

Aiken Technical College
2015 Accountability Report
(Draft – for inclusion in SC Technical College System Report)

The Aiken Technical College Vision is that of a catalyst for developing educated, engaged and employable individuals whose collective energy will be the driving force for prosperity and the quality of life in our diverse community. Realization of the vision is accomplished through the College’s Mission, which is defined as follows:

Aiken Technical College (ATC) is a public, open-door, two-year comprehensive institution of higher education established to provide citizens of greater Aiken County opportunities for educational, economic, professional, civic and personal development. Through its focus on teaching and learning, the College supports economic growth and community development by educating and training students for entry into the workforce or for further education.

In support of this overall Mission, the ATC 2014-2015 Annual Plan established 14 Strategic Objectives for the fiscal year, which are categorized within four overall Goals for the institution:

- Goal 1 - Empower our students through life-changing education and training experiences to become productive and committed citizens.
- Goal 2 – Promote the College as a regional leader of excellence in education, training, and workforce development.
- Goal 3 – Establish collaborative partnerships to advance educational attainment of area citizens.
- Goal 4 – Achieve a College culture of excellence through the deployment of an evidence-based continuous improvement system.

The 14 Strategic Objectives encompassed academic and non-academic College services and activities components, and included 33 different Action Steps designed to improve ATC’s academic programs and offerings; customer service to its students, local business and industry partnerships, and the community; and its ongoing relationships with critical governmental and non-profit partners throughout the ATC service area. This report will focus on those items contained in the 2014-2015 Annual Plan specifically related to instruction, service to students and enhancements to the campus infrastructure, and which are central to the goals and Mission of the College. This review is not comprehensive, but focuses on the most important instructional and non-instructional related items contained in the plan.

Aiken Technical College constructs, equips and opens a new technical facility for technical programs – The Center for Energy and Advanced Manufacturing (CEAM).

- Funds secured to equip the CEAM teaching labs. Aiken Technical College will host a dedication of the \$8.5 million, 30,000 sq. ft. CEAM building in September of 2015. The CEAM building was specifically designed to house programs in the technical education areas of advanced manufacturing, nuclear welding, radiation protection technology and nuclear quality systems. ATC received a FY 2016 \$1,000,000 (non-recurring) State budget appropriation for equipment, and a USDA Rural Economic Development Loan in the amount of \$1,000,000 was closed and received and will also be leveraged to purchase equipment. These funds will be used to purchase new and current equipment to support welding technology and machine tool/fabrication technologies necessary for program enhancement and upgrades. Additionally, a Department of Energy grant has been applied for to design, construct and install a Systems Flow Loop to support the Radiation Protection Program, maintenance and electronic technicians.



- Increased media exposure for technical programs. ATC leveraged the momentum of the CEAM building construction phase to promote the vital need for educated, engaged and trained industrial, welding, and radiation protection workers in the nuclear and manufacturing industries through presentations. Numerous presentations were given to various community groups, elected officials, and the Department of Energy. Further, tours were provided of the construction site for the Foundation Board of Trustees and the Aiken County Commission for Technical Education. Additionally, a webpage dedicated to the CEAM building was developed and media releases were shared with the press during the construction period. Finally, a targeted marketing plan, to position ATC as the regional technical college of choice, was developed to increase media exposure for technical programs and increase awareness of the need for an educated technical workforce.
- The College continues to support objectives identified by the Community Manufacturing Workforce Collaboration. ATC has been fully engaged from the inception to the completion

of the need for *A Comprehensive Regional Workforce Study*. The study was completed by the SRS Community Reuse Organization in April 2015. The results projected the growing workforce demand in 2019 in the manufacturing, nuclear, health care, and information technology sectors. The college played a prominent role in the press conference and will be actively involved in developing a comprehensive workforce plan for the Central Savannah River Area.

Aiken Technical College receives funds to support technical training for the Telecommunication Industry.

- ATC's TAACCCT proposal was funded for \$2.45 million and funds are to support the expansion of the Tower Technician I certificate. The seven-week for-credit certificate program will be expanded to four stackable certificates and culminating in an Associate of Applied Science in General Technology with an emphasis in Telecommunications. During 2014-2015, the Tower Technician (TT1) Program graduated 100 students; 100% of the graduates secured positions locally, regionally or nationally or enrolled in further education at ATC. The TT2 Certificate DACUM (Developing A Curriculum) was completed and the curriculum, 100% online course delivery is well underway; the TT2 certificate has been approved by the Aiken County Commission on Technical Comprehensive Education and the SC System Technical Education/System Office, and a RFP is out for bid for online course development and a third party evaluator. Erecting on-campus climbing towers has been temporarily delayed. The TT Program is gaining national attention, and requests for presentations and information from other colleges and industry leaders are resulting in added recognition, opportunities for collaboration, and increased program enrollment and job placement rates for the college.

Aiken Technical College shortens the time to graduation through curriculum redesign.

