



## News Release

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Athens, GA—Athens Technical College will join its sister institutions within the Technical College System of Georgia in converting from the quarter system to the semester system in August 2011.

The Technical College System of Georgia has made a strong commitment to its 190,000 students to assist them through the conversion with minimal disruption to their studies. Beginning in the Summer of 2010 and continuing through the transition to the semester system, faculty and staff at Athens Technical and its 25 sister colleges will offer one-on-one advisement sessions to develop individualized academic plans for all affected students. Emphasis will be made on easing any student concerns about the conversion and their course credits, graduation dates, and financial aid.

“We have several committees already working to aid in the transition to the semester system,” said Dr. Flora W. Tydings, president of Athens Technical College. “One of these committees is developing materials and professional development activities that will aid faculty in providing students with accurate, timely information about the conversion process.”

Dr. Tydings added that faculty and staff will devote special attention to those students who are nearing the completion of their programs of study in order to make sure they complete their graduation requirements prior to the conversion date.

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“We want to make sure that students are not delayed in meeting their graduation goals; therefore, we must reach out to them to guide them in developing an academic plan to reach those goals,” she said.

The Technical College System is launching a comprehensive new website, [www.TCSGSemester411.com](http://www.TCSGSemester411.com), which features a series of entertaining video messages about the quarter to semester conversion. The website also includes a frequently asked questions page, a new semester-based academic calendar, and a host of other information for current and prospective students.

Dr. Tydings pointed out that the system’s new website will be accessible from the *Prospective Students* tab on the college’s website ([www.athenstech.edu](http://www.athenstech.edu)). She also added that the college-specific academic calendar for the 2011-2012 academic year will be available to students by August 1, 2010.

Moving from quarters to semesters will align the technical college academic calendar with those of the state’s K-12 school systems, the University System of Georgia, and most of the state’s private colleges and universities. Eighty percent of public and private colleges in the United States follow a semester calendar.

“The change to a semester academic calendar is in the very best interests of our students,” says Ron Jackson, commissioner of the Technical College System of Georgia. “We’re a world-class educational system for workforce development, and a major part of our mission is to provide seamless education where calendars and curriculum align and lifelong learning is easily attainable for students of all ages and circumstances.”

Semester scheduling offers technical college students many benefits, Jackson says, including additional instructional time, more in-depth coverage of course content, and ease of transfer to other institutions, as well as calendar alignment that better supports dual and joint enrollment opportunities for high school students.

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“With a semester system, both students and their future employers benefit from more in-depth coverage of course content and extended learning opportunities,” Jackson added. “The Technical College System of Georgia is committed to workforce development and workforce excellence, and the conversion to semesters underscores this goal.”

Dean Alford, chair of the state board that oversees the state system of technical colleges, commented, “Moving to semesters is a strategic initiative that will ensure greater educational and career opportunities for all of our students and it will better prepare them for their important roles in Georgia’s 21<sup>st</sup> Century workforce.”

The conversion will not affect students’ state or federal financial aid, including Georgia’s HOPE grant and scholarship programs. Annual tuition under the new semester will be roughly equivalent to the annual cost under the quarter system; however, tuition will be paid three times a year instead of four times a year. Class sizes are not expected to increase on the semester system, nor will a student’s grade point average be affected.

Staff and administrators at the college and system levels have been working throughout the last year planning and addressing all necessary curriculum, scheduling, financial aid, information technology, and operations aspects of the conversion. A comprehensive curriculum review and adaptation has also been underway at the state level for over a year to ensure that program content is relevant to today’s workplace.

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