

Federal Education and Workforce Committee Field Hearing  
Committee Chairman John Kline (R-MN) Presiding  
Columbia State Community College  
April 21, 2011, 10:00 A.M.  
Waymon L. Hickman Building, Room 123

"Reviving our Economy: The Role of Higher Education in Job Growth and Development."

Testimony of Janet F. Smith, President  
Columbia State Community College  
Columbia, Tennessee 37041

Chairman Kline and Congressman DesJarlais, thank you for this opportunity to speak to the Role of Higher Education in Job Growth and Development, particularly as it relates to the mission, programs, activities, and services of Columbia State Community College. We at Columbia State are honored that you have selected our college as the location for this hearing. We believe that community colleges are central to providing the diverse educational opportunities needed to meet the growing and ever changing job demands and needs. Please accept our appreciation for your recognition of the need for continued and advanced training and education of our citizens, and your selection of a community college, our College, to solicit information for evaluation of the role of higher education in reviving our economy.

### Columbia State Community College Profile

As Tennessee's first community college, Columbia State builds on its heritage of excellence through innovation in education and services to foster success and bring distinction and recognition for the quality and effectiveness of the College. The mission of Columbia State is to enhance the lives of citizens and the communities of southern Middle Tennessee through teaching, learning and student success. That mission and vision are the guiding principles of our strategic planning process, outcomes, and community outreach.

Columbia State services nine counties (Wayne, Perry, Lewis, Marshall, Giles, Hickman, Lawrence, Williamson, and Maury) in south central Tennessee. The service area includes one of the poorest to one of the wealthiest counties in the state. All of our counties except Williamson are in Local Workforce Investment Area (LWIA) 10. The January 2011 preliminary Labor Force Estimates for Unemployment was at 14.2%, an increase of 1.2% over December 2010. We have the unfortunate distinction of having the highest unemployment rate in the State (the next closest is 12.2%). Education and training are a must for the growth and development of our service counties and citizens.

Students are provided educational opportunities through the Columbia campus and four extended campuses (Clifton, Lewisburg, Lawrenceburg, and Williamson). Classes are offered via classroom, hybrid (classroom/on-line blend) and on-line (web based). In addition, Columbia State students may receive a degree through the College's participation in the Regents On-line Degree Program.

Fall 2010 College statistics include:

Credit student enrollment	5600	Degree Seeking First Generation	2308
Full Time Equivalency	3556	Low Income Students/ FAFSA	2661
Dual Enrollment	531	Students Receiving Loans	967
Full-time	2600	Students Receiving Any Aid/Scholarship	3230
Part-time	3000		
Males	36%	Full Time Faculty	100
Females	64%	Adjunct Faculty	178
Average Age	24.8	Professional and Support Staff	149

#### Partnerships with Workforce Agencies, Business, Organizations... for Workforce Development

Columbia State is linked to the workforce needs of its service area through representation on various workforce boards, chambers of commerce, local government and civic organizations which inform college representatives of area education and training needs. These linkages foster communication and information necessary for community and workforce development throughout the region. A partnership for developing grants and sharing resources is another outgrowth of these linkages. The college periodically conducts town hall meetings in the counties where it has campus sites to solicit the needs, views, and desires of these community leaders relative to the types of education, training, and services that they would like to receive from their college. These meeting results are incorporated into the College's strategic plan so that new initiatives reflect the expressed needs of the communities served by the College.

The President of Columbia State serves as a Board member on the Local Workforce Investment Board. The Director of Economic Development is a participant at all meetings. Another important organization is the area P-16 Council which consists of secondary, post-secondary, government, workforce officials, and business leaders meeting to discuss needs, changes, and actions. Also, it is the role of all College employees to identify needs and forward the information obtained to the appropriate office(s) for review and follow-up. This expanded "ear to the pulse of the community," so to speak, cannot be understated.

Workforce programs are offered through both credit and non-credit programs and classes. The decision for credit or non-credit is determined by the demand and education-training needs identified. The following is an overview of each.

## Partnering and Listening as Methods to Identify, Develop, and Monitor Workforce Relevant Programs

The College has a multi-level training needs assessment process for identifying and developing programs and training sessions for our businesses, industries, and citizens. The process includes:

### *Periodic meetings with key clients to determine training needs*

Through leads or direct interaction with an industry leader, College representatives establish meetings with existing employers to develop specialized courses or to introduce the employer to on-going courses and service packages that could benefit their employees and their business.

