DEFINITIONS OF TERMS & ACRONYMS

**AACC:** The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) is the primary advocacy organization for the nation's community colleges. The association represents almost 1,200 two-year, associate degree-granting institutions and more than 11 million students.

**AACRAO:** The American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) is a nonprofit, voluntary, professional association of more than 10,000 higher education admissions and registration professionals who represent more than 2,600 institutions and agencies in the United States and in 28 countries around the world. The mission of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers is to serve and advance higher education by providing leadership in academic and enrollment services.

**Academic Student:** Refers to students taking courses in an Association of Arts degree program of study.

**Accreditation:** A voluntary, nongovernmental process, in which an institution and its programs are evaluated against standards for measuring quality.

**AERA:** The American Educational Research Organization (AERA) is an international professional organization, with the primary goal of advancing educational research and its practical application. Its more than 25,000 members are educators; administrators; directors of research; persons working with testing or evaluation in federal, state and local agencies; counselors; evaluators; graduate students; and behavioral scientists.

**AIR:** The Association of Institutional Research (AIR) is a non-profit professional organization that supports quality data and decisions for higher education.

**Applicant:** Per IPEDS, an individual who has fulfilled the institution’s requirements to be considered for admission (including payment or waiving of the application fee, if any) and who has been notified of one of the following actions: admission, non-admission, placement on waiting list, or application withdrawn (by applicant or institution).

**Audit:** Refers to an enrollment in a credit-bearing course, for which the student elects not to receive credit.

**Campus:** A campus is a permanent location, which offers an extensive range of educational programs consisting of academic, technical and career, which lead to an associate of arts, associate of applied science or a technical or vocational certificate; as well as, continuing education, adult basic education, workforce training and community service. Complete instructional and student support services are provided on a campus. A campus is staffed primarily with full-time professional personnel, and the facilities are owned by the community or junior college district. There is at least one campus in each community or junior college district. However, in accordance with Section 37-4-3(6)(e), no new community or junior college branch campus shall be approved without an authorizing act of the legislature.

**Career (Vocational) Student:** refers to a student enrolled in a Career (Vocational) Certificate Program of Study.
**Census Date:** The census date, also referred to as the cut-off date, is the date at which students must be enrolled and in attendance in order to be counted for pay purposes.

**CIP Code:** The Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) Code provides a universal coding system for programs of study that allows for the accurate tracking, assessment, and alignment of program descriptions and program completions activity. CIP was originally developed by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in 1980, with revisions occurring in 1985 and 1990, 2000, and 2010.

**Comprehensive Center:** A comprehensive center is a permanent location, which offers a broad range of educational programs and services. A comprehensive center offers both credit and non-credit courses in multiple instructional areas that may include academic, technical, and career instruction, workforce training and other instruction for professional development and/or lifelong learning. A comprehensive center will have permanent facilities owned or shared by statutory agreement through which the community or junior college is guaranteed utilization. The facilities must be sufficient to carry out the stated mission. Library services and student support services must be comparable to those services located at the main campus. “The number of full-time faculty members must be adequate to provide effective teaching, advising and scholarly or creative activity” (SACS). There may be one or more comprehensive centers in a community and junior college district or none at all.

**Conditional Admission:** A student who is admitted to the college without having completed all the required documentation. These students are not eligible for reimbursement.

**Contact Hour:** A unit of measure that represents an hour of scheduled instruction given to students. Also referred to as a clock hour.

**Credit Hour:** As defined in State Board policy 9.2, a semester credit hour is defined as minimum student-teacher contact of 750 minutes for lecture and 1500 minutes for laboratory, not to include time for passing between classes, registration, nor final examinations.

**Diploma Mill:** An education institution (secondary or postsecondary) operating without supervision of a state or professional agency and granting diplomas which are either fraudulent or, because of the lack of proper standards, worthless.

**Dual Credit Student:** A student who is enrolled in a community or junior college or state institution of higher learning while enrolled in high school and who is receiving BOTH high school and college credit for the postsecondary coursework.

**Dual Enrolled Student:** A student who is enrolled in a community or junior college or state institution of higher learning while enrolled in high school and who is receiving ONLY college credit for the postsecondary coursework.

**Electronic Audit Reporting System (eARS):** A system designed and developed by the MCCB to help colleges report data, and to assist the board with conducting the audits. The system allows colleges to upload data upon completion of a term. The data is validated to ensure values are correct and consistent throughout each data set and among all the colleges. It then allows auditors to visit each campus and conduct all work electronically.

**Education Achievement Council (EAC):** Established by the Mississippi Legislature in 2010 (HB 1071) for the purposes of increasing the educational attainment and skill levels of
Mississippi's working age population to the national average by 2025. Membership includes the chairs of the House and Senate Universities and Colleges Committees, the House and Senate Education Committees, the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, representatives from the IHL, Community College, and K12 Systems, as well as representatives from the MS Economic Council and the MS Department of Mental Health.

