college name is displayed in a large green banner with the tagline "enroll in one of the nation's fastest growing community colleges". To the right of the banner is a search bar and a navigation menu with links for "contact", "directories", and "calendar". Below the banner is a yellow navigation bar with links for "Our College", "Academics", "Athletics", "Campuses", and "Library". A second green navigation bar contains links for "Student Life" and "News & Events". A third green navigation bar lists "Prospective Students", "Current Students", "Faculty & Staff", and "Alumni & Visitors".

The main content area features a green sidebar on the left with a vertical menu: "Home", "Counseling Services", "Testing Services", "Testing Calendar", "Proctoring", and "Forms". The main content area has a green header for "Counseling & Testing" with the address "Crouch Center Lab 1043 | 931-393-1762" and an image of a pencil. Below this is a white section titled "Proctoring" with a bulleted list of links: "ADA Proctoring Info", "Correspondence and Distance Education Proctoring Student Info", "Disability Student Proctoring Info", "Proctoring Signup - Main Campus, Smyrna, McMinnville", and "Fayetteville Proctoring Signup".

At the bottom of the page, there is a copyright notice: "© 1996-2010 Motlow State Community College | A Tennessee Board of Regents Institution P.O. Box 8500 Lynchburg, TN 37352-8500 Phone: 931-393-1500 | Toll Free: 800-654-4877". Below the notice is a row of logos for "MSCC Online", "SMARTHINKING!", "Motlow", "Facebook", "MSCC Online", and "Rave MOBILE SAFETY".

Appendix B-4 Assessment

Nashville State Community College

The screenshot displays the Nashville State Community College website. At the top, there is a dark teal header with the college logo on the left, a date and weather widget in the center, and a search bar and navigation links on the right. Below the header is a horizontal menu with categories like ACADEMICS, ADMISSIONS, FACULTY & STAFF, STUDENT RESOURCES, ABOUT, ALUMNI & SUPPORT, and CONTACT. The main content area is divided into three columns. The left column features a 'TESTIMONIALS' section with a sub-header 'Getting Started at NSCC' and four numbered links: '1 Apply Now', '2 Financial Services', '3 Request Information', and '4 Download Campus Map'. Below these links is a testimonial box with a photo of G.K. and a quote about CAD classes and a current job at an architectural firm. The middle column has a 'Testimonials' sub-header and five individual testimonial entries, each with a name, field, and a short paragraph of text. The right column contains an 'About' section with a list of links including Visitor Information, News, Events, Media Room, Institutional Research, Accreditations, Accolades, and Testimonials.

Nashville State Community College
Sun. November 14, 2010 44° F Cloudy
CONNECT Search Keywords
Site Preferences A-Z Site Directory Campus Directory

ACADEMICS ADMISSIONS FACULTY & STAFF STUDENT RESOURCES **ABOUT** ALUMNI & SUPPORT CONTACT

TESTIMONIALS

Getting Started at NSCC

- 1 Apply Now**
Skip the stamp and apply online.
- 2 Financial Services**
See how we can help you.
- 3 Request Information**
Need to know more?
- 4 Download Campus Map**
Find out where you are going.

With the help of my CAD classes and coop program getting me connected with my current job at a large Nashville architectural firm, I am achieving my goals.

G.K. Architectural Engineering Technology

Testimonials

Justina, Music Technology
I want to get into demo work and my classes are helping me make connections. We also actually get to go in the studio—hands-on—and record, sing, play an instrument or do the mastering.

Matt, Computer Information Systems
Technology is in a constant flux because it changes so quickly. Nashville State has helped me stay on the front end of these technology changes.

Stephanie, Culinary Arts
Nashville State has definitely prepared me for my career. You get a very well-rounded education which makes you more valuable to the company you work for.

Jenni, Social Work
The teachers and staff have always been willing to help me. There have been times when I didn't think I could handle school and they helped me make it through.