- Redesigned the developmental studies courses to transitional studies and integrated into the Academic Success Center. Six developmental studies courses were redesigned and the faculty attended professional development to gain skills in an accelerated pedagogy model. The math courses were redesigned from a lecture/lab course to a transitional studies modularized math course combining two courses. The Learning Resource Center staff worked with the faculty members to create learning objects that addressed the needs of students requiring academic assistance in math, reading and English. Further, a new course in Reading, Writing and Reasoning was developed by combining the English and reading developmental courses. Transitional courses feature added support for students with classroom tutors in addition to the tutors in the Academic Success Center. The movement to an accelerated model of learning has helped to smoothly shift developmental study courses to transitional studies courses, which affords students the opportunity to complete their transitional courses in one semester.

Transitional Studies Course Success Rate Spring Semesters				
COURSE		2013	2014	2015
ENGLISH	ENG-031	58.4%	51.3%	61.0%
	ENG-032	70.7%	67.9%	69.8%
MATH	MAT-011	71.1%	70.7%	Not offered
	MAT-031	71.1%	70.7%	75.4%
	MAT-032	62.3%	62.5%	83.7%
READING	RDG-031	50.0%	41.0%	60.5%
	RDG-032	50.6%	61.2%	73.2%

Aiken Technical Colleges launches a *Within Reach* initiative with the Aiken County Public School District and collaborates with the SC Army National Guard to offer vocational training to students graduating from the Youth Challenge Academy.

- Hosted three on campus breakfast focus groups sessions for middle and high school principals, vice principals, and district office staff to share information and build relationships for improving educational attainment in Aiken County. A three year action plan, *Within Reach*, was developed and is underway. The plan has three established goals to increase ATC presence on high school campuses, increase students enrolled in dual enrollment courses, and to educate parents on the various financial aids available to support college. Further, ATC released \$25,000 for 25 *Within Reach* scholarships for Fall 2015, and the ATC Foundation committed to raise \$50,000 for 50 scholarships for Fall 2016.
- Established and deepened relationships with Career and Technical Education (CATE) faculty at Aiken County high schools. ATC held eight meetings with the CATE high school (HS) faculty and one with the Aiken County Career and Technical Center faculty.

ATC and the CATE faculty collaborated to develop new Technical Advanced Placement (TAP) agreements to increase advanced placement opportunities for HS students wishing to attend ATC; new TAP agreements for business and computer courses were developed; and TAP agreements for welding and machine technology programs were expanded. Further, a relationship was established with the Career Center faculty to develop a pathway for Cybersecurity advanced placement.

- Financial awareness events were held for current students in Spring 2015. Financial Aid Nights were held at all seven Aiken County high schools in partnership with the Lower Savannah Council of Governments. A presentation for faculty was provided to educate faculty regarding financial aid awarding and the compliance process. Resources have been provided to students and graduates as a result of these partnerships.
- In collaboration with the SC Army National Guard, the Clemson Extension Program, LSCOG, and DJJ, ATC developed and submitted a Department of Labor grant to support vocational/technical education program for at-risk youth completing the Youth Challenge

Academy (YCA) program. Grant funding was received for three years, and the 50 YCA graduates will begin taking vocational training certificate programs at ATC in Spring 2016. The YCA graduates will attend as a cohort in short-term credit certificate programs designed especially for them. The programs include the Basic Tower Technician, Basic Welding, Certified Production Operator, Networking and the Patient Care Assistant program. The YCA students will receive a certificate of completion and applicable industry recognized credentials. Further, the students will receive career readiness and personal leadership training to prepare them for entry into the workforce.

Aiken Technical College continues to improve through high quality assessment practices.

- Implemented year two of the Assessment Practices Academy. In Fall 2014, an assessment academy was conducted to prepare Deans and Department Chairs to support program faculty as they planned for the 2014-2015 yearly learning outcomes assessment document. The assessment academy met and developed strategies to train faculty on implementing the writing rubric, review curriculum program maps, program and student learning outcomes.
- TK20 was implemented at ATC in June 2015. TK20 stands for “Technology in Kindergarten through Age 20”. It is an assessment, accountability, and management system to help colleges and universities meet requirements for accreditation. ATC faculty and administrators are receiving training for the academic assessment module, which includes curriculum mapping and course learning outcomes. Other modules to be implemented during 2015-2016 include college-wide annual planning; accreditation, including individual program accreditation; student assessment of instructors (SAI) and assessment of services and operations (SOAR), surveys and strategic plans. Utilizing TK20 has resulted in improved communication and data collection efforts and a cost savings for ATC.
- Completed year five of the Quality Enhancement Plan: *Think* with three key events including a ThinkQuest Bowl for students and a faculty and staff engagement session during the 2014-2015 Welcome Back event and the compiling of results from five years of implementation. The 2014 CCCSE results reported that ATC’s mean score was slightly higher in critical thinking than the cohort of participating colleges nationwide.
- Services and Operations Assessment and Review (SOAR) was fully implemented in June 2015. Aiken Technical College fully implemented the SOAR process to assess the services to students and the operations of the College. The assessment was implemented to non-academic units and student support departments. A comprehensive survey was developed by the directors and 300 surveys were administered to a random group of students. SOAR data was collected in Spring 2015; results were reviewed and provided to the Executive Staff members for further discussion and review in their divisions and for inclusion in the