

# A Tradition of Excellence

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## Mission Statement

Athens Technical College, a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia, provides educational programs and services through traditional and distance education methods to foster lifelong learning, facilitate workplace success, and promote economic development.

## Vision Statement

As the college for the community, we provide transformational experiences that enable our students to advance educationally and to remain competitive in an ever-changing world.

## Strategic Goals and Objectives

### *Student Success*

- Expand and enhance optimal learning opportunities for students
- Advance student success through a focus on the achievement of learning outcomes for all students with the active involvement of all employees
- Advance student success through a focus on improving persistence and graduation rates
- Enhance pathways for students to transition from high school, home school, or adult education to Athens Technical College and from Athens Technical College to four-year institutions or to the workplace

### *Faculty/Staff Investment*

- Develop college faculty and staff
- Expand the number of full-time faculty and staff to better address the full complement of student needs

### *Workforce and Community Development*

- Identify and close workforce gaps
- Enhance continuing and community education opportunities at all campus locations
- Emphasize lifelong learning opportunities
- Redesign and implement the college Work Ethics program

### *Technology Integration*

- Expand the use of technology throughout the college

### *Sustainability*

- Ensure the long-term sustainability of the college

## History

The roots of postsecondary technical education in Georgia date back to 1943 when the state Board of Education approved a master plan for a system of area trade and vocational schools—the forerunners of today’s technical colleges. This action led to the opening in 1944 of the first of these institutions in Clarkesville. After a second area trade and vocational school opened in Americus in 1948, the state board set aside the master plan despite the growing demand for training as a result of the mechanization of Georgia’s agricultural economy and the rapid expansion of manufacturing throughout the state. The abandonment of the master plan would leave Clarkesville and Americus as the only locations of area trade and vocational schools in Georgia for the next ten years.

By the mid-1950s, W. M. Hicks, superintendent for trade and industrial education for the state Board of Education, was convinced that the economic future of Georgia depended on the availability of a trained workforce. Heeding the advice of Mr. Hicks, the state board revisited the issue of postsecondary vocational education in Georgia. After extensive deliberation, the board adopted a new set of policies in 1958 to open additional institutions throughout the state.

Two communities—one in northeast Georgia and the other in southwest Georgia—quickly responded to the actions of the state Board of Education by opening new institutions later that year. The Clarke County School District opened one of these institutions and named it Athens Area Vocational-Technical School, a name that would remain in place for the next 29 years. The institution opened in former army barracks on Pope Street in downtown Athens. Growth in enrollment would lead to the opening of an additional location in Winterville.

Approval of a school bond referendum by the citizens of Clarke County in the mid-1960s allowed Robert G. Shelnett, the first director of the institution, to consolidate the Pope Street and Winterville operations at a permanent campus on U.S. Highway 29, three miles north of downtown Athens. This facility opened in 1966. At the time, Athens Area Vocational-Technical School offered only 13 programs of study.

Mr. Shelnett would oversee two expansions of the U.S. Highway 29 campus before his retirement in 1985. A 1970-1971 construction project funded by Clarke County, the State of Georgia, and the Economic Development Administration doubled the size of the campus facilities, which in turn, provided space to introduce 10 additional programs. Another expansion in 1980 provided modern facilities for instructional programs in business education, electronic data processing, and electromechanical engineering technology. The 1980 construction project expanded campus facilities to over 155,000 square feet of classrooms, laboratories, shops, and administrative offices.

During his 27-year stewardship, Mr. Shelnett established a foundation that would enable the next generation of leaders to expand Athens Area Vocational-Technical School into one of the premier institutions of this type in Georgia.

The election of Joe Frank Harris as governor planted the seed for educational reform in Georgia. Governor Harris established the Georgia Vocational Education Task Force shortly after his inauguration in 1983. The governor charged the task force with the responsibility of identifying ways to improve the governance structure, funding, and quality of the area vocational-technical schools. Acting on the recommendations of the task force, Governor Harris issued an executive order in 1984 to create the Georgia Board of Postsecondary Vocational Education. This order set in motion a long-term plan to consolidate the governance of area vocational-technical schools under this new state entity.

Just as Athens Area Vocational-Technical School was one of the first two institutions to open under the 1958 policies adopted by the state Board of Education, it was one of the first five institutions to transition to state governance in 1986. This change in governance led to the renaming of the school in 1987 to Athens Area Technical Institute. The transition to state governance also led to the creation of a local board of directors. Board members are liaisons between the institution and the counties it serves. The board of directors consists of representatives from business, industry, and economic development from the service area, which includes Clarke, Elbert, Greene, Hart, Madison, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Taliaferro, Walton, and Wilkes counties.