Rita, History
After being out of school for 18 years, I needed to start at the beginning. I knew this would be the place to do that. I feel so welcomed here.

About

- ▶ **Visitor Information**
Schedule an Appointment
- ▶ **News**
Important News to Know
- ▶ **Events**
What is going on?
- ▶ **Media Room**
Background Information
- ▶ **Institutional Research**
Strategic Initiatives
- ▶ **Accreditations**
Program Accreditations and More
- ▶ **Accolades**
Our Awards and Recognition
- ▶ **Testimonials**

Appendix B-4 Assessment

Gadsden State Community College

The screenshot shows the website's navigation menu with 'ACADEMICS' selected. The main content area is titled 'eLearning' and features a heading 'Are You Ready for eLearning?'. Below this, it describes the SmarterMeasure (formerly READI) assessment, its duration, and the areas it assesses: Individual Attributes, Learning Styles, Technical Competency, and On-Screen Reading.

HOME FUTURE STUDENTS **ACADEMICS** ADMINISTRATION FACULTY & STAFF COLLEGE LIFE COLLEGE INFO

Destinations

- + [eLearning](#)
- + [Blackboard 9](#)
- + [BB Mobile Learn](#)
- + [Respondus](#)
- + [Tegrity](#)
- + [Ready for eLearning?](#)
- + [Future Students](#)
- + [Student eL Handbook](#)
- + [Current Students](#)
- + [Faculty](#)
- + [Resources](#)
- + [Links](#)

eLearning

Are You Ready for eLearning?

Find out by completing the SmarterMeasure (formerly READI) assessment

It will take you about 30 minutes from start to finish, but you may log out and complete it later if necessary. After you login, you will receive an email from SmarterMeasure with a PIN number that will allow you to log back in later or view your results again.

Your SmarterMeasure score will not prevent you from registering for online classes. It is a tool that will help you assess your strengths and weaknesses related to distance learning in 5 areas.

- 1. Individual Attributes - Procrastination, Time Management, Willingness to ask for help and Academic Attributes.
- 2. Learning Styles - What is your predominant learning style?
- 3. Technical Competency, Skills and Knowledge
- 4. On-Screen Reading, Speed and Comprehension

Appendix B-4 Assessment

Lurleen B. Wallace Community College

Athletics	Home - Admissions - Admission Requirements - First Time Freshman
College Calendars	
Consumer Information	
Distance Education	
Financial Aid	
Library	
Student Life	
Student Services	

Blackboard

EVENTS CALENDAR

November 2010

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	2			
	7	8	9	11		

11/16/10

Faulkner University Class

11/18/10

First Time Freshman

A first-time college student must have ONE of the following:

- the Alabama High School Diploma or its equivalent from a regionally and/or state accredited high school
- a GED
- a high school diploma issued by a non-accredited high school which is equivalent to the Alabama High School Diploma AND a composite ACT score of at least 16
- the Alabama Occupational Diploma AND an ACT composite score of at least 16

Transcripts documenting the above must be official and must be mailed directly to:

Lurleen B. Wallace Community College
Admissions Office
P. O. Box 1418
Andalusia, AL 36420

In addition, the following items are also required:

- a completed LBWCC [Application for Admission](#);
- an [acceptable form of identification](#) (notarized if not presented in person); applicants claiming in-state status for tuition purposes must also submit documentation of Alabama residency (for example, an Alabama driver's license)
- [COMPASS Placement Test](#) results or ACT scores of 20 or higher in English, reading, and mathematics;
- all male students between the ages of 18 and 26 must have registered with the U.S. Selective Service System

Applicants with the above credentials are considered "degree eligible".

