COMMUNITY COLLEGE PERFORMANCE PROFILE
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2010, the Mississippi Legislature passed HB 1071, which created the Education Achievement Council. The purpose of the Council, as stated in the bill, is to set education achievement goals for the state and to monitor progress towards those goals through required institutional and state report cards.

The Community College Report Card, or Performance Profile, was developed by the Presidents and Institutional Research and Effectiveness Officers of Mississippi's fifteen community colleges. The measures they employ align closely with the Voluntary Framework of Accountability developed by the American Association of Community Colleges, and are designed to reflect the unique mission of Community Colleges. Community colleges are open-admission and therefore educate students from diverse economic, educational, and demographic backgrounds who might not otherwise have access to higher education. Many community college students must overcome significant barriers to achieve their educational goals. They may be economically disadvantaged, academically under-prepared, or they may be working adult students who attend part-time while also holding jobs and taking care of their families.

Where possible, these report cards utilize data being reported annually to the State Workforce Investment Board, the U.S. Department of Education, and to Complete College America. Finally, the data contained in these report cards come in part from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System known as Mississippi LifeTracks and have been independently validated by a third-party, the National Strategic Planning and Analysis Research Center (nSPARC) at Mississippi State University.

Information on the Community College Performance Profile includes student enrollment, degrees awarded, student success, student retention, student progress, workforce development information, GED and adult basic education statistics, as well as enrollment and success in developmental or remedial coursework (college readiness). Each college's report includes information for the specific college, along with figures for the system. Most metrics are based upon a specified cohort of students, defined as a group of students who enter or start a program at the same time. Specific cohort definitions and dates are indicated with each metric. Cohort dates will vary, depending on whether the metric reflects entry or outcome data. An explanation of each section of the Performance Profile follows.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Mississippi's community colleges serve more than half of all undergraduates enrolled in public institutions of higher education in Mississippi. The comprehensive mission of community colleges makes them attractive to a broad range of students with varying degrees of college readiness and divergent educational goals. Students who enroll in community college include those seeking to obtain credits to transfer towards a four-year degree (University parallel/AA), those seeking a technical degree (AAS) or certificate that will lead them directly into the workforce, those who take a few classes to transfer to a four-year institution or to upgrade a particular skill, those who simply want to learn more about a specific area of personal interest, and those who dually enroll in college courses while also attending high school. Headcount (N) is provided, along with full-time equivalents (FTE). FTE is based on total credit hours generated by all students (fulltime and part-time) divided by thirty.

DEGREES

Educational objectives vary greatly among students who enroll in community colleges. Community College students enroll simply to test the waters of higher education, to complete basic courses for transfer, to gain or improve job skills, to gain knowledge for personal enrichment, or to obtain a degree or a certificate. For students seeking a degree or certificate, Mississippi community colleges provide three general options. Students may choose a university parallel degree (AA or Associate of Arts degree), which is the equivalent to the first two years of the baccalaureate degree; a technical degree (AAS or Associate of Applied Science degree), which prepares them to enter directly into the workforce; or a certificate, which is a shorter term program that allows them to upgrade the vocational and technical skills needed for specific jobs. Headcount (N) is provided for each of these categories.

STUDENT SUCCESS

The standard way to evaluate student success is to track students who enter college for the first time in a fall semester and who enroll in twelve or more credit hours for that semester. These students are commonly referred to as a first-time, full-time cohort, although they may not continue to enroll as full-time students in subsequent semesters. Common factors that affect time to success for community college students include family obligations necessitating reduced course loads and/or periodic stop-outs and the need for remedial coursework prior to enrolling in college level courses. The student success portion of the Performance Profile tracks outcomes for a first-time, full-time cohort at the end of two years (100%), three years (150%) and four years (200%). Students are considered successful if they graduate, transfer, or persist in enrollment. Headcount (N) and percentages (PCT) are provided at each point along the timeline.

STUDENT RETENTION

Retention is often viewed as an indicator of institutional expectation, support, advice, and learning. Community college retention must be viewed within the context of its diverse student body, with its differing educational goals and very often the added demands of work and family. The student retention portion of the Performance Profile evaluates a first-time, full-time cohort of students from the fall semester of entry into the following fall semester. Certificate students are not included in this measure, as many certificate programs are only one year in length. Headcount (N) and percentages (PCT) are provided for those cohort students who enroll one fall semester and are still enrolled the following fall semester.

