

NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE ASSOCIATION

SUBJECT: CONFERENCE COMES TO BIRMINGHAM

NOVEMBER 1, 2014

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Alabama Community College Association (ACCA) will feature one of the leading figures in community college education when it hosts its conference for Alabama Community College System (ACCS) employees from November 23-25, 2014, in Birmingham, Alabama. Dr. Walter Bumphus, President/CEO of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), will deliver the first keynote address to employees. Bumphus has been a leader in the movement by community colleges to transform workers in America to meet the high-skill technical jobs of the new American economy.

“The theme of our conference this year is *Reclaiming the Dream*,” stated Dr. Mark Heinrich, Chancellor of the ACCS. “With the accessible and cost-effective higher education our System provides, we are positioned as never before to help our citizens reclaim that dream in America’s emerging and expanding economy.” Chancellor Heinrich, too, will be a conference keynote speaker, addressing the topic of strategic planning for the ACCS.

The ACCS often is described as Alabama’s main engine in powering the Alabama workforce into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century economy. The System reaches some 300,000 citizens each year, making it by far the state’s largest educational institution in terms of people served. The ACCS provides educational services in three primary areas: university academic transfer, workforce development, and adult education. As an example of the impact of the ACCS in Alabama and its importance in the state, ACCS officials note that 75 percent of the practical and registered nurses in Alabama are products of the Alabama Community College System.

“Our annual conference permits employees in the ACCS to receive the latest and best in professional development,” stated Alabama Community College Association President Dr. David Campbell. “Not only will attendees hear about the most recent educational patterns and trends from Dr. Bumphus and Dr. Heinrich, but during the conference ACCS employees and consultants will make more than eighty presentations on professional development topics and how to better serve students and the state.”

Campbell also noted that various ACCA Commissions will hear from speakers Iyishia Smith (Managing Partner, Castal Resources), Robert Carrow (Trainer, Carrow Group International, LLC), Marquita Furness Davis (Executive Director, Jefferson County Committee for Economic Development), Pete Blank (Formerly of Disney University), and Zeke Smith (Executive Vice President for External Affairs, Alabama Power Company). Campbell pointed out that an Executive Committee made up of employees from throughout the ACCS has been working throughout the year to plan the conference. “For a conference of this size,” Campbell added, “it takes detailed planning by experts in specific areas to organize activities. The Executive Committee has done that.”

Dr. Bumphus holds Bachelor of Science and Master of Education degrees from Murray State University and a doctorate from the University of Texas at Austin. He has received national accolades for his work, including the Marie Y. Martin CEO of the Year award from the Association of Community College Trustees and the National Initiative for Leadership and Institutional Effectiveness Lifetime Achievement Award. He was named President/CEO of the AACC in 2010.

The conference will bring some 1,000 people to Birmingham, and it will be headquartered at the Sheraton Hotel, with meetings there and at Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex. A reception for attendees at the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame on Sunday afternoon will kick off the conference. The ACCS partners with the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame and the Bryant-Jordan Foundation to provide college academic scholarships to Alabama high school students involved in sports. "We also have arranged an after conference hours bus trip to a local mall for registered attendees," Campbell stated, "as well as having a band perform one evening for those who wish to attend. We want the conference to be both educational and entertaining for participants. The best conferences I think hit that mark."

Campbell noted that although the conference itself is conducted on a limited budget, it nonetheless has a considerable economic impact on the City of Birmingham. Officials with the Greater Birmingham Convention and Visitors Bureau estimate that the conference will result in \$443,194 in direct and indirect business sales and taxes for the city. "That's another plus for the conference," Campbell added. "While providing professional development opportunities, the conference also brings a substantial boost to the local economy of Birmingham."

For additional information about the conference, please contact Ms. Pat Wildman, President's Office, Northeast Alabama Community College at 256-228-6004.