Community College Mission Statements in an Era of the New Community College Baccalaureate

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COMMUNITY COLLEGE MISSION STATEMENTS IN AN ERA OF
THE NEW COMMUNITY COLLEGE BACCALAUREATE

By

Kelly Hernandez

A DISSERTATION

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of the University of Miami
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COMMUNITY COLLEGE MISSION STATEMENTS IN AN ERA OF
THE NEW COMMUNITY COLLEGE BACCALAUREATE

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Community colleges have long suffered an identity crisis since their inception. Throughout history, community colleges have shifted their missions due to various environmental forces such as the economic climate and societal needs. By employing qualitative content analysis, this study first investigated the salient themes of mission statements from 295 community colleges belonging to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Schools (SACSCOC), and secondly, explored whether there were major variations in the missions depending on their classification as an associate’s degree-granting institution or as a bachelor’s degree-granting institution. Thirdly, the study revealed how the themes of community college mission statements have changed since 2001 when the first state in the SACSCOC region began to authorize community colleges to confer baccalaureate degrees. Results indicate that the salient themes of access, workforce and economic development, and high quality and excellence remain steady as the top three themes since 2001, but that access has been eclipsed by the workforce development mission. The themes of responsiveness, comprehensiveness, and diversity lessened in salience while the new themes of community development, success, and quality of life improvement emerged. Additionally, the study demonstrates that the themes in institutional mission statements, operationalized by the institutions’ values, goals, and functions, do vary by their classification as an associate’s degree-granting or
as a bachelor’s degree-granting community college. The thematic variations within mission statements over time and by institutional type are interpreted through the lens of resource dependency theory, and implications for the future of the community college and their students are offered.
DEDICATION

To those from University of Miami: I wish to thank my committee for their careful scrutiny of this document and providing me with their valuable insight and expertise in order to publish a high quality paper. Dr. Scotney Evans must be commended for his gentle guidance and for asking hard questions all throughout my research. Only after the defense did I sense the value of these razor-sharp questions and was grateful for his thorough feedback and expertise. Thank you, Dr. Scott Ingold, for your unwavering commitment and willingness to respond to questions in such a prompt and caring manner.

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*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.* ~Philippians 4:13

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Chapter One: Introduction

Community colleges have long suffered an identity crisis. First established as junior colleges in the early 1900s, community colleges were established merely as extensions of secondary school (Geller, 2001). With passage of the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act or GI Bill in 1944, the vocational efforts of community colleges flourished with the infusion of financial assistance for veteran benefits (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). In the decades of 1960 and 1970s, the community college enjoyed a golden age of growth, as students flooded the halls of community colleges across the nation (Altbach, Gumport, & Berdahl, 2011). By the late 1980s, Fountain and Tollefson (1989) identified the principal mission foci of community college to be formal education, student services, continuing education, economic development, and finally, attention to servicing a diverse group of learners. In the booming economy of the 1990s, community colleges were influenced heavily by industry and business, driving a new force of vocationalism upon the college (Levin, 2000). Levin (2000) pointed out that in the 21st century the mission shifted from collegiate to career education and from community development to workforce and economic development due the influences of the global economy. At the same time, for-profits have been competing fiercely in an increasingly selective admissions market for students, and the numbers of virtual and distance learners have leaped exponentially. Adding to their already comprehensive list of shifting priorities, community colleges are now quickly inching toward the baccalaureate; at present nearly 50 public community colleges have added select bachelor’s degrees to their list of already comprehensive educational offerings (AACC, 2013). Considered a bellwether state in the nation for the community college baccalaureate movement, Florida alone is home to half
of the community colleges that now offer bachelor’s degrees (CCBA, 2012; Floyd & Walker, 2008).

In an era of globalization, which direction are community colleges heading as they respond to both local and global forces on this flatter world? Who is exerting the greatest influence on community colleges’ missions—the constituencies from their respective service areas or less visible, more global capitalist-driven forces? In an intensely competitive climate of limited funding and constrained human and capital resources, how are community colleges adapting to this rapidly changing, open market-oriented environment? After the last decade’s strong pull towards the accretion of baccalaureate programs, what is the current state of the community college missions?

**Purpose and Research Questions**

This study fills a gap in the understanding of where community colleges are located in the continuum of their long established missions. This research allows community colleges’ mission statements to speak for themselves and articulate the purpose and direction of their institutions. Approximately half of all undergraduates, especially those from lower socioeconomic levels, attend community colleges in this country (AACC, 2012). Therefore, this study is particularly relevant to students who have been historically excluded from traditional four-year institutions if indeed segments of the community colleges sector are slowly morphing out of the open access paradigm into the baccalaureate level. Also, it is incumbent upon community college presidents and high-level administrators to be informed as to where their institutions are positioned in the larger context of community college mission in order to analyze, plan, and lead effective strategic decisions for their institution. In the current pace of unprecedented
changes in higher education, a solid mission foundation is critical for clear direction and inspiration, not to mention, accreditation. However, an in-depth search into the literature revealed that, to date, only six studies have investigated community college mission statements, but these were limited to a specific region, state, a specific aspect of mission statement, or particular comparison group such as liberal arts institutions.

The purpose of this study is to understand the thematic content of mission statements of community colleges belonging to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Schools (SACSCOC) and to explore whether there are major variations in the missions among the institutions, where those variations are to be found, and how missions of this region have changed in the last decade. The region of SACSCOC was selected because 91% of the community colleges authorized to confer baccalaureate in the nation since 2001 are located in the SACSCOC region (Floyd & Walker, 2008). This investigation was guided by the following three research questions:

1. What are the salient themes in the mission statements of 295 SACSCOC-accredited institutions that identify as community colleges?

2. How do the themes of the mission statements within the SACSCOC-accredited community colleges vary by their classification as an associate’s degree-granting institution or as a bachelor’s degree-granting institution?

3. How have the themes of community college mission statements changed since 2001 when the states in the SACSCOC region began to authorize community colleges to confer baccalaureate degrees?

For the purpose of this study, these salient themes represent what the institutions propose as their values such as open access and diversity, their goals such as the
development of an educated community and lifelong learning, and their functions such as transfer education or workforce development. Based on the literature review, several themes are expected to emerge within and among the mission statements such as responsiveness to local economic and workforce needs versus responsiveness to global economic and workforce needs, students as learners versus economic entities, academic versus vocational education, service versus market orientation, emphasis on open access versus emphasis on quality and standards, and individual learner needs versus business and industry needs. These contrasting dimensions stem from the interdependence between community colleges and their external environments which influence their mission priorities.

In addition to identifying the salient themes represented by all the SACSCOC community colleges, the researcher also compared the prominence of themes between the two classification types (associate vs. bachelor’s granting). In relation to the third research question, this qualitative study uses as a baseline the Ayers study in 2002 in which the researcher conducted a content analysis revealing seven salient themes (access, workforce and economic development, comprehensive services, responsiveness, quality and excellence, diversity, and service area) emerging in the mission statements of 102 randomly sampled community colleges from the SACSCOC region, specifically ten institutions from each of the eleven member states in the SACSCOC. This study extended his study by including not a random sampling but rather all 295 SACSCOC-accredited community colleges’ mission statements. The researcher compared and contrasted Ayer’s seven salient themes of the SACSCOC institutions from over ten years ago but did not limit the investigation to these seven. In this way, the result of this study was a
macroperspective of mission priorities of community colleges in the southern region of the United States which provides both a contemporary snapshot of mission priorities as well as a historical comparison of mission statements before and after the last critical decade of shifts in degree offerings at the community college level.

The data for this study are the 295 most recent mission statements available on the SACSCOC-accredited community colleges’ websites. The data was compiled into a document cache that was manually coded and categorized by using NVivo10 software. As a result of the coding and categorizing process, themes emerged which point to what institutions value and select as their goals and functions. In addition to investigating the current overarching regional missions of SACSCOC community colleges, the prominence of themes between the two classification types (associate’s vs. bachelor’s granting) were compared. The emerging themes of these community college mission statements were then analyzed and compared in relation to the themes identified by Ayers (2002) from his sample of SACSCOC-accredited community colleges.

This study is the first to inform the higher education field of the priorities of mission statements from all the SACSCOC community college members since 2001, the year in which Florida, the state giant among community college baccalaureates, began extending past the associate’s degree. The study is the only research to date investigating how community colleges differ in their web-stated mission statement respective to their degree classification as associate or bachelor’s granting institutions.

This research is also particularly relevant for community college presidents and senior-level administrators when spearheading long-term and strategic plans for their institutions and considering accreditation changes. It is imperative for these leaders to be
informed of the trends internal and external to their region and pay attention to the
signposts of this baccalaureate movement among community colleges. In an era of
accelerated changes, being well anchored by a solid, clear mission statement is critical for
guiding these institutions into a future of unprecedented educational opportunities.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

Defining the Mission Statement

Initially emerging from the field of business as a management trend and tool in the 1970s and 1980s, mission statements have become a necessary staple product of institutions of higher education (Morphew & Hartley, 2006; Wang, Gibson, Salinas, Solis, & Slate, 2007). In both the public and private sectors, the mission statement has been consistently identified as an indispensable tool for managers of organizations over the last 40 years (Lake & Mroziniski, 2011). More recently, in the last two decades, mission statements have risen to the status of being senior executives’ most common management tool (Ayers, 2002). In the management literature, the identification of mission has been popularly lauded as the most important task for leaders of organizations and elevated almost to a mythological level in what they are capable of achieving for organizations (Lake & Mroziniski, 2011).

There is a plethora of differing definitions of mission statements. According to Hill and Jones (2001), a mission statement is defined as a formal document that articulates the organization's ethical priorities. Others define an organization’s mission as a declaration of the reason for its existence (Daft, 2009; Kibuuka, 2001; Newsom & Hayes, 1991; Pearce & David, 1987; Wheelen & Hunger, 2000) or similarly its “reason for being” (Abrahams, 1990) while Grabowski (1981) asserts that a mission statement is a “commitment to a concrete, specific plan with clearly stated priorities” (as cited in Woodrow, 2006).

A mission statement cuts to the core of an organization’s purpose, philosophy, competencies (Davis, Ruhe, Lee, & Rajadhyaksha, 2007). Whereas the vision statement
describe the future, the statement of mission "is about the here and now" (Lewis, 2005). Sometimes viewed as a historical text, the mission statement also has served as an “artifact of a broader institutional discussion about its purpose” (Morphew & Hartley, 2006, p. 457). Some refer to the mission as a cultural artifact because it reflects the institution’s overarching purpose and vision (Bingham, Quigley, & Murray, 2001; Bryson, 2004).

**Definition of mission statement in the educational context.** The definition of mission within the educational context is similar to the business and management paradigm. Pearce and David (1987) conducted a mission statement component analysis that was later applied by Newsom and Hayes (1991) on over a hundred postsecondary educational institutions’ mission statements. They concluded that are seven primary components in post-secondary education mission statements: (a) targeting of the institution’s constituencies (b) specifying of the products or outputs of the institution beyond that of teaching and service, (c) delineating the geographical area the college will serve (d) emphasizing of the commitment of the institution to growth; (e) adhering to particular beliefs and values, as well as prioritizing philosophies; (f) disclosing of how the institution perceives itself, and (g) projecting of a certain public image or reputation to the public. Sidhu (2003) suggested that to be effective, a mission statement should outline the school’s purpose, direction, values, philosophies, core competencies, and the ends to which it will achieve its mission. According to Meacham (2008), mission statements declare a campus's vision of excellence for students, faculty, and institution, as well as its rationale, purpose, and responsibilities toward both the student body and the community. For Schuh (2003) an institution's mission statement functions as a reminder
of what the institution is all about and seeks to achieve. The mission statement should not only indicate an institution’s intentions, but also how it mirrors its philosophical foundations and how it identifies its market (Finley, Rogers, & Galloway, 2001; Rowley, Lujan, & Dolence, 1997).

The utility of mission statements of educational institutions. The benefits of formulating a mission statement are numerous and diverse. Although the benefits that mission statements extol are plentiful, critics have their place in the discussion on the utility of mission statements. Their criticisms mainly surround the vagueness of language and goals expressed with these statements. The Ohio Board of Regents in 1993 concluded, “mission statements are often very similar, making it difficult or impossible to distinguish one institution from another . . . for purposes of providing a strategic focus and a foundation upon which to base planning activities, most mission statements are less than effective” (as cited in Rowley, Lujan, & Dolence, 1997, p. 44). For example, a benchmarking of 45 universities in Canada yielded no basis for differentiating between them; their mission statements were all found to be significantly similar (Finley, Rogers, & Galloway, 2001). Likewise, Newsom and Hayes (1991) conducted an analysis of 114 American secular college and university mission statements and found that the majority of the statements were unclear, vague, evasive, and rhetorical (Abelman & Dalessandro, 2008). Naysayers of mission statements perceive these statements simply bundles of ambiguous and overly aspirational stock phrases which don’t have value in conveying any true sense of identity and avoid real follow-through (Chait, 1979). After examining dozens of mission statements, Chait (1979) determined that they merely refer to “vague and vapid goals” (p. 36), sounding the same with their interchangeable phrases such as
“the pursuit of excellence” which are easy to embrace but difficult to materialize specifically (Morphew & Hartley, 2006). Another criticism of college and university mission statements is that they do not articulate clear and detailed outcomes (Carver, 2000).

While some would argue that mission statements are mere “organizational window dressings that are normative necessities,” others claim they are “strategic expressions of institutional distinctiveness” (Morphew & Hartley, 2006, p. 459). In fact, some researchers have been surprised at the variety of themes included in mission statement (James & Huisman, 2009; Walton, 2005). Despite the language of mission, which on its face seem to be strikingly similar, Morphew and Hartley (2006) found that institutions do carefully attempt to express common elements in decidedly different ways and means.

**General Purposes of Mission Statements in the Higher Educational Context**

Mission statements are commonplace in the world of education: Virtually every college or university has a mission statement whose purpose, according to Walton (2005), is to communicate to a wide internal and external audience. Ireland and Hitt (1992) emphasized that one purpose of mission statements is to communicate a sense of uniqueness in its purpose, scope of operations, and service. One of main values of the mission statement for an institution is its expression of a vision for the future (Carruthers & Lott, 1981; Martin, 1985). Mission statements in the college setting can also serve as a tool to address and solve problems in a sustainable way and move along dialogue between faculty and administrators (Meacham, 2008). Abelman, Dalessandro, Snyder-Suhy, Janstova, and Pettey (2007) found that mission statements at academic institutions,
particularly secular ones, serve diverse but complementary purposes. Other purposes of mission statements such as recruitment, marketing, accreditation, accountability, funding, decision-making, resource allocation, faculty, students’ character reinforcement and learning goals, administrators, financial performance, organizational performance, motivation, unifying force, internal and external stakeholders, and strategic planning are discussed below.

**Accreditation.** Beyond recruitment and marketing, mission statements are simply an imperative for the continued existence of an institution of higher education, as the six regional accrediting bodies mandate a mission statement as a standard for accreditation (Lake & Mrozinski, 2011; Mrozinski, 2010). Both regional and specialized accreditation associations set standards that evaluate each institution on its commitment to its individual mission. To attain accreditation, the institution must present evidence of mission achievement, and to retain accreditation, it must inform the accrediting agency of changes made to the mission statement (Higher Learning Commission, 2013). For the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Schools (SACSCOC), the mission statement should address teaching and learning, and, if applicable, public service as well as research. SACSCOC additionally sets forth that the mission statements should be clearly defined, comprehensive, specific to the institution, appropriate for higher education, and published (SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation, 2012).

**Accountability.** Mission statements are effective means for an institution to be held accountable to the criteria of its mission. For example, accreditation by SACSCOC signifies that the institution has specified clear educational objectives which correspond to its mission and that it has demonstrated sufficient resources, programs, and services to
fulfill and sustain its intended mission. (Anderson, 2012). Ultimately, the success and efficacy of community college mission statements are dependent on clearly articulated purposes for the benefit of stakeholders. Without clarity, success cannot be measured, and efficacy remains elusive (Lake & Mrozinski, 2011). Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, and Associates (2010) considered the mission statement beneficial because it can be examined on a semi-regular basis in order ensure and prolong the relevance of the educational and philosophical foundations of the institution. After all, an institution must put into practice its prescribed mission (Meacham & Gaff, 2006). Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, and Associates (2010) pointed out that every college has two missions: (1) the espoused one which immediately comes to mind, what an institution would want to assert about itself, and (2) the enacted mission or rather who the school serves and what it actually carries out. These authors established that institutions could distinguish themselves by possessing a narrower gap between their espoused mission and their enacted mission than at other schools.

**Funding.** An institution’s funding supply-line from government or private sources is many times linked to its mission statement, as decision makers look for institutions which will be responsible with their monetary contributions (Wang, Gibson, Salinas, Solis, & Slate, 2007). In a climate of tightening budgets and limited funding sources, keen resource allocation is critical, and mission statements can encourage more focused, appropriate allocations of resources for an organization (Ireland & Hitt, 1992). By pointing to one common direction which goes beyond transitory, immediate individual and departmental demands, the mission statement provides a framework to strategically allocate organizational resources (Bartkus, Glassman, & McAfee, 2000).
Also, community colleges can capitalize on their open access mission to garner funds for the college, confronting the perception by the public that these institutions are less entitled to receive donations because they are tax-subsidized (Nacco, 2010). The fact is that community colleges possess little to no financial incentives to do what they do for society, and these institutions have a compelling narrative which needs to be shared -- along with solid, convincing data. Sharing this story just may assist in the colleges securing the funds needs to resolve their financial shortfalls (Anderson, 2012).

**Decision-making.** Mission definitions of community colleges are important to recognize and examine because they can influence the rules and procedures by which decisions about curriculum, advising, and hiring are made, and these same policies are used to assess the organization’s performance (Bogart, 1994; Dougherty & Hong, 2006). If sufficiently specific, mission statements can provide guidance and validation for decision-making processes for an institution (Lake & Mrozinski, 2011), aid in consensus-building and planning for the future, guide the allocating or restricting of resources, and keep administrators accountable (Meacham, 2008).

**Faculty and students.** For faculty members, mission statements can serve two purposes: (1) as a guide to communicate what they are to be collectively and what they are to teach students and (2) as a defense for academic freedom and faculty rights (Meacham, 2008). For students, the college’s mission grants them a glimpse of their final outcome as graduates of that institution (Wang, Gibson, Salinas, Solis, & Slate, 2007). Ultimately, the institution and its mission statement are accountable to students; for Hara (2005), a mission statement has “immense weight and responsibility” as it represents “the promise of a college” (p. 4).
Student learning goals. According to Meacham (2008), mission statements very often contain language about student learning goals that then can be used by campuses to assess their attainment. A survey of more than 300 of the top colleges and universities as identified by the Princeton Review yielded the finding that most institutions set forth on average five student learning outcomes (Meacham, 2008). The most common learning outcome was to experience and acquire a liberal education, and the second most common goal was for graduates to contribute to their communities. The third most common learning outcome was to develop and engage in social responsibility in a democratic society. It is common for many mission statements to incorporate an appreciation for diversity as well.

Character reinforcement. Davis, Ruhe, Lee, and Rajadhyaksha (2007) suggested that mission statement may play a role in character reinforcement. Using a sample of senior business students at 16 universities, they discovered that students attending universities which explicitly stated ethical statements in their missions had significantly higher perceived character trait importance than those at universities without ethical elements in their mission statement. Their results purport that colleges containing explicit ethical content in their mission statements do influence ethical orientation of their students. The researchers did consider the possibility that a clearly stated purpose may simply attract individuals who share the same sense of purpose; in any case, the organization could achieve its purpose by creating a context that values the character traits promoted in the mission statement. To illustrate, in their analysis of 16 business universities, Davis, Ruhe, Lee, and Rajadhyaksha (2007) found the benefit of influencing
the ethical orientation of its student body when these mission statements contained explicitly ethical statements or content.

**Financial performance.** Among the organizational benefits which result from mission statements is the potential stimulation of financial performance (Weiss & Piderit, 1999). In order to positively affect performance, mission statements must communicate its standards and goals effectively (Fugazzotto, 2009). However, little evidence is available to demonstrate a strong relationship between organizational performance and mission statements (Bart & Baetz, 1998; Meacham, 2008; Pearce & David, 1987; Sidhu, 2003).

**Source of motivation and unity.** At the same time, the mission statements can motivate and mobilize the workplace in a powerful way as well as provide direction, empowerment, and meaning in work (Kouzes & Posner, 2008). Mission statements also unify an institution or organization behind a single direction or purpose which in turn can better streamline decision-making processes (Ireland & Hitt, 1992). Dolence, Rowley, and Lujan (1997) asserted that "mission statements can be helpful in getting people to pull in the same direction in the pursuit of common and well-understood goals." Mission statements have the capacity to unify student and staff with the upper administration, faculty, and even with the executive body (Abelman & Dalessandro, 2009; Palmer & Short, 2008). Mission statements create a “shared sense of purpose” (Morphew & Harley, 2006, p. 457) by aligning student and institutional views and offering a set of common objectives and values (Abelman, 2011). More than mere strategy, mission entails a relationship between strategy and culture, which reinforce one other and bring about an articulation of unified behavior standards (Campbell & Yeung, 1991). As a “cultural
“glue” which allows internal and external stakeholders to function in unison (Campbell & Yeung, 1991; Palmer & Short, 2008, p. 455), mission statements serve as a common ground or focal point where all constituents commit to supporting and nurturing the institution’s purpose and direction (Collins & Porras, 1995; Topor, 1983, as cited in Woodrow, 2006). The mission statement also inspires and motivates its constituencies towards common goals, guides decision-making, and creates balances among competing stakeholders (Ayers, 2002; Morphew & Hartley, 2006). By renewing the commitment to its mission, the campus is also able to strengthen feelings of academic community (Meacham, 2008).

**Relationships with stakeholders.** The mission statement has a unique and powerful vehicle for communicating, influencing, and inspiring internal and external stakeholders such as students, alumni, faculty, staff, community, administrators, and donors (Bartkus et al., 2000; Palmer & Short, 2008). A principal benefit of the mission statement is that it is instructs stakeholders how to identify the priorities and plans which best conform to the organization’s principles. Once an organization’s goals have been clarified by its mission statement, its stakeholders can be persuaded to mobilize activities and resources to attain strategic advantages (Bryson, 2004; Caruthers & Lott, 1981; Mrozinski, 2010; Sanchez & Heene, 2004). Morphew and Hartley (2006) suggested that mission statements communicate a “public declaration of responsibilities” which stakeholders have decided to take on, as opposed to a top-imposed listing of obligations (Meacham, 2008, p. 6). Mission statements often are written in such a way to display agreement with the various interested parties (Berg, Csikszentmihalyi, & Nakamura, 2003). Because higher education institutions answer to many more stakeholders than for-
profits, the mission-oriented strategic planning often results in slower and more cumbersome decision-making (Bingham et al., 2001). At the same time, institutions can benefit from mission statements due to their legitimizing role; through them colleges and universities can show their importance and relevance to their external constituencies such as legislators and resident taxpayers in an era of intense competition for public funding, resources, and attention (Morphew & Hartley, 2006).

**Strategic planning.** Often created via an institution’s strategic planning process (Firmin & Gilson, 2010), mission statements become the foundation and starting point of strategic initiatives (Abelman & Dalessandro, 2009; Desmidt, Prinzie, & Decramer, 2011; Morphew & Hartley, 2006). According to O’Hearn (2003), mission statements are employed as one of the elements in the strategic planning process, just as the accreditation processes also takes recourse to that same emphasis on mission. Missions are useful tools in prescriptive planning for colleges and universities (Palmer & Short, 2008) but have only been used as a means for strategic planning in the latter part of 20th century (Mrozinski, 2010). Some authors assert that the very purpose of articulating a mission is to guide the strategic planning process and to support the implementation of the organization’s strategies (Bryson, 2004; Caruthers & Lott, 1981; Mrozinski, 2010). And “without a strategic mission,” Ayers (2002) claimed certain educational institutions “may continue to focus their resources on programs and services that have outlived their relevance” (p. 12).

**Recruitment and marketing.** According to Sevier (1999), mission and an integrated-marketing plan are inextricably linked. Mission statements are modes of displayed marketing (Kirp, 2003) as well as recruitment tools (Abelman & Dalessandro,
Additionally, mission statements seek to attract a diverse academic community (Abelman & Dalessandro, 2008). However, one downfall of community colleges’ multiple mission platform is that it is difficult to present to the public a concise message or brand to their diverse constituencies.

**Definition of Mission Statement in the Community College Context**

As outlined by Vaughan (1988), five specific components are necessary for a community college’s mission statement: (1) identity as a higher education institution, (2) an organization that reflects the societal makeup, (3) a teaching institution, (4), an open access institution, and (5) comprehensive programming (as cited in Hegeman, Davies, & Banning, 2007). The American Association of Community Colleges (2003) defines the mission statement of the community college as “a collective statement by an organization’s internal stakeholders describing their highest sense of purpose in serving society’s needs” (as cited in Hegeman, Davies, & Banning, 2007, p. 131).

**Common Themes found in the Mission Statements of Community Colleges**

Common themes emerge in mission statements of community colleges despite their vast differences in location, target populations, and unique priorities. According to Fountain and Tollefson (1989), community college mission statements typically include the following elements (as cited in Ayers, 2002):

- formal education (academic transfer, career education, developmental education, general education)
- student services (counseling, placement assessment, and financial aid)
- continuing education (adult education, lifelong learning, job enrichment)
- community services (seminars, lectures, concerts, plays, consultative activities)
• attention to student populations (traditional college-age, high school, adult, female, minority, underrepresented, and disabled students)
• economic development (career and vocational education, contract training)

More recently, researchers of the community college have identified several clear, recurrent themes in community college mission statements: workforce and economic development, comprehensive services, responsiveness to need, access, and quality in service (Bragg, 2001; Dougherty & Townsend, 2006; Hegeman, Banning, & Davies, 2007; Levin, 2000). In addition to the aforementioned themes, Ayers (2002) in his study found that diversity and specified service area were also two components frequently addressed in the mission statements. Likewise, in their study of mission statements located on community college websites, Hegeman, Davies, and Banning (2007) pinpointed three messages consistently expressed in community college mission statements: access, diversity, and service area. In their seminal book on community colleges, Cohen and Brawer (2003) outlined the community college mission into the following functional categories: community service, vocational-technical or career education, remedial or developmental education, continuing education, and the collegiate function, which includes academic transfer and the liberal arts curriculum.

**Historical Shifts in the Mission of Community Colleges**

As early as 1919, McDowell, speaking of the junior college, lamented, “We do not know what it should be, because we do not know what it is. Before we can see clearly what it is, we must know why it is” (Bureau of Education Report, 1919, pp. 6-7, as cited in Wagoner, 1985). Indeed the community colleges in their original stages did not offer any more clarity in explaining their raison d'être and defining their identity than those of
today. The community college has experienced uncertainty regarding its identity, its place within the larger setting of post-secondary educations, and its institutional priorities for much of its existence, as it has been impacted by significant shifts and changes in direction during its history (Wagoner, 1985). Ayers (2002) maintained that missions often arise from institutional responses to changing learner needs. Since the founding of Joliet Junior College, the nation's first public community college, in 1901, Mrozinski (2010) pinpointed three principal shifts in the mission of community colleges as it has evolved through history: (1) from the one single function of the transfer or pre-baccalaureate track (junior college) to multiple tracks in the 1950s, (2) from this more complex focus to career and vocational training in the last half of the century, and (3) from pre-baccalaureate and vocational institutions to those which offer select baccalaureate degrees. Below the historical stages are briefly described.

**From junior college to multiple tracks in 1950s.** Initially, in the early 1900s community or junior colleges were established merely as extensions of high school (Geller, 2001) or as the lower division of universities where students would receive more general and vocational training as opposed to the more rigorous research-oriented scholarship found in the junior and senior years in the university. The new junior colleges easily found a convenient place in the post-secondary educational system due to a population boom of high school enrollees at the turn of the 20th century. Instead of simply accommodating more capacity for these students in universities, some prominent university leaders such as William Rainey Harper of the University of Chicago and Henry Tappan of the University of Michigan decided to utilize this opportunity to shed the responsibility of educating students their first two years of college and refine the
university into the likes of the European system of the higher and lower divisions (Wagoner, 1985). The junior college could also serve as a filter and a feeder to send on only the most prepared, relieving the university of educating the less academically sophisticated students while routing capable students into their higher divisions (Reitano, 1990). It is noteworthy to mention that the rationale for the original community or junior college was based on the interest in an academically robust healthy American university (Wagoner, 1985). Not only as a vehicle to transfer upward, the junior or community college was a means for vocational efficiency in society in order to track and train students into professions which did not require more professional degrees. During the Depression years other functions of the community college were stressed such as adult education and community service, a new role for the institution during an era of widespread job scarcity (Wagoner, 1985).

With passage of the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act or GI Bill in 1944, the vocational efforts of community colleges flourished with the infusion of financial assistance for veteran benefits (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). By 1947, 40% of the enrollments of junior colleges were veterans (Goodwin, 1972), and this drastic infusion of these students subsequently granted the two-year college full member status in the American system of higher education (Wagoner, 1985). President Truman’s Commission on Higher Education Report of 1947 advocated for educational access to higher education for the majority of Americans and recommended that networks of locally controlled college be established within the geographical reach of as many Americans as possible. This commission used a rare term at the time “community college,” thus popularizing and furthering the concept of a college which would be fully engaged in its local context
The Report deemphasized its transfer or more junior college type function and encouraged the terminal vocational role of a community college education (Gilbert & Heller, 2010). Since World War II, open access was the predominating purpose for community colleges, as the GI Bill allowed college to be feasible financially for thousands of newcomers to higher education. The open doors of the community college were becoming imperative, for universities were able to reject their applicants more liberally due to greater selectivity and increasing numbers of applicants (Vaughan, 1984).

**1950s on: Career and vocational training.** In the decades of 1960 and 1970s, the community college enjoyed a golden age of growth, as students flooded the halls of community colleges across the nation (Altbach, Gumport, & Berdahl, 2011). In 1963 a monumental federal law called the Higher Education Facilities Act undertook the challenge of doubling college enrollments and set out to open 500 new community colleges within ten years (American Association of Community Colleges, 2012). With the widespread embracing of the open admission policies, the role of development and remedial education grew in prominent and increasingly so to this day (Bragg, 2001b). The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education in 1970 placed the community college as its “centerpiece of its calls for universal access to higher education” (Dougherty 1994, p. 4). Community colleges had rightfully won the role of "democracy's college” (Dowd, 2003) or “democratizing agent,” in the words of L. Medsker in 1960 (Wagoner, 1985).

Enrollments were beginning to tip downward during the late 1970s and 1980s, and by the late 1980s, the principal mission foci of community college was solidified as formal education, student services, continuing education, economic development, and
finally, attention to servicing a diverse groups of learners from traditional college-age students, women and minorities, disabled, to the economically disadvantaged (Fountain & Tollefson, 1989). Even as early as 1990 nearly half of all undergraduates were attending a community college (Reitano, 1990). In the booming economy of the 1990s, community colleges were influenced heavily by the demands of the global economy and the performance-driven agenda of their policy makers and business and industry leaders, driving a new force of vocationalism upon the college (Dowd, 2003; Levin, 2000). By the late 1990s, Vaughan (1997) pinpointed a different set characteristics of the public community colleges: public support, open access, commitment to teaching, an identified service area, community-based programs, comprehensive program and support services. Levin (2000) pointed out that in the 20th century the access and vocational mission guided and shaped the community college mission while in the 21st century the mission shifted from collegiate to career education and from community development to workforce and economic development due the influences of the global economy. Community college missions also play a role in national policy, as seen recently with President Bush’s and President Obama’s pronounced commitment to workforce education (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). In reality, the workforce and economic development dimension is not a new phenomenon, as this component of community college mission appeared even as early as the 1910s but blossomed in the 1960s (Brint & Karabel, 1989; Dougherty, 1994). Community colleges largely have been depended on to prepare the nation’s current and future mid-skilled, sub-baccalaureate workforce, accounting for about 60% of workers in the United States (Grubb, 1996). In this modern economy, as a result of changes in the economy and the demands for new skills, the workforce and
economic development mission has once again emerged with a renewed focus on occupational education (Dougherty & Townsend, 2006).

**From Vocational to Baccalaureate**

At present nearly 50 public community colleges have added select baccalaureate degrees to their list of already comprehensive educational offerings (AACU, 2013). At the same time, for-profits have been competing fiercely in an increasingly selective admissions market for students, and the numbers of virtual and distance learners have leaped exponentially. The rise of for-profit institutions represents another external force that is pushing community colleges toward their vocational and occupational missions at the expense of their transfer missions (Desai, 2012). In the new globalized world, community colleges, no longer restricted to the role of local provider of educational services, are connecting with more students in considerably more expanded range as they broker opportunities through multiple delivery modes and a variety of providers (American Association of Community Colleges, 2012).

