



frequently asked QUESTIONS

Altamaha Technical College and Okefenokee Technical College will be merged effective July 1, 2014, under a plan adopted in early August by the State Board of the Technical College System of Georgia.

How many mergers has the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) undertaken?

Between 2009 and 2013, the TCSG merged 17 TCSG colleges into eight; the system now has 24 colleges instead of 33.

Specifically which TCSG colleges have been merged?

- *Chattahoochee Tech in Marietta, North Metro Tech in Acworth and Appalachian Tech in Jasper merged to form the new Chattahoochee Technical College (July 2009).*
- *Coosa Valley Tech in Rome and Northwestern Tech in Lafayette merged to form the new Georgia Northwestern Technical College (July 2009).*
- *Southeastern Tech in Vidalia and Swainsboro Tech merged to form the new Southeastern Technical College (July 2009).*
- *West Central Tech in Waco and West Georgia Tech in LaGrange merged to form the new West Georgia Technical College (July 2009).*
- *Griffin Tech and Flint River Tech in Thomaston merged to form the new Southern Crescent Technical College (July 2010).*
- *Valdosta Tech and East Central Tech in Fitzgerald merged to form the new Wiregrass Georgia Technical College (July 2010).*
- *Sandersville Technical College and Heart of Georgia Technical College merged to form Oconee Fall Line Technical College (July 2011).*
- *Central Georgia Technical College and Middle Georgia Technical College merged to form Central Georgia Technical College (July 2013).*

Why was the decision made to merge Altamaha Technical College and Okefenokee Technical College?

The recent decision to merge Altamaha Technical College (ATC) and Okefenokee Technical College (OTC) is part of the TCSG effort to increase the colleges' efficiencies while enhancing students' access to more programs and instructors.

The TCSG strives to keep technical college operations and programs as efficient as possible. The past downturn in the national and state economy and the prospect of a slow recovery necessitate careful management of the Georgia taxpayers' investment in the TCSG. The mergers have saved on administrative costs while creating larger and more influential colleges with greater resources and enhanced capabilities to deliver more programs to our students.

How do you decide the name of the merged college?

In previous mergers, the name of the merged college has been selected by boards of directors of the merging colleges with input from local stakeholders. The ATC and OTC Boards of Directors submitted Coastal Pines Technical College to the State Board of the Technical College System of Georgia as the new merged college name. Approval was granted by the State Board on October 3, 2013.

As a result of the previous mergers, has there been a negative effect on college services?

First and foremost, the delivery of all programs and services to TCSG students remains strong. The merged TCSG colleges have been able to offer greater student access to technical education and program opportunities, even during a prolonged period of state budget cutbacks.

Have any of the mergers resulted in the closure of campuses?

The mergers did not result in the closings of any campuses or college facilities.

How will the merger affect the availability of instructional programs?

The merger is an important decision made in the face of major state budget reductions. Mergers have protected faculty positions and kept instructors in the classrooms during a period of declining appropriations and record enrollment growth for the TCSG.

How will the ATC/OTC merger save money?

The primary cost-saving result of the mergers is the elimination of some upper-level administrative positions, including presidents and vice presidents, whose jobs were made unnecessary by the consolidation of colleges. Most faculty and staff positions have remained unaffected.

What is the projected annual administrative cost savings resulting from the merger?

The TCSG estimates an annual savings of a minimum of \$500,000 in administrative costs per merger. Additional savings will be realized from the ability of the merged colleges to add to their existing programs through the sharing of instructor and classroom resources. In FY10, funds saved by the mergers enabled the TCSG to absorb a \$6.2 million budget reduction.

Does a merger benefit one college more than the other?

Each merger is a collaboration of colleges and has not been viewed as one college taking over another. The campuses that make up the merged college each maintain important roles in their communities and regions. Their mission remains to provide quality technical education programs to their students as well as a talented pool of employees for the businesses and industries that depend on the colleges for a highly-trained 21st century workforce.

How will students benefit from the merger?

TCSG students now enjoy the advantage of greater sharing of the merged colleges' program resources along with expanded access to instructors and technology.

What happens to the Local Board of Directors at each college?

The merged colleges will have a combined local board of directors. The local boards of the colleges will work closely together to transition to a new board for the merged college that has equal representation among their membership. All counties in the service delivery areas of the merged colleges will be represented.

How quickly will the two colleges merge?

The Altamaha Technical College and Okefenokee Technical College merger is scheduled to be effective July 1, 2014.

However, there are issues to resolve before a merger can occur, including accreditation, college workforce plans, the merging of technical college, adult education and workforce training programs, PeopleSoft and banner consolidations, and much more.

How will the main campus designation be determined?

The "main campus" designation is primarily for accreditation purposes and does not carry much significance beyond that. At present time, the President of the merged college will have an office on the Waycross Campus and the Jesup Campus. When campuses are constructed in Glynn County and Camden County, the President will have an office at those locations as well.

In this particular merger, the Waycross Campus is the largest of the seven campuses and will carry the designation of main campus.

As in the case of most mergers, the President will regularly be at all campuses and will spend a significant amount of time travelling throughout the service area.

How will the designation of a Main Campus affect the location of Vice Presidents and other Executive Level Positions?

The senior leadership will no doubt be a representation from both colleges. Regardless of their "home" campus, the vice presidents/executive level positions will also do a lot of travelling between campuses. Therefore, in most cases, they will be able to remain at their current location and will not have to relocate.

What is the timeline for a new logo and mascot?

ATC and OTC are working with H2o, an advertising firm in Brunswick, to help establish a formal marketing plan that will include the development of a new logo, mascot and branding campaign. The colleges will receive numerous samples from H2o very soon and start college community reviews of them before the end of 2013.

College Accreditation

Both colleges are regionally accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). Okefenokee Technical College is in its five-year reaffirmation process, which is scheduled to be completed June 2014. Immediately after the reaffirmation of OTC, the SACSCOC Board will most likely approve the merger of the two colleges with an effective date of July 1, 2014.