



SOUTHERN UNION
STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Impact Report

2023-24

TO OUR STAKEHOLDERS

Southern Union State Community College (SUSCC) plays a critical role in the health and well-being of communities throughout east and central Alabama. We loyally serve citizens, strengthen communities and make lives better through the transformative power of education to build upon our 102 years of history.

We are grateful for stakeholders like you! Your belief in our mission allows us to respond to the growing educational needs of the region and serve more than 5,000 students on our three campuses which, are conveniently located in Opelika, Valley and Wadley, Alabama.

Southern Union is the recognized leader in workforce preparedness in our region and a vital contributor to the economy. We are an eager partner in the recruitment and retention efforts of industry and welcome the opportunities to provide training programs that uniquely meet their needs. Our college also consistently responds to workforce gaps by strategically developing new programs such as Aviation Maintenance and Veterinary Technology.

Southern Union is an important economic development partner to our region and the recognized leader in the workforce preparedness

On behalf of Southern Union, thank you for your continued investment, partnership and belief in our mission. I hope you will enjoy reading our impact report and learn more about all that we offer. It is our honor to serve you, strengthen our communities and transform lives through education.

Todd Shackett
President



HIGHLIGHTS

Record Enrollment

Southern Union has its highest enrollment since 2003 with more than 5,000 students in the fall 2024 semester. This represents a 9% increase in the number of students and 8% increase in the number of credit hours, making Southern Union a top performer in production of credit hours in Alabama Community College System.

We continue to expand partnerships with K-12 schools and higher education institutions to offer dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment and academic programs for transferability. One of our most successful concurrent programs is **Path to the Plains** which offers opportunities for more Alabama residents to attend Auburn University. There are over **300** students currently registered in this program.



SUCCESS STORY



SAVANNA JOHNSON

The day she stepped across the stage at Auburn University to receive her bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering was the proudest day of Savanna Johnson's life to date. It was a dream that she fought hard to realize.

"I didn't think I was suited for college," she said. "I had always struggled with learning disabilities and ADHD, so it was not always easy for me."

But Savanna wanted to become an engineer. A lover of creativity, she wanted to "serve people using my mind." And the innovation and versatility of the engineering field would help her do just that. The first step in making her dream a reality was to enroll at Southern Union State Community College, where she found more than just an educational institution. "Southern Union is your everything school!" she said, reflecting on the comprehensive support system she encountered. The personalized attention and strong sense of community at SUSCC played a crucial role in her academic and personal growth. "The faculty, students, and even administrators made me feel like a person, not just a number," Savanna recalled. This nurturing environment helped her build the confidence she needed to tackle her goals.

Savanna now works as a system engineer at RoviSys, a global provider of building automation services and solutions for industrial, commercial and mission-critical applications. She continues to embody the values she cherished during her time at Southern Union.

Her success is not only a personal achievement but also a beacon of hope for others. "I want to show others that it is possible to achieve their dream, and Southern Union will give you a strong foundation and the confidence to succeed," she said.

Academic Division

Southern Union State Community College's Academic Division offers Associate in Science (A.S.) and Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S.) degrees. Students may also earn certificates in some curriculum areas. The Academic Division includes Distance Education, Concurrent Enrollment, and Adult Education as well as Business, Child Development, Fine Arts and Humanities, Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Sciences. The academic division boasted 703 graduates in the 2023-24 academic year.

Path to the Plains is one of eight concurrent enrollment opportunities offered at Southern Union.