The more recent completion agenda has highlighted the sobering problem of sagging retention and graduation rates and called for the sector to make changes in practices to boost completion rates. With this new pressure to graduate, colleges have been using their limited resources on degree programs instead on development education. Wetstein adds, “the intangibles that community colleges offer are being lost in the completion movement led by the Obama administration and nonprofit groups…the community is being stripped out of community college…it's incredibly painful to watch.” (as cited in Gonzalez, 2012, para. 46). This movement away from developmental education may be detrimental to the most vulnerable students (Levin, 2007). According
to the Community College Research Center, more than 60% of two-year college students are placed into development education, and of these less than 25% graduate (Gonzalez, 2012). The numbers are staggering considering that half of all the undergraduate minorities attend community colleges (Gonzalez, 2012). The combination of shrinking budgets, external pressure to push up the retention numbers, rising enrollments due to demographic shifts, and the temptation to take safe ground in degree programs may compromise the core mission of community colleges, whose doors open to opportunities particularly for low-income students and students of color (Gilroy, 2005; Gonzalez, 2012; Levin, 2007; Mendoza, Basham, Campbell, O'Daniels, Malcolm, Felton, Lebesch, & Douma, 2009).

The forces which shape community college missions differ tremendously by region, state, and locality, as is seen in the case of the Florida community college system with its distinct emphasis on the transfer mission (Dougherty, Reid, & Nienhusser, 2006). Vaughan (1988) used a metaphor which illustrates the differing waves of mission of community college as a balloon. Societal pressures can alter the balloon’s shape but not its contents. One element of mission can expand while another diminishes, but it keeps its buoyancy (Dassance, 2011). To explore the distinct shapes and sizes of this balloon, the following section discusses the various functions of the community college.

**Multiple Functions of the Community College**

Although the missions of community colleges have embraced a wide range of functions and roles, there are common threads woven throughout its history. In 1956 Jesse Bogue, the Executive Secretary of the American Association of Junior Colleges, put forward three functions for the community or junior college: (1) the transfer function or
“university parallel,” (2) continuing education, and (3) training for job advancement and in technological developments (Bragg, 2001a). Decades later, Cohen and Brawer (1982) similarly identified four “C” functions: compensatory (or remedial education), career, community, and the collegiate (or transfer function). More recently, the focus of economic development activity has been added to mission of community college (Ayers, 2005; Bailey & Averianova, 1999; Dowd, 2003).

Another way of describing the multiple functions is by dividing them up into three principal tracks (Levin, 2000). The first track corresponds to the community college’s training and educational role as a pipeline to the four-year institution (Dougherty, 1994), as a means to job preparation and career education (Clowes & Levin, 1989), and as the training ground for achieving success or experiencing failure in society (Levin, 2000). The second track encompasses the more curricular focus on academic, vocational, and remedial education (Cohen & Brawer, 2003), not to the exclusion of general education. Cohen and Brawer (2003) emphasized the important role community colleges have in furthering general education as a binding force of common knowledge and culture in American society. Witt, Wattenbarger, Gollattscheck, and Suppliger (1994) further noted that the general education at the community college prepares individuals to be productive citizens in a democratic society.

The last track is related to individual and community development, individual social and economic mobility, and social stratification and reproduction (Brint & Karabel, 1989; Dougherty, 1994; Griffith & Connor, 1994). The social stratification role is related to the commonly known “cooling out” function of the community college (Clark, 1980), a sifting process during their community college years in which students
without academic potential for more a liberal arts education or without personal or financial resources must lower their expectations for higher degrees and adjust their aspirations.

The cooling out function has been construed in such a way that the colleges have been faulted for being vehicles to reinforce class distinctions, diverting the dreams of baccalaureate degree-seekers who come from disenfranchised poor populations, while guarding privilege for the upper classes, and to promote “class-based tracking” while giving the appearance of socio-economic mobility for the poor (Brint & Karabel, 1989; Pincus, 1980). Others maintain that the community college does squarely function in some capacity as a gatekeeper for higher education since they educate the lion’s share of college students, but this simply relieves the four-year institution from enrolling more students (Turner, 2004) and at the same time appeals to principles of equal opportunity, social mobility, and responsible financial stewardship (Dowd, 2007).

**Concerns over the Multiple Missioned Community College**

There are several reasons why community colleges have adopted multiple missions. As open-access institutions serving vast and increasingly diverse student populations, community colleges respond to their learner needs by employing multiple missions at their institutions (Desai, 2012). Furthermore, since the community colleges respond to a host of constituents beyond just their student body—corporations, state and local governments, and four-year institutions, the resulting by-product of these demands is the adoption of multiple mission statements (Desai, 2012). Bailey and Morest (2004) noted that community college mission have swollen beyond its four or five core functions to include English as a Second Language, job skills training for welfare recipients, and
even dual enrollment programs. Community colleges are also expanding into business-training programs, small business development, and customized training for specific companies because these types of programs generate more income than the traditional offerings and provide additional funding in this current time of fluctuating state and government funding (Gilroy, 2005). There is good reason that community colleges continue to add and not shed programs: They cannot afford to alienate any of their constituencies and to run the risk of reducing potential resources for the institution (Bailey & Morest, 2004). In fact, it is to the advantage of the community colleges to possess a broad portfolio of missions because by serving many different agendas, widespread support by the public and government can be safeguarded (Dougherty & Townsend, 2006). Much of the race for resources is due to the competition from for-profit institutions that community colleges are facing (Gilroy, 2005).

Narrowing down the missions of community colleges will not easily nor likely happen, but McPhail and McPhail (2006) propose both a framework and a tool for establishing or re-establishing mission priorities in order to “preserve the best of their historic missions but also launch themselves in new and powerful directions for the next generation of community colleges” (p. 98). Because the different missions are often pursued in isolation, they create competition, but Reitano (1990) sees the potential for cohesiveness. Community colleges can also espouse certain strategies to ease the struggle among their multiple missions; for example, a conflict between the occupational education and transfer function could be mitigated by pursuing agreements with universities that facilitate the transfer of more vocational credits or even the articulation
of applied associate of science degrees (Dougherty, Reid, & Nienhusser, 2006; Ignash & Kotun, 2005).

The community college being tasked with various distinct missions should not be cause for alarm because they are simply doing what they purposed since their inception: being responsive to their local constituents through multiple services (Gilroy, 2005). Community colleges grew out of a distinctly American context that is inherently divided into class, race, and gender, so narrowing their functional missions would not necessarily eliminate conflict. Division has been a natural outgrowth in the evolution of community colleges, and the debates about preserving academic excellence, maintaining open access, and addressing the needs on the business side, and providing lifelong learning opportunities show no signs of dying out (Dougherty & Townsend, 2006).

On the other hand, some community college observers are not so fast to defend the multiple mission paradigm. Reitano (1990) perceived that these various purposes are chaotic and that community colleges have “made a virtue out of a necessity and styled themselves as comprehensive institutions serving all men but knowing no master” (Reitano, 1990, p. 3). Others warn that if community colleges insist on extending themselves so widely, they will only encounter more competitors on multiple fronts (Alfred, 1998; Bailey, 2002). McPhail and McPhail (2006) challenged the community college to prioritize the most suitable mission to pursue for its community since there is no evidence that points to the ability of community colleges to effectively sustain multiple missions. The tension between the traditional academic transfer mode and the more comprehensive mode creates a mission paradox for community colleges (Desai, 2012). Adhering to the comprehensive mode, which attempts to meet all the educational
and training needs of a very diverse student population, should not be pursued if it results in other modes being overshadowed or neglected (Desai, 2012). Thus the paradox exists: Should the community college cater to the wide-ranging needs of all its constituents by being all things to all people or should it seek a one track path to some higher ground?

**From Paradox to the Prospect of Mission Creep**

The paradox can lead to competition and conflict. For example, the increasing attention placed on honors programs has been a source of conflict because they could lead to the neglect of the community colleges’ most vulnerable, less advantaged students (Dougherty & Townsend, 2006). Also the growing interest in adding bachelor degrees onto the host of educational offering of the community college is another source of tension because it may reduce the transfer mission and undercut remedial education (Bailey & Morest, 2004; Dougherty, 1994; Dougherty & Townsend, 2006).

Clark Kerr (2001), an esteemed leader in higher education, defined and described mission creep as a familiar phenomenon where one sector of higher education takes on a mission whose responsibilities are performed by another. Mission creep is also defined as the “expansion of a college’s mission, particularly in the direction of presumed more prestigious activities, results in less attention being paid to the original purposes” (Pluviose, 2008, p. 22). Kerr and others cautioned against mission creep because it is very difficult to reverse and can cost taxpayers millions of dollars because it potentially can generate unnecessary competition and duplication of efforts among higher education institutions (Gump, 2006). Martin and Samels (2002) considered mission creep “a misguided intrusion into the historical prerogatives of four-year institutions” while others like Lowman (2010) perceived missions as malleable and permeable, naturally tending to
change shape in the course of time. Cohen and Brawer (2003) however were not concerned that a drift has occurred at the level of the greater mission of community college, but they considered that within select organizational missions and in some mission statements a shift is being established.

One significant force behind mission shift is financial need. Due to the ascendance of neoliberalist policies, the government has increasingly cut funding for public higher education in the same measure it has also slashed funding for many public services (Ayers, 2005; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Neoliberalism avers that the government should support business and industry in order to protect the economic interests of the country (Ayers, 2005; Giroux & Giroux, 2004; Levin, 2007). In the same way, community colleges dealing with their limited funding sources, seek partnerships with businesses and corporations in order to sustain their economic growth or survival. Consequently, the market becomes the driver of educational programming in community colleges, and the institutions become the passengers who are propelled into greater engagement in market-like activities (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Community colleges’ involvement in the market has caused concern among those who are proponents of the community college as an egalitarian project serving the interests of a democracy. Brint and Karabel (1989) pointed out a highly trained, skilled workforce, the principal outcome of community college-business partnerships, is distinct from the original intentions laid down by the initial foundations of community colleges. Desai (2012) also perceived a potential decline in the academic and transfer missions of community colleges in lieu of workforce development and expressed concern that the primary constituency of community colleges, students, could soon be eclipsed by corporations. According to
Ayers (2005), neoliberalism promotes the ideal of consumerism over that of participatory democracy within the discourse of community college education, potentially leading to a fatal blow to the colleges’ commitment to community democratic processes and becoming instead “a servant of unfettered, free-market capitalism” (p. 537).

**Analyses of Mission Statements in Higher Education**

This study seeks to fill a gap in the understanding of the current state of mission statements by comparing them to those from the same region over a decade ago and comparing those from associate’s degree to bachelor’s degree-granting community colleges. Therefore, it is important to place this study in the context of other analyses conducted on mission statements in higher education. Although the theory and studies on mission statements stemmed from the business and management fields, they were soon adapted for analysis in postsecondary institutions. One of the first studies in this specific area, investigating 142 colleges’ and universities’ mission statements, was conducted by Newsom and Hayes (1991) who applied the corporate-based research of Pearce and David (1987). Another early study was spearheaded by Stober (1997) who employed content analysis to examine 120 mission statements from colleges and universities accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. His research extended content analysis beyond counting words and served as a model in his combination of human raters and computer analysis in order to include the measures of tone and readability.

The study of mission statements has been conducted on institutions which are distinguished by race or gender. For example, Lundquist and Rice (1991) analyzed the missions of women’s colleges in the United States whereas Abelman and Dalessandro
(2009) turned their attention to the missions of historically black colleges and universities. Using content analysis, Abelman (2011) compared the institutional visions of 34 tribal community colleges to 30 randomly selected American and Canadian public community colleges, revealing the utility of the mission and vision statements of tribal community colleges to communicate student outcomes and to function as guiding documents.

One distinct focus of study is the mission statement of colleges of business or engineering. Stearns and Borna (1998) utilized content analysis to examine the mission statements of business programs and how they diffused accreditation standards. In the same vein, Buff and Yonkers (2004) studied the missions of accredited business departments while Palmer and Short (2008) focused on the mission statements in U.S. colleges of business. Lastly, Creamer and Ghoston (2012) applied a mixed approach of qualitative and quantitative on their study of missions in colleges of engineering.

Another focus of study is the mission statement of religiously affiliated institutions of higher education. Zingales (2001) studied seven Roman Catholic, Benedictine colleges and universities in the United States, seeking to find a relationship between the Benedictine values articulated in the institutions’ mission statements and students’ perceptions of the applicability and importance of these values to their lives. Also, in the same year, Young (2001) was the first to study the mission statements of American Catholic universities. Woodrow (2006) analyzed the 105 member institutions of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities; in the same way, Firmin and Gilson (2010) focused Christian colleges in general. Following two studies on Catholic colleges’ mission statements by Woo in 2005 and Estanek, James, and Norton in 2006,
Abelman and Dalessandro (2008) investigated the institutional vision of Catholic universities and then also researched the institutional vision of a nation-wide sample of Catholic, Evangelical, and “Christ-centered” schools (2009). Abelman (2012) further conducted an additional study on the mission of theologically conservative Catholic colleges and universities.

Studies on the mission statements of liberal arts institutions and various classifications of institutions can also be found in the literature. For example, Delucchi (1997) sought to examine the myth of uniqueness and studied a small sample of liberal arts colleges’ mission statements. Clifton (2003) replicated Delucchi’s study in order to uncover the actual curricular offerings of liberal arts institutions compared to the claims in their mission statements. Seeking to explore the relationship between rhetoric and institutional type, Morphew and Hartley (2006) pursued a more thematic analysis of mission statements across liberal arts and doctoral institutions. Further, Taylor and Morphew (2010) compared how institutions represented themselves on their websites and on an archive maintained by the U.S. News and World Report in their analysis of mission statements on baccalaureate-granting colleges which offer few or no graduate degrees.

Within the literature there are studies which hone in exclusively on the analysis of community college mission statements. Ayers first published his research on mission priorities of 102 randomly selected SACSCOC-accredited community colleges in 2002, and then in 2005 he completed a critical discourse analysis of the presence of neoliberal ideology in the mission statements belonging to a sample of 144 American community colleges. Hegeman, Davies, and Banning (2007) contributed to the field by evaluating community colleges mission statements as they appeared in print and on the internet.
Advancing the understanding of the function and purposes of mission in diverse educational contexts, Wang, Gibson, Salinas, Solis, and Slate (2007) investigated the thematic differences in mission statements between four-year public institutions and two-year colleges in Texas. Abelman and Dalessandro (2008) studied and compared the institutional vision and mission statements of 240 institutions, 30 of them being community colleges, and found through his content analysis that key linguistic components were present in the institution’s visions. The largest sample of community college mission statements was employed by Ayers (2011) in his analysis of 421 community colleges in which he concluded that economic development had become a mission priority and that these institutions were adapting to global sociopolitical and economic processes. Finally, two additional studies also concerned the mission statements of community colleges, but the researchers did not directly analyze the actual statements. In particular, Mrozinski (2010) explored the role and efficacy of community college mission statements in the strategic planning process while Anderson (2012) found that presidents of SACS-accredited community colleges concurred that external factors affect their mission statements.

To conclude, there have been 25 studies on mission statements in the higher education setting in the United States, seven of these were focused on community colleges and four of them narrowed in on the institutional vision of the colleges and universities. However, none have focused on the differences between associate’s and bachelor’s degree-granting community college mission statements nor have they compared statements from community colleges located within a certain accrediting body over time.
Theoretical Framework

Research to date has utilized several different theoretical frameworks to undergird the studies of mission of higher education institutions. These frameworks have included institutional theory, neo-institutional theory, human capital theory, open systems theory, and theories of organizational identity and image in addition to more broad-sweeping concepts of globalization, neoliberal capitalism, and academic capitalism. For this study, the conceptual framework was grounded in resource dependence theory. This theory proposed by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) stipulates that the ability to obtain and maintain resources is essential for the survival of an organization and that all organizations depend on their environments for resources (Bess, Dee, & Johnstone, 2012). According to resource dependence theory (RDT), organizations will prioritize actions which generate revenue for the organization, and these activities are motivated by the need for resources (Miller, 2013). Moreover, in their attempt to pursue revenue, the internal behaviors of organizations can change as a result of their interaction with agents in the external environments (Wilson, 2008). When organizations seek resources externally, they become subject to the demands of the external entities which provide their needed resources (Miller, 2013). This dependence on resources results in a “kind of boundary breach wherein external demands exert pressure on internal processes and structures” (Mitchell, 1997, p. 268). According to Pfeffer & Salancik (1978), “organizations will tend to be influenced more the greater the dependence on the external organization, or alternatively, the more important the external organization is to the functioning and survival of the organization” (p. 59-60). However, interaction with the environment is inevitable, as organizations cannot survive if they do not respond to the demands of their
external environments (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Organizations can be likened to “quasi markets” which seek to maximize their autonomy and dependence of other organizations on them while minimizing uncertainty and dependence on other organizations (Levin & Kater, 2012).

In resource dependency theory, organizations are framed as open systems which are strongly influenced by and inextricably linked to their external environments (Frost, 2005; Levin & Kater, 2012; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). The community college would be considered an open system because it accepts inputs from its internal and external constituencies (Frost, 2005). Community colleges now have very high and complex levels of interaction with the external environment particularly as they pursue resources commonly in the form of revenue streams (Miller, 2013). In light of community colleges having been negatively impacted by losses of state-assisted appropriations, community college administrative leaders have sought to secure alternative external public or private sources in the form of partnerships, auxiliary enterprises, outsourcing, and new services for the community, but this leads to the unavoidable risks of being exposed to external influences (Miller, 2013; Wilson, 2008). In becoming less reliant on government funding, community colleges have become more responsive to public preferences and demands and more affected by global market forces (Levin, 1999; Wilson, 2008). As a result of these market conditions, community college executive-level leaders are influenced to take on decisions similar to those in the corporate workplace, responding to the demands of industry (Levin, 2001; Wilson, 2008). Community college executive level administrators have thus responded to external market forces by turning to workforce
development, training, and employability skills required by business and industry at the expense of education and social needs (Levin, 2001; Wilson, 2008).

The external demands for workforce and professional development opportunities are in direct response to the consequences of globalization (Levin, 2004). Accordingly, “markets, not citizens” are becoming the focus of higher education institutions, and he attributes this phenomenon as an outcome of global competition (Levin, 2004, p. 3). Community colleges too are being “subsumed into a global capitalist model, where global relationships are defined by capital formation and the dependencies that result” (Frost, 2005, p. 43). Levin (2004) pinpoints access, economic development and opportunities, external and internal pressures, marketplace competition, and demographics as the foundations of globalization and defines globalization as “increased interdependence in cultural, economic, and political activities across borders as well as awareness of the reduction of temporal and spatial boundaries globally” (p. 3). The globalized economic marketplace has demanded new workforce training demands and called for higher levels of education and training on the local level; as a result, community colleges have turned baccalaureate-degree programming in targeted occupations such as nursing and teaching. There is a concern that community colleges are expanding their institutional focus in an attempt to accommodate more practical, workforce-oriented, consumer needs. However, according to Pfeffer & Salancik (1978) an organization is effective when it can satisfy the demands of the members of its environment whose support is necessary for the organization’s survival. In this light, community colleges which respond to the demands of its local and regional economies as well as its global competitors are bound to survive. Indeed community colleges are
locales where globalization is reinterpreted, adapted, and advanced, and they “can function as global institutions, participating in the global flows of culture as conveyors and recipients of these flows” (Levin, 2002, p. 141). How resource dependency in a globalized open system could bear on the institutional identity and focus of community colleges as expressed by their publicly stated mission statement is an important consideration that frames this study.

**Conceptualizing the Thematic Structure of Mission Statements**

In the literature, no formula was found for constructing a mission statement although several commonly included components have been identified, as discussed in the section on the definition of mission statement in the educational context (Finley, Rogers, & Galloway, 2001; Newsom & Hayes, 1991; Meacham, 2008; Rowley, Lujan, & Dolence, 1997; Schuh, 2003; Sidhu, 2003). In the literature, even themes of mission statements are referred to by many different terms such as focuses, components, tracks, elements, pillars, values, functions, philosophy, goals, purposes, and outcomes. As stated, for the purpose of this study themes represent what the institutions propose as their values, goals, and functions. For this study, values are defined as what the college believes in and what it believes to be valuable or important. The values are often identified in the mission statement by their present tense verbs following by an object. For example, College A promotes equal access, encourages academic excellence, fosters scholarship, embraces diversity, and values affordability. However, values can also be found in how a service is described or how a function is accomplished. For instance, “College B encourages the pursuit of academic excellence and scholarly achievement through high quality instruction.” Here two functions, scholarly achievement and
academic excellence, are realized through high quality instruction and excellence which are values of College. Goals, on the other hand, are defined as what the College intends to accomplish. These are commonly found in infinitival (to + verb) phrases such as “The mission of College C is to achieve student success by developing informed and creative students” or “College D embraces excellence, diversity, and innovation to maximize student learning and success.”

Finally, function is defined as what the college does or what services the college provides and is usually identified by looking for verb in the present tense. For example, “College E provides students with equal access to a broad spectrum of educational and cultural opportunities” or “College F creates and continuously improves affordable, accessible and effective learning opportunities.” Oftentimes, however, values, goals, and functions cannot be discretely categorized because the reader can interpret what colleges value by what they state as their goals, and these same goals are often their functions. That is, what colleges believe in and intent to do are very often manifested in their services and offerings. For a chart with multiple examples of this common overlap in mission statements, refer to the Appendix A. To illustrate, College G believes access is important, so they state access as their goal and consequently offer accessible programs which are affordable and convenient. Thus there is considerable overlap between values, goals, and functions. Since these components are very common, they were considered the backbone of the thematic structure of mission statements for this study. In addition to values, goals, and functions, mission statements often include verbage on their particular service area (“serving the counties of X, Y, and Z”) as well as their own self-definition (College G is a public, comprehensive community college which…”). These additional
components are not necessarily the vertebrae of the statements, but rather they are like extending ligaments from the core, giving the statements a context. As such, service area and self-definition were also considered in the analysis of the study’s mission statements in addition to values, goals, and functions.
Chapter Three: Methods

In this section the methods used to investigate the research questions are discussed. The research questions are the following: 1) What are the salient themes in the mission statements of 295 SACSCOC-accredited institutions that identify as community colleges?, 2) How do the themes of the mission statements within the SACSCOC-accredited community colleges vary by their classification as an associate’s degree-granting institution or as a bachelor’s degree-granting institution?, and 3) How have the themes of community college mission statements changed since 2001 when the states in the SACSCOC region began to authorize community colleges to confer baccalaureate degrees? The researcher utilized content analysis, a qualitative approach to analysis, to investigate the mission statements from this sample population of community colleges. The unit of analysis for this study was the text from institutional mission statements, whose length ranged from approximately from five to 164 words. The study was conducted in an inductive manner in which thematic codes emerged from the sample data during the process of analysis, leading potentially to the development of concepts or a model. In the section that follows, the selection of the sample institutions are described as well as the process for data collection from searching to verifying and organizing the mission statements. Additionally, the analysis procedures for coding, categorizing into themes, and comparing are provided for each distinct research question. Multiple measures taken to ensure credibility, dependability, and transferability are discussed at the end of this section.
Selection of Sample

The researcher first obtained the member listing of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), which consisted of 802 accredited institutions within an eleven-state region, and then identified all the institutions from the SACSCOC list which were publicly governed and where associate’s degrees were conferred. In the SACSCOC classification listing, this included Level I and Level II institutions. Level I refers to institutions which offer the associate degree as the highest degree, and Level II refers to institutions which offers the baccalaureate degree as the highest degree. However, Level II can also refer to institutions which offer the bachelor’s without the associate’s degree, and this type of Level II institution (non-associate’s degree-granting) was not included in the sample. That is, once all the Level I and Level II institutions were identified, those in Level II which did not confer associate’s degrees were removed, resulting in a sample in which all the institutions offered associate’s degrees with the only difference being in some additionally offering bachelor’s degrees. The researcher then crosschecked this list with the Carnegie Foundation Basic Classification Category from 2010 in order to exclude those which were 1) tribal colleges, 2) special focus institutions such military or solely health sciences colleges where 75% or more of their degrees were offered in one field alone, or 3) institutions where bachelor’s degrees represented 10 percent or more of all undergraduate degrees. The reason for this crosscheck was because the SACSCOC classification did not provide this level of detail, and all the colleges comprising the sample population needed to represent similar institutional functions and characteristics. That is, all the colleges in the dataset needed to be associate’s dominant institutions in order to represent the
predominant community college paradigm. As a result of applying the Carnegie Basic Classification (2010), five institutions were eliminated: Dalton State College, St. Petersburg College, Louisiana State University at Alexandria, University of South Carolina-Beaufort, and Middle Georgia State College (previously known as Macon State College). No tribal college was removed because no associate’s dominant institutions existed in this accrediting region, but three institutions were eliminated because they were considered special focus institutions according to the Carnegie Basic Classification: Carolinas College of Health Sciences, Georgia Military College, and Central Texas College.

In this study, the sample consisted of 295 SACSCOC member institutions which were extracted from the original 802 institutions in preparation for conducting this study. The remaining sample of 295 were from colleges where the degrees conferred are at the associate's level or at the bachelor’s level but where bachelor's degrees account for less than 10 percent of all undergraduates, excluding institutions eligible for the Carnegie classification of tribal colleges or special focus institutions. The study sample was parsed into two principal lists: public accredited institutions conferring only associate’s degrees (263) and those conferring both associate’s and bachelor’s degrees (32), with bachelor’s representing less than 10 percent of all undergraduates.

**Data Collection: Searching, Verifying, and Organizing the Mission Statements**

The unit of analysis in this study was text from institutional mission statements. Graneheim and Lundman (2003) suggested that the size of a unit of analysis is suitable when it is large enough to be considered a whole and small enough to be considered a meaningful context for analysis. In this study, the unit of analysis was the phrase,
sentence, or cluster of sentences which comprised the institutions’ mission statements. Within these units of analyses, meaning units were found at the word or phrase level. According to Graneheim & Lundman (2003), meaning units are the groupings of words or statements that interrelate to each other through their content and context and connect to the same central meaning.

Using publicly accessed institutional websites, the researcher extracted the mission statement data from every institution on the two lists, Level 1 and Level II. The mission statement was located systematically by first searching the institution’s home page for the “About Us” tab or link, as the mission and values of the institution were often located under this section. However, if this was not available on the home page, the institution’s search engine was accessed by typing in “mission” and selecting the link or page that contained the institution’s mission statement. The search sometimes resulted in mission statements pertaining to a department, school, or office, but the mission statements were all critically reviewed to exclude all statements that did not refer to the institution as a whole. The mission statement data were thoroughly combed to eliminate vision or value statements from the sample, as these were often placed on the same page as the mission statements. Once located, the mission statements were exported and saved onto an Excel file into the respective columns which corresponded to the two different lists of community college associate’s degree-conferring and community college bachelor’s degree-conferring. It is important to note that these mission statements traditionally consisted one to four sentences, but some were considerably longer—up to over 300 words. Approximately 10% of the mission statements were outside the length of the mission statements in this study, which ranged five to 164 words. Many times, these
longer mission statements included a bulleted or numbered list of institutional goals, promises, or specific offerings for the constituents in its particular service area. In these cases, only the first one or two paragraphs of the longer text in its entirety were used as the institution’s mission statement so as to make the length of mission statements more standardized across institutions in the sample. Moreover, particularly lengthy mission statements bloated the common features of mission statements and made it difficult for the researcher to identify clearly what the institution prioritized as its central values, goals, and functions. Examples of how the longer mission statements were trimmed to conform to a manageable size of context are located in Appendix B.

Approach to Analysis

The researcher utilized content analysis, a qualitative approach to analysis, to analyze the mission statements from this sample population of community colleges. Content analysis helps researchers understand the meanings, intentions, and context of communication (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992, as cited in Elo & Kyngas, 2008). Qualitative content analysis is defined as “an approach of empirical, methodological controlled analysis of texts within their context of communication, following content analytic rules and step by step models” (Mayring, 2000, p. 5). Whereas some would consider content analysis to be a systematic and objective means of analyzing message characteristics (Thayer, Evans, McBride, Queen, & Spyridakis, 2007), others aver its subjective nature and acknowledge that working with text always implicates multiple meanings which require some degree of subjective interpretation (Graneheim & Lundman, 2003). Hsieh and Shannon (2005) perceive qualitative content analysis as a method to subjectively
interpreting textual data by a systematic classifying process of coding in order to identify patterns or themes.

From its source data, content analysis makes inferences that are replicable and valid with the purpose of gaining new knowledge, insights, and content-relevant representation of facts (Krippendorff, 1980, as cited in Elo & Kyngas, 2008). Moreover, the purpose of content analysis is to gain a condensed and comprehensive description of a given phenomenon by way of concepts or categories (Elo & Kyngas, 2008). Its goal is to “fracture” and thus rearrange the data in order to ease the comparison of categories (Maxwell, 1998, as cited in Schilling, 2006) and to reach verifiable conclusions (Schilling, 2006). One of the benefits of content analysis is that it is flexible in its design and content-sensitive (Krippendorff, 1980, as cited in Elo & Kyngas, 2008). Another advantage of content analysis is that large volumes of text and different sources of textual data can used in validating evidence (Elo & Kyngas, 2008).

This study is considered to be qualitative, but to supplement the qualitative content analysis, the researcher provided for the reader descriptive tables containing a summary of the concrete data on the mission statements such as the number of words in the mission statement, the range of length, average word count, the number of sentences included, the most frequently used content-laden phrases, the number of mission statements from each state, and their Carnegie Classifications. These tables allow for the researcher to discretely and objectively describe the mission statements and for the reader to be able to contextualize the data and delve into the specifics before getting to the broader themes. Appendix C contains all 295 SACSCOC mission statements in their entirety for readers to further examine.
The study of the mission statements was conducted in an inductive manner in which thematic codes emerged from data from this sample during the analysis process (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007; Thayer et al., 2007). One benefit of this approach is gaining direct information without being limited by the imposition of preconceived categories or theories (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). While the researcher was aware of the salient themes from the David Ayers study (2002), the initial codes were created independently without any attempt to match or search for his themes in an attempt to not impute meaning into the text. Due to the third and last research question being of a comparative nature, Ayers’s identified themes were contrasted a posteriori to those which emerged from the current sample, allowing the text to talk for itself. However, some themes which emerged organically from the study had to be collapsed in order to make an equivalent comparison to his study. For example, access and accessibility (in the sense of flexible class offerings) were merged together. Also, workforce and economic development had to be merged because Ayers united these together as one theme, and aptly so, because in the literature they are continually used as a pair without any distinction between these two types of development.

In regards to using qualitative data analysis software, some researchers consider this as particularly useful in studies using large and diverse data (Creswell, 2009). These types of computer programs make the analysis more manageable and may even bring about more thorough levels of analyses (Gerbic & Stacey, 2005). Despite having the benefits of software storing, arranging, and reporting the data, the analytic process still was controlled by the hands of the researcher (Schilling, 2006). In this study, the researcher made use of a text-analysis software used for qualitative data called NVivo
(Version 10) for the following purposes: 1) importing the source data, 2) conducting coding queries, 3) running comparative analyses, 4) visualizing the results via models and charts, 5) labeling and organizing the attributes and hierarchies of codes, and 6) tracking the codes of the two lists.

**Analysis Procedure**

The procedure for analyzing the data to answer the three proposed research questions cannot be described with a broad brush since each question is unique and was analyzed differently, requiring distinct steps. Below the researcher delineates the steps per research question.

Research question 1: *What are the salient themes, defined as the institution’s values, goals, and functions, of the mission statements of 295 SACSCOC-accredited community colleges?* In order to investigate this first research question, the researcher first copied and pasted those mission statements from the identified population of the 295 community colleges’ websites onto rows of their respective list in Excel. From Excel, the mission statements were imported into NVivo (Version 10). Preliminary text search queries were conducted to obtain word counts and word clusters, word tree maps, and word frequencies. These text query results allowed for the identification of preliminary code labels for an initial scheme, while allowing for the addition of new code labels when encountering data that doesn’t correspond to an existing code. The coding scheme was comprised of the code name, label, and usually several two-word phrasal exemplars from each code, so the coders could be familiar with how a particular code could be found in context. On the coding sheet, the coder identified and placed the code into the different categories of values, goals, functions, service area, and self-definition. The second coder
was apprised of some examples of values, goals, functions, service area, and self-definition within the mission statements as well as guidance on how these five categories could be interpreted.

The researcher first applied the coding scheme to 15 mission statements selected at random via the Randomizer function in Excel. Since it is important to establish a baseline for intercoder reliability at the start of a content analysis (Thayer et al., 2007), a second trained coder also applied that coding scheme to the same 15 mission statements. This second coder was trained in content analysis and debriefed on the coding procedure and read three content analysis articles prior to coding the statements. These training articles were written by Elo and Kyngas (2008), Schilling (2006), and Graneheim and Lundman (2006), and hyperlinks to these articles can be found in the reference list.

On the coding sheet, the coder identified and placed the code into the different categories of values, goals, functions, service area, and self-definition. The second coder was apprised of some examples of values, goals, functions, service area, and self-definition within the mission statements as well as guidance on how these five categories could be interpreted. The researcher and the second coder identified and placed the codes into the different categories of values, goals, functions, service area, and self-definition for each mission statement.