### *Participation in “monthly breakfast brainstorm” sessions*

The local South Central TN Workforce Alliance is integral to determining workforce and training needs. They sponsor a monthly breakfast brainstorm session that meets in a different county each month for identification of new/existing training programs, and training needs. Participation in these sessions has resulted in a number of customized training events to help our local employers/workforce.

### *Focus Groups*

The College employs the use of focus groups to gather information on training needs. Such an approach was recently used to measure the level of need for “Programmable Logic Controller” training for manufacturers in our service area.

### *Participation in Community Organizations*

College administration and workforce leadership participate in area Chambers, industry and business group meetings, professional associations, and other community organizations for obtaining information on workforce and education needs, as well as to be active in community leadership. (Primary participants are the President [Chamber Board Member of Two area Chambers], Dean of Extended Campuses, Director of Economic Development, Extended Campus Directors, Executive for Advancement, and Provost) Our recent training courses in Basic and Intermediate Social Media classes were a direct outcome of this outreach process and a Strategic Planning class is under development.

### *Collaborations with Career Centers*

Identification of training needs and offering of courses to meet those needs and demands is accomplished through access to DOL statistics and partnering with our local Career Centers. An example of an outcome of this process was the offering of Medical Coding and Advanced Medical Coding classes that lead to certifications. Other medical/healthcare courses are in the process of being arranged now and will be offered during our summer and fall terms. All of these courses have a certification exam as well, providing students an opportunity to prove they have the required knowledge. Another example was an identified need for Leadership classes. In response to that need, the College began offering a series of 29 Leadership classes which have been well received. We also assist employers with applying for Incumbent Worker funds and encourage them to use those funds when available to pay for the training we provide.

### *Community Scanning*

As noted in the above profile, Columbia State has four extended campuses with Directors and a Dean that are actively involved in their communities. That involvement includes activity with

community leaders and businesses for the identification of workforce training and education needs. Through that identification, courses, programs, and or curriculum enhancements (credit and non-credit) are identified and offered.

#### Advisory Committees

Professionals throughout our communities volunteer their time to serve on advisory committees for meshing curriculum with workforce and professional needs. These committees are appointed for the development of both credit and non-credit programs and for the on-going assessment of credit programs. Standing advisory committees exist for Nursing, EMT, Film Crew Technology, Respiratory Technology, Veterinary Technology, Agriculture, Radiologic Technology, Office Systems Administration, Business Administration, and Commercial Entertainment programs.

Columbia State offers a wide range of classes to employers, many in a live lecture format, and others online. In the non-credit professional development area, we provide customized program services.

They are:

- Design non-credit classes to meet the needs of employers
- Reevaluate existing non-credit training classes and customize the content to specific challenges identified by employers. Part of that customization is to develop quizzes/tests to measure learning.
- Deliver training at one of our five campuses or at an employer's offices, depending on their preference.

#### Partnerships with the Local Labor Market Workforce Investment Board

Our partnership with the South Central TN Workforce Alliance has resulted in positive worker education and training programs for workforce growth and development. A prime example is the offering of Entrepreneurship training within our service area. Over 200 people have taken advantage of this training, resulting in businesses being started. In other cases, existing business owners have taken the training, and jobs have been added as a result. This training effort has also been made even more effective due to a spinoff USDA for funding of an Entrepreneurship Coaching position to help prospective/existing business owners write an effective business plan. In fact, this grant has also allowed us to offer more Entrepreneurship training in rural counties for 40 individuals. Columbia State is in concert with the area Technology Centers, and is the lead institution for education and training programs at the Northfield Center under the current direction of the local Area Workforce Board.

A service we provide to non-credit continuing education students is to help identify potential employers. An example of this is a SHOWCASE event we sponsor along with the South Central TN Workforce Alliance. We invite a number of Middle Tennessee doctor's offices and hospitals to send representatives to this event where they can meet trainees who have recently attained their Certified Professional Coder credential. The WIA office also has grant funding to provide pay to completers for the purpose of attending an internship with these employers. This contains several benefits in that it pays the completers, gives them a chance to demonstrate their skills to the employer, and gives employers an opportunity to

see the recent completers in action on the job. We are very excited about this and the potential it represents.