Appendix B-4 Assessment

Northeast Alabama Community College

Northeast Alabama Community College Rainsville, Alabama (256) 638-4418 or 228-6001

Text Menus [Students](#) [Future Students](#) [Faculty & Staff](#) [Friends & Visitors](#)

ONLINE GED PREPARATION

[Adult Education Home](#)
[GED Class Schedules](#)
[GED Class Information](#)
[GED Testing](#)
[GED Graduation](#)
[Graduation Pictures](#)

It's true!
We have launched an online GED preparation program. Not all students will qualify, so call or email us today for more information. When you contact us, please give us your name and phone number, so we can talk about your options.

Phone us at...256-638-2957
or 256-228-0021
Email us at...
maddoxp@nacc.edu

Top

Copyright • Northeast Alabama Community College • P. O. Box 159, Rainsville, Alabama 35986

Appendix B-4 Assessment

Roane State Community College

Are Online Courses for Me?

Grade Quiz

1. Do you have access to a computer with a DVD/CD-ROM drive an Internet connection and printer at home or at work?

Yes No

2. Would you feel comfortable learning without having face-to-face interaction with your instructor?

Yes No

3. Can you dedicate a minimum of six to eight hours per week to participate in the online learning environment?

Yes No

4. Are you a highly self-motivated and self-disciplined learner?

Yes No

5. Do you have good time management skills?

Yes No

6. Are you able to send and receive e-mails with attachments?

Yes No

7. Do you feel comfortable reading and completing assignments without immediate feedback from an instructor?

Yes No

Appendix B-4 Assessment

Southwest Tennessee Community College

Faculty Resources

[Training](#)
[Appointments](#)
[Equipment
Reservation](#)
[Faculty Helpdesk](#)
[Syllabus Tools](#)

Student Resources

[Online Degrees](#)
[FAQ](#)
[DE Courses](#)
[Online Courses](#)
[Split Courses](#)
[Telecourses](#)
[Faculty Directory](#)

[Home](#) / [Orientation](#) / [PAWS Orientation](#) / [PAWS Orientation Contents](#) / [Communications](#)

Communications

Are you comfortable with online communications?

In an online class, good writing skills are important because most conversations between you, your classmates, and your instructor will be written. You will learn more about text-based communication in an online environment by exploring the links below, reading the content pages, watching the videos, and listening to students, faculty, and staff tell real stories of learning online. As you explore, be sure that you complete self-assessment quizzes that will help you determine if you can make the grade!

- Typing is not an overwhelming task for me and I am comfortable with word processing software.
- Practicing good "Netiquette" is essential when communicating from a distance because body language clues cannot help convey your message.
- I can follow written direction and don't need to have them explained orally.
- I understand that most communication in an online class does NOT take place in real time.
- Are you confident in your ability to express your thoughts and ideas in writing?

BACK



NEXT



Appendix B-5 Advising and Counseling

Jefferson State Community College

All questions during normal business hours will receive a response within 24 hours.

[Future Students](#) [Enrolled Students](#) [Community & Corporate Students](#) [Quick Links](#)



Advising Center

Advising Center

Online Advisor

Welcome to Online Advising at Jefferson State Community College!

Academic advising at Jefferson State Community College is designed to help students succeed and assist them in making the most of their college experience. We will assist you as you plan your educational future. This includes:

- Short and long term academic planning
- Interpretation of test scores and transcript evaluation from other colleges
- Providing information about transfer requirements
- Selecting the right courses for your major
- Information on registration procedures and class scheduling
- Answering questions about college policies
- Assisting with academic concerns and special needs
- Listening carefully to your questions and concerns
- We want you to succeed! You may be a new student or a student with previous college experience. You may be a currently enrolled, a returning student or you may be at Jeff State to take one class or complete a degree program. Whatever your status, an advisor is willing and waiting to meet with you to ensure that your academic experience at Jeff State is a successful one.