When meeting to discuss the preliminary coding results, the two coders conducted an intercoder reliability test to see whether the two coders were making the same decisions or whether the results varied. After all, the agreement among independent

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1 The second coder was Dr. Michelle Thomas, the Interim Academic Dean at Miami Dade College-Wolfson Campus. For her dissertation on professional development of teachers for international contexts, she implemented qualitative and quantitative methods by employing case study, surveys, and focus groups. Dr. Thomas brought to this current research a solid understanding of and extensive experience in coding.
observers is the key to reliability (Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007). A threshold of 86.19% agreement between the coders was met for first 15 mission statements, reaching the minimum level of agreement of 85% for this study in order to establish validity. The researcher and the second coder analyzed and coded 30 more randomized mission statements, and at that point, another test of intercoder reliability was conducted, and a 85.69 % level of agreement was calculated for all 45 statements, representing 15% of the total mission statements being investigated. The greatest lack of agreement occurred when independently coding the category of goals. After goals, the category which was the most difficult to reach agreement was functions. For values, self-definition, and target population, there was relative consistency in agreement while the goals and functions often decreased the percentages of agreement. Although the two coders discussed their disagreements in order to reach a consensus, sometimes there were differences which remained so as not to purposely bend the independent coding decisions in favor of a higher reliability coefficient. For example, for the mission statement of Sandhills Community College, the coders only reached 75% of agreement in their choices of what constituted the institution’s goals. For the first coder, the goals were educational opportunities, excellence, and access whereas the second coder concurred with those three but also considered that community development was an additional goal. Although the statement mentions that these high quality educational opportunities are to be extended to all the people of the Sandhills, the first coder didn’t agree with the interpretation that community development was the goal. In this case, since the coders agreed on the other categories of values and functions to a great extent, they allowed this lack of agreement to stand without a consensus.
NVivo was used to keep track via a running tally of the proportion of community colleges in the sample that reflected each code and to indicate which codes were present in each college’s statement. Once having coded all the mission statements, the researcher sorted the codes into categories or themes. The clusters of themes sometimes reached the level of subthemes, and a rudimentary hierarchical structure of themes and subthemes was sketched out, resulting in a table outlining the salient themes, subthemes, and exemplars, along with their respective keywords from the Level I and II mission statements. The prominence of each salient theme relative to the other salient themes was also assessed in an attempt to gain an understanding of the overarching themes across all institutions in this region. Prominence was calculated by looking at the position and frequency of the themes in the mission statements. Frequency is the number of times a theme was employed in the data, and position refers to the ranking order in frequency in which a theme was found. Finally, the salience of values, goals, and functions was configured, and then the researcher followed up with a comparison of salient themes corresponding to the entire dataset’s salient values, goals, and functions in order of frequency and position.

Research question 2: How do the themes of the mission statements within the SACSCOC-accredited community colleges vary by their classification as an associate’s degree-granting institution or as a bachelor’s degree-granting institution? For this question, the researcher split out the data into two groups: associate’s degree-granting institution (Level I) vs. bachelor’s degree-granting institutions (Level II). Both levels were already coded from the analysis from the first research question, resulting in a tally of the proportion of college mission statements that reflected each code and the codes that
pertained to each institution and each of the two levels. Since the researcher utilized the previously identified codes as well as the same keywords and exemplars, the themes were able to emerge out of the two levels and thus be compared. In addition, the top most persistent values, goals, and functions in Level I were identified and correspondingly, the top most persistent values, goals, and functions in Level II were identified and compared to the Level I as far as their proportion and frequency.

Research question 3: How have the themes of community college mission statements changed since 2001 when the states in the SACSCOC region began to authorize community colleges to confer baccalaureate degrees? The themes from all the SACSCOC community colleges which were identified via research question one were used as a springboard to answer this third and final research question. In order to show comparison, the seven salient themes from Ayers’s 2002 study on 102 community college mission priorities were compared to those themes identified in this study gleaned from research question one. The specific 102 institutions could not be identified by name nor their specific information extracted from the Ayers study. Ayers, although willing to advise on various aspects of his research article, was unable to retrieve the list of institutions and respective data for use in this study. It is important to note that in Ayers’s study, he did not tease out the SACSCOC associate’s degree-granting institution and bachelor’s degree-granting institutions, so the results from research question two were not be utilized in this comparison. Nonetheless, Ayers’ themes and their corresponding frequencies and proportions and the salient themes resulting from this study were then compared and contrasted with the intent to expand on his work and provide insight into to potential shifts in mission in light of resource dependency theory.
Trustworthiness

This study, like every research study, should be assessed according to the procedures used to produce findings, and the purpose of assessing is to ensure trustworthiness. In order to increase trustworthiness, several actions were taken to safeguard credibility, dependability, and transferability. In order to achieve credibility, the research selected the most suitable meaning units for analysis so they were not too broad or too narrow (as in a single word). For example, those mission statements which were several paragraphs long including bullet lists of purposes, goals, and offerings were trimmed because they were likely to contain many more meanings than the more standard mission statements. Credibility also concerns how well categories and themes cover data appropriately and thoroughly, so the researcher was careful not to inadvertently or even systematically exclude data during this process of cutting down the lengthy statements. In addition, the researcher showed representative quotes and exemplars from the mission statements so the reader is able to judge the credibility of the researcher’s codes and categories.

Another means to achieve credibility is to seek agreement among independent coders (Graneheim & Lundman, 2003; Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007). In this study, 15% of mission statements chosen at random were coded by two independent coders, resulting in two initial tests of intercoder reliability at the start of the analysis. A threshold of 85% agreement between the coders was the minimum level of agreement for this study in order to establish validity. If the threshold fell below 85%, the two coders added, edited, or deleted the codes and discussed until the disagreements were resolved and a consensus
was reached. As a result, the trustworthiness of this study increased by having developed a coding scheme and adhering to the analytic procedures (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Another aspect of trustworthiness is the question of dependability. Research is considered dependable if the researcher takes into account factors of instability in the data and any alterations in the researcher’s design or decisions during the analytic process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, as cited in Graneheim & Lundman, 2003). The researcher chronicled the process and made note of any changes from the established protocol.

The degree to which the sample data will change over time can be predicted only to a certain point. For example, a SACSCOC-member institution is accredited every ten years for accreditation. At that time, the institution can submit a new mission statement along with all the supporting documentation, including evidence of the legal authority for the change of mission if authorization by the governing board or the state is required. However, an institution reserves the prerogative to change their mission at any time, but member institutions are required to notify SACSCOC of any substantive changes, not editorial changes, made to the mission. These types of substantive changes to an established mission of the institution would lead to a fundamental shift in the nature of the institution, for example, the transformation of a technical college into a comprehensive community college. Due to the sheer volume of work involved in submitting a SACSCOC substantive change prospectus, not to mention garnering the funds, support, and required authorizations to change the mission of a college, mission statements do not change frequently.

Finally, trustworthiness also requires that findings can be transferred to other settings or groups. In order to discern the transferability of a study, it is important to have
a clear and thorough depiction of the study’s context, sample selection procedures, data collection, and analytic process. The researcher provided a concise protocol to follow along with a rigorous presentation of findings which includes appropriate exemplars from the data.
Chapter Four: Results

Overview of Mission Statements

Before disclosing the final results of the three research questions, a summary or descriptive snapshot is provided as context for the data analysis, allowing the reader to gain a deeper understanding and broader perspective of the mission statements. This brief descriptive section includes five snapshots: 1) the number of words and sentences in the mission statements, 2) the top most frequently used content-laden words and phrases found in the statements, 3) the number of mission statements from each state according to their SACSCOC level classification, 4) descriptions of the mission statements’ declared self-definitions, and 5) their target populations. After these five sections, the results from the three research questions are discussed.

Descriptive snapshot: Size and length of mission statements. On average the 295 mission statements in the dataset consisted of approximately two sentences (1.827), and the length ranged from five to 164 words in this study. The average word count of the 295 mission statements is 54, and this count included the missions which were trimmed for the purposes of this study. If the 33 trimmed statements had been removed, the average would have been 51 words. The average word count of the 33 longer statements that had to be trimmed have an average word count of 74. The typical mission statement is as long as the one from Indian River State College in Fort Pierce, Florida at 54 words:

Indian River State College is a comprehensive college accredited to award Baccalaureate Degrees, Associate Degrees, and Career and Technical Certificates. As a leader in education and innovation, IRSC transforms lives by offering high-quality, affordable and accessible education to the residents of
Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, and St. Lucie counties through traditional and electronic delivery.

**Descriptive snapshot: Word and phrase counts.** The researcher did not use simple word frequency counts to make inferences about the data but rather only used it initially to identify words for the potential codes. Following are Tables 1 and 2 which list the most frequent words and phrases at the most basic level. These lists are helpful because looking at frequency allows the reader to make general claims about the significance of topics or concepts in a given discourse and to detect patterns in the occurrence of phrases and words. Table 1 lists the top 20 most frequently used content-laden words in all 295 statements. “Content-laden” refers to words (or phrases) that possess meaning in their own right. There are no exact locations, states, articles (the, a, an, some), prepositions, pronouns, nor conjunctions included. Frequency is the number of times a word is used in the data, and position refers to the ranking order in frequency in which a term was found.

Table 1

*Top 20 words in entire mission statement sample (N=295)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>technical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>educational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>workforce</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While the entire list of mission statements is available in the appendices, a quick snapshot of the statements at the phrasal level allows the reader to become familiar with the most common collocations in the data without having to read all 295 missions to become familiar with their jargon. Table 2 provides a list of the most frequently employed four-word phrases that make sense; for example, incomplete phrases such as “a unit of the” or “college a member of” are not included but rather only the phrases which contain a head word and/or an object.

Table 2

*Top ten four-word phrases in the 295 mission statements*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Four-word phrase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>community and technical college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>the quality of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>the technical college system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>institution of higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>a public two year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>educational programs and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>traditional and distance learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>public comprehensive community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>business and industry training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>educational opportunities and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>degrees diplomas and certificates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>economic social and cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>associate of applied science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>to improve the quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>to business and industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>technical education and training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Descriptive snapshot: Mission statement distribution among 11 states. The mission statements in this study are from 11 different states from SACSCOC, but they vary greatly in the numbers of institutions with the Level I and Level II SACSCOC designations. Level I refers to institutions which offer the associate degree as the highest degree, and Level II refers to institutions which offers the baccalaureate degree as the highest degree. However, Level II can also refer to institutions which offer the bachelor’s degree without the associate’s degree, and this type of Level II institution (non-associate’s degree-granting) was not included in the sample. In order to link these different levels to their geographical locations within the southern United States, Table 3 provides a listing of number of mission statements from each state and their corresponding number of SACSCOC level classifications.

Table 3

Number of mission statements from each state and their SACSCOC level classifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Level I</th>
<th>Level II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Descriptive snapshot: Self-definition. Before analyzing the overarching themes of the institutions in the dataset, it is important to situate them within their given context. Also, when examining goals, it is helpful to know how the institutions first perceive and define themselves before they publicly put forward their main purposes and objectives in a statement. Therefore, self-definition was included as one of the five main categories under which all mission statements were coded. The themes elicited from the three research questions were expressed by the values, functions, and goals of the statements. To clarify, values were defined as what the college believes in and what it believes to be valuable or important, and goals were defined as what the College intends to accomplish. Finally, function was defined as what the college does or what services the college provides. The researcher found it important to also include what was discovered in terms of the institutions’ self-definition as well as target population. As stated earlier, self-definition and target population are not necessarily thematic core of the statements, rather they contextualize the statements. Table 4 shows which phrases and words were most employed by all 295 institutions in the dataset to define themselves. Position describes the rank in frequency of the words and phrases, and frequency represents how many mission statements in the entire dataset this word or phrase was used. The results show

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Georgia</th>
<th>Kentucky</th>
<th>Louisiana</th>
<th>Mississippi</th>
<th>North Carolina</th>
<th>South Carolina</th>
<th>Tennessee</th>
<th>Texas</th>
<th>Virginia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Georgia 31  Kentucky 16  Louisiana 10  Mississippi 15  North Carolina 58  South Carolina 16  Tennessee 13  Texas 64  Virginia 23
that the institutions more than anything else, describe themselves as public, part of a system, comprehensive, and two-year community colleges serving a particular geographical area. Geographical area refers to phrases such as “Northwest Alabama” or “communities of Gwinnett and North Fulton.” The colleges in this dataset also assert themselves as open door, learner- or student-centered institutions of higher learning. For three representative self-definitions which contains language that correspond to words and phrases listed in Table 4, refer to the mission statements of Aiken Technical College, Augusta Technical College, or Chattahoochee Valley Community College in Appendix C. Not included in the chart, some of the top self-describing adjectives were “diverse,” “community-centered,” “dynamic,” and “innovative.”

Table 4

*Position, frequency, and most salient words and phrases expressing self-definition*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Word or phrase describing the institutions’ self-definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Part of system; a unit or member of a body or system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Two-year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Geographical area (e.g., northeastern Kentucky region)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Community college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Open door/open access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Institution of higher learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Learner- or student-centered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Multi-campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Located in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Catalyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Leader</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Often times the self-definition encompassed all three values, goals, and functions.

For example, in 34 of the self-definition statements, the institutions state what they
provide as in “quality, customer-driven educational opportunities to enhance the lives of those we serve” or “accessible, innovative, and comprehensive learning opportunities within a supportive community that encourages academic excellence.” The institutions often articulated their identity alongside their function, as 15 statements mention that they offer or award certain services and programs. The statements assert what they support, strengthen, or desire to strengthen, as in “the economic empowerment of people, communities, and businesses along the Altamaha River and southern coast” or “strengthens the academic, economic, social and cultural life of the citizens of New Hanover and Pender counties.” Seven of the self-definition statements contained language about responding to needs or meeting needs as in “dedicated to serving the intellectual, diverse, cultural, and occupational needs of the Florida Keys as well as the global community” or “dedicated to fulfilling the educational, training, and cultural needs of the communities we serve.” Sometimes the self-definition also touched on values to which the institution was dedicated or committed to. There were 17 such statements which expressed dedication or commitment to such things as “lifelong learning opportunities, student success, teaching and learning, open access, and improving and enriching lives.”

**Descriptive snapshot: Target population.** Looking at the target population of a given mission statement is also important in order to understand for whom the goals are being accomplished and to whom the functions are being carried out. Studying target population allows us to define a service area and be able to answer the question: For whom are the institutions providing these offerings? For which populations are institutions working to complete their goals?
Table 5 outlines the most frequently stated target population in all the mission statements along with their position or rank, from most to least frequently referenced as a target population. Frequency expresses not the number of absolute codes but rather the number of mission statements which had that particular public coded as their target. Mission statements could pinpoint more than one target population and very often did. Florence-Darlington Technical College in South Carolina provides an example of a mission statement which encompasses more than one population:

The mission of Florence-Darlington Technical College is to provide comprehensive technical education, workforce development, and educational services to students, business and industry, and the markets it serves. Through instructional programs, business and industry partnerships, and community involvement, the college will play a major role in the economic development and quality of life of its constituents. The educational experience at Florence-Darlington Technical College will have an international perspective, which will enhance the student's marketability in today's global economy.

As shown in Table 5, the top target population is students or learners, and following students very closely by the difference of one mission statement were communities. The following mission statement provides an example of communities as a target population: “Edgecombe Community College is a comprehensive two-year institution dedicated to fulfilling the educational, training, and cultural needs of the communities we serve.”

If workforce and economic development had been combined with business and industry, this third position would have held a much higher frequency. It is clear that
these three core populations of students, community, and business/industry/workforce are located in the center of these institutions’ radar. The next ones which follow share approximately the same frequency: individuals, county, and geographical region. Bishop State Community College in Alabama provides an example of a geographical area selected as a target population; it is “responsive to individual and community needs for the citizenry of Mobile and Washington counties.” At the sixth position, general population refers to words in the statements such as people, lives, or all. Although not captured in the table below, there were three instances of “diverse populations” coded as target population in the data (for an example, see Chattahoochee Valley Community College’s mission in Appendix C), but in fact many of the target population categories above were described as diverse, such as diverse student body (24 mission statements or MSs), diverse individuals (11 MSs), diverse communities (26 MSs), diverse geographical region (2 MSs), diverse county (1 MS) or diverse citizenry (1 MS) or diverse adults (1 MS), and finally, diverse surrounding areas (1 MS).

Table 5

Target population as stated by institutions by their mission statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Target population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>Students or learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>Community or communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Business and/or industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Geographical region (e.g., central Shenandoah Valley)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>General population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Citizens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Workforce or workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Service area or the region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Adults</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These descriptive snapshots allow the reader to better contextualize the data before exploring the results of the larger themes. Now coupled with some basic descriptions on the mission statements, including the word count of mission statements, sample key words and phrases, the distribution of mission statements among the 11 states, as well as target population and self-definition, the final results are discussed within a context of greater breadth and depth.

**Research Question One**

*What are the salient themes, defined as the institution’s values, goals, and functions, of the mission statements of 295 SACSCOC-accredited community colleges?*

The coding of the analysis of both Level 1 and Level II institutions resulted in 13 overarching themes represented in the 295 mission statements, and these are the following in order from most to least salient: workforce and economic development, access, high quality and excellence, comprehensiveness, service area, community development, responsiveness to needs, success, improvement in quality of life, diversity, personal development, cultural development, and preparation for responsible citizenship/member of society. The prominence, frequency and salience of each salient theme relative to the other are illustrated in Table 6. Prominence is expressed in terms of position in which the most salient theme is the first position and the least salient is in the last or 13th position. The frequency represents the number of mission statements in which this theme is found, and the proportion refers to the percentage of mission statements in

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Surrounding areas/and beyond</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Its employees (the college's)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Constituents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>School districts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
which the theme is present in the entire dataset of 295 mission statements. To clarify, the theme was counted once in a mission statement even if the theme was found more than once under the categories of values, goals, and/or functions. Sometimes a theme could be present in all three of these categories, sometimes two, or just one. For example, a mission statement could express workforce and economic development as a value of the institution, and they actually state this as both a goal and function. That is, the institution values workforce and economic development and is committed to workforce and economic development as a goal, and one of its main functions is workforce and economic development. In the case of workforce and economic development, there were 258 instances of workforce and economic development codes found among the values, goals, and functions, but workforce and economic development was found in only 184 statements. So, for the purposes of listing the order of prominence of themes, a theme is counted one time once it is found in a mission statement, as opposed to counting the raw number of codes in each and every category.

Table 6

*Salient Themes of 295 Level I and II Mission Statements*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Workforce and economic development</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>62.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>58.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>High quality/excellence</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>56.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Comprehensiveness</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>42.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Service area</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>40.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Community development</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>38.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Responsiveness to needs</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>37.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Success</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>34.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Improvement of quality of life</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>29.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>22.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Personal development</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>21.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Cultural development</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>15.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Preparation for responsible citizenship</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>13.22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To provide more context to these salient themes and clarify what they represent, Table 7 below lists the 13 themes along with their respective subthemes in addition to keywords and corresponding sample phrases from the mission statements. In order to be considered a subtheme, it had to be mentioned at least twice in the sample; unique phrases, albeit coded in the analysis, are not included in the table. These subthemes are equivalent to different related topics within a particular theme, and they trace a type of boundary around the coding parameters, pointing what was included and could be potentially included if replicated in the future. The keywords are included for the benefit of future researchers who would like to know the most common terms embedded in phrases coded in a given theme. The sample phrases from the mission statements give particulars of exactly what was coded in that theme, so as to serve as a template for future replication.

Although Table 7 provides data on themes, subthemes, exemplars, and keywords, some additional explanation is necessary for the themes of diversity, service area, and comprehensiveness. Almost all the salient themes, except for three, were arrived at by collapsing values, goals, and functions, and then by comparing frequencies of a particular theme in the mission statements to identify salience. However, in the case of diversity, the researcher needed to look at target population in addition to values, goals, and functions because by leaving out the mentions about diversity in target population, it would have left out in great measure what Ayers referred to in his theme of diversity, which was diversity in target population. Ayers did not slice his coding into values, goals, functions, self-definition, and target population like in this study. If target population had been left out in diversity, the resulting themes gleaned from the first research question
one would be incomparable to Ayers’s results, which later serve to answer the third and final research question. In an attempt to compare fairly, the target population’s diversity codes were included in the overarching theme of diversity.

Also, service area emerged externally and separately from values, goals, and functions; it acted as its own category, a peer to these three. Service area as a salient theme refers to a specified service area, not merely a target population. As demonstrated in Table 5, target population encompasses much broader groupings of publics ranging from citizens to constituents, counties to states. If target population had been made synonymous to service area, it would have been too amorphous and vague to contribute much value to the study. Service area as a salient theme was more targeted and precise than merely a community or communities; this theme comprised counties, school districts, state, geographical region, service area and/or region, or surrounding areas, and even local community. Nevertheless, five instances of local community was included in service area because the researcher considered this phrase pointed to a specific area located near the institution and thus would fit with the rest of the codes under service area.

In addition, it is important to note that the salient theme of comprehensiveness in the table below includes an additional category outside of values, goals, and functions. For this theme, the researcher had to also include the category of self-definition since nearly 20% of the institutions specifically described themselves as comprehensive in their self-definition as in the case of Chipola College cited in the exemplar under comprehensiveness in Table 7. These codes would have been entirely dismissed in the salience counts if self-definition had been left out and only values, goals, and functions
had been examined. Additionally, mission statements were coded under the theme of comprehensiveness if they included any of the keywords listed below in Table 7 or if the mission statement contained a list of comprehensive services including student support services, career education, development education, community education, and/or academic education programs.

Table 7

*Salient themes, Subthemes, Exemplars, and Keywords of the 295 Mission Statements*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
<th>Exemplars</th>
<th>Keywords in context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Workforce and economic development</td>
<td>-Prepare students for the job market, employment, career advancement</td>
<td>-“develop the capacities of business, industry and the communities”</td>
<td>Business, career, collaborations,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Business and industry</td>
<td>-“prepare students to enter the job market”</td>
<td>economy, economic, employer,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Professional development</td>
<td>-“impact economic development”</td>
<td>employment, industry, job,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Partnerships-agricultural, business and industry, economic development,</td>
<td>-“improve the employability”</td>
<td>occupation, partnership,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and occupation-related fields</td>
<td>-“develop a globally competitive workforce”</td>
<td>professional development, training,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Economic development</td>
<td>-“modern workforce training”</td>
<td>vocational, workplace,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>workforce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Access</td>
<td>-Affordability</td>
<td>-“affordable, high-quality educational and training programs and services”</td>
<td>Access, affordable, affordability,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Flexibility</td>
<td>-“equal access to opportunities”</td>
<td>alternative, convenient, delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Equity</td>
<td>-“meeting the diverse needs of the population at a reasonable cost”</td>
<td>methods/models, distance learning,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Various delivery methods, traditional and distance delivery methods</td>
<td>-“open admissions policy”</td>
<td>equitable, equity, flexible,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-“provides accessibility for individuals with diverse backgrounds”</td>
<td>flexibility, traditional, open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-“traditional and distance education delivery methods”</td>
<td>door or admissions, schedules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-“range of flexible programs”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. High quality/excellence</td>
<td>-Excellence in general</td>
<td>-“excellent workforce and transfer programs, student services, and</td>
<td>Exceptional, excellent,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subthemes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1 | -Excellence in teaching, learning, or programs                            | -continuing education”
|   |                                                                            | -“high quality innovative instruction and support”
|   |                                                                            | -“world-class life-long educational and workforce training”
| 2 | 4.Comprehensiveness                                                        | -“a spectrum of educational goals”
|   |                                                                            | -“broad range of programs, learning opportunities and experiences”
|   |                                                                            | -“comprehensive range of opportunities for the educational, cultural, and economic development of the service district”
|   |                                                                            | -“wide variety of educational programs and instructional strategies”
|   |                                                                            | -“Chipola is a comprehensive public college whose...”
| 3 | 5. Service Area                                                           | -“primarily serves the needs of the citizens of its service area (Parker, Wise, Palo Pinto, and Jack counties)”
|   |                                                                            | -“promotes great value primarily for its 20-member school district service area in Northeast Texas”
|   |                                                                            | -“services that focus on the dynamic requirements and needs of its local, regional, and international community”
|   |                                                                            | -“dedicates its services to area citizens”
| 4 | 6. Community development                                                 | -“community development”
|   |                                                                            | -“community success”
|   |                                                                            | -“quality of life of community”
|   |                                                                            | -“community engagement”
|   |                                                                            | -“community leadership and service”
|   |                                                                            | -“community outreach and services”
|   |                                                                            | -“engages and strengthens its community”
|   |                                                                            | -“make a positive change in...the community”
|   |                                                                            | -“community partnerships”
|   |                                                                            | -“community service”
|   |                                                                            | -“social and cultural development of our community”
| 5 | 7. Responsiveness to needs                                                | -“meet the changing and diverse lifelong learning needs of a multi-culturally diverse citizenry”
|   |                                                                            | -“anticipates and responds to the education needs of individuals”
|   |                                                                            | -“meet the needs of citizens, business, and industry in the service area”

**Excellence**

- Exemplary, premier, quality, sound, superior, world class

**Comprehensiveness**

- Broad, comprehensive, range, scope, spectrum, wide

**Service Area**

- Area, county, local, region, school districts, service area, state, surrounding area

**Community development**

- Community, local, social

**Responsiveness to needs**

- Changing, learner-centered, needs, relevant, relevance, respond, responsive, student-centered,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>“student-centered, caring and technically advanced environment”</th>
<th>up to date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 8. Success | -Student success  
-General success  
-Personal success  
-Staff and faculty success  
-Workplace and professional success | -“achieving their educational and career goals”  
-“empower people for success”  
-“prepare individuals to succeed in today’s technological workforce”  
-“success in a sustainable global society”  
-“prepared for success at four-year institutions”  
-“student achievement” | Achievement, achieve, succeed, success, successful |
| 9. Improvement in quality of life | -Transformation of lives, individuals, and region  
-Empowerment of individuals | -“enhance the quality of life of its constituents”  
-“transforms lives through the power of education to improve the employability and quality of life of area citizens”  
-“enrich the lives of its students and the communities it serves”  
-“empowering individuals through education and training” | Empower, enhance, enrich, improve, transform |
| 10. Diversity | No subthemes | -“prepare our students to value the individuals and organizations within our diverse community”  
-“inclusive postsecondary education and training”  
-“promotes cultural diversity” | Diverse, diversity, inclusive, multicultural, nontraditional, special populations, status underserved |
| 11. Personal development | -Student development  
-Holistic development  
-Realize full potential  
-Social, personal, and intellectual values  
-Creativity  
-Student life | -“support personal and professional growth”  
-“helping students reach their full potential”  
-“holistic development of students”  
-“lifelong professional and personal development programs”  
-“nurture individual development”  
-“personal development opportunities”  
-“personal enrichment”  
-“strengthening character”  
-“to develop creativity”  
-“building self-confidence” | Character, development, growth, holistic, individual, personal, potential |
| 12. Cultural development | -Art and culture | -“providing individuals in ... County with accessible educational, cultural, and social opportunities”  
-“social and cultural activities”  
-“diverse cultural enrichment opportunities”  
-“art and cultural appreciation”  
-“cultural enrichment”  
-“cultural life of the citizens of ...counties” | Cultural, culture |
| 13. Preparation to be responsible citizen/member of society | -Prepare students to be responsible, educated citizens to contribute and be productive  
-Prepare students to participate/function in a changing global society | -“preparing students to contribute and compete ethically and successfully in a diverse global community”  
-“to develop their roles and responsibilities as participants in a changing society”  
-“to prepare individuals in our diverse communities for life and work in a global and technological society”  
-“contribute to the democratic society in which we live”  
-“meaningful civic participation  
-“capable of contributing to a knowledge- and service-based global society” | Citizen, civic, contribute, function, member, participate productive, responsible, society |

In the dataset there were more than the abovementioned 13 themes, but these were selected because those were present in 10% or more of the mission statements. The remaining 16 themes, represented in less than 10% of the total mission statements (MSs), were the following in order of prominence: innovation (26 MSs), partnerships (23MSs), support services (19MSs), leadership (17MSs); technology/technical competence (15MSs), results and inquiry (15MSs), environment (12 MSs), respect and integrity (10MSs), appropriate technology, best practices, and instructional strategies (8MSs), create opportunities/general opportunities (7MSs), leadership (7MSs), college mission (4MSs), environment (4MSs), service (4MSs), stewardship (4MSs), and inspire (3MSs). If a goal, value, or theme was mentioned only in one mission statement, it was not considered a theme and thus not reported in this study. Finally, it is important to note that education, college, teaching, instruction, or learning were not considered themes. These words and phrases were so ubiquitous in the statements, and to identify education as a unique idea or potential trend in community college would not add any value to the study, since by mere definition, a college exists to educate.
**Values, goals, and functions.** Along with the overarching themes, it is noteworthy to explore the most salient values, goals, and functions and to compare them discretely. These three categories didn’t necessarily correspond to each other in the same order of prominence, although sometimes they did. Some themes simply weren’t conducive to a given category. For example, access was not commonly expressed as an explicit goal in the statements. Access is an ideal the institution values or a means or function to a particular end, which could be personal success or improvement in quality of life. Listed below in Tables 8, 9, and 10 are the ten most salient values, goals, and functions present in all 295 mission statements. The top ten were listed, their position notwithstanding; that is, it is not the top ten positions but rather the top ten categories of values, goals, and functions although in the particular example of Table 8, the top ten values do correspond to ten positions. Again, salience refers to frequency, which represents the number of mission statements in which the value, function, or goal is found. To anchor the reader in the context of these values, exemplars are provided in the following three tables. Service area was not included in these tables because it was not coded under values, goals, or functions but rather as a separate peer category.

**Values.** Table 8 illustrates which values were most prominent or important to the institutions. Compared to the goals or functions, the values listed in Table 8 most approximate the ordering of the institutions’ most salient, overarching themes shown in Table 6. Access is the most salient in values and tops the list, immediately followed by workforce and economic development. Comprehensiveness emerged as one of top ten most prominent values, but did not appear in the list of most salient goals or functions. On the other hand, cultural development wasn’t coded as often in values and therefore
didn’t make the ten most salient values, but it is located on the goals and functions salience lists on Tables 9 and 10. Diversity was not among the ten most salient themes under values, but it is important to note that references to diversity were commonly located in two categories outside of values, goals, and functions because the theme of diversity was articulated more in the mission statements’ self-definition and target population and therefore is not listed in Table 8, 9, or 10.

Table 8

*Salience of Values in all 295 Mission Statements*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Exemplars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>“providing access to comprehensive programs and services”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>Workforce and economic development</td>
<td>“prepare students for employment …upgrading employment skills”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>High quality/excellence</td>
<td>“providing quality educational and training opportunities”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>Community development</td>
<td>“partners with the communities it serves”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Success</td>
<td>“thrive in a global society” “lifelong personal success”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>“meeting the diverse needs of the population at a reasonable cost”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>Life quality improvement</td>
<td>“positive change in the lives of students and the community”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Comprehensiveness</td>
<td>“comprehensive collegiate experience”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Personal development</td>
<td>“helping students reach their full potential”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Prepare to be responsible citizen/member of society</td>
<td>“contribute and compete in a diverse and global community” “well-educated, productive citizens”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Goals.** The most prominent goals of the 295 mission statements are captured in Table 9, which provides an outline of what the institutions have committed to do for their
target populations and what they hold as their top priorities to accomplish. The institutions overwhelmingly state that they are aiming for an improved local economy, success for their graduates in all its various forms, an improved quality of life, and community development. Access dropped down to the seventh position, the lowest among the three categories of values, goals, and functions perhaps due to access not being a goal per se but a means to achieving the stated goals. Diversity and comprehensiveness were not top priority goals expressed by the institutions, but this could be due to institutions making responsiveness to diverse needs their goal, resulting in comprehensive services and programs an outcome of that goal (of responsiveness).