Recently, through the WIA partnership, we began offering special non-credit classes at their request for displaced workers for re-enter into the workforce.

In regards to credit programs, the partnership between the College and the Workforce Board has resulted in student tuition assistance for Associate Degree and Certificates in Computer Science Technology, Health Information Technology, Radiologic Technology, Registered Nursing, Criminal Justice, Business Management, and Office Systems Technology. More than 55 students have been serviced during this academic year.

Many of the non-credit programs the College is introducing have a certification/testing connected with them. An example is the computer software training we are doing for an employer in our service area. We are conducting 10 classes for them, each of which contains a quiz at the end to measure knowledge. Another example is in the area of Geographic Information Systems. This class is being developed into a non-credit certificate program. That is, there are four courses in the series, and a student must take at least three and pass the exams to get the certificate. Here again, this allows trainees to prove they have the requisite knowledge in the topic, and, this program can be moved to a credit certificate if interest and need continues strong.

Programs at Columbia State that Prepare Students for the Workforce

A listing of non-credit programs by primary delivery completed between July 2010 and this writing are outlined below:

<b>Non-Credit Workforce Training July 2010 – To Date</b>		
<b>Type/Examples</b>	<b># Programs</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>
<b>Open Enrollment - On – Ground (classroom)</b> Police In-Service, Hospice Training, EMT Refresher, Leadership, Social Media, Computer, Software, Coding, ...	41	589
<b>Open Enrollment – On Line Individualized Contract Courses</b> Medical Coding, Medical Transcription, Paralegal, Pharmacy Tech, Six Sigma, Creating an Inclusive Classroom, Get Assertive, Office Software, ...	112	128
<b>Contract Training – WIA/IWT</b> Basic Computer, Entrepreneurship, Medical Coding, Customer Service, AutoCAD, ...	17	244
<b>Spanish Training Grant – Federal Pass Through – Government Highway Safety Grant for Tennessee</b>	17	311
<b>GM Contract for Specialized Classes</b>	33	254
<b>Industry Contracts</b>	4	28
<b>Partnership Training Courses with Area Organizations and Businesses</b> ACLS, Pediatric Advanced Life Support, PALS, ...	23	343
<b>Total</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>1897</b>

Credit programs offered by Columbia State that are career or workforce entry after completion include five credit-bearing certificate programs and eight associate in applied science degree programs. They are:

### **Certificates**

Business Management Certificate  
Commercial Entertainment  
    Option: Songwriting  
    Option: Performance  
Early Childhood Certificate  
EMT/Paramedic  
Film Crew Technology

### **Associate in Applied Science Degrees**

Business Information Technology  
    Option: Computer Systems  
    Options: Office Systems  
Business Management Technology  
Criminal Justice Technology  
    General Technology  
Nursing (R.N.)  
Radiologic Technology  
Respiratory Care Technology  
Veterinary Technology

All of these credit programs have advisory committees comprised of professionals in the field who offer guidance to assure that the content is relevant so that graduates will complete with the skills and knowledge necessary for the current job needs. Many programs require clinical or observation experiences in the field and area employers are cooperative in allowing students to gain these experiences. Many programs have accredited status within their profession which also requires industry professionals to serve in an advisory capacity to assure industry standards are met as part of maintaining program accreditation.

### **Radiology Technology**

The radiography program utilizes 10 clinical affiliates, including rural hospitals, regional medical centers, free standing imaging centers and orthopedic clinics. Students rotate through sites from Franklin to Dickson to Waynesboro to Shelbyville.

Program faculty periodically provides educational programs for area professionals (access to mandatory continuing education credits). Brenda Coleman, Program Director, currently serves on the Board of United Way of Maury County.

Kae Fleming, faculty/Dean, serves as a Site Visitor Chairman for the national programmatic accrediting agency, Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT). Ms. Fleming also serves on the Williamson County Schools Career & Technical Education Health Sciences Advisory Committee and the BioMedical Advisory Committee for BioTN.