Appendix B-5
Advising and Counseling

Copiah – Lincoln Community College

The screenshot shows the SkillsTutor website interface. At the top, there is a blue header with the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt logo on the left and the SkillsTutor logo with the phone number 1.888.391.3245 on the right. Below the header is a search bar with the word "SEARCH" and a magnifying glass icon. A navigation menu follows with links for HOME, PRODUCTS & SERVICES, ALIGNMENTS, BEST PRACTICES, RESOURCE LIBRARY, and SUPPORT CENTER. The main content area features a large "Welcome to SkillsTutor" heading in blue and orange. Below this is the tagline "A Leader In K-Adult Learning Solutions". A paragraph describes the platform as an online curriculum providing differentiated instruction and intervention. Another paragraph lists subjects like reading, language arts, writing, math, science, and workforce readiness. To the right, there is a preview of the SkillsTutor user interface, showing a sidebar with subject categories (Reading, Math, Science, Social Studies, Technology, Health, Career) and a main area with icons for an apple, a school bus, and the letters "ABC". At the bottom of the page, there are three small images: a classroom scene, two students at a desk, and a map of the United States.

Appendix B-5 Advising and Counseling

Hinds Community College

The screenshot shows the Hinds Community College website. At the top, there is a dark red header with the college logo on the left, navigation links (Home, Sitemap, Search Hinds) in the center, and an "Eagle One ALERT" logo on the right. Below the header is a horizontal menu with categories: Prospective Students, Current Students, Faculty & Staff, and Alumni & Community. A secondary menu below that includes: About Hinds, Admissions, Maps and Locations, Departments, Athletics, Student Life, Contact Us, Login, and Quick Links.

The main content area is titled "Student Services" and features a sidebar on the left with a "eLearning" image and a list of links: Distance Learning, How do I enroll?, Online Orientation, Online Courses, FAQs, Student Services, and Contact Us.

Student Services

Counselors
Contact a counselor or advisor at the campus nearest you for registration and advisement.

For students whose address on file with the college is more than 60 miles from a campus, or who are deployed more than 60 miles from a campus, a new registration option is in place. Please follow the directions here to submit a request for online advising and registration. You should include your name, address and phone number. For those deployed, please include deployment location, outfit and supervising officer.

Once the Counseling Office has confirmed the address, they will respond with information on registration. Please allow 48 hours to reply excluding holidays and weekends. Students who are within 60 miles of a campus will need to visit the campus for registration.

Click here to submit a request for online advising (only for students who currently reside more than 60 miles from a Hinds location)

Learning Resource Center
The Hinds Community College Library web site offers a link to Online Catalog search, library hours, and MAGNOLIA databases.

Admissions and Records
For general information on how to apply to Hinds Community College or to transfer your transcripts, please contact the Office of Admissions and Records.

Appendix B-5
Advising and Counseling

Dyersburg State Community College

The screenshot displays the website for Dyersburg State Community College (DSCC). At the top, a navigation bar includes links for FUTURE STUDENTS, CURRENT STUDENTS, ABOUT DSCC, ALUMNI/PARENTS, FRIENDS/VISITORS, and HOME. The main header features the large 'DSCC' logo and the text 'Dyersburg State Community College'. A red button labeled 'CURRENT STUDENTS' is positioned to the right of the logo. Below the header, a search bar with the text 'website search' and a 'GO!' button is visible, along with a 'My DSCC' logo and an 'ONLINE CLASSES' button. A vertical menu on the left side lists various services: Apply/Register/Pay/Confirm, Athletics, Business Office, Calendar/Event Sign Up, Centers, Maps and Contacts, Employment, Frequently Asked Questions, Giving Opportunities, LRC/Library, News Releases, Paying for College, Programs of Study, and Resources/Services. The main content area is titled 'Learning Resource Center' in a red, cursive font. Below this title, there is a section for 'Career Assessment Resources' featuring a circular logo and text about the 'OCCUPATIONAL OUTLOOK HANDBOOK 2010-2011'. Another section, 'Keirsey™ Temperament Sorter-II (KTS™-II)', describes a test that determines personality type and fits it with a career. On the right side of the page, there is a photograph of a baseball player in a red jersey and blue helmet running on a field.