The transition to state governance also led to the changing of the title of Dr. Kenneth C. Easom, the successor to Mr. Shelnett, from director to president. Dr. Easom guided the institution through a period of significant growth and change during his 18-year tenure as chief executive officer. Under his leadership, Athens Area Technical Institute was the first technical institute not governed by or connected to the Georgia Board of Regents, the governing entity of the state's university system, to earn accreditation as a two-year college from the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

This level of accreditation afforded the institution the opportunity to become the first technical institute in Georgia to receive approval from the Georgia Board of Nursing to develop an associate degree program designed to prepare students for licensure as registered nurses. The first class of students entered this program in 1991. Athens Area Technical Institute was also the first institution in the newly emerging state system to offer an associate degree program in paralegal studies. Dr. Easom added these unique programs to a comprehensive array of program offerings that included the only program designed to prepare students as laboratory assistants in the many private, state, and federal research and biotechnology laboratories moving to the area.

The institution assumed responsibility for providing adult education programs in the service area during Dr. Easom's tenure as president. This transfer of management responsibility occurred in July 1989. These adult education

programs include basic reading and math classes, English as a Second Language courses, Tests of General Educational Development (GED) preparation courses, and workplace literacy classes. The institution holds GED testing sessions at the campuses in Clarke, Elbert, Greene, and Walton counties and at locations in Hart and Wilkes counties. The institution operates adult education centers in all service area counties. Students may participate in a full range of adult education classes at these centers. Residents may also obtain information from staff at these centers about the programs and services offered by the college.

Dr. Easom also oversaw the first expansion of campus facilities in 15 years. In 1995, a 34,000 square-foot facility opened on the north end of the Athens Campus. It contains a lecture hall, the library, and administrative offices. The opening of this facility coincided with the opening in September 1995 of the Walton County Technical Education Center. This center was originally housed in a 7,500 square-foot facility located in the Walton Plaza in Monroe.

As part of the 1995 expansion, the institution held groundbreaking ceremonies in April for the Elbert County Campus. Elberton executive Frank Coggins donated nearly 43 acres of land 1.1 miles west of Elberton on Highway 72 for the new campus. The 37,000 square-foot academic building contains 14 classrooms, two laboratories, a lecture hall, and a library. The 10,000-square-foot classroom building contains six classrooms, an adult education laboratory, and faculty offices. The 7,000 square-foot child development center provides classroom space for the Early Childhood Care and Education program. The 3,900 square-foot auxiliary services building houses a bookstore and student center. Dedication ceremonies for the Elbert County Campus occurred on September 11, 1997.

Another dedication ceremony—this time for a technical education center in Greene County—followed the Elbert County ceremony 10 months later in July 1998. The Greene County Board of Commissioners, local businesses and industries, and a community development block grant from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs provided the funding needed to construct a 10,000 square-foot facility; the Greene County Development Authority provided land for the center.

Two years after opening the Greene County Center, the college acquired 10 additional acres of land and an 8,000 square-foot building directly across U.S. Highway 29 from the Athens Campus. This facility houses an adult education laboratory and classrooms and laboratory spaces for the plumbing program of study.

The Georgia General Assembly passed House Bill 1187—the A+ Education Reform Act—during the 2000 session. Signed into law by Governor Roy Barnes, the A+ Act authorized a name change for the publicly funded technical institutions in the state. A ceremony on July 6, 2000, brought Lieutenant Governor Mark Taylor to Athens to officially change the institution's name to Athens Technical College.

The college began the new millennium with a name that more accurately reflected the scope of services available

to the citizens of Northeast Georgia. The name change also led to an immediate increase in the number of students who enrolled in classes. Enrollment increased by 27.9 percent during the first year the college operated under the name Athens Technical College.

Growing enrollment led to the need for additional space on the Athens Campus. Dr. Easom worked to obtain funding for a new Business and Technology building before retiring in 2002. Construction on the 41,000 square-foot Business and Technology building began in May 2003. The building, which is located on the north end of the Athens Campus, opened in January 2005 and includes 18 classrooms, a lecture hall, instructional technology and computer network centers, and offices for faculty in the Division of Business and Public Service.

Dr. Flora Tydings arrived from Central Georgia Technical College to serve as the third chief executive of Athens Technical College in August 2004. Dr. Tydings launched the first capital campaign to be undertaken by the institution and its affiliate foundation shortly after arriving in Athens.

Dr. Tydings also guided the college through a process to expand the programs and services available at the technical education centers in Greene and Walton counties. The college now offers academic programs of study, training programs for business and industry, a comprehensive schedule of community education courses, and adult education classes at these locations. The Greene County Board of Commissioners renovated a portion of the existing facility in 2008 to accommodate this expansion. The renovated space now houses the college's Cosmetology and Medical Assisting programs.