Path to the Plains

Minority Representation

12%

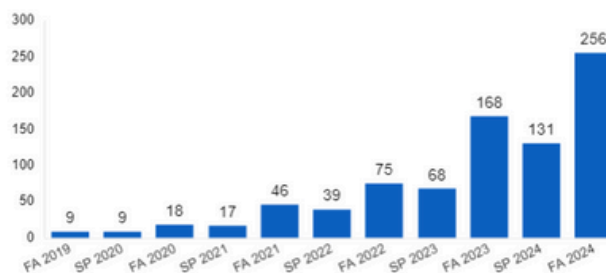
Pell Eligible Students

18%

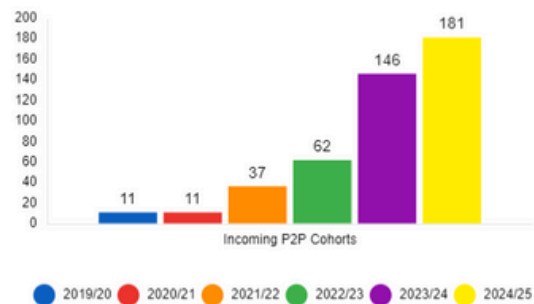
First Generation Students

13%

P2P Term by Term Total Enrollment



P2P Yearly Incoming Students



Retention

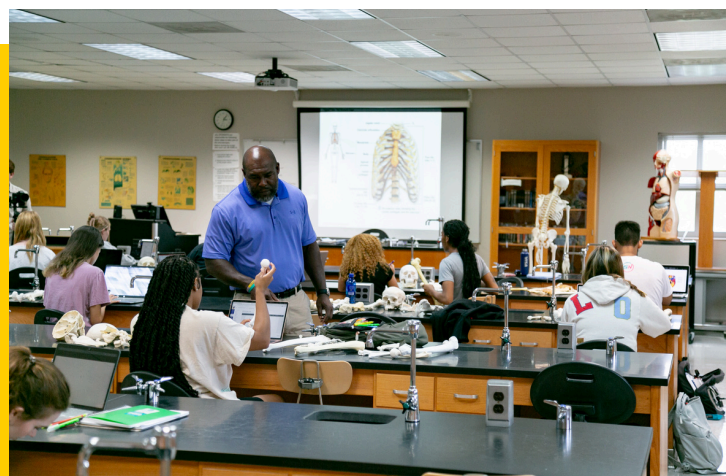
97%

Students who transferred or matriculated to AU following P2P participation

**Does not include # of nursing students.*

To learn more about Academic Division programs, please visit:

<https://www.suscc.edu/programs/academic-programs>



Health Sciences

To meet the increasing demands of the healthcare industry, Southern Union offers a variety of degree and certificate programs including: Nursing, Paramedic, Medical Assistant Technology, Radiologic Technology, Surgical Technology, Therapeutic Massage, Physical Therapist Assistant, Veterinary Technology, and Health and Wellness. Our students are well prepared to enter the workforce and give back through community service activities.

- The Associate Degree in Nursing spring 2024 graduating class achieved a 98% pass rate on the NCLEX-RN licensure exam.
- Fall of 2024 marks a record enrollment of more than 300 students in Nursing.
- Nursing students participated in a week-long diabetes Camp Seale Harris at Camp ASCCA in Jackson's Gap.
- A new health science program, Veterinary Technology was launched Fall semester 2024.

To learn more about the Health Sciences programs, visit
<https://www.suscc.edu/programs/health-science-overview>



Technical Education and Workforce Development Division

Enrollment in Southern Union's technical programs has increased by a staggering 70% over the last three years to meet the growing needs of regional businesses and provide opportunities for both traditional and non-traditional students.

- The addition of evening programs in Cosmetology, HVAC, Mechatronics and Welding will address workforce needs and support non-traditional students.
- An Aviation Maintenance program was launched in 2023 to meet service industry demands and build a qualified workforce for regional manufacturers.
 - A new aviation hangar will be completed by September 2025 at the Auburn University Municipal airport and will allow our students to have hands-on experience at a working airport.
- Partnerships with existing industries continue to upscale the workforce which leads to lower turnover and better productivity. Some of our training partners include:
 - West Fraser
 - Golden States Foods
 - Briggs and Stratton
- An Increase in short-term certificate offerings through the Skill for Success program creates opportunities for immediate entry into the workforce:
 - Skid Steer Training
 - Fiber Optic Technician Training
 - CDL Training

<https://www.suscc.edu/programs/tech-overview>



SUCCESS STORY



ADAM BAKER

“Motivation will get you started, but discipline is what helps you finish.”