Table 9

*Salience of Goals in all 295 Mission Statements*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Exemplars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>Workforce and economic development</td>
<td>“prepares a diverse student population to enter the job market”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>Success</td>
<td>“to achieve professional and personal success”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Quality of life improvement</td>
<td>“to improve life through learning”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>Community development</td>
<td>“to promote ... community development to a diverse population”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>High quality/excellence</td>
<td>“to providing quality comprehensive higher education”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>“to meet the emerging needs of the community”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Personal development</td>
<td>“to aid students in reaching their full potential”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>“to expand access to college ...through strategic partnerships”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Prepare to be responsible citizen/member of society</td>
<td>“to face the challenges as responsible and productive members of society”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Cultural development</td>
<td>“promote cultural engagement” “culturally enriching our communities”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Functions.** Table 10 outlines what the institutions state they already do and what the institutions’ functions are. Compared to values and goals, functions produced only about half of the number of codes when analyzing the entire dataset (664 discrete codes versus 1,120 codes for values and 1,463 codes for goals). Institutions select carefully what they purport to do, as these are public statements accountable to the public for actual outcomes, not just expressed ideals. Not surprisingly, workforce/economic development, access, community development, and responsiveness constituted the top functions. Responsiveness was highest here than for values or goals, and community and personal development were also highest ranked in functions compared to values or goals. High quality/excellence dropped out probably because quality is not necessarily what you do but how you do it. Additionally, comprehensiveness was left out of the top ten functions perhaps due to the actual functions encompassing such a wide range of programs and services in and of themselves. Diversity again was not listed as a top function, as diversity isn’t something that an institution does; rather an institution itself can be diverse or possess target diverse populations. Institutions in this dataset do have diverse services and programs, but that is where comprehensiveness comes into play. Table 10 contains a unique theme not found in the other categories of goals and values: partnerships. Partnerships can refer to general, unspecified partnerships or partners with educational providers or organizations, but partnerships in this category did not include partnerships with business/industry or with the community or school districts, as these would have been coded as workforce and economic development and community development respectively. The theme of partnerships, albeit vague and non-committing, demonstrates that the institutions desire to work together with their various constituents.
To better visualize how the values, goals, and functions compare to each other, Table 11 maps out what the institutions value, what they intend to do, and what they do in order of position. Again, the frequency placed in parentheses after the theme refers to number of mission statements where it is found, not number of codes, which is considerably larger. Workforce and economic development is labeled as WF/Economic Development. No service area is found in Table 11 because service area comprised its own category outside of these three. Also, diversity was not included for the reasons already described. Workforce and economic development was the only theme which was consistently found in the top three values, goals, and functions of the institutions. The

Table 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Exemplars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>Workforce and economic</td>
<td>“to help create or improve economic well-being”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>“meeting the diverse needs of the population at a reasonable cost”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Community development</td>
<td>“engages and strengthens its community”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>“focus on...needs of its local, regional, and international community”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Personal development</td>
<td>“affords opportunities for individual growth and expression”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Success</td>
<td>“preparing for success as learners, employees...citizens of the 21st century”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Cultural development</td>
<td>“cultural and educational enrichment opportunities”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Quality life improvement</td>
<td>“improve the quality of life of the individuals in our community”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Partnerships</td>
<td>“diverse partnerships”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Prepare to be responsible</td>
<td>“prepares people for successful living and responsible citizenship”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>citizen/member of society</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
other top themes in common across categories were success, community development, and responsiveness. Access had considerable variation in position among the categories, being in the top two themes in values and functions and then jutting down to the seventh position under goals. High quality/excellence, although present near the top of the position in both goals and values, does not appear as one of the ten most prominent functions.

Table 11

Comparison of both levels’ salient values, goals, and functions in order of prominence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values (Frequency)</th>
<th>Goals (Frequency)</th>
<th>Functions (Frequency)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Access (180)</td>
<td>1. WF/Economic development (138)</td>
<td>1. WF/Economic development (114)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. High quality/excellence (158)</td>
<td>2. Success (99)</td>
<td>2. Access (60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. WF/Economic development (145)</td>
<td>3. Quality of life improvement (72)</td>
<td>3. Community Development (48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Community Development (105)</td>
<td>4. High quality/excellence (71)</td>
<td>4. Responsiveness (36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Success (90)</td>
<td>4. Community Development (71)</td>
<td>5. Personal development (31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Responsiveness (89)</td>
<td>5. Responsiveness (62)</td>
<td>5. Success (31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Quality of life improvement (75)</td>
<td>6. Personal development (45)</td>
<td>6. Cultural development (30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Personal development (55)</td>
<td>8. Prepare to be responsible citizen/member of society (27)</td>
<td>8. Partnerships (17)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question Two

How do the themes of the mission statements within the SACSCOC-accredited community colleges vary by their classification as an associate’s degree-granting institution or as a bachelor’s degree-granting institution? For this question, the researcher split out the data into two groups: associate’s degree-granting institution (Level I) vs. bachelor’s degree-granting institutions (Level II), both levels already having been coded from analysis from the first research question. Since the researcher utilized the same code definitions and exemplars previously identified in research question, the themes were easily differentiated into the two levels for comparison purposes. The most prominent Level I themes which emerged are graphically illustrated in Table 12. Frequency refers to the number of mission statements in that level which express a given theme, and proportion means the percentage of mission statements which contained that theme at least once. Because Level I institutions constitute 89% of the entire dataset, they dominated the overall salient themes for the complete list of sample mission statements; thus Table 6 and Table 12 resulted in the same list with workforce and economic development, access, high quality/excellence, and comprehensiveness in the lead as the most salient themes. The only difference between Tables 6 and 12 were the positions of Personal development (position 11 in Level II versus 10 in Level I), Cultural development (position 12 versus 11 in Level I), and Preparation for responsible citizenship/member of society (position 13 versus 12 in Level I).
Table 12

*Salient Themes of the 263 Level I Mission Statements*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Workforce and economic development</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>63.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>58.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>High quality/excellence</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>54.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Comprehensiveness</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>42.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Service Area</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>41.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Community development</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>39.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>36.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Success</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>33.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Improvement in quality of life</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>28.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>20.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Personal development</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>20.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Cultural development</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>12.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Preparation of citizen/member of society</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>11.79%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most salient themes from Level II mission statement are presented with their corresponding frequencies and proportion in Table 13. There are some similarities and differences with Level I, and there are two different ways to interpret the findings. One way to find the similarities and differences between the results in Table 12 and 13 is to compare positions or proportion of different themes. When examining the differences in salient themes by way of position, diversity and cultural development demonstrate the largest distance in position between the two levels. Diversity is four positions higher in the Level II institutions, and cultural development is situated five positions higher in Level II. The differences show a slightly different picture when comparing proportions of the themes present in the mission statements in the respective Level I and Level II lists. Consistent with the comparison in position, cultural development (24.95 percentage point difference) and diversity (17.35 percentage point difference) both demonstrate the largest spread between Level I and Level II. Another noted difference in percentage is high
quality/excellence, a 20.63 percentage point difference; however, high quality/excellence is situated only two positions apart (position 3 in Level I and position 1 in Level II).

Turning to the similarity between the two levels, a comparison of proportion and position was first employed. Comprehensiveness and community development are themes whose proportions were located less than two percentage points from each other, demonstrating the most similarity in salience. When comparing position, comprehensiveness and community development both share the same position across the two levels, fourth and sixth respectively. Access also shares second position in Level I and II, but the percentage point spread is 7.46, not really showing any great similarity or difference between levels as far as proportion.

Table 13

*Salient Themes of 32 Level II Mission Statements*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>High quality/excellence</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>75.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>65.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Workforce and economic development</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>53.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Comprehensiveness</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>43.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>43.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Success</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>40.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>37.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Cultural development</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>37.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Community development</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>37.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Improvement in quality of life</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>34.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Service Area</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>31.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Personal development</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>31.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Preparation citizen/member of society</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Values, goals, and functions.** These similarities and differences between the two levels were elucidated in another way by looking at values, goals, and functions discretely in the two levels. For values, goals, and functions, comparing position would
be inappropriate because in looking at most prominent values, for example, Level I has 12 positions and Level II only 6 positions due to the disproportionate number of mission statements in the two datasets. Also, proportion is not appropriate in comparing values, goals, and functions, because the goal at this point is to find how saturated each level is with the respective themes. Therefore, instead of looking at proportion or percentages, the following three tables (14, 15, and 16) below report absolute counts of codes, denoted as frequency of codes on the tables.

**Values.** Table 14 provides a comparison in the Level I and Level II values. The two levels share the same four most prominent values of access, high quality, workforce and economic development, and community development. Personal development drops down in the Level I list compared to Level II, but just for perspective, there were 23 different value themes (which had more than one occurrence) coded in the statements under Level I, and the table only shows the first 12, ending with cultural development. Both levels value innovation, and for the first time, innovation appears in the table of values and later is found also in the top functions for both levels. For the most part, except for cultural development, responsiveness, and personal development, almost all the values danced around similar positions between the two groups.

Table 14

*Comparison of Level I and Level II Values*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level I Values</th>
<th>Frequency of codes</th>
<th>Level II Values</th>
<th>Frequency of codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High quality/excellence</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>High quality/excellence</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WF/Economic development</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>WF/Economic development</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community development</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>Community development</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>Success</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Personal development</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Goals. In comparing what the two types of institutions have committed to as goals, Table 15 shows greater variation than in their shared values. Level I and II institutions both state high quality/excellence, workforce and economic development, success, improvement in quality of life, responsiveness and personal development as their top goals. However, Level II institutions particularly wish to express that they are aiming for high quality/excellence, more than anything else. Both are focused on the goal of success and improvement of quality of life for their constituents, but community development demonstrates less prominence as value in Level II institutions. However, as seen in Table 16, community development is a function that both institutions adhere to in almost the same level of prominence. Although access dropped in frequency in goals at both levels, particularly in Level II, it doesn’t mean that it was not important, as seen in Table 14: Access was the most highly coded value for both institutional groups.

Table 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level I Goals</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Level II Goals</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WF/Economic development</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>High quality/excellence</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>Success</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community development</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>WF/Economic development</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of life improvement</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Quality of life improvement</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High quality/excellence</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Personal development</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal development</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Community development</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Prepare citizens</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare citizens</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural development</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Cultural development</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Functions.** Next, the differences in functions between Level I and Level II are examined in Table 16. It is important to note that one very large coded area within the category of functions were the actual offerings of the institutions such as certificates, workforce training, continuing education, and technical education. Specific offerings were not included in functions since they were anomalous to the other overarching themes; it would not have been fitting to contrast certificates to responsiveness or corporate training to success. Accordingly, a cursory comparison between the combined Level I and II institutions’ top offerings in order of prominence are the following: associates, certificates, continuing education, technical/career education, and curricula intended to transfer to baccalaureate’s degree-level institutions. The Level II institutions’ top offering was the bachelor’s degree; in fact, 21.05% of all the codes in the offering category were attributed to the bachelor’s degree, which translated into 16 mentions, half of all the mission statements in Level II. These institutions were not shy about promoting themselves publicly as bachelor’s degree-granting colleges. In all of the Level 1 institutions, not surprisingly, there was just one instance of bachelor or baccalaureate in their mission statements.

Bachelor’s degree or not, both groups hold on to workforce and economic development as their most frequently mentioned function. Interestingly, according to Table 16, Level I institutions showed a greater spread between their most frequently function, workforce and economic development, and their subsequent functions, access and then community development. In the case of level II institutions, there is hardly a drop at all in frequency between workforce and economic development and the next two most frequent functions, personal development and community development. These two
functions (personal development and community development) are equally important to
the Level II institutions, having the same frequency of mentions. At first glance, access
appears to be much less frequently cited as a function in Level II, but juxtaposing Level
II’s access and WF/economic development (five access codes versus ten workforce and
economic development codes) to Level I’s access and WF/economic development (55
codes versus 104 workforce and economic development codes), points to a fairly similar
proportion of codes. In this light, there is not much of a difference in access as expressed
as a function in the two levels.

Innovation was more frequently coded in Level II, showing three mentions out of
32 institutions versus three mentions in 263 institutions in Level I. Diversity did not make
it into the 12 most frequently coded functions in Level II. Interesting, success was coded
infrequently as function in Level II whereas it was Level II’s most frequently coded goal.
At the same time, success is not something a college does, but rather it prepares students
for success personally or professionally. Possibly, “success” to the institutions is
manifested in successful workforce and economic, personal, and community
development.

Table 16

Comparison of Level I and Level II Functions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level I Functions</th>
<th>Frequency of codes</th>
<th>Level II Functions</th>
<th>Frequency of codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WF/Economic development</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>WF/Economic development</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Personal development</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community development</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Community development</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Cultural development</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal development</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural development</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Prepare citizens</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of life improvement</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Quality of life improvement</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question Three

How have the themes of community college mission statements changed since 2001 when the states in the SACSCOC region began to authorize community colleges to confer baccalaureate degrees? The themes from all the SACSCOC community colleges identified in the first research question were used to compare the seven salient themes from Ayers’s 2002 study on 102 mission priorities from SACSCOC community colleges. The similarities, dissimilarities, and overlaps of Ayers’ seven themes and the most salient themes that resulted in this study are compared and contrasted below.

In order the answer this question, a summary of the results from Ayers’ study is provided. Below is a cursory explanation of how he arrived at his themes, and the exemplars in Table 17 are to be used to understand specifically what the different themes encompassed in his study.

Ayers did not signify access as just open admissions but also included flexibility, affordability, distance learning, and flexible or convenient scheduling in his parameters of access which was the most prominent theme in his dataset, present in 80% of the statements. As for workforce and economic development, Ayers did not separate these into two categories but rather melded them together and included partnerships with business and industry as well as customized training or needs within that same overarching theme, which included language ranging in specificity from broad statements.
about strengthening the economy to identifying the types of skills of businesses and industry needed to enhance careers. For Ayers, comprehensiveness was coded if the statement contained derivation of the word *comprehensive* or if the statement included a broad list of set of programs such as community education, career education, student support services, development education, or academic education. Ayers coded high quality and excellence when the language in the statement reflected quality or excellence in educational programs, teaching, learning, support services, community services, personnel, work environment, physical environment, learning environment, research, or continuous quality improvement. Ayers defined responsiveness as meeting evolving needs in a changing global society, keeping curriculum up-to-date, in addition to being responsive to individual level and macro-needs such as community, diversity, or workforce needs. Moreover, when the mission statements identified a specific geographical target of the colleges’ programs and services, Ayers coded them as the service area, which for him referred to a set of counties or cities; he didn’t mention community per se as the service area. Diversity, for Ayers, referred to an institutional mission statement’s recognition of diversity in their target population. The references to diversity ranged from “respect for diversity is an important part of the educational process” to “we will offer a student-centered faculty and staff who embrace diversity in a friendly, inclusive learning environment” and “the College recognizes the diversity of its learner population.” Diversity was framed in terms of culture, race, gender, ethnicity, national origin, disability, nontraditional students, technological ability, veteran status, socioeconomic status, educational background, political affiliation, and populations
historically excluded from higher education; references to diversity in his study varied from appreciation for diversity to mere compliance with Title VII or IX laws.

His list of salient themes did not continue once the theme stopped being present in 50% or more of the mission statements whereas this study’s themes were included until they were no longer present in 10% or more of the mission statements, leading up to 13 themes versus Ayers’s seven themes described in Table 17. In this table the results from his study are re-capped with the position, frequency, exemplars, and the percentage of mission statements in which the theme was found.

Table 17

Ayers’ seven salient themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Exemplars</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>“accessible” “open door” “open admission” “affordable” “flexible scheduling” “distance learning technology”</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>80.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Workforce/ economic development</td>
<td>“Strengthen the local economy” “provide workforce training” “offer...skills that enhance careers” “an educational link between adults with educational needs and employers with needs for a skilled workforce”</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>77.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Comprehensiveness</td>
<td>“comprehensive”</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>77.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Quality and excellence</td>
<td>“quality” “excellence” “standards” “integrity” “soundness”</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>71.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>“changing global society” “ever-changing society” “keeping curriculum up to date”</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>69.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Service area</td>
<td>specific set of counties or cities</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>54.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>“affords equal opportunity to all people regardless of age, race” “respect for diversity is an important part of the educational process” “we appreciate the diversity in the students we serve”</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The salient themes of this study overlap Ayers’s in many ways. The researcher retained the same parameters for coding the themes as Ayers in order to compare the same factors but at different points in history. There are many similarities between the exemplars in Table 6 (this study’s salient themes) and Table 17 (Ayer’s salient themes). Although the results of the two datasets vary greatly in frequency, they share the same main themes such as access, workforce and economic development, quality and excellence, and responsiveness. The variation in frequency could be due to Ayers coding only 102 mission statements and this study consisting of 295 statements; nonetheless, the positions of the two lists of salient themes are fairly similar as shown in Table 18. This table contains Ayers’s seven salient themes and this study’s ten most salient themes, their respective positions, and frequencies. The frequencies represent how many mission statements in the entire dataset the theme was found, not the frequency in raw number of codes. The reason for not comparing exactly seven themes to seven themes was in order to show where Ayers’s final theme of diversity fell in comparison to this study’s, which was position ten. It was important to show the range of themes present in Ayers to where they lie in comparison to the current study. If the table only included those themes which were present in 50% or more of the mission statements like Ayers’s, only three themes of access, workforce and economic development, and high quality and excellence would have remained, leaving a large puzzle piece out of the picture.

In the present study, access slipped directly under workforce and economic development whereas Ayers coded access as the most frequent theme in his study. Both Ayers’s study and the current one placed high quality and excellence as the third most salient theme. Service area in both studies also shared the same position, the fifth one.
Service area, if it had been defined as the target population, would have been the most salient theme because in this study a target population was identified and coded in 94% of all the 295 mission statements. However, service area was not made entirely synonymous with target population because Ayers’s parameters were used with the purpose of comparing his themes to this study’s. Ayers pinpointed more of localized sense of service area such as cities or a set of counties, and target population in this study as shown in Table 5 ranged from students to state, and from adults to school districts—much wider and less specific than the way service area was coded in his.

Notwithstanding, they share the same position in both studies, and moreover, it can be indirectly observed that one critical service area in this study was community, as seen by the theme of community development located the position immediately below service area.

Comprehensiveness, responsiveness, and diversity were not as highly positioned as in this study as Ayers’s, but new themes emerged which intertwined his themes: (1) improvement in the quality of life of lives, individuals, and region, (2) community development, and (3) success. These new themes could be viewed as different manifestations of comprehensiveness and responsiveness, as institutions strive to meet the needs of all their constituents—the workforce, individuals, and community. Diversity was coded less frequently in comparison to the 2002 study, but there was an expansion in diversity in mission. Not only do the institutions purport to make the economy stronger but also to improve the quality of life for all those in their service area and to make their students successful. Success referred mainly to student success, as almost 53% of all the codes in success referred to students or academics exemplified in phrases such as
“successful academic matriculation,” “successful educational attainment,” “to maximize student learning and success,” “prepared for success at four-year institutions,” and “well prepared to engage in higher levels of education.” The remainder of success codes related to general or personal success (31%) or success at the workplace (15%).

Table 18

Comparison of salient themes in Ayers’s study and the results from the current study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Ayers’s Themes (Frequency)</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Current study’s themes (Frequency)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Access (80.39%)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>WF/economic development (62.37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>WF/Econ. development (77.45%)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Access (58.98%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Comprehensiveness (77.45%)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Quality and excellence (56.61%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Quality and excellence (71.56%)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Comprehensiveness (42.37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Responsiveness (69.6%)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Service area (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Service area (54.9%)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Community development (38.98%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Diversity (50.00%)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Responsiveness (37.63%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Success (34.58%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Quality of life improvement (29.49%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Diversity (22.03%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The beginning section of this chapter allowed for a fuller description of the 295 mission statements by providing the length of the mission statements, the kinds of words and phrases that most frequent the statements, the state of origin of the mission statements and the particular SACSCOC level classification to which they belong, and their corresponding self-definitions and target populations. This chapter also revealed the results from the first research question, the salient themes of Level I and Level II mission statements combined. In addition, the overall values, goals, and functions of the entire mission statement dataset were outlined. Next, the distinct salient themes of Level I and Level II were compared, and the values, goals, and functions of each level were treated separately and reported. Lastly, this section turned to the salient themes from the first research question and compared them to the Ayers’s 2002 study. This chapter has
provided the grounding for the following chapter in which the results from this analysis are discussed and interpreted, and the study is concluded with some implications for practitioners and recommendations for future research.
Chapter Five: Discussion

Interpretation of Results of Research Questions One and Three

In this section, the ten most salient themes of workforce and economic development, access, high quality and excellence, comprehensiveness, service area, community development, responsiveness to needs, success, improvement in quality of life, and diversity which resulted from Research Questions One and Three are interpreted in detail through the lens of resource dependency theory. Again, these questions have to do with the salient themes in the mission statements of 295 SACSCOC-accredited community colleges and how the themes of these mission statements have changed since 2001. Following this discussion, the results from Research Question Two are addressed and interpreted.

**Workforce and economic development.** The most salient theme of all the mission statements in the dataset was workforce and economic development. In Ayers’s study, workforce and economic development followed the top position, access. In this study, workforce and economic development was found to be the most salient goal, the most salient function, and the second most salient value after access. Long before this study, workforce and economic development have been acknowledged as being the mainstay in the mission of the community college since its inception. According to Clark Kerr, a major thought-leader in higher education claimed that in fact colleges and universities have always served the labor market in one way or another (Kerr, 1994, as cited in Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2013). The imperative of economic growth and emphasis on workforce are evidenced by the numbers: Over 3/5 of 6 million community college students are studying in some kind of occupational program (Cohen, Brawer, &
Kisker, 2013). Additionally, over half of the registered nurses and the majority of other health-care providers in this country are graduates from community colleges (American Association of Community Colleges, 2008). Community colleges are a significant factor in local workforce development because they possess particular advantages such as low cost, technical expertise, experience in working with adult students, organizational flexibility, and their closeness to the private sector (Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2013). All these strengths make the community college a prime spot to spearhead business expansion and incumbent worker programs. One concrete example of this college-industry nexus is the 2012 five-day bus tour in which Dr. Jill Biden and Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis promoted partnerships between community colleges and industry. Additionally, in the same year President Obama announced his Community College Career Fund Act, which will develop a competitive grant program that funds partnerships between businesses and two-year colleges. This $8 billion initiative addresses the skills gap and provides training to two million community college students in select careers (Fain, 2013).

Why do community colleges align themselves so closely to the workforce and economic development mission that it has potentially eclipsed access in the last decade? The answer can be found in the dynamics of resource dependency theory. Considered the most open systems sector of public higher education, the community college is especially sensitive to market pressures and political influence because they are so “underfunded and at the bottom of the higher education food chain” (Meier, 2008, p. 60). For community colleges, “resource scavenging is an organizational imperative” (Meier, 2008, p. 60). Depending on block grants from the state governments and funds from the federal
government makes the community colleges particularly vulnerable to environmental pressures.

Resource dependency theory postulates that the stability of an organization depends on its ability to use resources effectively (Kent & McAllister-Spooner, 2009). Not only is the stability of the organization influenced by resource availability but also its behavior. These organizational behaviors can be interpreted as the colleges’ espoused goals, functions, and values manifested in specific actions and decisions, and according to Wade (2004), these organizational behaviors are greatly influenced by two main factors: (1) the mechanism by which colleges receive their funding and (2) environmental pressures. An organization, as an open system, can respond to their environments by complying or adapting even at the risk of being labeled mission drift or mission creep (Meier, 2008).

To understand how workforce and economic development interface with resource dependency, it is necessary to examine the two critical factors of the theory, environmental and funding pressures. In this vein, the shrinking state funding for higher education is first discussed, and then three current environmental factors of neoliberalism, globalization, and vocationalism follow.

**Funding.** To begin with, community colleges receive their funding from the following sources: 41.1% from state and local appropriations (mostly state); 23.6% from federal and state non-operational grants (mostly Pell Grants); 15.9% from tuition and fees; 7.4% from operating grants; and 3.6% from auxiliary sales and services (Dowd & Shieh, 2013). Community colleges depend heavily on state sources for funding, and enrollment-based funding accounts for the largest portion of community college
revenues. Colleges, however, are accountable to the state for measuring their outcomes to keep the funds flowing. Furthermore, it is accountability to the market that actually enables state governments to direct their scarce public resources towards market demands (Dowd & Shieh, 2013). As a result, market accountability now pushes the colleges towards meeting the needs of both the state and the economy. Some of the current market needs are manifested by the many changes in employer demands for more white collar and technical training (Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2013) and for more educated applicants, as the bachelor’s degree is increasingly required for even entry level positions (Floyd, Skolnik, & Walker, 2005).

Navigating the why and how of funding community colleges is complex, and an entire dissertation can be devoted to this topic. However, at the simplest level, there are two main trends in state funding for community colleges operating in the resource dependency environment. First, real dollar allocations from state and federal governments (adjusted for inflation) to institutions of higher learning have drastically decreased over the past thirty years (Aronowitz, 2000). Secondly, state funding for social services and higher education institutions both has been massively divested due to the view by the public and legislators that higher education is not a public good but rather a private benefit (Levin, 2005). Consequently, there is a heightened institutional stress on performance and measured outputs (of quality assurance and academic audits, and completion indicators) whereby performance funding could become even more demanding on institutions.

**The environment of neoliberalism.** Neoliberalism is defined as “a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human wellbeing can best be advanced by
liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (Harvey, 2005, p. 2). The basic tenets of neoliberalism are (1) the self-interested and rational individual as economic actor or consumer, (2) free market, and (3) the commitment to laissez-faire and free trade which translates into minimal state intervention and regulation of the economy (Olssen & Peters, 2005). The attractiveness of neoliberalism is its end goals of individual freedom, prosperity, consumer sovereignty, choice, and individual initiative and growth (Olssen & Peters, 2005). Giroux and Giroux (2004) have a less optimistic perception of neoliberalism; they admonish it for allowing the interests of the private sector to trump social needs and prioritizing economic growth over social justice (p. 250). Moreover, Harvey (2005) asserted that neoliberalism was from its inception a means to restore class power and to “bring all human action into the domain of the market” (p. 3).

Around the same time the state began to substantially shrink its budgets for higher education and the accountability movement was beginning to intensify, neoliberalism, marked by the dominant influence of capital and its centrality of markets and market processes, was at work deconstructing economic structures and redefining the purpose of higher education (Harvey, 2005; Saunders, 2002). Neoliberalism brought about fundamental changes in how colleges make decisions and how they define and justify their existence (Olssen & Peters, 2005). According to Ayers (2005), neoliberalist ideologies threaten to whelm the missions of community colleges as they are being grafted into the neoliberal institutional framework of the state (Ayers, 2011). Neoliberalism has influenced institutions of higher education to adhere to more market-
based approaches and to possess an intensified focus on revenue generation and efficiency in use of funds (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Since colleges depend on money from the state, and the state is becoming more free market-oriented, colleges therefore have begun to imitate corporations in their values and behaviors by their unencumbered competition for students and in their treatment of students as customers (Saunders, 2010). According to Slaughter & Rhoades (2004), colleges and universities have now become actors who initiate academic capitalism, not just as passive players who have been corporatized.

Neoliberalist politics and policies have undercut the government’s investment in colleges while emphasizing the economic role of higher education. The state and government in general consider their role to be that of facilitator of economic market freedom in order for the market to bring about economic security of individuals and increase productivity (Levin, 2007) because doing so will allow them to keep their coffers full and their citizens off the dole. For example, the gubernatorial administration of 2010-2014 in Florida declared its expressed preference for more degree programs in STEM fields at state universities and added that it would rather invest in degrees more tailored to the job market of the state; as a result, this particular administration’s view on incentivizing science and technology programs was perceived as stripping the liberal arts majors of importance within the world economy (Jaschik, 2011). Florida notwithstanding, other states are also prodding colleges to make the most return on their investment so as to fuel the economy machine and keep the sprockets of the capitalistic wheels rolling. In the neoliberal paradigm, community colleges function as arenas where human capital is developed as an investment into the state economy (Ayers, 2005).
Therefore, financing of the community college is undergirded by market-like strategies and incentives as shown by Obama’s initiatives to catalyze innovations and encourage reform in higher education through grant competitions.

**The environment of globalization.** According to Levin (2001), globalization can be likened to both a process and a condition: The process is an intensifying linking of localities which are separated by huge spans of distance, and the condition is the fact that the world is now just one single place, a shared social place. Stiglitz (2002) suggested that globalization is “the removal of barriers to free trade and the closer integration of national economies” (p. ix), and Friedman (1999) defined it as the integration of technology, capital, and information across borders of nation-states. Globalization connotes a type of worldwide interdependence insofar as conditions in one part of the globe can have acute consequences for individuals or communities in another region of the world. Levin (2001) posited that global forces push up production rates and consequently drive more competition. Consequently, global competition spurs on greater innovation in technology which in turn results in more technological innovations and applications.

In the education realm, organizational changes in the community colleges resulted from global economic forces in the 1990s, causing the colleges to alter their missions and organizational structure. Mirroring the process of globalization in the late 1980s and 1990s, community colleges’ missions shifted from local community needs toward local private sector needs, right in line with influence from the government and business agendas (Levin, 2001). It is interesting to note, however, that although “economic development is situated within a global context, the entities responsible for developing a
competitive advantage are decidedly local—most commonly communities and regions of the state” (Ayers, 2011, p. 27). Ayers named these entities “local growth coalitions,” and their role is to influence community colleges to follow the interests of global capital (Ayers, 2011, para. 8).

The dominant influences of globalization for community colleges are economics (global production and the private sector), information/electronic technology (for example, email, voicemail, video, and software programs), immigration patterns, and politics, especially state government (Levin, 2001). Globalization has impelled state governments to reduce public grants to colleges, to hike up student tuition, to bring colleges into closer integration with the market, and to encourage colleges’ adoption of corporate-like management practices; ultimately, the influence of globalization is capable of redefining education as a means for workplace training and a vehicle of greater productivity and economic efficiency (Levin, 2001).

*The environment of new vocationalism.* New vocationalism is a phenomenon in which first, the needs of business and industry receive high priority when deciding on educational programs and secondly, education is most prominently oriented to the market (Levin, 2002). The community colleges’ orientation to the economic marketplace highly prioritizes technology and employment skills in their curriculum and measures student development and educational outcomes by job training, career development, or skill acquisition for professions (Levin, 2007). New vocationalism is a consequence of a burgeoning emphasis on vocational-technical education for growth industries of the global economy (Grubb, 2001). What makes this vocationalism “new” is that it encompasses career pathways from entry level to high skill, high wage professional
levels in fields which are essential in the new economy (Bragg, 2001). Therefore, there has been an increased emphasis on and interest in applied programs and degrees as responses to local business and industry demands for a competitive workforce (Levin, 2001). The curriculum for these applied degrees are more training-focused and more practical with an eye for the skills needed for a global economy (Levin, 2002). According to Orr (2001), the new vocationalism is more holistic in its approach than traditional vocational education in its combination of academic and technical skill development necessary for a knowledge economy.

The new vocationalism has been filtering down to both institutional and individual level, especially in this generation. According to Howe and Strauss (2003), a core characteristic of millennial students is to equate college as the key to a high salary and successful job, as their primary focus is achievement not personal or academic development. This is a generation of students who have been pressured from an early age to decide on a career and perhaps have tracked towards that path since grade school. This trend of new vocationalism could reinforce these perceptions, and students may lose the opportunity to experience the benefits of a liberal arts degree due to being charted directly into a career pathway in order to produce capital.

Notwithstanding, the new vocationalism is not without benefits. It attracts more prepared students and highlights the significance of community colleges to governors and legislators (Townsend & Dougherty, 2006). Additionally, the new vocationalism brings together the educational and business and industry sectors into collaborative albeit complex relationships which are crucial to predict future training and educational
requirements and to integrate academic and vocational education in more efficient, adaptable, and flexible ways (Grubb, 2001).

In sum, the new vocationalism, which is closely intertwined with neoliberalism, reinforces dependency on resources and influences organizational behavior. Learning at the community college is thus structured to prepare students with skills required for employment, retraining, and advancement, to cater to state policy initiatives, and to meet employer needs to compete and survive in the new economy of the 21st century (Levin 2001; Levin 2007).

**Access.** Access was the second most salient overall theme of the community colleges in the southern region of the United States, whereas in Ayers’s study it was the top theme. It also took the number one spot in values, the second in functions after workforce and economic development, and seventh in goals. The relationship between access, particularly open access, and resource dependency is treated in the following paragraphs. To begin, open access for community colleges not only signals their institutional philosophy, it also elicits more funding for the colleges because states and localities base their funding formulas on enrollment (Dowd & Shieh, 2013). Colleges rely on open access to increase enrollment in order to achieve more dollars; more students mean more funds. An inherent problem in the distribution of higher education funding is providing equal access to enroll, but not seeking to ensure equal outcomes once in enrolled in college (Dowd & Shieh, 2013). Access doesn’t naturally bring about equity. Of course, there is no equity without access, but access only affords the ticket in, not the ticket out to achievement. As Dowd and Shieh (2013) explain, there are two different types of access to consider—horizontal and vertical equity.
Horizontal equity asserts that students with equal needs should receive resources in equal amounts. Formula funding is based on this concept: For every enrolled student, the college is given equal resources with the idea that providing equal resources will yield equal chances to learn and benefit (Dowd & Shieh, 2013). Under the framework of horizontal equity, states provide to colleges the same level of funding for each full-time equivalent student. On the other hand, vertical (or social) equity calls for funds to be distributed in a manner that respond to varying needs of students; in this way, “unequals are treated unequally” (Dowd & Shieh, 2013, p. 44). One example of funding for vertical equity is federal financial aid which is need-based. Since horizontal equity operates in an economically efficient manner, vertical equity is often at odds with it because it is less corporate and less assuming of the equal needs of students. To complicate things further, the cost per student varies depending on his/her program. For example, a student at a community college working on their third year in a nursing program may cost the institution more than a student in their first year in an associate’s degree in history or a student in a noncredit adult education program.

Unfortunately, state and private funding is increasingly tied to outcomes, not just open door access, so the pressure to produce outcomes in order to receive higher levels of funding has shifted the mission of community colleges less toward access and more toward outcomes, articulated in the mission statements as achievement or success at school or the workplace (Dowd & Shieh, 2013). The movement toward tighter accountability demands higher numbers of completers, not just starters, and the completion agenda, stemming from the Obama administration and philanthropic organizations such as the Lumina Foundation, seek higher completion rates in the form of
degrees and certificates awarded. The aspiration of the Obama administration, which is also the goal of the Lumina Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and now a shared national priority, is to produce an additional 5 million community college graduates by 2020 (Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2013; Remington & Remington 2013). The United States currently stands at 15th in the world for the numbers of persons between the age of 24-35 with a two or four year degree according to the Lumina Foundation (2011), and President Obama is determined to put the country back in a enviable position in the world again despite the challenges of cost and capacity (Remington & Remington, 2013).