### **Veterinary Technology**

The Vet Tech program has continuously served the veterinary medical community since initially earning accreditation in 1979 and is one of only two programs sponsored by TBR/THEC institutions in Tennessee. The program currently has affiliation agreements with 39 clinical sites. Students benefit from rotations in specialty practices including two Equine hospitals (Thompson's Station & Nolensville), two UT Dairy Educational Research Centers (Spring Hill & Lewisburg), two specialty referral practices (which include emergency facilities), an Animal Emergency clinic (Columbia), the Vanderbilt University Division of Animal Care, a Veterinary Ophthalmology practice (Nashville) and at least one mixed animal practice (Columbia). The yearlong clinical component of the educational program rotates students from Lawrenceburg to Nashville and occasionally Livingston, TN. All students are members of Columbia State's student chapter of the National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America.

### **Nursing**

The Nursing program has established clinical relationships with more than 15 institutions ranging from small, rural hospitals to metropolitan research institutions to long term care and mental health facilities. Student learning experiences also occur in area health departments and community school systems. Students volunteer for service learning opportunities by assisting area agencies with wellness clinics and health screenings. Clinical partnerships occur across the Middle Tennessee area.

Faculty interact with the workforce through volunteer speaking, involvement with HOSA groups (including contest judges), as well as hosting both high school and LPN students on campus.

Columbia State partnered with National Healthcare (NHC) and Maury Regional Medical Center (MRMC) to deliver a contract night/weekend LPN to RN bridge program (2005/2006). In response to continued pressure for working LPNs to pursue becoming an RN – the college is exploring establishing a cohort pathway LPNs could use to complete Nursing's general education requirements. If interest is sufficient, the College will request approval from the State Board of Nursing and the accrediting agency (NLNAC) and attempt to recruit qualified faculty to design an LPN-RN Bridge cohort.

Area healthcare facilities are invited to utilize equipment on campus, particularly high fidelity human simulators used by hospitals to train staff (ACLS & acute care). Other applications include flu clinics with Williamson Medical Center, MRMC Hospitals, and serving on leadership of TN Clinical Placement System.

Utilizing physical resources at the Wayne County Technology Center, Columbia State will offer non-credit Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) training in Waynesboro (Summer 2011).

### **EMS Education**

EMS Education has clinical affiliations with approximately 20 hospitals, fire halls, and ambulance services. Students experience emergency medicine in rural settings and major research institutions (Vanderbilt University Medical Center). Clinical partnerships occur across the Middle Tennessee area. EMS lends itself to delivery of courses to meet the specific needs of a community – examples include courses we did to train displaced workers in Perry County in 2008 and 2009.

Columbia State is a regional site for "EMS Night Out" – a bi-monthly educational program for EMS professionals.



## **Respiratory Care**

The Respiratory Care program clinical affiliations with nine institutions ranging from small, rural hospitals to metropolitan research institutions: Vanderbilt University Medical Center, St. Thomas, Baptist Hospital, Crockett Hospital, Maury Regional, Middle TN Medical Center, Williamson Medical Center and Monroe Carell Children's (VUMC). Students also benefit from clinical experiences via Respiratory Care at Home in Nashville. Clinical partnerships occur across the Middle Tennessee area. An active advisory committee includes representation by each clinical site in addition to shared medical directorship from Maury Regional Medical Center: Jon Freels, MD, Thomas Quinn, MD, Maura Lipp, MD, and Minerva Covarubius, MD.

The program is classified as an "Advanced Practice" (Registry) program and provides the professional community with graduates eligible for all three national credentialing examinations to become registered respiratory therapists, RRT.

Program faculty members are active leaders in their profession. Roger Major, Clinical Coordinator, represents the profession on the TN Board of Respiratory Care, and is a member of the Education Committee for the TN Society. R. David Johnson, Program Director, serves as Chair of both the Education & Government Affairs Committees for the Tennessee professional society and is a member of the Health Sciences Advisory Council for Summertown High School. Both faculty members are credentialed instructors for ACLS, PALS, and/or BLS, providing certification opportunities for students, faculty/staff, and the community.

## **Business Administration and Information Systems Technology**

Professionals in the field review curriculum and often seek students for placement. The faculty follows the placement of graduates to assure their effectiveness in meeting employer requirements. Through a partnership with Trevecca Nazarene University, an Accelerated Business Administration program is offered. Through this program, a student can obtain their Associate of Science degree and follow with their Bachelor's degree in three years. A fourth year is available for obtaining the Master's degree.

