
General Information

Institutional Mission

Northwest-Shoals Community College provides career technical, academic, and lifelong educational opportunities using varied delivery systems; promotes economic growth; and enriches the quality of life for people of the Northwest Alabama region.

Institutional Philosophy and Goals

The College is dedicated to the belief that all people should have an equal opportunity to develop and expand their skills and knowledge throughout their lives. The College promotes this concept by making higher education available to all who can benefit through its open door admission policy, affordable tuition, and a wide variety of financial aid opportunities. The College is committed to providing an educational environment where opportunities for successful advancement will be available for all students, but particularly those who have historically been underserved. Instruction is delivered in various formats including on campus, online, and at convenient off-campus locations throughout the College's service area. Through its programs and services, the College contributes to the quality of life in the community, supports economic development in the region, and reinforces the concept of learning as a lifelong pursuit.

The College offers educational programs and services which enable students to achieve their potential, better understand themselves and others, seek continued higher education, gain applied technology skills required for employment or career growth, and improve their quality of life. Educational opportunities provided by the College include courses for transfer, associate degrees, applied technology program certificates, training programs, developmental studies, adult education, and Ready to Work programs. Working in partnership with area universities, businesses, and industries, the College strives to support economic development by keeping the curriculum current.

Through Dual Credit/Dual Enrollment arrangements with local school systems, eligible high school students may complete courses offered by the College and receive college credit for their work. College credits and training programs are also available to those requiring college courses for promotion and/or professional certification.

The College recognizes the need to provide student support services. A Student Success Center is housed on each campus to assist students with a variety of college success initiatives. Professional advisors help students succeed and manage their lives and careers through financial aid assistance, and personal and academic advisement. Students with additional needs have access to a variety of services provided by the College. The College also provides appropriately furnished and well maintained physical facilities, classroom equipment, and grounds. In addition, extra-curricular activities expand and enrich student experiences at the College.

Goal 1

To ensure access to education for all people throughout their lives with special efforts made to seek diversity of population and to support the historically underserved;

Goal 2

To continuously improve the quality of our varied educational offerings which lead to certificates, associate degrees, transfer to baccalaureate institutions, the general educational development of students, and immediate employment in an occupational field, the College strives to meet the following general educational outcomes.

1. Students will demonstrate proficiency in written communication.
2. Students will demonstrate proficiency in problem-solving skills.
3. Students will demonstrate proficiency in quantitative reasoning.

*These outcomes are used to assess the general education competencies for all **students**.*

Goal 3

To build community partnerships which support economic development.

Goal 4

To keep the curriculum current in order to strengthen the bridge for students to pursue further education and/or the workforce;

Goal 5

To meet the needs of a variety of community based populations by designing credit, non-credit, and CEU courses, using varied delivery systems and by making available services, activities, and other resources of the College;

Goal 6

To offer support services and extracurricular activities which enrich the student learning experience and help students formulate and achieve their goals;

Goal 7

To establish an environment which is safe, healthy, aesthetically pleasing, accessible to students, and otherwise learning centered;

Goal 8

To develop faculty and staff who are proficient, professional, and enthusiastic in advancing the mission of the College; and

Goal 9

To become a model of institutional effectiveness and advancement through decision-making based on research, planning, on-going assessment, and adequate and equitable budgeting and distribution of funds.

History of the College

Northwest-Shoals Community College is a comprehensive two-year public institution of higher learning providing vocational, technical, academic and lifelong educational opportunities for the northwest Alabama Region. The College is part of the Alabama College System, a statewide system of postsecondary colleges, governed by the Alabama Board of Education. Northwest-Shoals derives its original charter from the Alabama legislature through the Alabama Trade School and Junior College Authority Act of 1963.

The Northwest-Shoals service area is comprised of the counties of Colbert, Franklin, Lauderdale, Lawrence and the western portion of Winston. The College operates two campuses – the Shoals Campus in Muscle Shoals and the Phil Campbell Campus in Phil Campbell.

The Phil Campbell Campus was founded in 1963 as Northwest Alabama State Junior College to provide access to postsecondary education for citizens of the rural counties of northwest Alabama. It was the first public junior college in what was to become the Alabama College System and was accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in 1967. The Shoals Campus, founded in 1966 as Joe Wheeler State Trade School, provided occupational and technical training.

Both institutions recognized that the narrowness of their focus did not meet their constituents' educational needs. In 1973 Muscle Shoals State Technical Institute enhanced its curriculum and obtained accreditation from the Commission on Occupational Education Institutions. In 1977, with the approval of the Alabama State Board of Education, Northwest Alabama State Junior College established a branch campus in Tuscumbia primarily to offer first and second-year college courses.

In 1989 the Alabama State Board of Education created Northwest Alabama Community College through the consolidation of Northwest Alabama State Junior College in Phil Campbell and Northwest Alabama State Technical College in Hamilton. Shoals Community College was created through consolidating Muscle Shoals State Technical College and the Tuscumbia Campus of Northwest Alabama State Junior College. The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools granted accreditation to Northwest Alabama Community College in 1990. Shoals Community College received its accreditation in 1991.

Northwest-Shoals Community College was formed in 1993 by the Alabama State Board of Education through the merger of Northwest Alabama Community College's Phil Campbell Campus and Shoals Community College. The merger was enacted in order to provide more effective and efficient educational services to residents of rural northwest Alabama and the Shoals area.

Additionally, the merger provided business and industry with a single focal point for addressing educational and training needs and provided a single workforce development center to assist communities with economic development activities. The merger was reviewed and approved by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Reaffirmation of accreditation was granted by SACSCOC in December, 2009. Northwest-Shoals Community College, composed of two campuses, has adequate physical facilities to support an environment in which academic, social, physical, and emotional development may be fostered. The two campuses are located in Muscle Shoals and Phil Campbell. The campus in Muscle Shoals is designated as the Shoals Campus.

College Campuses

Phil Campbell Campus

The Phil Campbell Campus is located approximately 30 miles south of the Shoals campus. It is easily accessible from either U.S. Highway 43 or Alabama Highway 5/ AL Hwy 13. Located on a scenic 100-acre site one mile southwest of the town of Phil Campbell, the campus provides academic and applied technology programs and a full complement of student and community services. The Beville Fine Arts Center is among the premier cultural centers in northwest Alabama and the home of numerous concerts, musicals and special events for both the College and local communities.

Shoals Campus

The 110-acre Shoals Campus houses academic and applied technology programs. The Patriot Center, a multipurpose facility, offers the largest seating capacity in Colbert County. Tennis courts and a fitness center provide opportunities for both intramural athletics and wellness activities for the student body and the community. A child development center with a qualified staff to care for children is available to students and the community. Also housed on the Shoals Campus are allied health programs, science labs, special programs such as adult basic education, and the Alabama Technology Network's Environmental Technology Center.

Grants and Contracts

In all cases of external grants and contracts, Northwest-Shoals Community College will maintain full control of instructional and other institutional activities. The College assures that any external grant or contract shall comply with the overall mission of the institution and that the College will comply with all pertinent state and federal regulations, legislation, and procedures. The College shall in no way compromise its commitment to maintain legal and ethical administrative practices as well as accreditation standards.

Commitment to Institutional Integrity

Northwest-Shoals Community College complies with the Alabama Ethics Commission's advisory opinions concerning private consulting that may be conducted by full-time employees. The Chancellor's guidelines in regard to "conflict of interest" issues require the approval of the President, Vice President, Deans and Department or Division Chairperson for outside, compensated consulting activities.