



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 26, 2019**

**CONTACT:** Chandra Scott | [cscott@maef.net](mailto:cscott@maef.net) | O 251.476.0002 | C 251.508.7729

**Bishop State and Coastal Alabama Community Colleges Join Degrees When Due, a Nationwide Completion Initiative to Strengthen the Pathway to a College Degree**

**Mobile, AL (September 25, 2019)** – Bishop State and Coastal Alabama Community Colleges have been selected to join [Degrees When Due](#), a national initiative of the [Institute for Higher Education Policy \(IHEP\)](#), to help students who have some college credits complete their degrees.

As two of the colleges and universities from twenty states participating in Degrees When Due, Bishop State and Coastal Alabama will learn best practices in [degree reclamation](#) and provide targeted support while re-engaging students who have paused, or “stopped out,” their studies. Bishop State and Coastal Alabama’s participation in the initiative is facilitated through the Mobile Area Education Foundation’s [75,000 Degrees](#) Talent Hub initiative.

“Governor Kay Ivey has set a state goal of 500,000 credentialed Alabamians by 2025 to meet the workforce demands of our state’s business/industry. Reengaging students in the 75,000 Degrees Talent Hub is essential to fulfilling our region’s goal of 75,000 Degrees by 2030,” states Chandra Scott, Director of Strategic Outcomes for the Mobile Area Education Foundation. “Degrees When Due will provide both Bishop State and Coastal Alabama Community Colleges with proven strategies that will better identify and serve returning learners.”

Degrees When Due will grant Bishop State and Coastal Alabama Community Colleges access to a variety of resources to help more students complete their degrees and to help the institution audit students’ previously earned and transfer credits to determine the most efficient pathway to graduation. The program will benefit the more than 62,791 individuals in Alabama who have been identified as having some college credits, but no awarded degree.

“Coastal Alabama Community College is committed to meeting the educational and workforce needs of all of our citizens in southwest Alabama. Degrees When Due supports and strengthens our efforts and will help us meet the 75,000 attainment goal,” said Coastal Alabama Community College Dean of External Funding & Instructional Services Dr. Melinda Byrd-Murphy.

“Our Degrees When Due institutional and state partners are building a strong pathway to degree attainment for all students, including by providing an on-ramp for those who have paused their studies or ‘stopped-out,’” said IHEP President [Michelle Asha Cooper, Ph.D.](#) “IHEP enthusiastically welcomes the selected institutions and states to this effort. Through this initiative, they will increase student success, serve a diverse set of student populations, and join us in addressing one of higher education’s most pressing challenges: degree completion.”

“Degrees When Due aligns with Bishop State’s overall mission of providing multiple pathways to student access and success,” said Bishop State President Dr. Reginald Sykes. “The faculty and staff of Bishop State are committed to serving all students and promoting increased attainment to meet our region’s goal of 75,000 Degrees by 2030.”

###

### **Mobile Area Education Foundation**

The Mobile Area Education Foundation is a county-wide partnership of citizens, businesses, local public school systems, colleges and public agencies working together to ensure that all the children of Mobile County are given the opportunity to succeed. Its mission is to build community responsibility for improving public education outcomes in Mobile County. Visit, [www.maef.net](http://www.maef.net)

### **75,000 Degrees Initiative**

The Mobile Area Education Foundation was selected as one of 75 communities in the U.S. to receive a Lumina Foundation grant to design and support local efforts in improving college attainment rates. MAEF has facilitated the work of the Education Commission, Mobile's PreK-20 council to create a sense of urgency to double the number of post-secondary credentials and degrees by the year 2030 to our region's growing workforce needs. Through the use of data, commitment of shared resources and responsibility, and transparently reporting progress, the 75,000 Degrees Blueprint was developed.

This Blueprint is a post-secondary attainment agenda success plan which will guide the collective goal of doubling the number of Mobile citizens with degrees and credentials by 2030. The 75,000 Degrees Blueprint outlines Mobile's challenges, recommendations and measurable outcomes to students Getting READY, Getting IN and Getting THROUGH post-secondary pathways. The Blueprint also provides a Call to Action for all stakeholders to ensure the sustainability and success of this community reaching 75,000 Degrees. Visit, [www.maef.net](http://www.maef.net), for more information.

### **75,000 Degrees Talent Hub**

The 75,000 Degrees Talent Hub is a post-secondary centered collaborative led by the Mobile Area Education Foundation in partnership with Bishop State Community College, Coastal Alabama Community College, Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce and University of South Alabama. The work of our Talent Hub is driven by our community's post-secondary goal- 75,000 Degrees by 2030. The four areas of focus that guide our approach are: 1) Increase persistence and on-time graduation 2) Create a 'transfer culture' at the University of South Alabama 3) Scale and promote high quality certificate programs and pathways with multi-tiered supports for African-American and low-income students and 4) Enable conditions for long-term attainment success.