The Information Systems Technology students are given the tools to enter many computer fields. Many are provided opportunities for internships, special volunteer assignments, or coops where they obtain career experience or understandings. Through our information systems office, students, faculty and staff provide technology support for the Nashville Film Festival, which is held in April of each year.

## **Commercial Entertainment**

Commercial Entertainment is a one year program that provides students with skills and knowledge for entry into the recording industry and entertainment field. Graduates from this program are working in Nashville, New York, for various cruise lines, and in plenty of other entertainment/music-focused careers. Students and faculty work with entertainers in the area to keep the curriculum up to date.

## **Film Crew Technology**

Film Crew is one of our newer programs and involves students with hands on experience from the first class to the last. The program provides them the skills to be below-the-line gaffers, grips, camera operators, sound persons and/or other technicians. Film professionals from the Nashville area and some from Los Angeles have provided instructional support and helped mesh our curriculum with latest techniques to allow outside evaluation of student skills. One goal of the program is to reinforce the state's crew base with a

steady stream of trained professional technicians. This program boasts a 100% placement rate. Graduates have worked on every major production in the State of Tennessee since 2009, and several in Georgia.

The Film Crew students and faculty are involved in the Community. Each year they complete one or two community projects. Their most recent project was one for The Shalom Foundation. Two students and the instructor accompanied a group from the Shalom Foundation to Guatemala to film the experience and produce a video that provides an overview of the medical program and its importance.

The Program Director actively develops working relationships between professional production companies and the Film Crew Program. Those relationships have resulted in the placement of graduates and students on the following:

- Four music videos
- Four feature films
- Six short films
- 24 commercials
- Three EPK's (electronic press kits)
- Two PSA's (public service announcements)
- 16 industrial projects
- Two international shoots

The more this program works with outside production groups and entities, the more placements and new production work gets generated. But this may be scaled back somewhat in the future because the cost of this ongoing promotion and networking may not be able to be sustained with current program personnel (one faculty member who is director and instructor).

### **Criminal Justice Technology**

In the offering and development of this program there is continuous interaction with our law enforcement agencies for course and curriculum relevancy. It also serves as a training program for existing law enforcement personnel who have not obtained a degree.

Of special note is the collaboration with the University of Tulsa for a Cyber Security NSF/ATE grant. Through the implementation of this grant the College is developing a Cyber Security specialty for offering. Dr. Robert Grubbs, Program Director, is actively involved with local law enforcement agencies for maintaining a current curriculum as well as involvement of law enforcement professionals in instruction.

### **Other Initiatives**

Columbia State is collaborating with the Saint Thomas Heart Chest Pain Network and the Saint Thomas Stroke Network on a three year, \$600,000 Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant from the United States Department of Health and Human Services. This is a workforce development grant designed to increase the number of healthcare workers in rural Tennessee. Kae Fleming , Dean of Health Sciences, serves on the Advisory Board and Bob Trybalski, Instructional Technology Specialist, provides support for use of ITV resources to reach rural areas.

Two Technology Centers are located within Columbia State’s service area. The College collaborates with the Centers to provide support for their program and articulation of their certificate and diploma programs. An example is a process that was established that allows a Practical Nursing student a path of entry into our registered nurse program and diploma students to continue their studies at Columbia State to obtain an Associate of Applied Science in General Technology.

The College collaborates with the Local Area Workforce Board to provide leadership for collaboration with state community colleges in the offering of programs of need that Columbia State is not currently approved to offer. This collaboration is good for the student and positively embraced by state and national organizations and leaders, but traditional evaluation of institutional success and recent movements towards evaluation and funding based on graduates does not necessarily promote this type of collaboration.

### **Associate of Arts and Associate of Science Degrees**

The Associate of Arts and Associate of Science Degrees are sometimes not considered as part of workforce development. At Columbia State, we view students with majors that lead to one of these degrees as preparing for a career (workforce), which requires a baccalaureate for entry. As such we articulate curriculum with professionals in curriculum areas such as accounting, engineering, business, education (teaching), etc. The College, through the guidance of the University Center Office, maintains articulations agreements with four-year colleges and universities as well as transfer assistance. Universities partner with Columbia State to offer the baccalaureate requirements for Elementary Education, Business Administration, and Human Resources Management on our campuses. In addition there are Master’s degree programs as well as individual courses required for a baccalaureate offered. We have many students who complete their Associates and the Bachelor’s degree on a Columbia campus.