This is the guiding principle that Adam Baker lives by, and his story is a testament to the power of commitment and resilience.

Six years ago, Adam arrived in the Opelika area with a determination to turn his life around. Struggling with addiction and homelessness, he knew he needed a change. A four-year degree wasn't the right path for him, as previous attempts at three different colleges hadn't worked out. He began researching his options and discovered the industrial maintenance degree at SUSCC. “The program really encompasses everything, and it was at the time the only program with an internship option,” he said.

Adam knew he could earn money while earning his degree, and he graduated while working a full-time job. The encouragement from his instructors and the program's focus on job placement were crucial to his success.

“Next to getting sober, attending Southern Union was the best decision I ever made,” he reflected. “I wanted more out of my life, and Southern Union set me on the right path. The support and care I received made all the difference; everything just fell into place.”

With an associate degree in mechatronics, Adam now thrives as a successful industrial maintenance technician. He enjoys using his analytical skills to diagnose problems, identify common issues, and implement effective solutions.

“I received so much support from others; now I'm committed to giving back wherever I can,” Adam said, embodying the spirit of generosity and determination that has shaped his journey.

In addition to our academic, technical and health science divisions, Southern Union has a longstanding tradition of excellence in athletics and performing arts programs.

Athletics

Approximately 200 student athletes are part of the herd at Southern Union. The SU Bison field teams in Men's Baseball, Basketball, Cross Country, Golf and Soccer and Women's Basketball, Cross Country, Golf, Soccer, Softball and Volleyball. The SU Bison compete in the Alabama Community College Conference (ACCC) and is a member of the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA). Southern Union consistently excels on the field of play and in the classroom. More than 80 student athletes appeared on the Commissioner's Academic Honor Roll last year. And, the SU Lady Bison Softball team finished as first runner-up in the ACCC tournament, while a member of the ladies golf team played in the national championship tournament.



Fine Arts

Our music and dance programs have a rich history of accomplishments. Students take courses in their respective field, participate in the productions in the fine arts and humanities department, and culminate their experience with a trip to New York City for a Carnegie Hall performance, classes, workshops and fun. Our faculty are highly qualified professionals who are dedicated to providing effective instruction and performance opportunities for our students.



Economic Development

Southern Union continues to partner with area and state economic development recruiters to attract new businesses to our area and has been instrumental in fostering key relationships with the following new companies:

- Miele, a global premium brand for household and commercial appliances, is making a \$650 million dollar investment by locating their new plant in Opelika.
- ADS-TEC Energy Auburn develops and produces battery platform solutions for the energy industry of the future.
- Southern Union is adding a full-time career professional to ensure connectivity between the college, our students and area career opportunities.

Community Engagement

Central to its mission, Southern Union provides overall support to the community partners in our service area by sharing its valuable resources which include:

- Use of buses and facilities such as the Southern Room
- Southern Union also provided temporary office space for Miele as they constructed their plant in Opelika

Philanthropic Impact

The Southern Union Foundation is positively impacting student outcomes and success through its scholarship program. Education is a powerful tool for changing lives. Yet, many talented and deserving students face financial barriers that prevent them from accessing higher education. These scholarships not only alleviate the financial burden on our students but also empower them to focus on their studies, complete their degrees, and contribute meaningfully to society.

During the academic year, 73 students received scholarships valued at \$141,906.12.

Gifts to the Southern Union Foundation support the mission and priorities of the College. These contributions provide opportunities for students and a margin of institutional excellence not achievable with institutional funds alone. To learn more about giving to the Southern Union Foundation, please visit: <http://www.suscc.edu/about/foundation>.





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