Open access as a mission of community colleges causes a conundrum for funding: Funding access, as opposed to completion, seems to complicate the efforts to hold community colleges accountable for their graduation rates, but the emphasis on completion could in effect encourage the restricting of access (Dowd & Shieh, 2013). The greater numbers of individuals granted access, greater is the formula-based funding, but potentially fewer are the outcomes that need to be accounted for in order to please the colleges’ constituents and funders.

To confound the issue of access further, as colleges integrate more closely into the marketplace arena within the new globalized economy, they are interfacing more directly and rapidly with technology. With technology, the very meaning of “access” is changing. Does access mean delivering online instruction to those who cannot or do not want to make it to campus at a particular schedule? This form of access is actually closer to the meaning of convenience and is usually targeted for Anglo, middle-class, employed students, usually not due to an attempt to close a physical distance gap (Rhoades &
Marketing to this population provides proof of an orientation to extend access to the college to those who have proven some level of employment skill and who are already contributing to the economic market. Thus access could be evolving to signify accessibility, and as a consequence, there is the risk of leaving behind the very populations that need increased access—low-income and minority students. It is imperative that community college leaders and administrators decide on whether they are committed to vertical or horizontal equity, access or accessibility, or which combination of these elements.

In concluding the access piece of the mission puzzle, there are many points to consider, but the educational and economic future and wellbeing of generations and large sections of the populations are at risk of being forfeited due to concerns for commercial and economic interests of both the colleges and the state. According to Levin (2007), the economic imperative for community colleges, coupled with the good mission of customary open access, may endanger the accommodation of students in a way that does not result in justice, which is should be the priority for community colleges. Neoliberalism places community colleges in a dependent position to the state and in a subordinate role to business and industry, and neoliberal practices are adversative toward justice for the disadvantaged (Levin, 2007). Community college students, the majority being disadvantaged, should not be subjected to an educational system in which their self-purpose or rights to equality of opportunity are sacrificed in favor of the economic benefits for local or national industry, even if improved competitiveness would result in a greater good in society (Levin, 2007). In order to accord students justice and not mere accommodation, they would have to show that they have overcome their disadvantages.
educationally, socially, and economically through their college educational experience (Rawls, 1971, as cited in Levin, 2007). Access is just not enough.

**High quality and excellence.** High quality and excellence in both the Ayers study and this study were retained at the third position. It also was third in value and fourth among goals. The “quality” mission has not lessened in importance in over ten years. Why is this theme so important and what could its connection be to resource dependency? Overall, there is trend in higher education in which there is continual pursuit of greater prestige and legitimacy and interest in higher levels of credentialing, and the community college is not immune from this quest to advance in status. This trend could thus affect the mission of the community college. Some would say that the community college baccalaureate degree is evidence of this push toward academic upwardness (Levin, 2007). The race to the top or at least to a higher place is due to several environmental factors such as fierce competition, intensified selectivity, widespread concern for quality on behalf of students, community colleges, businesses, and government in the form of increased accountability.

Since higher education has been placed squarely in the economic marketplace, it has no recourse but to be subject to the whims of free market competition. In an environment of competition, each institution vies for their particular distinction and academic edge in order to gain the students’ coveted revenues in the form of tuition. To be distinctive involves putting a premium on visible evidence of academic performance or showing off physical amenities. Few community colleges are in a position to beat the competitors by flashing the latest, state of the art physical fitness center and dormitories.
with built-in entertainment centers, but they can claim a solid academic reputation and excellence in teaching and learning.

Additionally, due to higher selectivity standards, more and more students must have a very high academic record to make it in to flagship state universities. For example, at the University of Florida, the accepted applicants for the fall 2014 had an average of 4.4 GPA and an average score of 1960 on their SAT as per the university’s undergraduate admissions 2014 Freshman Profile found on their website (http://www.admissions.ufl.edu/ugrad/frprofile.html). Since more students are being rejected, there are more higher ability students attending community colleges. Moreover, 23% of community college students come from household whose annual income is $100,000 or more, according to a report by Sallie Mae (2013). Slowly, there is also an overall mindset change: Community colleges are gradually gaining broader acceptance as a viable postsecondary option after high school perhaps in part due to the skyrocketing cost of tuition at public and private four-year institutions nationwide (Fain, 2012).

Moreover, it makes sense for community colleges to continually push for excellence in academic and student support services and programming because quality gets these institutions in the game and helps them win at it. High quality makes sense because it will ultimately help the students succeed in academics and in the workplace. Several sectors are watching the quality arena and waging their bets--students, the government and the colleges’ external stakeholders, the private sector and stakeholders, and the community colleges themselves.

With instant access to the internet on mobile devices and the ubiquity of information, students are able to search rankings and comparison-shop at any time, day or
night. With the ease of instant information, tech-savvy students are able to connect with other students through social media, and contact their prospective institutions at the tip of their fingers. They are true consumers and reserve their right to do their homework before putting a college in their shopping cart. Overall, students are more informed and do make their decisions to select a school based on the institution’s academic reputation as well as cost of attendance (Noel Levitz, 2012).

State governments and external stakeholders are also interested in quality. Over the past three decades of an ever-growing atmosphere of accountability in higher education, state policy makers have been more and more interested in the actual academic performance of colleges and universities and in graduates reaching acceptable levels of student learning outcomes (Ewell, 2014). Being both the owner and the operators of public colleges, state governments are intent on assuring cost-effectiveness and garnering a return on investment from the institutions they oversee and fund (Dowd & Shieh, 2013). There is a growing scrutiny from lawmakers directed toward colleges’ stewardship of taxpayer money, a phenomenon accompanied by a general disinvestment in almost all social services areas. This scrutiny evolved to become more than a disposition; it led to the accountability movement in the 1990s which the state government sought out strategies to link allocations with indicators that measure student outcomes (Dowd & Shieh, 2013). In this environment, in order to secure funding, colleges have to show proof of their effectiveness and relevance in relation to market needs.

One very pivotal artifact from the accountability movement is the Report of the Commission on the Future of Higher Education, also known as the Spellings Commission
of 2006. This commission turned up the heat on the burners of states’ higher education agendas where notions of greater accountability were already simmering, and it fueled the debate about student learning outcomes into the purview of the public and into a national issue (Brint, 2008). Ultimately, the report deeply branded into the psyche of schools, colleges, and universities an unequivocal, binding accountability to their constituencies. This emphasis on accountability had its roots in private sector management ideas when the scrutiny of tax-supported public expenditures on higher education was residue from painful memories of widespread downsizing and cost-cutting during an economic era of globalization and rapidly changing technologies (Zumeta, 2000). The practice of streamlining production processes in the business sector impacted policymakers’ ideas of how education should be operated, and many states began to link part of higher education budget allocations to specific accountability measures, resulting in performance funding (Dowd, 2003; Ewell, 2014; Zumeta, 2000). Performance budgeting and funding, as executed by governors, the executive budget office, and the legislature, thus influenced institutional priorities and behavior by tying accountability measures to fiscal consequences (Zumeta, 2000). These accountability plans result in greater emphasis on efficiency and investment while ignoring equity and democratization. These consequences render performance funding controversial because its outcomes can deviate substantially from what the community college traditionally has delivered on--remedial education, community education, and transfer, for example (Cohen & Brawer 1982; Dowd & Shieh, 2013).

Interestingly, even the private sector, acknowledging education as the key to competitiveness, has its eyes on the quality dial, too. Business leaders, knowing well
what it means to trim costs and streamline processes, insisted that colleges and
universities also pay greater attention to outcomes such as quality control and student and
employer satisfaction (Zumeta, 2000).

Finally, the community colleges themselves are very concerned about the quality
which is closely related to successful student and academic outcomes and thus to tied to
funding. In fact, the community college sector via the American Association of
Community Colleges began to participate in a voluntary accountability system in 2011
which sets out to measure the multiple variables of student success (Fain, 2011). The
Voluntary Framework of Accountability from the American Association of Community
Colleges was initiated at the time that community colleges were facing pressures to
increase completion rates and to be more public about their performance. The leaders
from the participating colleges in this new system concurred that they should voluntarily
track and report on student progress, graduation rates, and workforce development and
should address student learning (Fain, 2011). All this transparency has a goal—to prove
that they are not only known for quantity but quality as well.

Moreover, community colleges need to sell themselves on the open market as
institutions worthy of investment by sharing their success stories, effectively
communicating to the world that they are producing graduates and productive, high
skilled workers for the market. Community colleges are showing that their values and
behaviors are in alignment with their funders, the state, employers, students, and the free
market in general. They want to project to the government and public in general that they
are creating a quality, consumer-centric educational experience which results in their
graduates yielding higher incomes which can in turn generate more consumption in the local economy and ultimately feed into the state treasury.

**The remaining themes.** In the following section, the remaining themes beyond workforce and economic development, access, and high quality and excellence, explained in the previous section, are investigated. In the Ayers study and the current study, the first seven themes were the same, but in different orders, except for the theme of community development and diversity. Success, quality of life improvement, and diversity configured as the last three of the ten themes in the current study. The newly occurring themes which differed from Ayers’s were community development (sixth position in this study), success (eighth), and quality of life improvement (ninth). The remaining themes (4th-10th) are discussed below.

**Comprehensiveness.** This theme dropped from the second theme in Ayers’s to the fourth in this study. It was eighth in position in value and was considered a goal or function. Comprehensiveness may be waning in salience due to the fact that community colleges are realizing that they cannot be the multi-purpose institution and keep all its promises to all types of constituents without more funding. According to Meier (2008), the comprehensiveness part of the community college mission flow in the direction of the revenue stream due to the forces of perennial resource dependency.

**Service area.** In both studies, the theme of service area was in fifth place. These community colleges do have an area in mind, and they do have a target population in mind. Students, communities and business and industry are the top target populations as shown in Table 5. It does not appear the community colleges in this region are losing sight of their local service area, which is the microenvironment of resource dependency.
Even though access seems to be moving more towards accessibility, the majority of online users according to research are in close physical proximity to the college (Aslanian & Clinefelter, 2012). It seems evident that the community colleges of SACSCOC have not expanded their service area.

*Community development.* In Ayers’s study, this was not a salient theme whatsoever. In the current study, it appeared as the sixth position as an overall theme, fourth in value and goal, and third in function. Community development encompassed a wide range of meanings. This theme did not refer to economic development in the community, but rather it comprised phrases about overall positive transformation or quality of life of the community or empowering the community. It is reassuring that the community colleges in this region still have the community high on their priority. However, since quality of life of the community and community development were not defined or operationalized in any way, it may have simply referred to economic prosperity. Although 20 of 28 community colleges in Florida have removed *community* out of their title since 2000 (Barnett, 2011), it appears that the theme of community development is a still a concern and a focus. Perhaps it is the last ground where resource dependency hasn’t dug in its heels and where true concern for well-being exists regardless of economic profit.

*Responsiveness.* The theme of responsiveness fell from four in Ayers’s to seven in the current study. It was sixth in value, fifth in goal, and fourth in function. This drop in salience is certainly not due to colleges not wanting to respond to learner needs or to be student-centered. The community colleges in the region do purport to have the goal of being relevant and up to date. Perhaps the community colleges are responding more to
the demands of the perpetual resource dependency. Can a college respond while it is reacting to the shifting changes in reporting and performance benchmarking in order to receive funds? Responding to multiple groups of students and community constituents may even cause conflict, so perhaps the colleges are choosing carefully who to respond to—most probably those who can expand enrollment and garner marginal dollars. The quality of being responsive as a community college, albeit praiseworthy, often results in “tortured mission” and goal statements due to the conflicting expectations of communities and stakeholders (Meier, 2008, p. 60).

*Success.* The overall theme of success, in the eighth position, was unique in the study because it did not appear in Ayers’s. It was fifth in values, second in goal, and fifth in function. From not appearing in Ayers’s study to then being the close to being the most salient goal of community colleges is noteworthy. This could be a new salient theme of the mission statements because these community colleges want to publicly declare their outcomes to their stakeholders— that students come to their institutions to succeed and that the colleges hold out both access and success to their students. They want to communicate that their students become graduates and are successful in their workplace and professional life. This theme refers mostly student success (53% of the references), containing performance-oriented and completion language such as achievement and success. The theme also speaks of general and personal success which would be related to the quality of life improvement as well.

*Quality of life improvement.* This theme, in the ninth position, was not part of Ayer’s findings. Improving the quality of life was seventh in value, seventh in function, and third in goals. This theme is similar to community development, but it refers to
quality of life improvement at the level of lives, region, and individuals. When it refers to the quality of life improvement of a community, it was coded into community development. This theme doesn’t appear to be so economic; rather it is pointing to transformation and empowerment at the individual and regional (supra-community) level. It could be the community colleges are trying to state that they are not just looking at professional and academic success and economic development of individuals, but that they also do care about non-countable, non-capitalist factors even if it is one of the last considerations. Once they are able to pay the light bill at their institutions, only then are they able to afford personal enlightenment, enrichment, and empowerment. In any case, they consider it an important goal to strive for.

**Diversity.** This theme shifted from sixth in Ayers’s to tenth position this study. Diversity does not appear as a salient theme as a value, goal, or function. This decrease in salience cannot be tied to target populations becoming less diverse because the demographics show that this generation of community college students is the most diverse in history in every respect (Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2013; Boggs, 2010). Also, it could be that touting diversity has worn out a little throughout the decades of talk of diversifying higher education in regards to staff, faculty, and students. Perhaps it is just abundantly evident in this day and age that students come from diverse backgrounds and have diverse needs, as there is no evidence of a trend toward homogeneity in the target populations of these community colleges. Possibly, an emphasis on cultural development, appreciation, engagement and enrichment was replacing or at least overshadowing the theme of diversity. In goals, functions, and values, cultural development was consistently more prominent than diversity. However, it was in the category of values where diversity
was most coded as seen in the phrases such as “embracing diversity” and “respecting uniqueness” and “celebrates diversity and inclusiveness.” Diversity could have been viewed as something that does not have to be intentionally pursued as a function or a goal of the institutions whereas developing cultural development merits more mention.

The above-mentioned themes have differing weights in their relevance to resource dependency. For example, community development, quality of life improvement, and diversity have little value as far as a relationship to resource scavenging and survival. These themes provide a bit of balance and altruism in the mission statement, making an attempt to show solidarity with the community and to show that the diverse students who encounter or experience the college will be advantaged in some way by doing so. The thematic hot buttons within resource dependency are the themes of access, workforce and economic development, high quality and excellence. Service area just provides the environmental context for resource dependency. Responsiveness and comprehensiveness are the buffers between the themes which call for more severe accountability measures and those themes which a beckon a lesser degree of pressure for performance. Indeed responsiveness and comprehensiveness are ambiguous themes, but they do speak to the ideals of the traditional community college: We are here to serve you, and we will do whatever you need. Unfortunately, the funding is not there to do it all, and the colleges have to pay attention and respond to their resource caregivers first, then their care-receivers. In sum, it appears that the more salient the theme, the closer it is to resource dependence, and the more the institutions have had to align themselves with the market.
Interpretation of Results of Research Question Two

The discussion of the results of the second research question which examines the difference in themes between Level I and Level II institutions covers only particular themes, not each and every similarity or difference for the sake of synthesis. For example, only four themes are examined when looking at the difference in overall salient themes between Level I and Level II—high quality and excellence, responsiveness, success, and workforce. Then, the difference in values, goals, and functions between the two levels is interpreted.

**High quality and excellence.** Both levels show high quality and excellence as salient, but Level I puts it in third position while the Level II has it as its most salient theme. There are different ways to interpret this, but the fact is that SACSCOC takes the posture that if a community college offers one upper division course, it is considered as a four-year institution as far as meeting the terms for accreditation (Floyd, Skolnik, & Walker, 2005). So, once there are baccalaureates offered at the community college, there is a call higher in quality due to the demands of being accredited using the same standards as a university, and this pressure would not extend to the Level I institutions. In any case, since Level II could be considered more enterprising, they could see higher quality as a function of the market, a type of responsiveness to consumers’ changing needs (Floyd, Skolnik, & Walker, 2005). The market for bachelor degrees is strong; many more professions are requiring it, so the Level II schools are communicating that quality is not forfeited when students decide to get a bachelor’s at these institutions as opposed to another type of four-year institution.
**Responsiveness.** Among the Level I institutions responsiveness is at the seventh position and in Level II it is at the fourth. There are several explanations for this. For example, in order to create a baccalaureate in a community college, the institution generally must first create a needs assessment (measuring student interest, job projections, labor market analysis), outline costs of programs (faculty, equipment, facilities, online possibilities), project enrollment, investigate other institutions offering programs to avoid duplication, propose partners, and a draft a thorough rationale, among other things (Floyd, Skolnik, & Walker, 2005). In the case of Florida, only careers which are located in the Florida Statewide Targeted Occupations List put out by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity and the Bureau of Labor Market Statistics are options to be slated for a community college baccalaureate. All these requirements for creating a community college baccalaureate beckon a far greater level of responsiveness to the state which approves these degrees and to the labor market for which the degrees are created than are experienced by the Level I institutions.

**Success.** The theme of success was higher in salience in Level II than Level I. In Level II it was in the fifth position, and in Level I the eighth position. Success was described in outcomes or performance language such as achievement and student and workplace success. Perhaps the Level II institutions want to highlight achievement along with their commitment to access (in second position); it is not just necessarily about getting students in the doors, but helping them to persist towards a degree as well as succeeding in the workplace.

**Workforce and economic development.** This was the most salient theme for the entire dataset, a finding that is also corroborated by a later study by Ayers (2011) which
identified economic development as a mission priority for 421 community colleges in 43 states. Level I, having the most weight in the entire dataset, claims workforce and economic development as their number one theme. In Level II it is in the third position after high quality and excellence and access. Perhaps Level II institutions desire to project a more academic or university-like tone, although in fact all their higher degrees are propelled by workforce needs, preparing students to be competitive for the job market.

**Values, goals, and functions.** Now that the more macro-level salient themes have been compared between the two levels, it is useful also to see how they differed in their expressions of their values, goals, and functions. In values, the themes of high quality and excellence, workforce and economic development, and community development are all in the same order. They also share the same position of access. In Level II access and high quality are tied for first place in values; they endorse access as a goal but claim high quality too. In values, responsiveness is lower in Level II, but it is in a higher position as a macro-level salient theme, as it was fourth in goals and functions. Perhaps responsiveness was not pinpointed as a value per se but more in what they strive to actually do as an institution and what they actually accomplish. Personal development was positioned considerably higher in Level II as a value, and this could be attributed to more university-like philosophical principles such as student’s holistic development and realization of full potential.

In the category of goals, the most outstanding differences in the goals between the two levels are high quality and excellence (fifth vis-à-vis first position) and community development (third vis-à-vis sixth position). In both levels, success is firmly planted as
the second position. The goal of both institutional types is to produce students who will succeed personally and professionally. High quality and excellence are more salient as goals in Level II institutions. Again, it could be due to wanting to be considered in the state college realm and have their programs receive the credit due them since they are being accredited using the same measuring stick as four-year institutions. Community development was higher in salience in the Level I institutions. This hardly means Level II institutions do not care about community development; they do, but personal development comes first. In Level I institutions, personal development comes after community development, which could reveal their preference and priority of the community more so perhaps than on individual student success and quality of life for the individual.

The two levels resulted in differing functions. For example, the theme of access is lower in Level II (second vis-à-vis fifth). Level II institutions have not set aside its open door philosophy, but it is not what they primarily set out to do. Workforce is first in both levels: They both aspire to improve employability and develop the capacities of business, industry, and the communities. Once again, personal development (second vis-à-vis sixth) is higher in Level II which shows that these institutions care more than just about their graduates being successfully employed. They want them to reach their full potential, be enriched personally, develop creativity, and participate in lifelong professional and personal development programs.

**Summary of Discussion**

Now that the results from all three research questions have been interpreted, it is appropriate to ask if community college missions have indeed changed and if Level I and
II institutions have the same missions. The answer is the same for both: They continue to care about the same things but in a different order and for the same service area as before. They strive to be comprehensive but are more cautious. Community colleges will continue to be the catch-all institutions for a while, until new institutions are created to address the different needs. This may take time, as nonprofit organizations and social support agencies are also feeling pinched for resources amidst the wide field of postsecondary institutional choices continually pecked away by for-profit hawks. Concern for quality will continue to grow and intensify. Community development and improvement in quality of life are emerging themes which give evidence that the altruistic, humane side of the missions is still intact. Responsiveness, the twin sister of comprehensiveness, is alive, but institutions realize that they will be accountable for what they choose to respond to. Colleges know all too well that they have to put the money where their mouth (mission) is. Success was a new theme that emerged which documents their interest in satisfying the overseers of the funds. Finally, diversity was a theme which diminished in salience, but perhaps the time has come to not have to point out the obvious demographic trends and what is the new normal in the community college student body. There is no need to panic that baccalaureate-granting community colleges entering the postsecondary institution stage are causing a dramatic upheaval. They are making changes to the script, but the plot is the same. These institutions are fine tuning their missions and recreating the score a bit, but it is still to the tune of responsiveness to workforce needs and the demands of the state and the markets. The director of this ensemble has invisible hands, and hopefully what is orchestrated is less than a piece to
entertain labor market audiences, and more to the hymn of democracy, justice, and social mobility.

**Implications**

**Future of community colleges.** After investigating how community college missions have changed--or not, and how missions vary according to institutional type, it is fitting to reflect on the future of the mission of the community college. The future is predicated on current conditions. In light of the new globalized or knowledge economy with its neoliberal underpinnings, the writing on the wall points to several factors molding the community college of the future: market incentives in the government financing of higher education, shrinking state funds for community colleges, corporate values in higher education, new vocationalism, the completion agenda, globalization, heightened accountability standards, and performance funding pressures. These factors will shape the community college of the 21st century. As Ayers (2005) pointed out, there is already a change in the discourse of the mission of the community colleges from an alleged focus on the democratization of postsecondary education to the "reconceptualization of the educational process by economic processes and their neoliberal ideological basis" (p. 545). The shaping of mission to this effect shows no indication of stopping or slowing down but rather of accelerating and becoming even more acute.

**Future for the community college student.** This study points to a glimpse into the future of the institution, but also it gives insight into the future of the community college student. Once the free market enters the mix of funding and the current environment as already described, the tentacles of resource dependency theory extend
beyond the systems level down to the individual level. As neoliberalism promotes the individualization of all actions, it rakes into the resource dependency nexus individual actors as consumers (students) who are primarily motivated by monetary or material gain and treated as economic commodities by policy makers (Levin, 2007; Saunders, 2002; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). But students are not just consumers, they are also a type of funder, too, as tuition becomes larger portions of colleges’ revenue source along with ever-diminishing state and federal aid. Individual students are peculiar players in the resource dependency equation because they are influenced by environment like the college is, and at the same time, they are also being affected by state mandates and college pressures. Although students are free agents in the open market system, that freedom comes at a heavy cost—in capital and accountability. Just as colleges feel the pressure, students now are feeling the heat at the individual level to perform. For example, in the state of Florida recently, state mandates for the Florida State College System require students to declare a major or pathway before completing their first 12 credits and also to declare transfer institutions by 12 credits. Another example of the Florida legislature cornering students to complete their studies within a certain time frame is the new law (Section 1009.286, FS) in which individual students are charged an excess credit hour surcharge if they do not complete the baccalaureate degree in a timely fashion. The screws are tightening quickly on students’ individual “freedom.”

In the same way as the state, colleges also are squeezing more from students to prove their commitment to accountability and quality mandates. Increasingly they are implementing first-year programs, compulsory orientations, various early intervention strategies, and intrusive advising practices all of which the colleges closely track.
compliance. Majors, now sometimes referred to as career pathways, are increasing more structured with fewer choices to keep the students in lock-step with their respective degree’s anticipated graduation dates. In the same vein, the federal government also is expecting more performance from students when they receive federal aid. Effective in July 2012, students can receive the Federal Pell Grant for no more than 12 semesters or the equivalent (roughly six years) over the course of their lifetime. Students are increasingly held accountable for the capital required for their degrees; they sign promissory notes for their federal loans and electronically place their signatures on financial obligation acknowledgement or responsibility agreements at the college level.

Thus the phenomenon of resource dependency is not just contained between college and state, in fact, the pressures are passed from the state to the college, and from the state and the college to the student. As the student graduates, the student is presented as a contribution to the new economy and as output or product to employers (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). These graduates then join the very labor market that influences the state which funds the college from which they are both an input and output. Consequently, community college students become inextricably part of the neoliberal processes, as they fund the state through their wages and are part of the capitalist enterprise. For all its vaunted merits, open access is not free. The mission of the unclosed door does have a price tag.

**Implications for research.** Mission statements alone are used in this study in an attempt to “force” the institution to self-define in a short and concise manner and to squeeze its essence into the fewest words and most significant elements. Thus the current study does not include vision and value statements from the institutions, but this
additional information could provide powerful indicators of what the institutions value without counting on the mission statements alone. This would be an expanded arena for future researchers to investigate.

In order to assure manageability of the collected data, the study focuses on SACSCOC-accredited community colleges only in a general sense; it does not discriminate between community colleges and technical colleges per se. The findings could yield significant differences if this distinction were made. Additionally, the institutions are not parsed according to size, institutional history, or urban/suburban/rural characteristics. A future study using these distinctions could make the data richer and more useful from a practitioner’s point of view.

This study has promise to shed light on the current state of the community college missions after more than a full decade of movement towards the accretion of baccalaureate programs especially in the southeast region of the U.S., but another study which would contribute to the field and provide a larger, more national scale is a comparison of what the trends are in regions representing other accrediting bodies.

This study used the very language which community colleges have carefully selected to express their reason for being and their values, goals, and functions. However, many times, there were no given definitions for community development or surrounding areas or improvement of lives. How is the word community in their statements actually operationalized? A follow-up study which solicits from top administrators the definitions of these specific terms and phrases would also provide a richer meaning and more detail and depth to this research.
In the same vein, it would be a valuable study to interview different levels of community college personnel, from middle-managers on up to college presidents, and ask these employees to name the top three values and goals aspects from their mission statements and see how accurate they are and how they vary by rank and department. Students could also be randomly selected to participate in a survey or focus group, and they could be questioned on their view of the college’s mission and the primary values and goals of the college. Is the enacted mission the same as interpreted “on the ground”?

In the words of Cohen, Brawer, and Kisker (2013), “Community colleges have suffered less from goal displacement than have most other higher education institutions. They had less to displace; their goals were to serve the people with whatever the people wanted. Standing outside the tradition, they offered access” (p. 36). A future study could investigate what access means to mission writers and study to see if accessibility is usurping the concept of access or if accommodation is becoming equated with open access.

Finally, future research could focus on whether the community college baccalaureate is making a dent in the workforce needs of the local area. If there are changes such as better employment rates and improved quality of life, can they be measured and how so? In order to encourage the growth of these types of institutions, it is critical that studies are made to trace their socioeconomic benefits to the community. Additionally, research is needed to utilize more authentic indicators of educational productivity such as teaching and learning outcomes and advising practices in order to showcase successes of the students beyond just a completion number or retention rate.
Limitations

This study yielded findings that can illuminate our understanding of community colleges mission priorities in the southern United States due to its macroperspective and extensive sample. Notwithstanding, this study carries some limitations. For example, the mission statements found on the institutional websites were not verified by another researcher for accuracy. It was possible, albeit unlikely, that some vision statements could have found their way into the recorded mission statements despite following a protocol in accessing and archiving the mission statement. In the case of the lengthy mission statements, the process of trimming them down had the potential of cutting out segments which the institution could have possibly considered of more primary importance than the text in the introductory paragraph which was analyzed in this study.

The identification of themes and the organization into codes was facilitated by NVivo10 software. Although more systematic and consistent than human coders, the software program could have missed nuances in words. However, the researcher was not reliant on the software in identifying themes but rather the software provided the first filtering of the data that was used as a springboard to establish the initial codes.

Moreover, the stage of establishing codes and identifying categories invariably involved some degree of interpretation because text always proffers the potential of multiple meanings. This subjectivity, an inextricable component of qualitative content analysis, could be considered a limitation, for it is impossible for a researcher to refrain completely from applying a particular perspective to a given phenomena.

Due to the nature of this study which set out to focus on a certain region as opposed to the entire nation, the sample only accounts for 11 states, so generalizations to
the entire country could not be made. However, since the hotbed of community college baccalaureates is located in this region, the themes which were discovered have value in projecting the trends for the rest of the country.

In addition, the mission statements in the data set cannot be assumed to be entirely current; however, mission statements “articulate a long-term strategy and describe enduring purposes and characteristics of the organization” (Ayers, 2002, p. 16). Accordingly, the intent of the researcher was to describe a macroperspective approximating a five to ten year timeframe.

Also, the comparison made between the Ayers study and this one was not on an institution-to-institution level because the exact institutions from Ayers couldn’t be retrieved and therefore identified, analyzed, and compared. His 102 randomized institutions were extracted from the SACSCOC region, and in this study all 295 SACSCOC institutions were used. Although not an exact institution-to-institution comparison, it is the only comparison that can be made given the availability of data. Indeed all 102 institutions of his study were included in this current study, but they were not compared one-to-one to follow up on how those specific institutions’ missions have changed. Ayers considered his study to be rather “primitive” in comparison to his later, more advanced research on mission statements; nevertheless, his study served as a well-timed baseline because it was published around the time that Florida’s community colleges were just beginning to offer associate’s degrees. It is important to note that in his study, unlike this one, he did not tease out the SACSCOC associate’s degree-granting institution and bachelor’s degree-granting institutions, so the results from research
question two were not utilized in the comparison between the themes of Ayers and this study’s salient themes.

Finally, writers of mission statements, in their attempt to be concise, often do not take the time or the words to define or clarify their phrases. The originators of these missions possibly believed that despite the ambiguity of the statements, they sufficiently communicated the gist of the institution without the need for further elaboration or definition. The meanings of these statements are open to interpretation, and interpretation is not truth. If several top leaders were to be interviewed about the meanings of the missions, their responses would all vary—even if they all were a part of the same strategic planning committee which together crafted the mission statement.

Conclusion

Should community colleges flow along with the current of the revenue stream even if that contradicts their written mission statements or unwritten philosophical underpinnings? Sometimes missions can just begin to simply omit populations it once chose to serve due to following the money trail or caving into pressure to perform, but this is not done by commission but rather by omission. This is why many times there is a potential liability in committing to general responsiveness to needs because of conflicts of interest, known or unknown. Plus, it is expensive to help all students, everywhere, regardless of financial need or ability.

There also is a risk in simply becoming market-oriented because it may result that populations of low socioeconomic students, the very group that community colleges traditionally have opened their doors to, become ancillary, excluded from participating in the knowledge economy (Levin, 2007). In an unbarred neoliberal globalized economy
scenario, there will be definite winners and losers, and those in the losing category will be those who are in special education, basic education, ESL, and GED programs because these are not the students which a new economy will profit or profit from (Levin, 2007). When students are perceived as economic commodities, or mere production units, there will be little to no justice for the disadvantaged, low income, or minority students.

Community colleges were not designed to execute the survival of the fittest. That type of competitiveness was a game other institutions played in the form of rankings and team sports competitions. Indeed there are advantages of following the current neoliberal course, but advantage or disadvantage, it is a matter of choosing between two poisons. On the upside, under this type of academic capitalist regime, employment and wages will go up, as well as the consumption rate, thus generating more revenue for the state.

For practitioners and leaders at community colleges, it is time to take pause and be more vigilant of their own philosophies. They are not unaffected by neoliberal thinking and should be cautioned not to drift away from their original mission or if it has changed, to be anchored by their own definitions of terms. If anything there is to be learned from this study, it is to be careful whom institutions serve or are dependent on lest they become like them. Community college leaders need to understand the larger forces at hand bearing on their missions. If they don’t define the institutions, their identity will be dictated by the highest bidder. Specifically, the mission-writers and the committee behind them have to think long and hard about what is access to them. Is it accessibility? Accommodation? What is equity? Is it justice? Do they care about justice? And if so, justice for whom? How do they advance justice? What does it mean to be democracy’s college? How do community colleges prepare students in citizenship skills which are
requisite for life in a democratic society? Is democracy compatible to responsiveness and comprehensiveness, access and high quality? Can high quality education be offered to the masses at bargain basement prices? Is that a worthy, realistic goal? Or is excellence in education only for the niche markets? Community college leaders must be aware and know where they can go very quickly: In less than 15 years the competitive environment has already traded out the access mission for one a little more submissive to the market--economic and workforce development.