Appendix B-5
Advising and Counseling

Pellissippi State Community College

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Planning Your Dreams at Tennessee College and Career Planning System; KUDER Career Inventory and information. <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Career Planning Resources</i></p> <p>Explore the many online resources to discover your passion, your educational path to create the career YOU want.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What Color Is Your Parachute?• Career Voyages, an on-line program developed by the U.S. Department of Labor and U.S. Department of Education designed to provide information on high-growth, high-demand occupations along with the skills and education needed to attain those jobs.• Cool Works^{AB} is about finding a seasonal job or career in some of the greatest places on Earth.• Occupational Handbook for job markets; find out about the hot jobs and what they pay, plus other useful tips.• The Labor Market Information LMI/Research and Statistics Section is the official source for all employment-related data for the state, the metropolitan areas, and the individual counties. The section works directly with the U. S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics to gather core labor market data that are comparable to information gathered nationwide.• JobWeb offers career and job-search advice as well as useful tips for email etiquette and sample resumes. Free booklets are available in the Job Placement Office and Counseling offices on all campuses.• What Can I do with a Major in . . . Univ. of North Carolina Wilmington resource• Explore careers - University of North Carolina Wilmington Career Center• http://careerplanning.about.com/ <p>Job Placement</p>	
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Appendix B-5
Advising and Counseling

Pellissippi State Community College

Format: PDF documents require [Adobe Reader](#) or another PDF viewer. Word documents require Microsoft Word, the latest version of Internet Explorer, or the Microsoft Office [Word Viewer](#). Optional [free alternative viewers](#).

[SkillsShops Handout](#) (PDF, 2.0MB)

Study Smart

Smart Note Taking

- [Become an Efficient Note Taker](#) (748KB)
- [Mind Mapping techniques](#) by Stephen Pierce
- [Cornell Note Taking Method](#)
- [www.howtostudy.org](#) A site offering an enormous amount of well-organized information.
- [Listening, Note-Taking, and Using Visual Organizers](#) – Bucks Comm. College. Lots of resources!
- [Study Guides and Strategies](#) A website for learning study skills and other topics
- [Study Strategies](#)

Concentration

- [Virginia Tech Study Guides](#)

Study Groups

- [How to run a study group](#)
- [The Power of Study Groups](#)

Appendix B-5
Advising and Counseling

Volunteer State Community College

The screenshot displays the Volunteer State Community College website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Español, People Finder, Campus Map, A-Z Index, Help Center, and Quick Links. Below this is a banner featuring the college's logo and a photograph of a man in a suit pointing at a whiteboard with handwritten notes. A search bar is located below the banner. On the left side, there is a vertical menu with links for Current Students, Future Students, Parents & Visitors, Alumni & Donors, Faculty & Staff, and Business & Community. The main content area is titled "ALERTS STUDENT REFERRAL FORM" and contains a paragraph describing the ALERTS system. Below the text is a blue header for "Student Information" and a form field for "*First Name:".

Español People Finder Campus Map A – Z Index Help Center Quick Links

VOLUNTEER STATE Community College
The Vol State Difference

Search Search

Current Students

Future Students

Parents & Visitors

Alumni & Donors

Faculty & Staff

Business & Community

ALERTS STUDENT REFERRAL FORM

ALERTS, Assisting Learners and Educators with Responsive, Targeted Support, is an early alert referral system at Volunteer State Community College. Students and faculty alike may submit an ALERT when they feel a little extra assistance may be in order. A counselor will contact the student to help make them aware of the many student support services offered at Vol State and to help them select the service most appropriate for their needs.

Student Information

*First Name:

Appendix B-6
Learning Resources

Coahoma Community College

COAHOMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE A-Z Index | Directory | CCC Home

Dickerson-Johnson Library and Learning Resources Center

The mission of the Dickerson-Johnson Library and Learning Resources Center is to support the college's mission by acquiring, organizing, and disseminating information to support the curriculum and programs of the institution.