**Enrolled:** Any registered, active (not withdrawn or dropped) student listed on a course roster.

**Entering Student:** Any students coming into the institution for the first time. This includes students who initially attended the prior summer term and returned again in the fall; all first-time, first-year students; students transferring into the institution; both full-time and part-time students; and all degree/certificate-seeking as well as non-degree/certificate seeking students.

**Ethnicity** is based on the whether an individual is of Hispanic or Latino descent or not. *Hispanic or Latino:* A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race. The term “Spanish origin” can be used in addition to “Hispanic or Latino.”

**Extension Center:** An extension center is a permanent location, which offers a partial range of educational programs and services. An extension center may be solely academic, solely technical/vocational, or a combination of these types of curricula. An extension center is established for a specific, stated instructional mission. Library services and student support services are limited directly to serve the type and number of students. Facilities may be owned or leased by the community or junior college district. There may be one or more extension centers in a community or junior college district or none at all. “The number of fulltime faculty members must be adequate to provide effective teaching, advising and scholarly or creative activity” (SACS). There may be one or more extension centers in a community and junior college district or none at all.

**Fall Cohort:** The group of students entering in the fall term established for tracking purposes. [For the IPEDS Graduation Rates component, this includes all students who enter the institution as full-time, first-time degree or certificate-seeking undergraduate students during the fall term of a given year.]

**FICE Code:** a 6-digit identification code used to identify institutions that are accredited at the college level by an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

**Five-Year Rule:** If a student previously attended your postsecondary institution (5 years or more prior) and has not subsequently enrolled at another postsecondary institution, your institution’s transcript will satisfy admission requirements for that student.

**FTE:** Refers to full-time equivalent. For state reimbursement, this refers to full-time equivalent students and is defined as the total credit hours accumulated by Academic, Technical, and Vocational students during the summer, fall and spring semesters divided by thirty (30).

**Headcount:** An unduplicated tally of students by a characteristic, such as full-time/part-time, major, age, etc.

**Hybrid Courses:** Hybrid courses are defined as those courses with less than seventy-five percent (75%) of student contact hours provided on-line (SB 3122, 2005).
IHL: Refers to the Institutions of Higher Learning, the governing agency that oversees the seven public four-year colleges in Mississippi.

In Attendance: For the purpose of state reimbursement, the term “in attendance” shall mean that the student’s last day of attendance (if any) occurred on or after the last class meeting of the sixth week or its equivalent. Students with the equivalent of two absences (per one credit hour course) by the end of the sixth week shall be deemed not in attendance unless that student attends class thereafter (State Board Policy 9.2).

Intercession Course: An intercession course is one that meets during the interim period between two regular semesters.

IPEDS: Refers to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. This is a system of interrelated surveys conducted annually by the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). IPEDS gathers information from every college, university, and technical and vocational institution that participates in the federal student financial aid programs. The Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, requires that institutions that participate in federal student aid programs report data on enrollments, program completions, graduation rates, faculty and staff, finances, institutional prices, and student financial aid. These data are made available to students and parents through the College Navigator college search Web site and to researchers and others through the IPEDS Data Center.

Last Date of Attendance (LDA): The last date the student was physically present in the class, or for an MSVCC student, the last day the student demonstrated activity in that online course. LDA determination for a hybrid course is based on the most appropriate definition above, depending on whether the course was meeting traditionally or online at the time of the LDA.

Mississippi Association for Institutional Research (MAIR): An association composed of institutional research professionals at Mississippi’s 2-year and 4-year postsecondary institutions.

MCCB: Refers to the Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB), formerly the State Board for Community & Junior Colleges (SBCJC), is the agency responsible for the coordination of the fifteen public 2-year colleges in Mississippi.

MDE: Refers to the Mississippi Department of Education, the governing agency that oversees the K-12 system.

Mid-Level Funding: The goal of a per-student funding level for community colleges midway between funding for K-12 students and regional public university students. In 2007, a bill was passed by the MS legislature and signed by the governor that would require mid-level funding for community and junior colleges; however, that funding level has not yet been achieved.

MSVCC: The Mississippi Virtual Community College (MSVCC) is a consortium of Mississippi’s 15 community colleges that makes it possible for these colleges to leverage their distance learning resources -- including faculty, courses, support services, and technology. Through the MSVCC, students may take courses from community colleges anywhere in Mississippi while getting support services from a local college. To take a course from a remote (provider) college, a student enrolls at a local (host) community college. The host college supports the student with a full slate of student services, including advisement and counseling, financial aid, and learning resources. The host college awards credit for the course. The remote (provider) college provides the course instruction.
National Center for Education Statistics (NCES): A division within the U.S. Department of Education, NCES is the primary federal entity for collecting and analyzing data related to education in the U.S. and other nations.

NCCCRP: The National Community College Council on Research and Planning (NCCCRP), is the only national organization that exists exclusively to serve institutional research and planning professionals in 2-year, postsecondary educational institutions and other persons with a special interest in community college research.