It is simply a reality that fiscal pressures, along with state level funding policies, now limit the access to educational opportunity and restrain community colleges from fostering social equity (Dowd & Shieh, 2013). The need of the hour is to be innovative. Innovation is no enemy of the free market system, and community colleges would do well to begin to come up with solutions with some teeth. Leaders and administrators should seek solutions in all its forms and not be apologetic for considering the community college baccalaureate. When so much is at stake, every option needs to be explored. For example, normal schools, as Floyd, Skolnik, and Walker (2005) point out, evolved into teachers colleges which then turned into state colleges which then morphed into state universities. In fact, by 2000 there were only six teachers colleges (five private, one public) in the nation according to the Carnegie Foundation (http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org/downloads/2000_edition_data_printable.pdf). Will the community college become like other educational institutions which served a purpose for a time and then transformed into other institutional types like teachers colleges and normal schools? It is not clear how the community college will evolve as an institutional
type, but history vividly illustrates the ill fate which falls to collective agencies which evolve with no improvement, or change without progress.

According to McKee (2001), there is now a chance that the new community college baccalaureate will bring about by force a “reconceptualization of the baccalaureate” (p. 91). According to the Institute for Higher Education Policy, there in fact is “no major postsecondary institution, program, or policy in the world with a specific focus on addressing the issues rising out of the New World Economic and demographic order which is emerging around us” (2007, p. 37). The hope of a new kind of institution such as the community college baccalaureate is that it could “serve as a model for a new kind of university in the 21st century global outlook but local and its delivery” because at the moment there is no new kind of postsecondary institution which tackles head on the complex economic, political, sociological, and entrepreneurial forces that are pushing back the attainment the American dream (Remington & Remington, 2013, p. 14). The community college baccalaureate movement has all the clay it needs to muster a new sculpture in the delivery of higher education: changing demographics, public policy and pressures, termination of transfer trauma, lower costs to states and students, and the alleviation of the supply of professional programs (Remington & Remington, 2013). All these factors potentially can breathe life into this monument; in fact, in 2013 there were already 57 community college baccalaureate institutions in the country when only seven years ago, it was only 21 (Remington & Remington, 2013). The community college baccalaureate could allow more students not only access to two-year degrees but also to four-degrees and at a lower cost to taxpayers. Bachelor’s degrees will be required for 35% of the jobs in 2020, and 65% of all jobs will require some form of
postsecondary education (Carnevale, Smith, & Strohl, 2013). Plus, the community college baccalaureate can provide a different type of bachelor’s education which is more applied and hands-on; this can bridge the gap between vocational and academic, producing the perfect offspring between workforce and high quality academic instruction. More permeable and malleable than a traditional four-year monolithic institution, baccalaureate-granting community colleges may become the leaner, faster, stronger model of what higher education is to become.
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**Appendix A**

On October 6, 2013 the researcher analyzed 15 preliminary mission statements to apply some definitions to the mission statements. These definitions pertain to values, goals, and functions as stated with mission statements. After trying out the definitions on actual mission statements, they were categorized into a chart to test to see if they could be discretely separated.

A. **VALUES:** *What does the College believe to be important? What do they believe in?*

B. **GOALS/PURPOSE:** *What does the College purport to do? What are its intentions?*

C. **FUNCTION:** *What does the College do? What services does the College provide?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>VALUES</th>
<th>GOALS/PURPOSE</th>
<th>FUNCTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>We value equal access, affordability, and access in terms of diversity, technology (distance learning), convenient scheduling and locations.</td>
<td>Our goal is to provide access in all its varying forms...to provide optimal access to high quality, affordable and relevant degree, career and community education.</td>
<td>We offer accessible programs which are open to everyone regardless of academic ability or race, ethnicity...We provide affordable programs which are convenient and available in different formats, times, and location.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce and economic development</td>
<td>We place importance on the economic development of our community and the needs of our local workforce.</td>
<td>We are committed to the goal of strengthening our local economies and competing ethically and successfully in a diverse global community.</td>
<td>We offer an array of career certifications and degrees and workforce employment programs, and we undertake partnerships to cultivate the economic development of our area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensiveness</td>
<td>We believe that our community college should provide a broad spectrum of educational and cultural opportunities to the community.</td>
<td>Our goal is to provide comprehensive services to enhance the lives of our students and the economic development of our community.</td>
<td>We offer bachelor’s and associate’s degrees, career oriented certificates, developmental education, adult education, GED preparation, and standard high school diplomas as well as specialized business and industry training, recreation and leisure courses, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality and excellence</td>
<td>We believe that our services should demonstrate quality and excellence… X embraces excellence…to maximize student learning and success.</td>
<td>Our goal is to provide excellent educational opportunities for the intellectual and cultural development of a diverse population.</td>
<td>We provide excellent undergraduate general education and first-rate programs leading to certificate and associate degrees.</td>
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<td>------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Responsive to needs</td>
<td>The board, faculty and staff are committed to student success by responding to student needs…The College promotes a strong working relationship with communities, businesses, state agencies, and other educational institutions.</td>
<td>Our goal is to respond to community needs…to meet the needs of our diverse students.</td>
<td>The College provides premier educational and workforce programs and services in response to the needs of the region…meets the needs of the community by providing a comprehensive range of programs and services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service area</td>
<td>College X is dedicated to serving the educational needs of Palm Beach County.</td>
<td>The mission of College X is to provide accessible, affordable, quality educational opportunities to the residents of Calhoun, Holmes, Jackson, Liberty and Washington counties and to all others who choose to attend.</td>
<td>College X serves the educational, social, and economic development of the region...providing premier educational and workforce programs and services in response to the needs of the region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>The College embraces excellence and diversity...A learning-centered community that celebrates diversity and inclusion.</td>
<td>The mission of College X is to meet the needs of our diverse students.</td>
<td>We prepare a diverse population for creative and responsible participation in a global society...we provide access to programs delivered by diverse, qualified faculty and staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

The following are three examples of long mission statements. The dashed line around the first paragraph shows what I trimmed out to use as mission statement data for use in this study.

Seminole State College of Florida

The mission of Seminole State College of Florida is to serve the community by providing a learning-centered, high-quality educational institution that anticipates and meets the needs of the community by providing a comprehensive range of programs and services.

Seminole State College promises:

• Exemplary and highly motivated faculty, administrators and staff who foster a caring and professional relationship with students and the community.
• An excellent academic curriculum that provides the first two years of university studies and selected bachelor's degree programs.
• State-of-the-art career and technical programs that lead directly to employment or career advancement.
• Cutting-edge continuing education programs that offer opportunities for advancement or re-certification.
• Personalized adult education programs that help students learn and strengthen basic academic skills and earn a high school diploma.
• Innovative student development services that support the learning and teaching processes and promote student success.
• Dynamic business, industry and educational partnerships that enhance the region's economic development and vitality.
• Leisure and personal development programs that contribute to the enrichment of the community.
• A distinctive cultural center that provides diverse professional and academic courses, programs and events.
Chipola College

Chipola provides the following:

- Educational programs which include general and pre-professional classes leading to the Associate in Arts degree for transfer into baccalaureate degree programs;
- Baccalaureate degree programs which produce educated and capable professionals prepared for successful careers or advancement to graduate degree programs;
- Workforce Development programs leading to Associate in Science degrees and Certificates of Training to prepare students for careers;
- Continuing education opportunities for professional and personal development; and
- A broad range of enrollment and student services and instructional and administrative support to facilitate student success.
St. Johns River State College

St. Johns River State College provides students with equal access to a broad spectrum of educational and cultural opportunities while encouraging the pursuit of academic excellence and scholarly achievement through high quality instruction. The College creates and continuously improves affordable, accessible and effective learning opportunities, support services, and resources for the educational needs of the diverse community it serves.

The College fulfills its mission through offering:

1. Transferable freshman and sophomore courses in the arts and sciences, as well as other disciplines, leading to the Associate in Arts degree;

2. Career and technical programs leading to the Associate in Science degree, college credit (technical) certificates, or vocational (PSAV) certificates;

3. Upper level courses leading to the awarding of baccalaureate degrees as authorized by the State Board of Education;

4. Intensive training and course work in the visual and performing arts for students of exceptional talent or promise;

5. Developmental courses for students who need to improve their academic skills and/or prepare for the General Educational Development examination;

6. Delivery of educational services in innovative and efficient ways to assist students whose opportunity for educational attainment is limited by place or time;

7. Support services which assist students in achieving academic success;

8. Partnerships with four-year institutions enabling students to earn baccalaureate degrees while remaining within the service district;

9. Assistance with economic development efforts by offering workforce development and continuing education programs designed to meet local, regional, and statewide needs;

10. Community enrichment and lifelong learning opportunities for the residents of the service district.
Appendix C

LEVEL I

**Aiken Technical College, Aiken, SC**

Aiken Technical College 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, social and personal development. The College educates and trains students to provide an effective work force to support economic growth and community development through its focus on teaching and service.

**Alabama Southern Community College, Monroeville, AL**

Alabama Southern Community College provides comprehensive educational opportunities and services in diverse learning environments to enhance community and economic development for the citizens of southwest Alabama.

**Alamance Community College, Graham, NC**

The mission of Alamance Community College is to provide an open door to high quality education and learning. Central to this mission is the belief in the unique worth of each person. Accordingly, the College strives to help people realize their potential and attain a meaningful education that is relevant and responsive to the needs of the local, state, and global communities.

**Albany Technical College, Albany, GA**

Albany Technical College, a public post-secondary institution of the Technical College System of Georgia, provides technical education and training support for evolving workforce development needs of Southwest Georgia. To accomplish this mission, the College utilizes traditional and distance learning methods. The following purposes of Albany Tech are based on the concept that education benefits individuals, businesses and the community: To provide quality competency-based associate degree, diploma and technical certificates of credit programs that prepare students for employment in business, technical sciences, health care technology, personal services and industrial careers. To provide basic adult education and development programs to help adults improve life skills and prepare for continued education and training. To contribute to the technological advancement of area businesses and industry through education and training. To offer comprehensive continuing education courses and programs for the advancement of skills, knowledge and personal growth.

**Altamaha Technical College, Jesup, GA**

Altamaha Technical College, a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia, is a multi-campus academic institution of higher education that supports the economic empowerment of people, communities, and businesses along the Altamaha River and
southern coast by offering quality technical education programs through traditional and distance delivery formats at the associate degree, diploma, and certificate levels; a variety of workforce development services; and adult education programs.

**Alvin Community College**, Alvin, TX

The mission of Alvin Community College is to improve lives by providing affordable, accessible and innovative educational opportunities to those it serves.

**Amarillo College**, Amarillo, TX

Amarillo College enriching the lives of our students and our community.

**Angelina College**, Lufkin, TX

The mission of Angelina College is to provide quality educational opportunities and services to aid students in reaching their full potential.

**Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College**, Asheville, NC

A-B Tech inspires, nurtures and empowers students and the community toward a better quality of life through progressive teaching, bold innovation and supportive collaboration.

**Ashland Community and Technical College**, Ashland, KY

Ashland Community and Technical College, a member of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, is a public, two-year degree granting institution serving Northeast Kentucky with a tradition of accessible, affordable, and quality education including general education that supports a variety of excellent associate degree, diploma, and certificate programs and prepares students for transfer to baccalaureate programs. The College has a strong commitment to meet the academic, workforce training, and lifelong learning needs of its community. Teach with excellence. Serve with passion. Learn for life.

**Athens Technical College**, Athens, GA

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.

**Atlanta Technical College**, Atlanta, GA

Atlanta Technical College, a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia, located in the city of Atlanta, is an accredited institution of higher education that recognizes the
importance of global education. The college provides affordable lifelong learning opportunities, associate degrees, diplomas, technical certificates of credit, customized business and industry training, continuing education, and other learning services using state-of-the-art technology. The integration of academics and applied career preparation to enhance student learning is essential in meeting the workforce demands and economic development needs of people, businesses, and the communities we serve.

**Augusta Technical College,** Augusta, GA

Augusta Technical College, a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia, is a public postsecondary institution that promotes and provides the education, economic, and community development needs of its service area (Burke, Columbia, Lincoln, McDuffie, and Richmond Counties). Associate of Science Degrees, Associate of Applied Science Degrees, diplomas, and technical certificates of credit are provided through traditional and distance delivery methods. The College achieves its mission by providing academic and technical education, student support services, customized business and industry training, economic development services, continuing education, and adult education services.

**Austin Community College,** Sherman, TX

The mission of Austin College is to educate students in the liberal arts and sciences in order to prepare them for rewarding careers and for full, engaged, and meaningful lives.

**Bainbridge State College,** Bainbridge, GA

Bainbridge State College, an institution of the University System of Georgia, promotes an accessible, affordable, and excellent education for the diverse population of southwest Georgia and beyond through transfer degrees, technical degrees, diplomas and certificates, continuing education courses, public service opportunities, and collaboration with other educational providers, resulting in lifelong learning, economic development, and graduates empowered for success in a global society.

**Baton Rouge Community College,** Baton Rouge, LA

The mission of Baton Rouge Community College is to identify and meet the educational and workforce needs of our community through innovative, accessible, and dynamic programs.

**Beaufort County Community College,** Washington, NC

Beaufort County Community College is a public comprehensive community college committed to providing accessible and affordable quality education, effective teaching, relevant training, and lifelong learning opportunities for the people served by the College.
Bevill State Community College, Jasper, AL

Bevill State Community College is an accredited, learning-centered institution dedicated to student success by providing quality educational and training opportunities that enrich lives intellectually, economically, and culturally.

Big Sandy Community and Technical College, Prestonsburg, KY

Big Sandy Community and Technical College, a member of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, is a public, comprehensive educational institution awarding certificates, diplomas, and associate degrees. As a progressive, learning-centered institution, the College offers accessible and affordable educational, cultural, and social opportunities. Utilizing diverse methods of instructional delivery and associated services, the College provides quality learning experiences for those preparing for entry into the workforce, transferring to a baccalaureate institution, and seeking to enhance their knowledge and skills. Big Sandy Community and Technical College also delivers customized training and services responsive to the workforce needs of citizens, businesses, and industries.

Bishop State Community College, Mobile, AL

Our Mission is to provide high-quality educational opportunities and services that are responsive to individual and community needs for the citizenry of Mobile and Washington counties at an affordable cost. The College utilizes traditional and distance learning to accomplish its mission.

Bladen Community College, Dublin, NC

The mission of the North Carolina Community College System is to open the door to high-quality, accessible educational opportunities that minimize barriers to post-secondary education, maximize student success, develop a globally and multi-culturally competent workforce, and improve the lives and well-being of individuals by providing education, training and retraining for the workforce including basic skills and literacy education, occupational and pre-baccalaureate programs; Support for economic development through services to and in partnership with business and industry and in collaboration with the University of North Carolina System and private colleges and universities; services to communities and individuals which improve the quality of life.

Blinn College, Brenham, TX

Blinn College provides a personal commitment to individual and community enhancement through educational excellence.
Blue Ridge Community College, Flat Rock, NC

Our Mission...enriching the lives of those within our reach through education, training, and cultural activities.

Blue Ridge Community College, Weyers Cave, VA

Blue Ridge Community College anticipates the educational needs of the central Shenandoah Valley, providing access to comprehensive programs and services, within an environment of academic excellence.

Bluegrass Community and Technical College, Lexington, KY

Bluegrass Community and Technical College (BCTC) is transforming the Bluegrass Region—one student at a time, one employer at a time, one community at a time.

Bossier Parish Community College, Bossier City, LA

The mission of Bossier Parish Community College is to promote attainment of educational goals within the community and strengthen the regional economy. This mission is accomplished through the innovative delivery of quality courses and programs that provide sound academic education, broad vocational and career training, continuing education, and varied community services. The College provides a wholesome, ethical, and intellectually stimulating environment in which students develop their academic and vocational skills to compete in a technological society.

Brookhaven College, Dallas, TX

At Brookhaven College, a public, open-door, two-year institution dedicated to student success, we provide quality educational programs by offering a broad range of programs, learning opportunities and experiences. We prepare our students to value the individuals and organizations within our diverse community and to face the challenges as responsible and productive members of society. We achieve our mission through our goals and strategic directions.

Brunswick Community College, Supply, NC

To provide opportunities for individuals to be successful through accessible, high quality programs and services that meet the educational, cultural and workforce development needs of the community.

Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute, Hudson, NC

The mission of Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute is to provide accessible, quality instruction to enhance student learning, support economic
development through comprehensive resources to business, industry, and agencies, and offer diverse services and opportunities which improve the quality of life.

**Calhoun Community College**, Tanner, AL

Calhoun Community College is an institution of excellence providing quality, innovative instruction through a responsive environment while promoting cultural enrichment and community development.

**Cape Fear Community College**, Wilmington, NC

Cape Fear Community College is an open door, multi-campus, comprehensive community college that strengthens the academic, economic, social and cultural life of the citizens of New Hanover and Pender counties.

**Carteret Community College**, Morehead City, NC

Carteret Community College offers opportunities for lifelong learning through high quality traditional and distance learning teaching, training, support, and enrichment with the intended purpose of improving the quality of life for all citizens of Carteret County and eastern North Carolina.

**Catawba Valley Community College**, Hickory, NC

Catawba Valley Community College is an innovative, comprehensive community college that fosters and promotes a multitude of learning experiences, enabling and empowering its students, faculty, staff, and stakeholders to identify and to serve higher purposes in their lives and in their communities.

**Cedar Valley College**, Lancaster, TX

The mission of Cedar Valley College is to provide exemplary teaching and learning experiences that prepare students for success in a dynamic world while strengthening communities.

**Central Alabama Community College**, Alexander City, AL

Central Alabama Community College is a multi-campus community college providing quality, customer-driven educational opportunities to enhance the lives of those we serve.

**Central Carolina Community College**, Sanford, NC

Central Carolina Community College serves as a catalyst for personal, community, and economic development by empowering people through education and training.
Central Carolina Technical College, Sumter, SC

Central Carolina Technical College is a comprehensive, public, two-year institution of higher education dedicated to fostering a positive environment of teaching and learning for faculty, staff, and students. The College serves primarily the region of Clarendon, Lee, Kershaw, and Sumter counties in South Carolina and confers associate degrees, diplomas, and certificates. College programs, student support services, and resources provide citizens, businesses, industries, and communities with quality, affordable, accessible, customer-responsive post-secondary education through life-long learning and specialized training opportunities. These are designed to develop the foundation for personal growth, economic development, and an improved quality of life through multiple learning environments including traditional and electronic instructional methods.

Central Georgia Technical College, Macon, GA

Central Georgia Technical College, a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia, provides traditional and distance learning educational programs and services. Through credit instruction, adult education, and customized business and industry workforce training, the College contributes to economic and workforce development within its eleven-county service area and throughout the State of Georgia.

Central Piedmont Community College, Charlotte, NC.

Central Piedmont Community College is an innovative and comprehensive college that advances the life-long educational development of students consistent with their needs, interests, and abilities while strengthening the economic, social, and cultural life of its diverse community. The College accomplishes this purpose by providing high-quality, flexible pre-baccalaureate and career-focused educational programs and services which are academically, geographically, and financially accessible. This purpose requires a fundamental commitment to student success through teaching and learning excellence within a supportive environment.

Central Virginia Community College, Lynchburg, VA

Central Virginia Community College is an accessible, comprehensive, public, two-year, higher education institution that is dedicated to providing open, flexible, affordable, quality learning opportunities for personal growth and the acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary for productive and meaningful life, providing general education, transfer, applied science, certificate, and diploma programs, determining and addressing the training needs of business, industry, and government to benefit the service area, supporting workforce and economic development through participation in regional organizations and training for new and/or expanding businesses, providing support services for education, training, technology infrastructure, and workforce development.
Chattahoochee Technical College, Marietta, GA

Chattahoochee Technical College, a Unit of the Technical College System of Georgia, is a point of access for individuals, business and industry, and communities; to programs which are occupational or transferable; to associate degrees, diplomas, certificates, non-credit courses, and adult education; through traditional campuses and online means in an environment supportive of learning, teaching, retention, and graduation.

Chattahoochee Valley Community College, Phenix City, AL

Chattahoochee Valley Community College, a member of the Alabama Community College System, is a public, comprehensive, community college serving a diverse population through traditional classroom and distance-learning formats. The College is dedicated to providing accessible and affordable education of excellent quality preparing students for transfer to senior colleges and universities, employment, or career advancement through associate degrees and certificate programs. Development courses are offered to assist students in improving learning skills and overcoming educational deficiencies. Student success is fostered by providing a student-centered environment and support services that respect uniqueness and value diversity. The College supports partnerships advancing community, workforce development, and life-long learning.

Chattanooga State Community College, Chattanooga, TN

Transform the lives of individuals and develop the capacities of business, industry and the communities within the Chattanooga State service area and beyond through the power of technical and postsecondary education.

Cisco College, Cisco, TX

The mission of Cisco College is to provide high-quality learning opportunities that promote student success in an ever-changing global environment.

Clarendon College, Clarendon, TX

Clarendon College is a comprehensive community college committed to teaching and learning and to providing equal access to opportunities that assist in the holistic development of its constituents and community. In pursuit of that mission, the College provides academic transfer programs, workforce education programs, student services, developmental education courses, continuing education/community service courses, and diverse cultural enrichment opportunities.

Cleveland Community College, Shelby, NC

Cleveland Community College provides diverse and accessible learning opportunities to meet the educational and training needs of our community.
**Cleveland State Community College**, Cleveland, TN

Cleveland State Community College provides accessible, responsive, and quality educational opportunities primarily for residents of southeastern Tennessee. The College delivers developmental education, university transfer programming, workforce training and continuing education activities. By engaging a diverse student body in the learning process, the College aspires to promote success, enhance quality of life and encourage civic involvement. The College strives to be a responsible partner in lifelong learning for the individual and in the economic development of the region.

**Coahoma Community College**, Clarksdale, MS

Coahoma Community College, located in the northwest corner of the rural Mississippi Delta, is an accredited, public, comprehensive, two-year institution of higher learning dedicated to serving Bolivar, Coahoma, Quitman, Tallahatchie, and Tunica counties and beyond. Serving as a catalyst for economic and community development, Coahoma Community College provides accessible, affordable, diverse, and quality educational opportunities and services that foster a nurturing teaching and learning environment, promote intellectual and work readiness skills, support personal and professional growth, and prepare students to enter the job market or transfer to a college or university.

**Coastal Bend College**, Beeville, TX

Coastal Bend College is a comprehensive, public community college serving a diverse South Texas area. It is a student-centered institution committed to the highest integrity and to the development of an educational culture that supports creativity, encourages professional development, and promotes excellence in all areas.

**Coastal Carolina Community College**, Jacksonville, NC

As a member of the North Carolina Community College System, Coastal Carolina Community College provides opportunities for quality post-secondary education, college transfer, workforce training and lifelong learning for the civilian and military population of Onslow County, within the limits of available resources. Coastal values academic excellence, focuses on learning outcomes and student success, provides leadership for community cooperation, and actively contributes to the economic development of Onslow County.

**College of The Albemarle**, Elizabeth City, NC

The mission of College of The Albemarle is to transform lives in an accessible, supportive environment that promotes academic excellence, student success, workforce development, community partnerships, and responsible stewardship.
**College of the Mainland,** Texas City, TX

College of the Mainland is a learning-centered, comprehensive community college dedicated to student success and the intellectual and economic prosperity of the diverse communities we serve.

**Collin County Community College District,** McKinney, TX

Collin County Community College District is a student and community-centered institution committed to developing skills, strengthening character, and challenging the intellect.

**Columbia State Community College,** Columbia, TN

Columbia State Community College enhances the lives of citizens and the communities of southern middle Tennessee through teaching, learning and student success.

**Columbus Technical College,** Columbus, GA

The mission of Columbus Technical College, a public two-year College in Georgia, is to promote regional economic development and a globally competitive workforce by providing a learner-centered, collegiate education and training experience intended for career development and transfer offered both locally and through distance learning.

**Copiah-Lincoln Community College,** Wesson, MS

The mission of Copiah-Lincoln Community College is to provide educational programs, economic development services, cultural and recreational opportunities through quality instruction and high expectations and service in a safe, student-centered environment.

**Craven Community College,** New Bern, NC

Craven Community College is a dynamic and responsive institution of higher education committed to improving and enriching individual lives and society through comprehensive, high quality and accessible learning opportunities that allow students to contribute and compete in a diverse and global community.

**Dabney S. Lancaster Community College,** Clifton Forge, VA

Dabney S. Lancaster Community College (DSLCC) provides an opportunity for the extension of knowledge, skills, and personal enrichment in a forum that maintains high academic standards, is financially and geographically accessible, and respects each student's rights and responsibilities.
**Danville Community College**, Danville, VA

Danville Community College is committed to providing quality comprehensive higher education and workforce programs and services to promote student success and to enhance business and community development.

**Davidson County Community College**, Lexington, NC

Davidson County Community College develops minds, inspires imaginations, and prepares students for enhanced career and educational opportunities within a changing global environment.

**Del Mar College**, Corpus Christi, TX

Del Mar College provides access to quality education, workforce preparation, and lifelong learning for student and community success.

**Delgado Community College**, New Orleans, LA

Delgado Community College provides a learning centered environment in which students from diverse backgrounds are prepared to attain their educational, career, and personal goals, to think critically, to demonstrate leadership, and to be productive and responsible citizens.

**Denmark Technical College**, Denmark, SC

Denmark Technical College is a public, comprehensive, Historically Black, two-year technical college located in rural Bamberg County in South Carolina. The college annually serves approximately 2,000 credit and continuing education students, a mix of traditional, nontraditional, full-time and part-time. Denmark Technical College is the only technical college in the State of South Carolina with on-campus housing. As a member of the South Carolina Technical College System, Denmark Technical College’s mission is related to the educational mission of the State of South Carolina and the Technical College System. The College's primary service area is comprised of Bamberg, Barnwell, and Allendale Counties with a legislated mandate to serve students throughout the state. As an open-door institution, the College provides affordable, post-secondary education culminating in associate degrees, diplomas, and certificates, to citizens from diverse educational and socioeconomic backgrounds and reaches out to its service area high schools with opportunities for the students. The college provides training needed by business and industry through collaborative partnerships and resource allocation.

**Durham Technical Community College**, Durham, NC

Durham Technical Community College’s mission is to enrich students’ lives and the broader community through teaching, learning, and service.
**Dyersburg State Community College**, Dyersburg, TN

Dyersburg State Community College serves seven counties adjacent to or near the Mississippi River in West Tennessee where there are enormous opportunities to improve college completion rates, employment levels in high-skilled jobs, and per capita income. An open-access, learner-centered institution, Dyersburg State anticipates and responds to the education needs of individuals through strategic planning and continuous improvement processes. In doing so, the College provides leadership in public service activities, workforce development projects, and educational collaborations designed to cultivate integrity and self-worth, to embrace lifelong learning, to promote diversity, and to improve the community at large by producing educated and productive members of society. Moreover, to improve the quality of life in the communities served, the College is strongly committed to developing and promoting civic and cultural opportunities, as well as economic and community development initiatives through partnerships with business and industry.

**East Central Community College**, Decatur, MS

East Central Community College, is a public, open-access, comprehensive, two-year institution of higher education that provides university transfer education, distance education opportunities, career-technical programs, workforce development services, and basic skills offerings to meet the educational and training needs of the residents of Leake, Neshoba, Newton, Scott, and Winston counties located in east central Mississippi.

**East Mississippi Community College**, Scooba, MS

East Mississippi Community College is a public community college serving six counties in East Central Mississippi, offering university-parallel programs, career-technical programs, and workforce programs. EMCC is dedicated to improving the quality of life for our students, our community and our personnel through instructional opportunities, with specific focus on a healthy mind, body and spirit.

**Eastern Shore Community College**, Melfa, VA

We serve the Eastern Shore of Virginia by meeting educational and training needs, creating an environment for student success, and preparing our students and ourselves for citizenship in a global society. By providing access to a broad range of academic, workforce development, and personal enrichment opportunities, we empower learners to improve the quality of life for themselves and their communities.

**Eastern Florida State College (formerly Brevard Community College)** Cocoa, FL

Eastern Florida State College is committed to engaging our diverse population in quality, accessible learning opportunities that successfully meet individual and community needs.
**Eastfield College**, Mesquite, TX

The mission of Eastfield College is to provide excellence in teaching and learning.

**Edgecombe Community College**, Tarboro, NC

Edgecombe Community College is a comprehensive two-year institution dedicated to fulfilling the educational, training, and cultural needs of the communities we serve.

**El Centro College**, Dallas, TX

Changing Lives Through Higher Education

**El Paso County Community College District**, El Paso, TX

The mission of El Paso County Community College District is to provide educational opportunities and support services that prepare individuals to improve their personal quality of life and to contribute to their economically and culturally diverse community.

**Elizabethtown Community and Technical College**, Elizabethtown, KY

Elizabethtown Community and Technical College (ECTC) is a comprehensive open access college that prepares people to live and work in a constantly changing world through dynamic teaching and learning environments.

**Enterprise State Community College**, Enterprise, AL

The mission of Enterprise State Community College, including the Alabama Aviation Center, is to serve students and communities by providing educational opportunities that enhance the quality of life and promote economic development.

**Faulkner State Community College**, Bay Minette, AL

Faulkner State Community College is a public two-year institution and a member of the Alabama Community College System. The College strives to provide an educational environment that promotes development and learning through a wide variety of educational programs and instructional strategies, including distance education and workforce development opportunities; adequate and comfortable facilities; a caring and well-qualified staff; flexible scheduling; and convenient locations. This effort is based upon the economic and social needs of the College service area.

**Fayetteville Technical Community College**, Fayetteville, NC

Serve our community as a learning-centered institution to build a globally competitive workforce supporting economic development
**Florence-Darlington Technical College**, Florence, SC

The mission of Florence-Darlington Technical College is to provide comprehensive technical education, workforce development, and educational services to students, business and industry, and the markets it serves. Through instructional programs, business and industry partnerships, and community involvement, the college will play a major role in the economic development and quality of life of its constituents. The educational experience at Florence-Darlington Technical College will have an international perspective, which will enhance the student's marketability in today's global economy.

**Florida Keys Community College**, Key West, FL

Florida Keys Community College is an open-access, educational institution dedicated to serving the intellectual, diverse, cultural, and occupational needs of the Florida Keys as well as the global community. The college is committed to student-centric academic programs and services, workforce development, continuing education, diverse partnerships, electronically delivered instruction, and sustainable practices that prepare students for personal success and responsible citizenship.

**Forsyth Technical Community College**, Winston-Salem, NC

Forsyth Technical Community College provides students with exceptional technical education and training as well as college transfer, adult basic education, and continuing and corporate education programs to develop a globally competitive workforce. The college responds to student, employer and community needs with innovative, flexible programs and service delivery.

**Frank Phillips College**, Borger, TX

Frank Phillips College is a comprehensive two-year, community-based educational organization committed to providing high-quality learning experiences and services. In accordance with its mission, the institution endeavors to assist each individual in acquiring the skills, facts, values, and attitudes necessary to participate in and contribute to the democratic society in which we live.

**Gadsden State Community College**, Gadsden, AL

Gadsden State Community College serves its diverse communities by offering quality academic education, workforce development, and adult education opportunities that are accessible and affordable and that foster lifelong learning and global awareness.
**Galveston College**, Galveston, TX

Galveston College, a comprehensive community college committed to teaching and learning, creates accessible learning opportunities to fulfill individual and community needs by providing high-quality educational programs and services.

**Gaston College**, Dallas, NC

Gaston College is an open-door public community college, located in Gaston and Lincoln counties, that promotes student success and lifelong learning through high caliber, affordable, and comprehensive educational programs and services responding to economic and workforce development needs.

**Gateway Community and Technical College**, Florence, KY

Gateway Community and Technical College provides high quality, affordable, accessible, and inclusive postsecondary education and training resulting in a positive contribution to the economic vitality of the region and enhanced quality of life for all citizens. Partnerships with school districts, colleges, universities, business and industry, and the community at large are part of our seamless system of entrepreneurial-learning which creates pathways to success through: Certificate, diploma, associate degree and transfer programs, Developmental, adult, and continuing education, Workforce and customized training, Support services for the enhancement of student learning and success. Gateway Community and Technical College is a member of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System and is a public two-year degree granting institution serving the Northern Kentucky Region.

**George C. Wallace Community College**, Dothan, AL

George C. Wallace Community College, a comprehensive community college, seeks to provide accessible quality educational opportunities, promote economic growth, and enhance the quality of life of its constituents.

**George Corley Wallace State Community College**, Selma, AL

The mission of Wallace Community College Selma is to provide high-quality educational opportunities and services that are responsive to individual, community and State needs.

**Georgia Northwestern Technical College**, Rome, GA

The mission of Georgia Northwestern Technical College is to provide accessible, high quality technical education and workforce development opportunities that lead to careers in technology, business, health, and public services. Operating under the Technical College System of Georgia, both on-campus and distance education programs are offered that lead to certificates, diplomas, and associate degrees. The educational programs of the college focus on the development of technical competence and critical thinking skills
as well as social, personal, and intellectual values. In addition, Georgia Northwestern Technical College supports the communities of the northwest Georgia service area by providing adult education and economic development services, customized business and industry training, and personal enrichment programs that meet the workforce needs of area citizens, communities, and companies.