Glossary | ILink

Home

About the Library

Ask a Librarian

CCC Blackboard

Contact Us

Databases

FAQs

Forms

Health Sciences

Information for Faculty

Research Guides

LIBRARY HOURS
Monday - Thursday
9:00 - 5:00

Services

- Computers and Copiers
- Computer Lab
- E-database Tutorials
- Guide, Tour, & Help
- Interlibrary Loan Article/Book
- Library Brochure
- Library Catalog
- Off-Campus Users
- Policies

Research Databases & Tools

- Academic Search™ Premier
- Alt Health Watch Complete
- Anatomy TV
- Bowker's Resources
- Chronicle of Higher Education
- CINAHL
- CQ Researcher
- Credo Reference
- Ebrary
- Gray's Anatomy of the Human Body
- Health and Medical Information (Mayo Clinic)
- Healthfinder Government Health Guide
- Issues and Controversies
- Magnolia
- MedlinePlus
- MELO
- National Center for Health Statistics

What's New

- Best Sellers
- Books
- Books, CDs, DVDs, and Video
- Carnegie Public Library
- CCC News
- Events
- Local Newspaper
- Resources
- US Immigration

Appendix B-7 Other Support Services

Walters State Community College

About Us	Academics	Administration	Admissions	Foundation	Athletics	Campuses	Employment	Library	Majors	Expo
--------------------------	---------------------------	--------------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	---------------------------	--------------------------	----------------------------	-------------------------	------------------------	----------------------

Campuses



[Home](#) | [Campuses](#)

[Morristown](#) | [Greeneville/Greene County](#) | [Sevier County](#) | [Claiborne County](#) | [Cocke County](#) | [Hawkins County](#) | [Maps](#) | [Other Locations](#)



At Walters State, college is convenient. With campuses in [Morristown](#), [Greeneville](#), [Sevierville](#) and [Tazewell](#), classes are close to your home and work. At each campus, you'll find a knowledgeable and dedicated faculty, technology to support your learning and student services like [counseling](#) and [financial aid](#).

- [Morristown](#)
- [Greeneville/Greene County](#)
- [Sevier County](#)
- [Claiborne County](#)
- [Cocke County](#)
- [Hawkins County](#)
- [Other Teaching Locations](#)

Appendix B-7
Other Support Services

Jefferson Davis Community College

CourseCompass™
Gateway To Your Online College Courses

PEARSON

MyLab Courses? You've Come to the Right Place!
Pearson MyLabs in CourseCompass are powerful tutorial and assessment products with ready-to-use tests and assignments, custom-built exercises, and automatic grading. [Read more...](#)

MyAccountingLab MyMathLab Myeconlab

Access the World of Online Learning from MyPlaces
Connect to all your Pearson courses and resources from a single, handy list. [Read more...](#)

Returning Users:
LOG IN
[Forgot your login name/password?](#)

Students **Register** Educators **Register**
Need Help? **Request Access**

What's New
[In CourseCompass?](#) | [In MyLabs?](#)

Take a Tour
[View List of Tours](#)

STUDENTS [Take a Tour](#)

How to Register
How to Buy Access
Getting Started
FAQ
Support

Welcome to CourseCompass, the online learning environment that helps you succeed in your MyLab or other course! CourseCompass offers you all the resources you need to get up and running in your courses. Here you'll find course announcements, syllabi, assignments, lecture notes, readings, videos, MP3s, tests, and more—everything you need to do your best.

