



Training the Workforce of Alabama

How the Alabama Community College System used Elevate to standardize workforce training across the state.



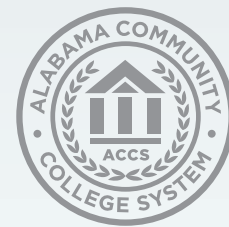
In announcing the \$17 million Reimagine Workforce Preparation grant, Alabama Governor Kay Ivey set an ambitious goal of “adding 500,000 additional credentialed workers to [the state’s] workforce by 2025.” With 24 institutions in more than 130 locations, the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) will play an integral role in training and upskilling students in preparation for specific, in-demand jobs. But to scale continuing education across the state, ACCS needed a systemwide solution, unifying their workforce development technology to provide the best possible student experience and outcomes.

Prior to this, Accs had to use various methods to register students and manage continuing education programs, with some institutions having no capability to do so digitally. This led to slow, manual processes and disparate data that couldn’t be aggregated into insights. As a result, ACCS had no true mechanism to ensure their course offerings would supply the type of training Alabama businesses required.

That’s why ACCS chose to implement Ellucian Elevate systemwide. Seamlessly integrating with Banner, Elevate standardizes processes to accurately forecast workforce demand and quickly meet training needs in each community it serves. By adopting an intuitive, data-driven continuing education solution, ACCS can be an effective partner to local businesses, provide a better student experience, and drive economic growth statewide.

Streamlined and Standardized

To best fulfill the unique needs of Alabama businesses, ACCS’s noncredit courses vary widely in form and length.



Main challenge

- Meeting statewide goals required a systemwide solution

Solutions

- Ellucian Elevate
- Ellucian Banner Cloud

Results

- Simplified workforce training processes across 24 institutions and 130 locations
- Built a more effective workforce pipeline using insights from statewide reporting
- Improved course registration, payment, and other student services

Because of this, ACCS needed to standardize their programs without flattening the important differences between them. Adaptable technology can support institutions with any type of curriculum and at any stage of workforce pipeline development, all while creating a common foundation for success.

With automated, systemwide reporting, **ACCS could accurately gauge headcount, identifying roughly twice as many enrolled students than what had been originally self-reported.** Now, ACCS can make faster, more effective decisions knowing the data from each institution is accurate and up to date.

“All the colleges now use the same catalog, same naming conventions, and same data standards,” explains Kathi Carr, a business analyst specializing in Elevate for ACCS. “That way, we’re truly comparing headcount in service programs at every institution on a one-to-one basis, as opposed to doing it 25 different ways.”

Data-driven Insights

Without consistent, reliable information, many ACCS institutions struggled to make informed, timely developmental decisions in response to market demands. “[Before Elevate, some ACCS] programs were offered without any change for maybe five, seven, 10 years,” Carr says. “Elevate allows us to use labor market data to match our college offerings with current needs.”

Elevate’s responsive, configurable course management makes it easy to remain agile in the labor market, retiring or altering courses with low enrollment and ramping up others to serve a growing demand. “We want to make sure we’re using state resources to the best of our ability,” explains Carr. “We should be training to meet workforce needs. Not just training for the sake of training.”

In addition to improving curricular decisions, more accurate data also helps strengthen business partnerships. ACCS can now communicate program headcount to Alabama stakeholders with confidence, demonstrating an ample workforce pipeline while gaining insight into potential skill gaps.

Modernizing the User Experience

Before Elevate, many ACCS students had to take care of administrative processes in person or through outdated, ad hoc forms specific to each institution. One community college, for instance, only staffed cashiers at four of their 16 locations, causing students to drive long distances to make payments at bottlenecked offices. And at other ACCS institutions, it could take between 24 and 48 hours for noncredit students to confirm their course registrations.

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Now, payments and registrations are streamlined, digitized, and fully integrated with Ellucian Banner. And because Elevate is accessible anytime, on any device, students can conveniently “shop” for courses and enroll on the spot. “Elevate is our Amazon shopping experience and Banner is our Amazon warehouse,” Carr says. “What you pull out of the shopping experience has to come from the warehouse, and vice versa.

Elevate has also enabled ACCS to better support alumni as lifetime learners. All workforce training is now included on transcripts, making it easy for students and their employers to keep track of certifications. And when new training opportunities arise, ACCS can automatically notify alumni using built-in communication workflows.

Systemwide Change Drives Statewide Results

Just as economic growth unites Alabama with a common goal, systemwide technology unifies workforce and continuing education for ACCS. With reliable data, consistent processes, and tools to efficiently adapt curriculum to workforce priorities, Elevate enables every ACCS institution to move forward together.

Collaborative transformation creates a statewide impact, but Carr reflects on how it all starts with the individual. “My goal for the state of Alabama is that we can see the student’s progression from workforce training to a career pathway,” Carr says. “To see where they started and help them work their way up the ladder to benefit themselves and their families.”

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