**Georgia Perimeter College**, Decatur, GA

Georgia Perimeter College transforms the lives of our students to thrive in a global society. As a diverse, multi-campus college offering onsite and distance learning opportunities, we provide relevant, responsive, learner-centered higher education that facilitates the achievement of academic, professional and personal goals. We embrace excellence, teamwork and quality service that link the college's human capital with our communities to enhance economic, social and cultural vitality. As a key point of entry for students into higher education in Georgia and in order to support the Strategic Plan of the University System of Georgia, Georgia Perimeter College is committed to maintaining our role as the major provider of associate degrees and student transfer opportunities in the state and to broadening our contribution to the educational aspirations of our communities by offering select baccalaureate programs in areas of need for the citizens of Georgia.

**Georgia Piedmont Technical College**, Clarkston, GA

Georgia Piedmont Technical College, a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia, promotes a student-centered environment for lifelong learning and development, encompassing academic and technical education for employment in a global community.

**Germanna Community College**, Locust Grove, VA

As a public, comprehensive community college, Germanna provides accessible, quality educational and training opportunities that meet our communities’ changing learning needs.

**Grayson College**, Denison, TX

The mission of Grayson College is to cultivate student success and community building in North Texas by Recognizing our interdependence with various communities, Providing a broad and dynamic curriculum to support university transfer, career technical education, developmental, and community education, Developing innovative curricula and services facilitated by appropriate technology, Creating a supportive learning environment, Promoting diversity and cultural enrichment, Supporting economic development, Committing to an institutional effectiveness process for continuous improvement in the pursuit of excellence.
**Greenville Technical College**, Greenville, SC

Greenville Technical College drives personal and economic growth through learning.

**Guilford Technical Community College**, Jamestown, NC

Guilford Technical Community College provides access to lifelong learning opportunities for personal growth, workforce productivity, and community service. It serves all segments of Guilford County’s diverse population, delivering quality educational programs and services through partnerships with business, community groups, and other educational institutions.

**Gwinnett Technical College**, Lawrenceville, GA

Advance the knowledge of individuals to enrich lives and develop opportunities. Gwinnett Tech, a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia, is a public two-year college that serves the communities of Gwinnett and North Fulton by offering campus and distance learning for associate degrees, diplomas and certificates in credit programs as well as for adult and continuing education training.

**Halifax Community College**, Weldon, NC

HCC strives to meet the diverse needs of our community by providing high-quality, accessible and affordable education and services for a rapidly changing and globally competitive marketplace.

**Haywood Community College**, Clyde, NC

As an open-door community-based institution, Haywood Community College strives to meet the educational and job training needs of diverse populations with varying backgrounds, goals, interests, abilities, and resources. The College provides accessible educational, training, entrepreneurial, cultural, and social opportunities that focus on current trends and foster the development of the individuals and communities it serves. Learners engage in experiential activities that join the worlds of work and learning and develop problem solving, leadership, critical thinking, and enterprise abilities.

**Hazard Community and Technical College**, Hazard, KY

HCTC is a comprehensive, public community and technical college that empowers diverse learners, building self-confidence and leadership capacity for lifelong personal success and community enhancement. A member of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, HCTC primarily serves Eastern Kentucky as a collaborative catalyst for blending honored Appalachian traditions with diverse global innovations.
**Henderson Community College,** Henderson, KY

To partner with the community in assessing and providing educational, economic, workforce development, civic and cultural programs that provide high-quality general education curriculum for the first two years of a baccalaureate program (Associate in Arts and Associate in Science degrees), provide high-quality technical programs to prepare students for immediate employment (certificates, diplomas, or Associate in Applied Science degrees), Provide continuing education, adult education, and customized training to prepare a competitive workforce, Provide personal enrichment and cultural opportunities.

**Hill College,** Hillsboro, TX

Hill College will provide high quality comprehensive educational programs and services. The college enhances the educational, cultural, and economic development of its service area and assists both individuals and the community to prepare for a more productive life.

**Hillsborough Community College,** Tampa, FL

Hillsborough Community College delivers teaching and learning opportunities that empower students to achieve their educational goals and become contributing members of the local community and a global society.

**Hinds Community College,** Raymond, MS

The mission of Hinds Community College, a public, comprehensive community college, is to offer pertinent and diverse educational programs and services for persons with various interests and abilities by providing academic (college transfer) programs that parallel the first two years of four-year college studies; Providing occupational programs to prepare students for employment; Providing continuing education programs for unemployed, employed, or underemployed adults who need training or retraining, or who can otherwise profit from the programs; Providing continuing education programs that enhance the quality of life; Providing short courses, seminars, workshops, and industrial start-up training that will meet educational, business, industrial, and service needs; Providing high school general education and career services through a cooperative agreement with district high schools.

**Holmes Community College,** Goodman, MS

Holmes Community College, a comprehensive public institution located in Central Mississippi, provides innovative educational and cultural opportunities to its constituents through campus-based and distance education programs. The college seeks to prepare its students for university transfer, productive employment and lifelong learning by offering an Associate in Arts degree, Associate in Applied Science degree, technical certificates and career certificates as well as workforce training. Holmes, whose primary
commitment is to excellence in all areas, offers affordable, equal access to higher education in an attractive, secure, multi-campus environment.

**Hopkinsville Community College**, Hopkinsville, KY

Hopkinsville Community College is an inclusive, student-centered educational institution that provides accessible, innovative, and comprehensive learning opportunities within a supportive community that encourages academic excellence. The college sustains strong educational, community, military, agricultural, and economic partnerships to improve quality of life in the southern Pennyrile region and Fort Campbell.

**Horry-Georgetown Technical College**, Conway, SC

The mission of Horry Georgetown Technical College is to provide accessible, affordable, high-quality, comprehensive two-year collegiate education and workforce development; to provide a student centered environment and inspire lifelong learning; to promote learning through teaching excellence; to promote community service and embrace diversity; to promote economic growth; and to embrace technological innovation in instruction and workplace applications.

**Houston Community College**, Houston, TX

Houston Community College is an open-admission, public institution of higher education offering a high-quality, affordable education for academic advancement, workforce training, career and economic development, and lifelong learning to prepare individuals in our diverse communities for life and work in a global and technological society.

**Howard College**, Big Spring, TX

Working as one, Howard College builds communities through quality, innovative education for lifelong learning.

**Isothermal Community College**, Spindale, NC

Isothermal Community College exists to improve life through learning.

**Itawamba Community College**, Fulton, MS

Itawamba Community College is a two-year public-supported community college dedicated to serving the educational needs of the residents primarily of Chickasaw, Itawamba, Lee, Monroe and Pontotoc counties in Northeast Mississippi. Its main purpose is to provide comprehensive educational opportunities of the highest quality through academic, vocational-technical and personal enrichment programs in order to meet local needs at low cost to students.
**J.F. Drake State Technical College**, Huntsville, AL

J. F. Drake State Technical College is a student-centered, two-year public institution of higher education offering certificate and associate degree programs, as well as specialized training for business and industry. Additionally, the college seeks to satisfy the diverse needs and academic pursuits of the community by offering adult education and transitional studies, noncredit short-term courses, college/university transfer, and continuing education courses that provide the citizens of North Alabama with flexible and innovative, academic, career and technical education at a reasonable cost.

**J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College**, Richmond, VA

J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College provides access to education that develops individuals for employment and career advancement, prepares students for successful transfer to colleges and universities, promotes personal enrichment and lifelong learning, and builds a skilled workforce that contributes to regional economic development.

**Jackson State Community College**, Jackson, TN

Jackson State Community College provides accessible learning opportunities that enhance the lives of individuals, strengthen the workforce, and empower our diverse communities by offering traditional and contemporary associate degrees, certificates, continuing education and enrichment, and college-readiness programs.

**James Sprunt Community College**, Kenansville, NC

James Sprunt Community College is a service-oriented college that responds to the needs of Duplin and surrounding counties by enabling a diverse population to attain their personal, academic and career goals. The College will meet and enhance the educational needs of the community accomplished through effective teaching and learning.

**Jefferson Community and Technical College**, Louisville, KY

Jefferson Community and Technical College fulfills its Mission by promoting excellence in programs and services in support of educational opportunity, lifelong learning, and student achievement as expressed in the following goals: Support the attainment of regional and statewide educational goals through data informed and inquiry driven strategies to increase retention rates and completion of credentials (Associate Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates); Maximize student achievement through an institutional commitment to effective teaching and support services; Enhance workforce readiness and economic development of the community by providing seamless educational opportunities through agreements with adult education, secondary school systems, postsecondary institutions, community groups, and business and industry partners; Provide an inclusive, accessible, and safe learning and working environment; Exercise responsible stewardship of the College's human, fiscal, and physical resources.
Jefferson Davis Community College, Brewton, AL

Jefferson Davis Community College, one of the public two-year colleges of the Alabama College System, provides accessible quality educational opportunities through traditional classroom and distance learning formats, promotes economic growth, and enhances the quality of life for the college service area.

Jefferson State Community College, Birmingham, AL

Jefferson State Community College, as a comprehensive, public, two-year, community college, exists to provide an educational environment in which the needs of the individual student, the community, and other target audiences can be met. Within this educational environment, Jefferson State endeavors to make collegiate education accessible to all who seek it and in a manner consistent with the vision, mission, goals, and objectives of the Alabama Community College System.

John Tyler Community College, Chester, VA

John Tyler Community College provides quality educational opportunities that inspire student success and community vitality.

Johnston Community College, Smithfield, NC

Johnston Community College provides accessible, high-quality educational and community enrichment opportunities for the successful development of learners.

Jones County Junior College, Ellisville, MS

Jones County Junior College will inspire greatness by providing educational opportunities for its students, employees, and surrounding communities.

Kilgore College, Kilgore, TX

Kilgore College prepares students for success in life by providing educational opportunities that have high quality, great value, easy access, and community focus. Taking as its motto “Emphasis Excellence,” Kilgore College promotes high quality in all of its operations: teaching and learning which lead to certificates and associate degrees, administrative and educational support services, and public service. Kilgore College promotes great value primarily for its 20-member school district service area in Northeast Texas by providing educational opportunities at a competitive cost. Kilgore College promotes easy access through open-door admission, distance learning opportunities, dual credit courses, developmental education, and a comprehensive financial aid program. Kilgore College promotes community focus through workforce education programs and through public service endeavors including workforce and small business development, Adult Basic Education, continuing education, athletics, and the fine arts.
**L. E. Fletcher Technical Community College**, Schriever, LA

Fletcher Technical Community College is an open-admission, two-year public institution of higher education dedicated to offering quality technical and academic programs to the citizens of South Louisiana for the purpose of preparing individuals for employment, career advancement, and lifelong learning.

**Lamar Institute of Technology**, Beaumont, TX

Lamar Institute of Technology provides quality education and training that enable a diverse student population to achieve its career goals. Programs are enhanced by developing and maintaining partnerships with business, industry, and the community. Faculty are dedicated to teaching, advising, and scholarship. Both faculty and staff work to serve the Institute and the community.

**Lamar State College - Orange**, Orange, TX

Lamar State College-Orange is a two-year open admissions, lower-division component of the Texas State University System. Our mission is to provide, through traditional and innovative delivery systems, an academic curriculum that offers associate degrees and prepares students for transfer to senior colleges and universities, to provide, through traditional and innovative delivery systems, certificate and Associate of Applied Science Degree programs that prepare students for employment; to provide support services that facilitate and enhance student learning and success; to provide continuing education and customized training programs for upgrading employment skills and/or for those pursuing areas of personal interest; and to sponsor and/or participate in community activities that support economic development, promote cultural engagement, and/or encourage cooperation with area school districts.

**Lamar State College - Port Arthur**, Port Arthur, TX

Lamar State College - Port Arthur, a member of The Texas State University System, is an open-access, comprehensive public two-year college offering quality and affordable instruction leading to associate degrees and a variety of certificates. The College embraces the premise that education is an ongoing process that enhances career potential, broadens intellectual horizons, and enriches life.

**Lanier Technical College**, Oakwood, GA

Lanier Technical College, a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia, serves as the foremost workforce development resource for Banks, Barrow, Dawson, Forsyth, Hall, Jackson, and Lumpkin counties by providing career-technical education programs, offered through traditional and distance delivery methods, leading to associate degrees, diplomas, and technical certificates of credit; customized business and industry training and economic development services; continuing education for technical and professional development; and adult education services.
Laredo Community College, Laredo, TX

Laredo Community College is an institution committed to student success by providing comprehensive educational services that focus on the dynamic requirements and needs of its local, regional, and international community.

Lee College, Baytown, TX

Lee College serves as a focal point for the development of educated, gainfully employed, and socially aware residents of our local community.

Lenoir Community College, Kinston, NC

Lenoir Community College, a member of the North Carolina Community College System, is a comprehensive two-year public institution. The College offers associate degrees, diplomas, or certificates through educational programs in college transfer, business, industry, public services, health sciences, and continuing education for the intellectual, economic, social, and cultural development of students and the community. Programs and support services are accessible through traditional and distance learning options.

Lone Star College System, The Woodlands, TX

Lone Star College System provides comprehensive educational opportunities and programs to enrich lives.

Lord Fairfax Community College, Middletown, VA

LFCC provides a positive, caring and dynamic learning environment that inspires student success, values diversity and promotes community vitality.

Louisiana Delta Community College, Monroe, LA

Louisiana Delta Community College, an open-admissions, comprehensive community college, provides the citizens of northeast Louisiana with affordable and accessible high quality educational programs, services, and modern workforce training. Supported by the Louisiana Community and Technical College System, a dedicated faculty and staff fulfill this mission through their commitment to student achievement, academic excellence, lifelong learning, and the use of current technology.

Louisiana State University at Eunice, Eunice, LA

Louisiana State University at Eunice, a member of the Louisiana State University System, is a comprehensive, open admissions institution of higher education. The University is dedicated to high quality, low-cost education and is committed to academic excellence and the dignity and worth of the individual. To this end, Louisiana State
University at Eunice offers associate degrees, certificates and continuing education programs as well as transfer curricula. Its curricula span the liberal arts, sciences, business and technology, pre-professional and professional areas for the benefit of a diverse population. All who can benefit from its resources deserve the opportunity to pursue the goal of lifelong learning and to expand their knowledge and skills at LSUE.

**Lurleen B. Wallace Community College**, Andalusia, AL

Lurleen B. Wallace Community College is a public, two-year institution in the Alabama Community College System under the governance of the Alabama State Board of Education. The College offers career-oriented certificates and associate degrees, as well as university transfer courses and associate degrees. In addition, the College provides specialized training for existing business and industry, workforce development, non-credit and continuing education, adult education and community services to the residents of its service area. With fundamental principles affirming the value of education, the freedom of teaching and learning, and the worth, dignity and personal development of each individual, the College provides an environment that emphasizes student success and achievement.

**Madisonville Community College**, Madisonville, KY

Madisonville Community College is a public comprehensive community college in the Kentucky Community and Technical College System. It is committed to establishing and nurturing a learning-centered, outcomes-based, culturally diverse organization.

**Marion Military Institute**, Marion, AL

Marion Military Institute, a two-year public institution, educates and trains the Corps of Cadets in order that each graduate is prepared for success at four-year institutions, including the service academies, with emphasis on providing intellectual, moral-ethical, physical-athletic, and leadership development experiences in a military environment.

**Martin Community College**, Williamston, NC

Martin Community College’s mission is to provide quality, affordable, and accessible learner-centered educational programs, and services that are responsive to the needs of the communities we serve.

**Mayland Community College**, Spruce Pine, NC

Mayland Community College is the educational gateway to opportunity in Mitchell, Avery, and Yancey counties.
Maysville Community and Technical College, Maysville, KY

Maysville Community and Technical College (MCTC) challenges learners to accomplish their educational, career, and personal development goals.

Goals of the College

1. Provide arts and science courses and associate degrees for transfer to baccalaureate institutions.
2. Offer technical degrees, diplomas, certificates, and courses for employment and career advancement.
3. Provide transitional and adult education offerings.
4. Deliver workforce training and services to support individual, community, and economic development.
5. Provide academic and student support to enhance student learning.

Maysville Community and Technical College, a member of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, is a public two-year degree granting institution responding to and serving the needs of communities in the northeastern Kentucky region.

McDowell Technical Community College, Marion, NC

McDowell Technical Community College is a member of the North Carolina Community College System, dedicated to providing student-centered accessible, high-quality educational opportunities and services which fulfill the personal development, training and employment needs of the residents, businesses, and industries of McDowell County and the surrounding areas through an open-door admissions policy. The college recognizes each person’s right to an education and seeks to contribute to the maximum development of a globally and culturally diverse workforce and improve the quality of life of the individuals in our community.

McLennan Community College, Waco, TX

McLennan Community College provides access to excellent workforce and transfer programs, student services, and continuing education that promotes student success including proficiency in identified student learning outcomes, successful course completion, graduation, employment, and transfer to a senior institution. The college engages and strengthens its community through successful educational attainment, strong leadership, sustainability efforts, best practices, community service, and integrity.

Meridian Community College, Meridian, MS

Meridian Community College is a public institution of higher learning dedicated to improving the quality of life in Lauderdale County, Mississippi, and surrounding areas. Through campus-based and distance education programming, MCC serves a diverse student population and accomplishes its mission by providing equal access to
Courses leading to the Associate in Arts Degree and/or transfer to senior colleges and universities; Associate of Applied Science Degree and occupational certificate programs, and customized workforce training, leading to entry-level and/or enhanced employment opportunities; Continuing education courses designed for personal and/or professional enrichment, student support services, cultural enrichment events, and adult basic and developmental education programs designed to equip students for expanded opportunities.

**Midlands Technical College**, Columbia, SC

Midlands Technical College is a comprehensive, multi-campus, two-year public college serving the primary region of Richland, Lexington and Fairfield counties of South Carolina. College programs and services provide accessible, affordable, quality education that prepares a diverse student population to enter the job market, transfer to senior colleges and universities, and achieve their professional and personal goals. Through its programs and services, the college equitably provides higher education opportunities and strengthens the economic and social vitality of the community.

**Mississippi Delta Community College**, Moorhead, MS

It is the philosophy of Mississippi Delta Community College to provide quality educational experiences that include intellectual, academic, career, technical, social, cultural, and recreational learning opportunities, at a nominal cost, to those who qualify for the courses of study and programs offered.

**Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College**, Perkinston, MS

The mission of Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College is to meet the educational and community needs in George, Harrison, Jackson and Stone counties by providing superior instruction through traditional and technological formats. The college embraces lifelong learning, productive citizenship, service learning, and leadership development in a dynamic and innovative learning environment.

**Mitchell Community College**, Statesville, NC

Mitchell Community College, a learning-centered institution, provides affordable, high-quality educational and training programs and services to meet the changing and diverse lifelong learning needs of a multi-culturally diverse citizenry who live and work in a global society.

**Montgomery Community College**, Troy, NC

Montgomery Community College will provide quality traditional and distance learning educational opportunities including basic skills, occupational, associate, and pre-baccalaureate programs; support economic development by offering workforce training
and retraining; improve the quality of life for individuals and the community; and address changing local, state, national and global needs.

**Motlow State Community College**, Lynchburg, TN

Motlow State Community College is a public, multi-campus college offering certificates, associate degrees, and flexible learning pathways for early transfer, college preparation, and workforce training. Students are prepared for employment, career advancement, and four-year college or university transfer. The College serves an eleven-county area comprised of full-time, part-time, traditional, and non-traditional age students from diverse socio-economic populations with disparate educational and cultural backgrounds. The College offers high quality accredited educational programs and a variety of support services emphasizing and promoting student success.

**Mountain Empire Community College**, Big Stone Gap, VA

Mountain Empire Community College’s mission is to provide quality higher education and workforce training programs and services that are financially and geographically accessible and meet individual, business, and community needs.

**Mountain View College**, Dallas, TX

Mountain View College empowers people and transforms communities

**Nash Community College**, Rocky Mount, NC

Nash Community College’s mission is to provide an affordable educational environment which prepares students for college transfer and rewarding careers. Through quality instruction and services, technology, work force development, and community partnerships, Nash Community College provides lifelong learning opportunities to individuals, communities, and organizations.

**Nashville State Community College**, Nashville, TN

The mission of Nashville State Community College is to provide comprehensive educational programs and partnerships, exemplary services, an accessible, progressive learning environment, and responsible leadership to improve the quality of life for the community it serves. The college serves a broad geographic area comprised of Davidson, Cheatham, Dickson, Houston, Humphreys, Montgomery, and Stewart Counties, and the Upper Cumberland region. Nashville State offers associate degrees and certificates that prepare students to think and perform well whether entering the workforce or transferring to a university upon graduation.
Navarro College, Corsicana, TX

Through visionary leadership, outstanding teaching and high-quality service, Navarro College will achieve distinction as an exemplary two-year institution where quality teaching and learning prevail and students are well prepared to engage in higher levels of education, leadership and employment.

New River Community College, Dublin, VA

New River Community College, a member of the Virginia Community College System (VCCS), subscribes to the tenets set forth in the VCCS mission statement. This statement is as follows: The mission of the Virginia Community College System is to provide comprehensive higher-education and workforce-training programs and services of superior quality that are financially and geographically accessible and that meet individual, business, and community needs of the Commonwealth.

North Central Texas College, Gainesville, TX

North Central Texas College is dedicated to student success and institutional excellence. The College District encourages student achievement by providing affordable, quality learning environments, comprehensive student support, and public services.

North Florida Community College, Madison, FL.

An exceptional college dedicated to an individualized and supportive academic atmosphere, accessible education, lifelong learning opportunities, and professional growth for our students and communities.

North Georgia Technical College, Clarkesville, GA

North Georgia Technical College, a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia, is a residential, public, multi-campus institution of higher education serving the workforce development needs of Northeast Georgia. The college provides access to student-focused occupational programs at the associate degree, diploma, and certificate levels; Adult Education; and customized business and industry training through traditional and distance education methodologies and college-wide services.

North Lake College, Irving, TX

North Lake College, created as a part of the Dallas County Community College District (DCCCD) in 1977, is a two-year public community college located in Irving, Texas. In addition to the Central Campus, three community campuses provide access to diverse communities in the service delivery area. The college utilizes an open-door admission policy which anticipates and responds to the educational, training, and employment needs of the community. The college prepares people for successful living and responsible
citizenship through quality educational programs. We invite dynamic partnerships with all our constituencies: students, community, business and industry, public schools, and government; we celebrate a supportive environment in all aspects of the college experience. We are committed to providing equal access and quality learning experiences to a diverse student population in an environment characterized by excellence in service and responsible use of resources.

**Northeast Alabama Community College**, Rainsville, AL

The mission of Northeast Alabama Community College is to provide accessible quality educational opportunities, promote economic growth, and enhance the quality of life for the people of Alabama.

**Northeast Mississippi Community College**, Booneville, MS

Northeast Mississippi Community College is a public, comprehensive community college that exists to meet the educational and career needs of individual students and the community within the district it serves – Alcorn, Prentiss, Tippah, Tishomingo and Union Counties - by awarding the Associate of Arts Degree, Associate of Applied Science Degree and Certificates. Beyond this original scope, Northeast responds to the needs of all who seek a college education.

**Northeast State Community College**, Blountville, TN

Northeast State is an open-access, public, comprehensive community college that advances the lifelong educational development of the residents of the region and strengthens the economic and social/cultural aspects of the community. To facilitate teaching, learning, service, and student success, the College provides innovative, high-quality, and relevant associate, certificate, and career-focused educational programs and services. Programming and comprehensive support services are offered through varied delivery systems and at multiple sites throughout its primary service area of Carter, Johnson, Sullivan, Unicoi, and Washington Counties. Within all aspects of its operations, Northeast State serves the public’s interest through the wise use of fiscal, human, and physical resources.

**Northeast Texas Community College**, Mt. Pleasant, TX

Northeast Texas Community College exists to provide responsible, exemplary learning opportunities.

**Northeastern Technical College**, Cheraw, SC

Northeastern Technical College (NETC) provides occupational, technical, college transfer, basic academic skills, and continuing education programs with appropriate support services to meet the needs of individuals, businesses, and industries in a rural service area composed of Chesterfield, Marlboro, and Dillon Counties. Within this focus,
the College contributes to economic growth by enhancing the employability of service area residents in technology, business, health, arts, and sciences. The College is dedicated to providing quality instructional programs which remain accessible to both traditional and nontraditional students through open admissions, reasonable costs, counseling, advisement, educational technology, financial assistance, and career development services. NETC also provides personal growth and enrichment opportunities through community services, continuing education, and social and cultural activities.

Northern Virginia Community College, Annandale, VA

With commitment to the values of access, opportunity, student success, and excellence, the mission of Northern Virginia Community College is to deliver world-class in-person and online post-secondary teaching, learning, and workforce development to ensure our region and the Commonwealth of Virginia have an educated population and globally competitive workforce.

Northwest Mississippi Community College, Senatobia, MS.

The mission of Northwest Mississippi Community College is to provide the students of its eleven-county district and beyond with opportunities for obtaining affordable quality education to meet their diverse needs. The comprehensive community and technical college offers students educational experiences through traditional campus-based and distance learning opportunities. Northwest is committed to achieving the following goals: to promote excellence in educational programs; to maintain quality educational support services; to continue responsive administrative processes; to ensure efficient use of financial and physical resources; and to assure institutional effectiveness.

Northwest Vista College, San Antonio, TX

Empowering Our Diverse Communities for Success.

Northwest-Shoals Community College, Muscle Shoals, AL

Northwest-Shoals Community College provides vocational, technical, academic, and lifelong educational opportunities; promotes economic growth; and enhances the quality of life for the people of Northwest Alabama.

Elaine P. Nunez Community College, Chalmette, LA

Nunez Community College is a comprehensive community college offering general education and occupational technologies curricula that blend the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences and lead to associate degrees, certificates, and workforce development opportunities.
**Odessa College, Odessa, TX**

Odessa College will lead the way in preparing its students and community for the future. The College offers exemplary courses, programs, and services to assist students in achieving their educational goals and becoming lifelong learners, community builders, and global citizens. Odessa College empowers its employees to model excellence in the service to students, colleagues, and community.

**Okefenokee Technical College, Waycross, GA**

Okefenokee Technical College, a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia, educates students through rigorous, learner-centered occupational programs designed to meet the workforce development, literacy, and lifelong learning needs of Southeast Georgia. The College provides college-wide services; associate degree, diploma, and certificate programs; adult education programs; continuing education; and customized business and industry training through traditional and distance delivery formats at on-and off-campus locations.

**Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College, Orangeburg, SC**

OCTech provides relevant training and education in an environment that inspires success and promotes self-reliance for students, and fosters economic development for the region.

**Owensboro Community and Technical College, Owensboro, KY**

To cultivate lifelong learning opportunities through career degree programs, workforce and community development, and transfer-to-baccalaureate degree programs.

**Palo Alto College, San Antonio, TX**

As a public comprehensive community college, Palo Alto College provides exemplary, accessible education and training to a diverse and aspiring community. The College educates, nurtures, and inspires students through a dynamic and supportive learning environment, which promotes the intellectual, cultural, economic and social life of the community.

**Pamlico Community College, Grantsboro, NC**

The mission of Pamlico Community College is to provide accessible and affordable quality education, workforce training, and lifelong learning opportunities through quality teaching and supporting and working in partnership with the communities served by the college.
**Panola College**, Carthage, TX

Panola College shapes its mission around the needs of the people within its service area. As a two-year public community institution, Panola College is dedicated to providing excellence in education for its constituents. The range of educational offerings both face-to-face and electronic includes university transfer programs, technical and workforce programs, developmental courses designed to increase academic proficiency, and continuing education to enrich lives and improve skills. Our aim is to help each student achieve his or her full potential and to contribute to the further development of society.

**Paris Junior College**, Paris, TX

Paris Junior College is a dynamic, comprehensive community college advancing the education of students while strengthening the economic, social and cultural life of our diverse community.

**Pasco-Hernando Community College**, New Port Richey, FL

Pasco-Hernando Community College (PHCC) serves the educational needs and interests of our community. As a comprehensive, multi-campus educational institution, PHCC provides an accessible, diverse teaching and learning environment rich with opportunities for students to attain academic success and cultural growth in a global society.

**Patrick Henry Community College**, Martinsville, VA

Patrick Henry Community College is a comprehensive two-year institution committed to student success, lifelong learning, and enrichment of the quality of life in the region it serves.

**Paul D. Camp Community College**, Franklin, VA

Paul D. Camp Community College provides diverse learning opportunities to enhance the quality of life for students and the community.

**Pearl River Community College**, Poplarville, MS

Pearl River Community College is a public institution committed to providing quality educational and service opportunities for all who seek them.

**Pellissippi State Community College**, Knoxville, TN

The mission of Pellissippi State Community College is to serve its community by providing college-level and non-credit courses and learning support instruction using a variety of delivery methods, including distance learning. The College provides support for teaching and learning, training and workforce development, and opportunities for life, civic and cultural enrichment.
**Piedmont Community College**, Roxboro, NC

Piedmont Community College enriches lives by providing lifelong learning, educational and training programs for today’s global workforce, and cultural opportunities for Person and Caswell Counties.

**Piedmont Technical College**, Greenwood, SC

Piedmont Technical College transforms lives and strengthens communities by providing opportunities for intellectual and economic growth. The College, a member of the South Carolina Technical College and Comprehensive Education System, is a public comprehensive two-year post-secondary institution. Piedmont Technical College contributes to the economic growth and development of the largest and most diverse region of the technical college system, Abbeville, Edgefield, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Newberry and Saluda counties and to the state. The College responds to the academic, training and public service needs of the community through excellence in teaching and educational services. Piedmont Technical College’s open admissions policy provides accessibility for individuals with diverse backgrounds the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills for employment in engineering technology, industrial technology, agriculture, business, health, and public service. Piedmont Technical College graduates develop competencies in communication, mathematics, problem solving and technology.

**Piedmont Virginia Community College**, Charlottesville, VA

Piedmont Virginia Community College offers accessible, affordable, high-quality educational programs that promote student success and community vitality. Our mission is achieved through Transfer programs that prepare students for admission to four-year colleges and universities and successful pursuit of a baccalaureate degree; Workforce programs that prepare students for employment or promotion in a career and promote a skilled regional workforce by meeting the training and educational needs of employers; Rigorous coursework and a full range of academic and student support services that assist students in achieving their educational and career goals; Developmental studies courses that prepare students for college transfer and career and technical programs; Community service that promotes community involvement, educational access, and opportunities for residents of the region.

**Pitt Community College**, Winterville, NC

The Mission of Pitt Community College is to educate and empower people for success.

**Randolph Community College**, Asheboro, NC

To provide educational and training opportunities that make a positive change in the lives of students and the community.
**Ranger College**, Ranger, TX

To provide teaching and learning opportunities through academics, developmental education, workforce programs, and continuing education, empowering individuals to become responsible members of the local and global community.

**Rappahannock Community College**, Glenns, VA

Rappahannock Community College provides access to high quality educational experiences for members of its community, preparing them for success as learners, employees, and citizens of the 21st century.

**Richard Bland College**, Petersburg, VA

To prepare students for university transfer through academically rigorous programs grounded in the liberal arts tradition of William & Mary and to expand access to college credentials through strategic partnerships, specialized programming, and scalable innovation.

**Richland College**, Dallas, TX

The mission of Richland College is teaching, learning, community building.

**Richmond Community College**, Hamlet, NC

The mission of Richmond Community College is to provide life-long educational opportunities, workforce training and retraining, cultural enrichment, and community services by employing traditional and distance learning methods to support economic development and enhance the quality of people’s lives.

**River Parishes Community College**, Sorrento, LA

River Parishes Community College is an open-admission, two-year, post-secondary public institution serving the river parishes. The College provides transferable courses and curricula up to and including Certificates and Associates degrees. River Parishes Community College also partners with the communities it serves by providing programs for personal, professional, and academic growth.

**Roane State Community College**, Harriman, TN

Roane State Community College’s vision is to be a premier learning institution that transforms lives, strengthens community, and inspires individuals to excellence.
Roanoke-Chowan Community College, Ahoskie, NC

To provide world-class life-long educational and workforce training in order to meet the emerging needs of the community and to improve the quality of life for the students we serve.

Robeson Community College, Lumberton, NC

Robeson Community College is an open door, comprehensive, public community college committed to promoting lifelong learning opportunities to the diverse population of Robeson County and the surrounding region by offering associate degrees, diplomas, and certificates. As a member of the North Carolina Community College System, Robeson Community College values excellence in teaching and learning. Offering affordable, accessible, and quality academic and student support programs, Robeson Community College accomplishes its mission through...

Rockingham Community College, Wentworth, NC

The mission of Rockingham Community College is to enhance individual and community success in Rockingham County through education as well as full development of human potential, employment assistance, service to business and industry, and contributions to cultural and social development.

Rowan-Cabarrus Community College, Salisbury, NC

RCCC improves lives and builds community through public higher education and workforce development.

Saint Philip's College, San Antonio, TX

St. Philip’s College provides an educational experience that stimulates leadership, personal growth, and a lifelong appreciation for learning.

Sampson Community College, Clinton, NC

The mission of Sampson Community College is to provide accessible and affordable education, workforce training, and lifelong enrichment. This mission is accomplished through effective teaching, student support, public outreach, and partnering with others to improve the quality of life for the people of Sampson County.