The college moved the Walton County Center into larger facilities in the old Monroe Area High School building on Bryant Road. The college changed the designation of the facility to a campus and renamed it the Walton County Campus.

The partnership was one of six initiatives funded by the Technical College System of Georgia through the Georgia Career Academy Project, a state initiative designed to expand existing career academies and to open additional academies throughout Georgia. The \$500,000 grant was used to renovate one wing of the WCA facility to allow the college to introduce its Biotechnology program at that campus.

The 2008-2009 academic year marked the beginning of another period of growth for the college. Construction began on the Athens Campus of a new \$15.4 million, 67,500 square-foot facility for the college's Life Sciences programs. Health care is identified as one of the state's strategic industries and responds to the goals set forth by the Commission for a New Georgia for a healthier, safer, and more educated Georgia. When the facility opens in Spring 2010, it will be one of the largest facilities ever constructed on a technical college campus in Georgia.

During this same time frame, architects finished drawings for a \$4.5 million, 26,555 square-foot facility on the college's Elbert County Campus. This facility will allow the college to introduce new programs in Diesel Mechanics and expand the programs in Industrial Systems Technology and

Electrical Systems Technology. Groundbreaking ceremonies for the facility were held in September 2009, with construction starting shortly thereafter. This facility opened for Spring Quarter 2011.

The college also received a \$2.9 million grant in December 2008 from the Technical College System of Georgia to construct a career academy in conjunction with the Clarke County School District, the University of Georgia, and the OneAthens anti-poverty initiative. The career academy will be constructed at the school district's H. T. Edwards facility, which is located off Broad Street in Athens. The Edwards site is being redeveloped to house a number of school district programs, including its highly successful performance learning center. The career academy opened in August 2011.

Athens Technical College is one of just 30 community colleges nationwide to receive an invitation to join the 2011 cohort of Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count. Athens Technical College is the first institution in Georgia to participate in this national effort aimed at improving student success, closing achievement gaps, and increasing students' persistence and graduation rates. As an Achieving the Dream college, Athens Technical College will undertake an in-depth quantitative and qualitative analysis of its strengths, problem areas, and achievement gaps. With the addition of 30 community colleges in the 2011 cohort, the Achieving the Dream network now includes 160 institutions serving more than 2 million students annually in 30 states and the District of Columbia. In addition to Athens Technical College, the 2011 cohort includes community colleges in California, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, Ohio, Oregon, Texas, and Washington.

Athens Technical College and three other colleges in Georgia received funding to redesign learning support coursework as part of a \$1 million grant from Complete College America in 2011. Athens Technical College joined Georgia Piedmont Technical College, the College of Coastal Georgia, and Georgia Gwinnett College to pilot innovative remediation programs in which students to complete technology-based diagnostic assessments to determine the level of remediation required for each student.

Athens Technical College joined its sister institutions in the Technical College System of Georgia in converting from the quarter-based academic calendar to the semester-based academic calendar beginning with Fall Semester 2011. In preparation for this transition, program faculty worked with the membership of their program advisory committees and with their peers at technical colleges across Georgia to redesign the curriculum. The redesign process ensured that the programs included instruction and content on topics relevant to the twenty-first century.

## Development Activities

Athens Technical College Foundation Inc. – The college established the Athens Technical College Foundation Inc. in January 1988 as a nonprofit corporation whereby funds, property, and other types of financial assistance – primarily

from businesses, industries, corporate and private foundations, and individuals – are available to the college for the support and development of educational, cultural, social, civic, and professional endeavors. The purpose of the foundation is to provide academic and institutional support, scholarships, and endowments to promote the mission of the college. The officers and board of trustees are distinguished business and civic leaders from the counties of the service area.

**Alumni Association** – The college formed the Athens Technical College Alumni Association to encourage graduates to continue to participate in the development of the college. The association's goal is to maintain a mutually beneficial relationship between the college and its alumni by promoting their personal, educational, and professional development. The college inducts graduates into the alumni association at the annual graduation ceremony.

## Accreditation, Approval, and Certification

**Regional Accreditation** – Athens Technical College is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, GA 30033; 404-679-4501) to award the associate degree. Inquiries to the Commission should relate only to the college's accreditation status, and not to general admission information.

**Professional Accreditation** – The business unit (the associate of applied science degree programs in Accounting, Business Administrative Technology, and Marketing Management) is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP), 11520 West 119th Street, Overland, Park, KS, 66213; however, the following associate of applied science degree programs are not accredited programs with ACBSP even though they are offered by the Division of Business and Public Service: Business Administration; Computer Support Specialist; Criminal Justice Technology; Culinary Arts; Early Childhood Care and Education; Health Information Technology; Hotel, Restaurant, and Tourism Management; Networking Specialist; Paralegal Studies; and Social Work Assistant.