No Show: No shows are students who registered for the course, but never attended the course.

nSPARC: This refers to the National Strategic Planning & Analysis Research Center. nSPARC, located at Mississippi State University, seeks to align university, industry, and government expertise and resources to maintain and increase economic competitiveness. nSPARC answers specific questions related to economic, workforce, and community development by conducting high-quality scientific research, including but not limited to statistical analysis, place-based analysis, survey design, and computer-assisted focus groups.

Off-Campus Site: An off-campus site is a location, which provides a very limited selection of course offerings (usually academic) that support the instructional mission of a campus or center. Such a site provides minimal library and student support services. Facilities generally are not owned by the college, but may be leased. The existence of an off-campus site does not imply commitment to maintain or to continue operation. A community or junior college must obtain approval from the State Board on a semester-by-semester basis to offer courses at an off-campus site in accordance with § 37-29-69 of the Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated.

Off-Schedule Course: An off-schedule course is any course taught during a regular semester that has a different census date than that of the regular semester’s courses. These courses will either be longer or shorter than the standard classes scheduled for that term.

Perkins: This refers to the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006. Colleges are required to submit accountability reports annually to the MS Department of Education in order to receive federal funds through Perkins.

Race is based in the following five categorizations (IPEDS definitions):

- **American Indian or Alaska Native:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.

- **Asian:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent, including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.

- **Black or African American:** A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.

- **Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.
- **White**: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.

**Readmission**: A student who has had a lapse in enrollment at a college may require readmission, depending on that college’s policy. Each college establishes its own policy for when readmission is necessary; however, all appropriate audit documents are required for the purpose of state reimbursement.

**Reinstatement**: A student who LDAs or withdraws prior to the last class meeting of the 6th week (or its equivalent), but who receives college approval to rejoin the class. Reinstatements must be coded on the roster, and reinstated students must be coded as reinstated and in attendance as of the last class meeting of the 6th week (or its equivalent) for the purpose of state reimbursement.

**SACCR**: The Southeastern Association for Community College Research (SACCR), provides a regional forum for planning, coordinating, or conducting activities which promote improvement of community-based postsecondary institutions throughout the southeastern United States. We identify and promote best practices in institutional research and planning, which support and strengthen decision making processes of higher education at the regional, state, and institutional levels.

**SACS**: The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) is the regional body for the accreditation of degree-granting higher education institutions in the Southern states.

**SAIR**: The Southern Association of Institutional Research (SAIR) is dedicated to the advancement of research leading to improved understanding, planning, and operation of institutions of post-secondary education. SAIR provides a forum for the dissemination of information and interchange of ideas on problems of common interest in the field of institutional research. In addition, SAIR promotes the continued professional development of individuals engaging in institutional research and fosters the unity and cooperation among persons having interests and activities related to research.

**SSCH**: Student Semester Credit Hours - Credit hours generated by all students in a semester.

**SBCJC**: The State Board for Community and Junior Colleges (SBCJC) is the agency responsible for the coordination of the fifteen public 2-year colleges in Mississippi. (Since July 1, 2011, the agency’s name officially changed to the Mississippi Community College Board.)

**Southern Regional Education Board (SREB)**: SREB is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that works with 16 member states to improve public pre-K-12 and higher education. Founded by the region’s governors and legislators in 1948, SREB was America’s first interstate compact for education. Today it is the only regional education compact that works directly with state leaders, schools and educators to improve teaching, learning and student achievement at every level of education.

**SLDS**: The Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS), established by SB2371 (2011), is a multi-agency database, currently in development, that will track education and student outcomes into the workforce.

**TAACCCT Grant Exception**: Students in this grant may or may not have graduated from high school or earned an equivalency diploma.
**Technical Student:** Refers to students taking courses in an Association of Applied Science or Technical Degree program of study.

**Transfer:** A student entering the reporting institution for the first time, but who has attempted hours from an postsecondary institution from which transfer coursework is accepted.

**Unduplicated Headcount:** A student is counted only once during an academic year (Summer term through Spring term) regardless of how many terms the student registers for or how many different classes the student takes during that time period.

**Uniform Course Numbering System:** The system of commonly identifying courses in all college parallel curricula, both in academic and in career-technical programs. A general revision of the numbering systems are prepared on an annual basis. Academic Courses are found here: [http://www.mccb.edu/pdfs/pb/coursenumbering.pdf](http://www.mccb.edu/pdfs/pb/coursenumbering.pdf) Career-Tech Courses are found here: [http://www.mccb.edu/pdfs/ct/cteuniformcoursenumbering2014.pdf](http://www.mccb.edu/pdfs/ct/cteuniformcoursenumbering2014.pdf)

**USDOE:** [United States Department of Education](http://www.ed.gov) (also sometimes referred to simply as DOE).

**Vocational Student:** See *Career Student*.