### **Programs Identified /Requested by Organizations/Businesses for Exploration/Offering by Columbia State**

Electroneurodiagnostic (END)	Certificate – AAS in Partnership with Vanderbilt
Polysomnography (Sleep Disorders)	Certificate “add on” credential for Respiratory Therapists or standalone AAS
MRI, Computed Tomography (CT), and/or Mammography	Certificate, “add on” credentials for registered Radiologic Technologists
Equine Dentistry	Certificate, “add on” for Veterinary Technicians

Health Information Technology/Health Informatics Technician	Certificate and/or Degree track
Acute Care Paramedic	Certificate
Biomedical Instrumentation Technician	AAS Degree
Clinical Research Associate (CRA)	AAS Degree
Physical Therapy Assistant (PT-A)	AAS Degree
Logistics	AAS Degree
Green Technology	Certificates - AAS Degree
Industrial Process Control	Certificate
Advanced Manufacturing	Certificate

### Student Support for Student Success

Providing educational opportunities alone is not an assurance of success. Research, and what we as educators have known, shows that student engagement in and out of the classroom is required for student retention and success. Services such as guidance, advisement, tutoring, computer access, and financial aid exist at Columbia State as with other colleges. However to engage students, enhanced services are needed. The following programs have been added to boost our connection students:

#### **Retention Advisors**

Reorganization was recently completed to transition from an advising center to retention advisors. A retention advisor will be located in each instructional area to identify students who are at risk and to work with faculty in identifying and assisting those students. This model was drafted by Columbia State and as per the information we have obtained does not exist in this form at other colleges.

#### **Student Activities**

Clubs, Student Government Association, athletics, and academic societies have existed at Columbia State since its inception. In our strategic plan for the next five years, the expectation of increasing student activities and student participation in such was set as a goal. Through this engagement we envision increased learning and student retention.

#### **President's Leadership Society**

This retention and student development project is open to all degree seeking students. The purpose is to engage the student, increase learning through life and workforce relevant workshops, to increase their

awareness of art, civic, and community responsibilities, and their understanding of cultural differences. One criterion for being a member of the Society is to graduate. This program is not only one that engages and develops the student, but it is one that also provides them with skills and abilities that are important to success in their chosen career.

### **Student Ambassador Program**

An Ambassador program exists for students to apply and participate in. The program provides students with the opportunity of working with various offices across campus and with students for showcasing the college, giving student tours, or representing the College at community events or activities.

### **Campus Learning Spaces**

Research states that student retention and engagement are enhanced through a campus that is attractive and has spaces across it that are inviting. These spaces, including the hanging of art, are occurring across campus to promote student gatherings for discussion and a connection to the college.

### **Think Graduation**

Think Graduation is a national movement that is championed by faculty and staff in a daylong event where they work and present to students the value of graduating. They seek to have students sign a graduation contract.

### **TRIO**

The Columbia State Community College TRIO program was established to assist 140 first generation low-income students, or students with a disability, with support for college success and graduation. Student services provided include tutoring, academic and career counseling, transfer assistance, cultural enhancement, and study skills workshops (examples – Time Management, Financial Management, Health Care, College Study Skills, etc.). Also, Summer Bridge, a three-day intensive orientation designed to enhance the success of 40 first time Columbia State students will begin this summer.

### **Lyceum Events**

Musical performances, cultural events, plays, films, lectures, discussions and more are held almost weekly to enhance student learning and engagement. These events are organized and run by faculty and staff.

### **Career Advising**

A career advising center exists but personnel for manning the center has not been adequate. Through reorganization the College is moving to provide greater services. The curriculum program coordinators and faculty provide career advisement as related to the field of the faculty and sometimes staff member. Career advising is important to the student's success and workforce development.

### **Cultural and Diversity Activities**

Through our Diversity Office, advising is provided students. A generational mentoring program composed of mentors throughout the region and designed to guide students towards successful college completion is active. Other projects include a scholarship and guidance program for adults returning to complete a degree that had previously stopped or dropped out.