The programs in Dental Assisting and Dental Hygiene are accredited by the American Dental Association Commission on Dental Accreditation. The Commission is a specialized accrediting body recognized by the United States Department of Education. The Commission on Dental Accreditation can be contacted at (312) 440-4653 or at 211 East Chicago Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60611.

The Diagnostic Medical Sonography program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) ([www.caahep.org](http://www.caahep.org); 1361 Park St., Clearwater, FL 33756; 727-210-2350) upon the recommendation of the Joint Review Committee on Education in Diagnostic Medical Sonography (JRC-DMS).

The Nursing program is accredited by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC),

3343 Peachtree Road NE, Suite 500, Atlanta, GA 30326, (404) 975-5000. Anyone wishing to file a complaint with regard to the Nursing program should follow the complaint resolution procedures as outlined in this publication (see *Complaints*). They may also contact the National League for Nursing at the above address and telephone number.

The Physical Therapist Assistant program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) of the American Physical Therapy Association, 1111 North Fairfax Street, Alexandria, VA 22314; 703-706-3245; [www.capteonline.org](http://www.capteonline.org).

The Radiography program is accredited by the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT), 20 North Wacker Drive, Suite 2850, Chicago, Illinois 60606-3182; (312) 704-5300; e-mail: [mail@jrcert.org](mailto:mail@jrcert.org); <http://www.jrcert.org>. If a student has an allegation of non-compliance with the Standards for an Accredited Educational Program in Radiography, they may pursue those allegations by going to the JRCERT website and accessing the section on *Student Resources*. Under *Student Resources*, select *Allegations* and follow the directions on the reporting form. Students must complete all the steps of the Athens Technology grievance procedures as outlined in the Radiography Addendum to the Catalog and Student Handbook before considering whether to file with JRCERT an allegation that the program is not in compliance with JRCERT standards.

The Surgical Technology program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP), 1361 Park Street, Clearwater, FL 33765, upon recommendation by the Accreditation Review Committee on Education in Surgical Technology (ARCS-T).

The Veterinary Technology program is accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) 1931 North Meacham Road, Suite 100, Schaumburg, IL 60173, as a program for educating veterinary technicians.

**Approval** – NAST 1100—Patient Care Fundamentals, is approved by the Georgia Medical Foundation (GMCF), 1455 Lincoln Parkway, Suite 800, Atlanta, Georgia, 30346, to provide training and preparation to become a certified nurse assistant.

The Paralegal Studies program is approved by the American Bar Association (ABA).

The Phlebotomy Technician program is approved by the National Center for Competency Testing (NCCT), 7007 College Boulevard, Suite 385, Overland Park, Kansas, 66211.

The Practical Nursing program is approved by the Georgia Board of Nursing.

**Certification** – The Automotive Technology program is certified by the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation Inc. (NATEF).

The Medical Assisting program is certified by the National Center for Competency Testing (NCCT), 7007 College Boulevard, Suite 250, Overland Park, KS 66211.

## Memberships

The college holds memberships in the following organizations:

- Association for Institutional Research
- Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count
- Alliance for Community College Innovation
- American Association for Paralegal Education
- American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
- American Association of Community Colleges
- American Technical Education Association
- Association of Surgical Technologists
- Council for Higher Education
- Georgia Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
- Georgia Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
- Georgia Hospitality and Travel Association
- Georgia Online Database
- National Academic Advising Association
- National Association of College and University Business Officers
- National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
- National League for Nursing
- North Georgia Associated Libraries
- National Student Clearinghouse
- Office Safety and Asepsis Procedures Research Foundation
- Southeastern Association of Community College Research
- Southeastern Library Network
- Southern Association of College and University Business Officers
- Southern Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
- Southern Association of Community, Junior, and Technical Colleges
- Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education
- Technical College Directors' Association of Georgia
- Technical College Foundation Association of Georgia
- Two-Year College Chemistry Consortium

## Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges

Athens Technical College is a member of the Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC) Consortium of approximately 1,900 colleges and universities. SOC Consortium members subscribe to principles and criteria to ensure that quality academic programs are available to servicemembers, including members of the National Guard and Coast Guard, their family members, reservists, and veterans of all services. As an SOC Consortium member, Athens Technical College ensures that military students share in appropriately accredited postsecondary educational opportunities available to other citizens. Current SOC information is available to faculty and staff members and prospective students on the Internet at [www.soc.aascu.org](http://www.soc.aascu.org).

## Program Advisory Committees

Athens Technical College invites representatives of area companies to serve on program advisory committees to ensure that the academic programs meet the needs of employers. The committees provide insight into trends affecting the workplace and aid in planning and evaluating the programs and services offered by the college.