San Antonio College, San Antonio, TX

San Antonio College is a public community college which provides for and supports the educational and lifelong learning needs of a multicultural community. As a leader in education, San Antonio College is committed to excellence in helping students reach
their full potential by developing their academic competencies, critical thinking skills, communication proficiency, civic responsibility, and global awareness.

**The San Jacinto College District**, Pasadena, TX

Our mission is to ensure student success, create seamless transitions, and enrich the quality of life in the communities we serve.

**Sandhills Community College**, Pinehurst, NC

The Mission of Sandhills Community College is to provide educational opportunities of the highest quality to all the people of the Sandhills.

**Savannah Technical College**, Savannah, GA

Savannah Technical College is committed to meeting the dynamic education, academic, and workforce development needs of individuals, employers and communities by creating opportunities through market-driven, environmentally conscious education offered in the classroom, laboratory, community, and online.

**Shelton State Community College**, Tuscaloosa, AL

Shelton State Community College is a public open-admission comprehensive community college whose primary mission is to provide accessible postsecondary education, training, and community educational opportunities.

**Snead State Community College**, Boaz, AL

Snead State Community College, a member of the Alabama Community College System is dedicated to excellence in meeting the educational needs of those we serve through the completion of degree and certificate programs, workforce development, and community engagement.

**Somerset Community College**, Somerset, KY

The mission of Somerset Community College is to improve the employability and quality of life of area citizens as the primary provider of: College and Workforce Readiness; Transfer Education; Workforce Education and Training; Associated Student Support Services. Somerset Community College, a member of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, is a public associate degree granting institution serving the south central region of Kentucky.

**South Georgia Technical College**, Americus, GA

As a member of the Technical College System of Georgia and a residential institution of higher education, it is the mission of South Georgia Technical College to prepare individuals for success in the workforce by providing accessible, high-quality associate of
applied science degrees, diplomas, technical certificates of credit, and non-credit programs and services that support the needs of citizens, businesses, and industries within our service delivery area in Southwest Georgia.

South Louisiana Community College, Lafayette, LA

South Louisiana Community College is a proactive provider of excellent education and training, serving and diverse local and global economy. We provide education and workforce training through service and career skills development for a global economy.

South Piedmont Community College, Polkton, NC

At South Piedmont Community College our mission is learning, student success, and workforce and community development.

South Plains College, Levelland, TX

South Plains College provides a quality learning environment. We are a comprehensive, public, open admissions community college that serves a 15-county region comprising the southern portion of the Texas High Plains. We are committed to providing learning opportunities that are high quality, accessible, flexible, and affordable through academic transfer, technical-vocational, continuing education, workforce development and community service programs. We offer these programs in a learning environment that is innovative, stimulating, compassionate, safe, diverse and supportive of the community. We do so by employing dedicated and qualified teachers, staff members and administrators who deliver a broad and dynamic curriculum and quality student support services. Understanding the diverse needs of students and the community, South Plains College seeks to improve the lives of our students and prepare them for lifelong learning.

Southcentral Kentucky Community and Technical College, Bowling Green, KY---formerly Bowling Green Technical College

The mission of Southcentral Kentucky Community and Technical College is to improve the employability and quality of life of south central Kentucky citizens as the primary provider of: Certificate, diploma, associate degree, and collegiate transfer programs; College and workforce readiness; Workforce education and training; Adult education and family literacy. Southcentral Kentucky Community and Technical College, a member of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, is a public, two-year degree granting institution serving the south central region of Kentucky.

Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College, Cumberland, KY

Founded in 1960, Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College is a public, comprehensive community and technical college under the governance of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS). The college serves the southeastern Kentucky region and provides: Associate in Arts and Associate in Science
degree programs and courses designed to prepare individuals to succeed in baccalaureate programs at senior colleges and universities; Associate in Applied Science degree programs, certificates programs, diploma programs and courses designed to prepare individuals to succeed in today’s technological workforce; Continuing education, training activities and services designed to expand life skills and knowledge of our citizens, strengthen the existing workforce, and enhance community and business development; Academic support and developmental education courses and experiences designed to prepare individuals for success in transfer, technical, and continuing education programs and courses; Resources to promote the preservation of Appalachian culture by stimulating artistic expressions...

Southeastern Community College, Whiteville, NC

Founded in 1964 as part of the North Carolina Community College System, Southeastern Community College is a public, comprehensive community college providing individuals in Columbus County with accessible educational, cultural, and social opportunities designed to improve the quality of their lives. Utilizing multiple and alternate methods of instructional delivery, the college provides learning experiences for those preparing for an occupation upon completion, for those in the work force seeking to enhance their knowledge and skills, and for those transferring to a baccalaureate institution. The college offers programs leading to the awarding of continuing education units, certificates, diplomas, and associate degrees. The college seeks to further serve the community at large by offering basic skills and literacy education for adults, by supporting economic development through services to business and industry, and by providing programs and services that improve the quality of life.

Southeastern Technical College, Vidalia, GA

Southeastern Technical College, a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia, provides an innovative, educational environment for student learning through traditional and distance education delivery methods focused on building a well-educated, globally competitive workforce for southeastern Georgia.

Southern Crescent Technical College, Griffin, GA

Southern Crescent Technical College, a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia, is an institution of higher education that delivers relevant technical education at the associate degree, diploma, and certificate levels and workforce training programs via traditional and distance learning formats that promote lifelong learning and impact economic development in the west central Georgia region that spans south of Atlanta and north of Macon.

Southern Union State Community College, Wadley, AL

Southern Union State Community College, an open admission, public two-year college and member of the Alabama Community College System, provides quality and relevant
teaching and learning in academic, technical, and health science programs that are affordable, accessible, equitable, and responsive to the diverse needs of our students, community, business, industry, and government.

**Southern University at Shreveport**, Shreveport, LA

Southern University at Shreveport, an institution within the Southern University and A & M System, seeks to provide quality education for its students, while being committed to the total community. This institution prepares students for careers in technical and occupational fields; awards certificates, diplomas and associate degrees; and offers courses and programs that are transferable to other colleges and universities. Dedicated to excellence in instruction and community service, this open enrollment institution promotes cultural diversity, provides developmental and continuing education, and seeks partnerships with business and industry.

**Southside Virginia Community College**, Alberta, VA

Southside Virginia Community College is dedicated to the belief that all citizens should be given an opportunity to acquire an educational foundation that develops and extends their skills and knowledge. The college's goal is to provide diverse instructional programs ranging from developmental studies to associate degree curricula in academic, technical / vocational, lifelong education, and workforce development. Through various activities, to include distance learning, students will also have the opportunity to develop their roles and responsibilities as participants in a changing society.

**Southwest Georgia Technical College**, Thomasville, GA

Southwest Georgia Technical College, a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia, is a public two-year college that provides access to learner-centered high-quality services; credit and non-credit courses; associate degree, diploma, and technical certificate of credit programs; adult education; and business and industry training through traditional and distance delivery methods at both on-campus and off-campus locations, serving primarily the citizens of Thomas, Grady, and Mitchell Counties.

**Southwest Mississippi Community College**, Summit, MS

Southwest Mississippi Community College provides academic, career, and continuing education, meeting the diverse needs of the population at a reasonable cost. SMCC provides community services and promotes economic development through consultative and workforce training.

**Southwest Tennessee Community College**, Memphis, TN

The mission of Southwest Tennessee Community College is to provide the citizens of Shelby and Fayette counties and the surrounding Mid-South region with a high quality.
and affordable post-secondary education that prepares them for associate degrees, future educational opportunities, and successful employment.

**Southwest Texas Junior College,** Uvalde, TX

Southwest Texas Junior College is a comprehensive, public, two-year college serving eleven counties in southwest Texas. College programs and services provide accessible, affordable, high-quality post-secondary education that prepares students to: 1) enter the job market, 2) transfer to senior colleges and universities, 3) pursue their professional and personal goals. Through its programs and services, the college equitably provides higher education opportunities and supports the economic growth of the community.

**Southwest Virginia Community College,** Cedar Bluff, VA

Southwest Virginia Community College, as a comprehensive institution of higher education, dedicates its services to area citizens. Believing that each person should be given an opportunity for continuing personal and intellectual development, the College assumes responsibility as a catalyst in the life of the individual and the community. SWCC provides citizens the means for improving skills; expanding knowledge as well as cultural, aesthetic and global awareness; and encouraging economic development and responsible citizenship. Southwest Virginia Community College offers programs of traditional classroom instruction and technologically enhanced courses generally extending not more than two years beyond high school. Educational opportunities for adults and college-age youth include instruction in associate degree, diploma, and certificate programs, as well as in continuing education. Counseling services and other student development programs assist students with decisions on occupational, educational, and personal goals.

**Southwestern Community College,** Sylva, NC

Southwestern Community College is a learning and teaching institution offering high quality innovative instruction and support which promotes student achievement, academic excellence and economic development.

**Spartanburg Community College,** Spartanburg, SC

Spartanburg Community College (SCC) provides affordable access to high-quality technical, transfer and lifelong professional and personal development programs in a teaching and learning environment that prepares students for success. The College is a key community partner in advancing the Upstate’s economy.

**Stanly Community College,** Albemarle, NC

Stanly Community College offers a learning-centered environment that encourages student access and completion, fosters partnerships, enables life-long learning, and enhances the economic, social and cultural life of the community.
**Surry Community College**, Dobson, NC

The mission of Surry Community College is to promote personal growth and community development to a diverse population through excellence in teaching, learning, and service.

**Tallahassee Community College**, Tallahassee, FL

The mission of the college is to provide a learning environment that prepares students for success in a global economy by offering higher education pathways, workforce opportunities and civic engagement experiences.

**Tarrant County College District**, Fort Worth, TX

Tarrant County College provides affordable and open access to quality teaching and learning.

**Technical College of the Lowcountry**, Beaufort, SC

TCL is one of 16 comprehensive, public two-year technical colleges in South Carolina. Our main campus is in Beaufort and we are a locally governed, publicly supported college that also serves the diverse educational needs of Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton, and Jasper counties.

**Temple College**, Temple, TX

The mission of Temple College is to foster student success for our diverse community by providing quality lifelong learning and enrichment experiences.

**Texarkana College**, Texarkana, TX

Texarkana College is a publicly-supported, two-year community college Dedicated to serving the educational needs of diverse individuals, businesses and the community through Relevant programs and services that are high quality, affordable and accessible. These programs are offered in an Environment of Excellence supported by a highly qualified, engaged and informed faculty and staff committed to promoting and increasing student Achievement and success in the development of knowledge and skills necessary for a rapidly changing world. Measurable student learning and institutional outcomes provide a culture of continuous improvement and data-driven decision making. In fulfillment of this mission, Texarkana College prepares individuals for Success in life and HOPE for a better tomorrow.

**Texas State Technical College - Harlingen**, Harlingen, TX

Texas State Technical College System is a special purpose system of colleges legislatively mandated to assume statewide responsibility for the offering of emerging
and advanced technical education and training at the collegiate level as well as other technical and vocational programs not commonly offered by community/junior colleges. TSTC will be a leader in building the economic vibrancy of Texas by striving to develop the technical competence of all Texans through the uniform delivery of high value learning experiences on location and at a distance. TSTC will facilitate the transfer of technology to Texas business and industry directly through the graduation of technicians in advance and emerging disciplines and through technical assistance provided to business and industry.

**Texas State Technical College Marshall,** Marshall, TX

Texas State Technical College System is a special purpose system of colleges legislatively mandated to assume statewide responsibility for the offering of emerging and advanced technical education and training at the collegiate level as well as other technical and vocational programs not commonly offered by community/junior colleges. TSTC will be a leader in building the economic vibrancy of Texas by striving to develop the technical competence of all Texans through the uniform delivery of high value learning experiences on location and at a distance. TSTC will facilitate the transfer of technology to Texas business and industry directly through the graduation of technicians in advance and emerging disciplines and through technical assistance provided to business and industry.

**Texas State Technical College Waco,** Waco, TX

Texas State Technical College System is a special purpose system of colleges legislatively mandated to assume statewide responsibility for the offering of emerging and advanced technical education and training at the collegiate level as well as other technical and vocational programs not commonly offered by community/junior colleges. TSTC will be a leader in building the economic vibrancy of Texas by striving to develop the technical competence of all Texans through the uniform delivery of high value learning experiences on location and at a distance. TSTC will facilitate the transfer of technology to Texas business and industry directly through the graduation of technicians in advance and emerging disciplines and through technical assistance provided to business and industry.

**Texas State Technical College - West Texas,** Sweetwater, TX

Texas State Technical College System is a special purpose system of colleges legislatively mandated to assume statewide responsibility for the offering of emerging and advanced technical education and training at the collegiate level as well as other technical and vocational programs not commonly offered by community/junior colleges. TSTC will be a leader in building the economic vibrancy of Texas by striving to develop the technical competence of all Texans through the uniform delivery of high value learning experiences on location and at a distance. TSTC will facilitate the transfer of technology to Texas business and industry directly through the graduation of technicians.
in advance and emerging disciplines and through technical assistance provided to business and industry.

**Thomas Nelson Community College**, Hampton, VA

Thomas Nelson Community College changes lives, empowers students to succeed and enhances the social and economic vitality of the region through high quality education and workforce training, excellent service and innovative partnerships.

**Tidewater Community College**, Norfolk, VA

Tidewater Community College provides collegiate education and training to adults of all ages and backgrounds, helping them achieve their individual goals and contribute as citizens and workers to the vitality of an increasingly global community.

**Tri-County Community College**, Murphy, NC

The mission of Tri-County Community College is to engage students in learning, help students succeed, and enrich the communities we serve.

**Tri-County Technical College**, Pendleton, SC

Tri-County Technical College is a public, two-year community college dedicated to serving as a catalyst for the economic and lifelong development of the citizens of Anderson, Oconee, and Pickens counties through outstanding programs and unparalleled service. An open admissions institution with primary focus on teaching and learning, the College serves approximately 6,000 to 7,000 students through both on-campus and distance learning courses. The College grants certificates, diplomas, and associate degrees in technical, career, and transfer programs. The College also offers certificates in continuing education programs.

**Trident Technical College**, North Charleston, SC

Trident Technical College serves as a catalyst for personal, community, and economic development by empowering individuals through education and training.

**Trinity Valley Community College**, Athens, TX

Trinity Valley Community College is a learning-centered college that provides quality academic, workforce, and community service programs to meet the educational needs of our students and the citizens of our service area.

**Tyler Junior College**, Tyler, TX

To provide a comprehensive collegiate experience that is anchored in the rich traditions of a quality education, vibrant student life and community service.
**Vance Granville Community College**, Henderson, NC

Vance-Granville Community College educates, inspires, and supports a diverse community of learners to achieve professional and personal success.

**Vernon College**, Vernon, TX

The mission of Vernon College is teaching, learning, and leading. Vernon College is a comprehensive community college that integrates education with opportunity through our instructional programs and student services.

**Victoria College**, Victoria, TX

Victoria College is a public, open-admission college. Our mission is to provide educational opportunities and services for our students and the communities we serve.

**Virginia Highlands Community College**, Abingdon, VA

Virginia Highlands Community College serves our community by providing quality and affordable education, training, and cultural activities through an array of flexible, diverse programs that enable community members to succeed today and in the future.

**Virginia Western Community College**, Roanoke, VA

Virginia Western Community College provides affordable, accessible, and quality educational opportunities and workforce training to meet individual, community and global needs.

**Volunteer State Community College**, Gallatin, TN

Volunteer State Community College was established in 1970 to satisfy the educational and training needs of the urban, suburban, and rural residents of northern Middle Tennessee. The College is a public, two-year, open-access, comprehensive community college governed by the Tennessee Board of Regents. The institution's primary focus is on effectively providing quality education relevant to all. The College grants associate degrees and technical certificates of credit and is committed to excellence in Disseminating knowledge and skills necessary in achieving lifelong goals; Providing undergraduate, technical, and continuing education; Providing community services and promoting cultural and economic development; and Preparing a diverse student population for successful careers, university transfer programs, and meaningful civic participation.

**Wake Technical Community College**, Raleigh, NC

The mission of Wake Technical Community College is to improve and enrich lives by meeting the lifelong education, training and workforce development needs of the
communities we serve and is to promote individual success in the workplace and higher education and to increase entrepreneurship, cultural, social, and economic development. In pursuit of its mission, the college adheres to an open door policy, offering quality education that is accessible and affordable to all adults regardless of age, sex, socioeconomic status, ethnic origin, race, religion, or disability. Wake Tech provides vocational, technical, and occupational training; university transfer preparation; basic skills development; community partnership opportunities; and a variety of support services and resources.

**Wallace State Community College**, Hanceville, AL

Wallace State Community College, a degree granting public community college, is committed to enabling meaningful learning that transforms lives and communities. In support of the mission, Wallace State Community College is committed to: promoting student success in learning environments that are student centered, innovative, engaging, and supportive; providing teaching excellence that inspires a quest for lifelong learning; respecting uniqueness and valuing diversity; forging strategic partnerships that advance community, workforce and economic development; culturally enriching our communities; accountability and integrity.

**Walters State Community College**, Morristown, TN

Walters State is a learning-centered, comprehensive, public community college dedicated to increasing educational attainment and supporting economic development by providing affordable, high quality educational opportunities for the residents of East Tennessee.

**Wayne Community College**, Goldsboro, NC

Wayne Community College’s mission is to meet the educational, training, and cultural needs of the communities it serves.

**Weatherford College**, Weatherford, TX

The mission of Weatherford College is to provide effective learning opportunities that enrich the lives of its students and the communities it serves. As a publicly supported, comprehensive community college and a member of the Texas system of higher education, Weatherford College primarily serves the needs of the citizens of its service area (Parker, Wise, Palo Pinto, and Jack counties) through teaching, research, public service, and learning. Weatherford College offers courses pursuant to a spectrum of educational goals: Associate of arts degrees, Associate of science degrees, associate of applied science degrees, core curriculum designed for transfer to a university, career/technical certificates, occupational advancement, developmental education, adult literacy and other basic skills, personal enrichment. Weatherford College maintains a friendly and respectful environment that encourages student pursuit of educational achievement, and offers counseling and guidance to help students identify and attain their goals.
West Georgia Technical College, Waco, GA

The mission of West Georgia Technical College, a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia, is to lead economic and workforce development by offering learning opportunities through quality services and educational programs using traditional and distance learning delivery methods. These opportunities focus on the development of academic and technical competence; critical thinking skills; social, personal, and intellectual values; work ethic traits; and an understanding of society. West Georgia Technical College services – including associate degree, diploma, and certificate programs, adult education, continuing education, and customized corporate training – meet the workforce needs of citizens, communities, businesses, and industries of the West Georgia service area.

West Kentucky Community and Technical College, Paducah, KY

The mission of West Kentucky Community and Technical College is to provide excellence in teaching and learning, promote student success, and support economic development.

Western Piedmont Community College, Morganton, NC

The College's mission is to provide accessible, high-quality education that improves lives and promotes growth in our community.

Western Texas College, Snyder, TX

Western Texas College is committed to excellence as it challenges students to reach their full potential. The institutional goals of Western Texas College are: Provide quality education for pre-professional, general, career, technical, workforce and foundational students; Enhance student life through campus activities; Provide support services that help students, staff and faculty succeed; Provide opportunities that encourage and facilitate social, cultural, economic and community development; Promote life-long learning that encourages critical thinking, skill development, communication proficiency, art and cultural appreciation and civic responsibility.

Wharton County Junior College, Wharton, TX

Wharton County Junior College is a public, two-year, comprehensive community college offering a wide range of postsecondary educational programs and services including associate degrees, certificates, continuing-education courses, cultural affairs, and leisure-time activities for the benefit of the community and a population of students that varies in age, background, and ability. The college affords opportunities for individual growth and expression and promotes the development of the total person through scholarly and creative activity and the application of knowledge for the good of society. Its curricular and co-curricular activities lay a foundation for lifelong learning and involved citizenship and encourage the pursuit of knowledge, innovation, experimentation, and excellence in
human endeavor. It prepares students for entry-level positions, for advancement in various occupations and professions, for a broad understanding of the liberal arts and sciences, and for transfer to baccalaureate-granting institutions.

**Wilkes Community College**, Wilkesboro, NC

Wilkes Community College, a member of the North Carolina Community College System, is a public, two-year, open-door institution serving the people of Wilkes, Ashe and Alleghany counties and beyond.

**Williamsburg Technical College**, Kingstree, SC

Williamsburg Technical College, a member of the South Carolina Technical College System, is a public, two-year, associate degree, diploma, and certificate granting institution serving Williamsburg County. The mission of Williamsburg Technical College is to offer quality, affordable, and accessible educational opportunities and experiences that enable students to acquire the knowledge and skills to achieve their goals and to encourage economic development in Williamsburg County.

**Wilson Community College**, Wilson, NC

The mission of Wilson Community College, a public post-secondary comprehensive educational institution, is to provide accessible, student-centered academic and personal enrichment opportunities to enhance lifelong learning through college transfer, technical, vocational, and adult education programs. The College embraces and is committed to the values of lifelong learning; community; sustainability; leadership; scholarship; accessibility and affordability; diversity and inclusiveness; research, assessment, and collaboration; and technology.

**Wiregrass Georgia Technical College**, Valdosta, GA

The mission of Wiregrass Georgia Technical College, a public two-year technical college and a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia, is to promote community, educational, and economic development by providing a highly trained workforce for South Central Georgia. The college fulfills the mission by providing quality technical and academic instruction, through campus-based and distance education delivery methods, leading to associate of applied science degrees, diplomas, and technical certificates of credit; customized training for new and existing industries; professional and personal development through continuing education programs; and adult education services to meet the needs of citizens, business, and industry in the service area.

**York Technical College**, Rock Hill, SC

York Technical College, a member of the South Carolina Technical and Comprehensive Education System, is a public, two-year institution of higher education that offers a variety of associate degrees, diplomas, and certificates. Through maximizing student
success, the College seeks to contribute to the economic growth and development of York, Lancaster, and Chester counties and of the State. York Technical College has an open admissions policy for qualified students and annually enrolls 8,000-10,000 credit students. Through excellence in teaching and learning, the College provides program offerings, in a variety of delivery methods, in the areas of engineering technology, industrial technology, information technology, business, health sciences, and public service and transfer to senior colleges and universities. In addition, the College offers a comprehensive selection of corporate and continuing education courses designed to promote occupational advancement, personal interest, and business and industry growth.

**LEVEL II**

**Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College**, Tifton, GA

Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College is a residential institution offering certificates, associate degrees in a broad array of disciplines, and baccalaureate degrees in targeted fields. With a state-wide mission in agriculture and natural resources and strong programs in the liberal arts, nursing, business, the natural and physical sciences, the social sciences, and physical education, the College serves students with diverse educational and career goals. Associate of Applied Science degrees prepare students for entry into a career field. Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degree programs provide the first two years of study toward a baccalaureate degree. Baccalaureate degrees are offered in disciplines related to the College’s mission and areas of regional economic importance.

**Atlanta Metropolitan State College**, Atlanta, GA

Atlanta Metropolitan State College, a unit of the University System of Georgia, focuses on excellence, where outstanding faculty members and committed staff teach and facilitate the successful academic matriculation and holistic development of students. The College offers an affordable liberal arts education and prepares students from a diverse urban community to function in a global society.

**Brazosport College**, Lake Jackson, TX

Brazosport College exists to improve quality of life by providing associate and baccalaureate degree programs, academic transfer programs, job skills training, and cultural enrichment in an efficient and cost effective manner. The board, faculty and staff are committed to student success by responding to student needs, creating a dynamic learning environment, exceeding expectations, and enriching our community.

**Broward College**, Ft. Lauderdale, FL

The mission of Broward College is to achieve student success by developing informed and creative students capable of contributing to a knowledge- and service-based global society. As a public community college accredited to offer associate degrees, selected baccalaureate degrees, and certificate programs, the institution and its District Board of
Trustees are committed to fostering a learning-centered community that celebrates diversity and inclusion by empowering and engaging students, faculty, and staff.

**Chipola College, Marianna, FL**

Chipola is a comprehensive public college whose mission is to provide accessible, affordable, quality educational opportunities to the residents of Calhoun, Holmes, Jackson, Liberty and Washington counties and to all others who choose to attend. The college creates a student-oriented atmosphere of educational excellence and maintains an intellectual environment which inspires the full development of each individual’s goals, abilities, and interests. Because there is no substitute for quality instruction, the college empowers faculty members to establish and achieve the highest possible standards. The college also promotes a strong working relationship with communities, businesses, state agencies, and other educational institutions.

**College of Central Florida, Ocala, FL**

College of Central Florida provides access to high quality, high value baccalaureate degrees, associate degrees, certificates and diplomas, and promotes the economic, social and cultural development of our community.

**College of Coastal Georgia, Brunswick, GA**

As a state college of the University System of Georgia, the College of Coastal Georgia offers targeted baccalaureate programs of study, pre-baccalaureate programs of study for transfer, associate of arts and associate of science degrees, and serves as a portal to graduate education.

**Darton State College, Albany, GA**

Darton, a state college within the University System of Georgia, is focused on providing a wide diversity of constituents access to certificate, associate, and select baccalaureate programs of study. Dedicated to serving as an access institution, our College will empower students by engaging them in a student-centered, caring and technically advanced environment through innovative delivery systems. Darton is committed to providing exemplary teaching to students in our community, region, and state. As a multi-campus, residential institution, the College pursues traditional and unique mechanisms to deliver education to its richly diverse student body. In service to the community Darton College will offer cultural enrichment experiences, continuing education, and economic development programs.

**Daytona State College, Daytona Beach, FL**

Daytona State College, a comprehensive public college, provides access to a range of flexible programs from community enrichment to the baccalaureate degree, emphasizing
student success, embracing excellence and diversity, as well as fostering innovation to enhance teaching and learning.

East Georgia State College, Swainsboro, GA

East Georgia State College is an associate degree granting, liberal arts institution of the University System of Georgia providing its students access to both academically transferable programs of study and collaborative programs in occupation related fields. The College also offers targeted baccalaureate level degrees that support the University System's initiative to expand educational opportunities. The College prepares traditional and nontraditional students for success in the global 21st century through a technologically advanced teaching and learning environment that fosters personal growth by utilizing an expanding range of resources and amenities, including an on-campus student residential option. The College also continuously engages the communities it serves through public service and cultural enrichment.

Edison State College, Fort Myers, FL

The mission of Edison State College is to inspire learning; prepare a diverse population for creative and responsible participation in a global society; and serve as a leader for intellectual, economic, and cultural awareness in the community.

Florida Gateway College, Lake City, FL

The mission of Florida Gateway College is to provide superior instruction, nurture individual development, and enrich the community through quality higher education programs and lifelong learning opportunities.

Florida State College at Jacksonville, Jacksonville, FL

The mission of Florida State College at Jacksonville is to provide optimal access to high quality, affordable and relevant degree, career and community education to enhance the lives of our students and the economic development of Northeast Florida.

Georgia Highlands College, Rome, GA

The mission of Georgia Highlands College, a state college of the University System of Georgia, is to provide access to excellent educational opportunities for the intellectual, cultural and physical development of a diverse population through pre-baccalaureate associate degree transfer programs, career associate degree programs, and targeted baccalaureate degree programs that meet the economic development needs of the region.

Gordon State College, Barnesville, GA

To provide an exceptional education through innovative teaching and engaged learning for the benefit of the world in which we live. Gordon State College will strive to ensure
affordable, supportive access to high quality post-secondary education; to develop creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, innovation, a global perspective and a commitment to lifelong learning that includes a respect for everyone involved in the process; to maintain a commitment to engaged faculty-student interaction through intimate classroom experiences, innovative and effective teaching strategies, excellent advising and mentorship programs, and effective student support services; to serve the broader community and region by developing academic programs and producing leaders equipped to contribute positively to middle Georgia, the United States, and the world; to remember and celebrate the heritage of the College and its graduates; to provide a beautiful and vibrant center of learning and scholarship as the touchstone of a diverse, connected community.

**Gulf Coast State College**, Panama City, FL

Gulf Coast State College holds students and community of central importance. The college provides many opportunities for learning and offers a range of programs and services to help students become well-educated, productive citizens. The college is equally dedicated to collaborating with the community to help create or improve economic well-being and to offer the space of the college for social dialog, events of art and culture, and other moments that enhance our quality of life.

**Indian River State College**, Fort Pierce, FL

Indian River State College is a comprehensive college accredited to award Baccalaureate Degrees, Associate Degrees, and Career and Technical Certificates. As a leader in education and innovation, IRSC transforms lives by offering high-quality, affordable and accessible education to the residents of Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, and St. Lucie counties through traditional and electronic delivery.

**Lake-Sumter State College**, Leesburg, FL

Lake-Sumter State College responds to community needs by providing high-quality, accessible programs from enrichment and career training to associate and baccalaureate degrees. LSSC embraces excellence, diversity, and innovation to maximize student learning and success.

**Miami Dade College**, Miami, FL

The Mission of Miami Dade College is to change lives through the opportunity of education. As democracy’s college, MDC provides high-quality teaching and learning experiences that are accessible and affordable to meet the needs of our diverse students and prepare them to be responsible global citizens and successful lifelong learners. The College embraces its responsibility to serve as an economic, cultural and civic beacon in our community.
Midland College, Midland, TX

Midland College is a comprehensive community college that is dedicated to excellence, has a commitment to learning, and promotes a life-long quest for knowledge. The institution supports individual and economic development in its service area and beyond by offering certificates, associate and baccalaureate degrees, workforce and continuing education opportunities, and comprehensive student support services. Midland College also provides a variety of community services, cultural and educational enrichment opportunities to the West Texas region.

Northwest Florida State College, Niceville, FL

The mission of Northwest Florida State College (NWFSC) is to provide quality educational programs and services which enable students to achieve their goals and which enhance the community through academic, career/technical, cultural, economic, and personal development opportunities.

Palm Beach State College, Lake Worth, FL

Palm Beach State College, founded in 1933 as Florida's first public community college, is a diverse, comprehensive institution dedicated to serving the educational needs of Palm Beach County. Integrally linked to the community through strong partnerships, the College provides associate and baccalaureate degrees, professional certificates, workforce development and lifelong learning. Palm Beach State College's mission is to create and sustain a dynamic teaching and learning environment that provides a high-quality, accessible, affordable education, preparing students to contribute and compete ethically and successfully in a diverse global community.

Pensacola State College, Pensacola, FL

Pensacola State College, under the governance of a local Board of Trustees, is one of 28 public colleges in the Florida College System committed to affordable, open access to educational opportunities. The College offers baccalaureate and associate degrees, career oriented certificates, developmental education, adult education, GED preparation, and standard high school diplomas. In addition, the College provides specialized business and industry training, recreation and leisure courses, and community outreach and services. Pensacola State College is dedicated to maximizing educational opportunities, through a variety of delivery methods that develop the academic, career, personal, and aesthetic capabilities of individuals for the benefit of themselves and the global community.

Polk State College, Winter Haven, FL

Polk State College, a quality driven institution, transforms lives through the power of education by providing access to affordable associate and baccalaureate degrees, career certificates and workforce employment programs, delivered by diverse, qualified faculty and staff.
**Santa Fe College**, Gainesville, FL

In keeping with our values and goals, Santa Fe College, a comprehensive public institution of higher education serving north central Florida and beyond, adds value to the lives of our students and enriches our community through excellence in teaching and learning, innovative educational programs and student services, and community leadership and service.

**Seminole State College of Florida**, Sanford, FL

The mission of Seminole State College of Florida is to serve the community by providing a learning-centered, high-quality educational institution that anticipates and meets the needs of the community by providing a comprehensive range of programs and services.

**South Florida State College**, Avon Park, FL

South Florida State College is an open-access, higher education institution dedicated to providing a learning-centered environment through quality programs, training, and services. Working in partnerships with organizations and communities, the college provides leadership and a comprehensive range of opportunities for the educational, cultural, and economic development of the service district.

**South Georgia State College**, Douglas, GA

South Georgia College is a four-year residential institution that serves the educational, social, and economic development of the region by providing accessible, high quality, student-centered associate degrees and a limited number of baccalaureate degree programs. Through close collaboration with faculty and staff, students are engaged in educational opportunities that empower them for success in a sustainable global society. South Georgia College prepares students to think critically, communicate proficiently, and act responsibly as civic-minded, environmentally conscious citizens.

**South Texas College**, McAllen, TX

South Texas College is a world-class comprehensive institution of higher learning providing premier educational and workforce programs and services in response to the needs of the region.

**St. Johns River State College**, Palatka, FL

St. Johns River State College provides students with equal access to a broad spectrum of educational and cultural opportunities while encouraging the pursuit of academic excellence and scholarly achievement through high quality instruction. The College creates and continuously improves affordable, accessible and effective learning opportunities, support services, and resources for the educational needs of the diverse community it serves.
**State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota**, Bradenton, FL

State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota, guided by measurable standards of institutional excellence, provides engaging and accessible learning environments that result in student success and community prosperity.

**Valencia College**, Orlando, FL

Valencia provides opportunities for academic, technical and life-long learning in a collaborative culture dedicated to inquiry, results and excellence.