### Partnership Initiatives for Student Success

Many activities for student success and in support of workforce development are completed through faculty and staff working in concert with one another. These programs increase the competence of secondary and post-secondary students in understanding professions and career requirements. These activities include:

#### **Student Leadership Conference**

County high and unit school students participate in a conference held on the Columbia campus for increased understandings of workforce skills and leadership requirements. Local business owners, CFO's, attorneys, doctors are the speakers.

#### **Summer Math Academy**

Local business owners, bankers and contractors give time to fifth, sixth, and seventh graders attending a Summer Math Academy designed to improve the basic math skills of students for everyday living. The Academies are held at five different locations in our service counties.

#### **Mule Town Family Network (system of care for youth and families with Serious Emotional Disorders)**

Students and staff work cooperatively to volunteer time that provides career development with organizations such as Centerstone, TN Voices, Department of Human Services, Juvenile Justice, City of Columbia Police, Sheriff's Department, and Family Center.

#### **ITV and Dual Enrollment Grant**

The College received a grant to implement an ITV system in rural high schools to provide opportunities for dual enrollment and industry training.

#### **Facilities Use**

College facilities are made available for businesses, organizations, and industries for use in training, annual meetings, or other activities that supports their business.

#### **COOP Program**

Campus staff works with different businesses /organizations, including the City of Columbia and local businesses, to place students in COOP experiences.

#### **Mass Communications Conference**

Approximately 200 secondary and post-secondary students participate in a Mass Communication Conference on the Columbia Campus each fall. The highlight of the conference is a panel of media and marketing professionals who gives an overview of their field and then takes questions from the audience for an open discussion speakers –The panel usually features TV/Radio hosts, newspaper writers, computer web developers and even music industry marketing professionals.

### Statement of Concern and Consideration

We are all concerned for the renewal and growth of our state and country's economy. We understand that education, partnerships, and development are central to that renewal and growth. Columbia State, as with

other colleges across the nation, has experienced great reductions in funding, reductions that have not been recouped through the increases in tuition. We are concerned with tuition increases and how such increases tend to close the college door. Yet to continue at similar levels of access, service, and programs, the tuition increases are required in our new economic arena.

To maintain its effectiveness, Columbia state completed an in depth analysis of functions as compared to mission and eliminated functions that were not evaluated as essential to mission fulfillment. This process allowed for budget-mission alignment. Yet we are in a dilemma as to how to respond to the many requests that we have for existing and emerging programs.

The College is hindered from response due to budgetary resources for program development personnel, equipment, instructional resources, and in some instances, facilities. While we seek grants, they are difficult to obtain due to competition or grant requirements that are not fully consistent with the needs of our area. Our Colleges are now very lean and filled with people working at maximum capacity, yet we are to increase access and graduation numbers.

Most DOL grants are linked to existing labor market needs; resources are needed to provide for emerging fields such as green technology, Biotechnology, or state recruiting plans for industries that will create a labor demand that does not currently exist in the area. A possible alternative to the current grant allocation process during these difficult economic times is to provide block grant funds to community colleges for program development that requires positive student success results over a four year period or refund of the funds received.

Another possible area for consideration, that would prove beneficial, is to provide for a program development specialist at each community college. Current personnel declines and increased personnel loads create lag in desired response to the identified need. This specialist would be the leader responsible for development of and integrating industry and curriculum requirements for training, certificate, or degree programs implementation.

As you are so well aware, we have all been proud to acknowledge education as the great equalizer of the peoples of our great Nation. Yet, this fall I see the door beginning to close. There is now, in Tennessee, an ACT standard for entry into remedial and developmental programs – in applying this new standard to Fall 2010, we anticipate that 100 students who were admitted last fall would not have been, if our new standard were in effect. I do not argue with the standard especially as we move towards being primarily responsible for student success, but I am greatly concerned that the opportunity to attempt a post-secondary education may be determined by many intervening variables that occurred during a student's youth. I am also concerned that the door is closing for some as tuition increases, yet to maintain the programs and services in our economic times the tuition is needed. I believe that education is the great equalizer and that I am a product: I desire that opportunity for all.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Janet F. Smith, President  
Columbia State Community College