STUDENT PROGRESS

Student Progress examines whether students are advancing towards degree completion within a reasonable timeframe.   Credit hour thresholds at the end of year two were established for both a part-time cohort (students enrolled in less than 12 semester hours during semester of entry) and a full-time cohort (students enrolled in 12 or more semester hours during semester of entry). Part-time and full-time status is determined in the first fall term only, and does not necessarily reflect that the student maintained that status over the course of enrollment. Credit hours earned include both remedial (developmental) coursework and college-level coursework completed with a "D" or better or a "P" if the course was Pass/Fail. Credit hours successfully completed at the end of the first term and at the end of year two are also included. Students enrolled in certificate programs requiring less than two years to complete are not included in this metric.   Headcount (N) and percentages (PCT) are provided for both cohorts. Credit hours successfully completed (N) and percentages (PCT) are also included.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Preparing students for employment is a critical component of the mission of a comprehensive community college. Mississippi's community colleges offer education and job training through credit Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs and Health Science programs, as well as through shorter-term non-credit Workforce Training programs.   The Workforce Development metric examines the job placement of CTE and Health Science graduates within six months of graduation and the licensure exam pass rate for those trained in jobs requiring state or national licensure. Additionally, this metric examines the number of hours spent on non-credit workforce training, the number of training events or classes conducted, the unduplicated headcount of individuals trained in non-credit workforce training classes during a fiscal year, and the number of individuals, who as a result of this training, received a state or industry recognized credential required for employment. Headcount, Contact Hours, and Events (N), as well as percentages (PCT) are provided for each measure in this metric.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community colleges often serve as the cultural center of the communities they serve, providing professional development and personal enrichment opportunities for citizens who have no desire or need to take a course for college credit. Community professional development courses are courses that enhance skills needed in the workplace, such as leadership, customer service, and business writing. Special interest courses are courses offered for community and personal enrichment or simply for fun. Common enrichment courses include creative arts courses, travel programs, and hobby-related courses.   Both types of courses reflect the comprehensive mission of the community college by supporting the professional, recreational, social and cultural needs of the communities they serve. Headcount (N) is provided for both community professional development and special interest course participation.

WAGE GAINS

The desired outcome for any student is employment and/or wage gains. Employment and wage gains for non-credit workforce training participants are examined before and after training. Similarly, employment and wage gains for credit program graduates are examined before and after enrollment. The headcount of those employed (N) one quarter after exit and their average annual earnings three quarters after exit are provided.

GENERAL EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT / ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

Nearly one in five adult Mississippians has no high school diploma or its equivalent. Mississippi's community colleges play a dominant role in helping these individuals re-engage in the education and job training they need to achieve a better quality of life for them and their families. As part of the Drop-Out Recovery Initiative, each community college operates Adult Basic Education (ABE) and General Education Diploma (GED) programs that provide a wide range of adult education and skills training, such as GED preparation, English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, literacy instruction, employability skills training, and basic skills training. Students who earn the GED are eligible for admission to credit-bearing postsecondary degree and certificate programs. The headcount (N) of GED students admitted into postsecondary credit courses, the total number of GEDs awarded, and the total enrollment in Adult Basic Education courses is provided.

COLLEGE READINESS ENROLLMENT AND SUCCESS

The open-door mission of the community college means that all students are welcomed, regardless of their academic preparedness upon leaving high school or the amount of time that lapsed since they were last enrolled in school. As a result, many community college students require some level of remediation or refresher course in math, English, and/or reading. Developmental courses include reading courses, all math courses below college algebra, and all English courses below English Composition I. The metric indicates headcount (N) of those students requiring remediation in one or more of these areas for a first-time, full-time cohort, as well as for all students. Additionally, a breakdown of enrollment by subject area is provided.

College Readiness Success reflects the progress those remedial (developmental) students make in completing the required remedial coursework and their progress through the first college-level course within two years of completing the remedial course. The metric indicates headcount (N) and percentage (PCT) of those students who successfully advance along each point of progression for a first-time, full-time cohort, as well as for all students. Additionally, a breakdown of success by subject area is provided.