



ON
CAMPUS:

Southwest Mississippi Community College

www.smcc.edu

PUBLIC 2 YEAR

Staying close to home was the initial reason Cardarius Grady chose Southwest, but what kept him there was the caring faculty.

"All of my instructors are so helpful and willing to go the extra mile for me," said Grady, who is a sophomore pre-engineering major. "At Southwest, my instructors not only teach me, but they also serve as role models. I really appreciate the fact that they get to know me personally."

Southwest's faculty and administration make it their goal to help students in every phase of life and learning.

It's this level of commitment that has contributed to an increase in the campus' fall enrollment. In fact, enrollment is up 24 percent from just three years ago.

Although the economy is a contributing factor to the high numbers, registrar Matthew Calhoun says there is more to it.

"This being our third year of increased enrollment shows us our faculty and our staff have been concentrating on recruiting, and their efforts have paid off," he said.

If any area at Southwest feels the impact of the higher student population, it's the Career-Technical division. Nearly every Career-Technical program has a waiting list. Southwest's well construction technology program is the only college program of its kind offered in the nation, and its occupational health and safety program is the only one of its kind provided through the state's network of 15 community colleges. Southwest also offers the popular health information technology program that prepares graduates to work under the supervision of medical records administrators in healthcare settings.

Another recent addition is a two-year process technology program, which is one of only two programs offered in the state. Process technology graduates earn jobs in the fields of refining, petrochemical, power generation and oil and gas production. Starting salaries for these jobs begin at \$45,000 to \$65,000. After several years with a company, it is not uncommon for



For Next Magazine

The student union at Southwest Mississippi Community College is the center of student life on campus.

Southwest Mississippi Community College, 1929

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some graduates to earn more than \$100,000 annually. Through partnership with leading oil industries such as Denbury, Chevron and Shell, process technology students gain technical advice, state-of-the-art equipment, scholarships and paid summer internship opportunities.

While an outside view of Southwest draws attention to the campus' picturesque setting, featuring a peaceful lake, lush foliage, blooming azaleas, winding trails and towering pines, a closer look reveals the school's rich student life. To complement a strong academic focus, Southwest offers a variety of activities and organizations. Southwest also sponsors more athletic teams than any other community college in Mississippi and is the only community college in the state with men's and women's track teams.

To kick off football season, Southwest

hosts an annual tailgate party for its students, alumni and area high school seniors. Another popular event is the school's annual "Meet the Bears" party. Students may also choose to participate in a variety of organizations ranging from musical groups, such as the show-stopping "Stage Band" musicians and performers, to campus leaders involved in Student Government Association.

Sophomore, physical therapy major Amanda Brown knows the benefits of being involved on campus. "It's important to study and work hard academically, but it's also important to remember to have a social life. Being president of Phi Theta Kappa, sophomore homecoming maid and a member of the Baptist Student Union and Bear Tracker organization, has given me so many opportunities to meet new people, and it has made me more outgoing."