EDUCATORS [Take a Tour](#)

How to Request Access
How to Register
Getting Started
Available Courses
FAQ

CourseCompass is a dynamic, interactive online learning environment. CourseCompass delivers powerful MyLabs and other courses that provide proven, effective tutorials and assessments for industry-leading Pearson textbooks. You can easily create a course and customize it with your own materials. And you can count on Pearson to offer the best tools available to help students succeed in your

Appendix B-7
Other Support Services

Jefferson State Community College

Jefferson State Community College

Future Students | Enrolled Students | Community & Corporate Students | Quick Links

My JSCC Pipeline
Registration & Admission
Class Schedules
Pay Tuition
Distance Education
Dual Enrollment
Online Library
STARS
Advising Center
Español
Contact Us

Servicios para la Comunidad Hispana

Información de Contact:
Coordinadores hispanicos del Outreach
hispanics@jeffstateonline.com

Shay Corzo, MA.
SHC-MS8116
scorzo@jeffstateonline.com
(205) 983-5921

Alberto Luna, Ph.D.
JC-BDH103
wluna@jeffstateonline.com
(205) 856-7819

Servicios Hispana

Servicios para la Comunidad Hispana en Jefferson State Community College

ESL 096 y 098 Verano

Servicios y oportunidades para la Comunidad Hispana en Jefferson State Community College

Mejore su vida y abra sus horizontes. El éxito es posible con nuestra ayuda. Queremos ayudarle a alcanzar sus metas académicas y profesionales. Escoger la carrera más apropiada para Ud. y su familia puede ser algo difícil. Nosotros en Jefferson State Community College podemos ayudarle a hacer esta decisión más fácil.

Los únicos documentos requeridos son su diploma de secundaria o su GED (General Equivalency Diploma) (diploma de equivalencia).

The English as a Second Language - ESL 096 and 098

(ESL) Program at Jefferson State is designed to better meet the needs of our student body. ESL courses will be offered at the Jefferson and Shelby-Hoover

Appendix B-7
Other Support Services

John C. Calhoun State Community College

The screenshot displays the Calhoun Community College website. At the top left is the college logo with the tagline "education works." and a "return to homepage" link. At the top right is the "Apply Online" section with links for "Web Advisor", "SPACE/Student Email", "Blackboard", "Contact Us", and "Search our Site". A navigation menu includes "About Us", "Admissions", "Programs of Study", "Student Services", "Athletics", and "Workforce/Community". The main content area features a banner for "FIRST STUDENT" with a collage of student photos. Below the banner is a link "<<go back:" and the heading "Student Injury and Sickness Plan Designed Especially for the Students of Calhoun Community College". The text states: "This area was designed specifically for the needs of our student insured population." It includes a link to "Click here to visit the FirstStudent Website" and describes the website's features: "From this page you can review plan brochures and enrollment materials, enroll on line, check the status of an existing claim, locate healthcare provider information, gain access to the Student Health Zone and obtain forms and information about our customer and claims services." Another "<<go back:" link is provided. The footer contains a list of links: "Catalog", "Schedule", "Job Openings", "Questions?? Ask us Now!", "Emergencies/Closing Policy", "College Maps & Campus Tours", "News", "Publications/Forms", "Calendar of Events", "Phone/E-mail Directory", "Disclaimer", "Our Mission", and "Calhoun Promo". At the very bottom is a disclaimer: "Calhoun Community College is committed to equal opportunity in employment and education. The College does not discriminate in any program or activity on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, age, national origin, disability, marital status or any other protected class."

Appendix B-7
Other Support Services

Northwest – Shoals Community College

Home | Students | About NW-SCC | Faculty & Staff | Academics | Contact Us

bookstore

Current Class Schedule & Textbook List*

Hours Of Operation	
Muscle Shoals Campus Bldg. 100 Monday-Friday 7:30 - 3:00 Evenings: Monday-Thursday 4:00 - 5:30	Phil Campbell Campus Bldg. 304 Monday-Friday 7:30-3:00 Evenings: Monday 4:00 - 5:30

Methods of Payment	Textbook Refunds	General Merchandise Returns
Financial Aid Information	Bookstore Tips	Where the New Textbook Dollar Goes

*Disclaimer: NW-SCC makes every effort to provide current information on required textbooks and class materials. Please note that prices and required items are subject to change without notice.