Case Study of East Mississippi Community College's plan to assist the Sara Lee Corporation employees due to plant closing

Bruce J Hanson

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Case study of East Mississippi Community College’s plan to assist the Sara Lee Corporation employees due to plant closing

By

Bruce J. Hanson

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of
Mississippi State University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Community College Leadership
in the Department of Leadership and Foundations

Mississippi State, Mississippi

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2012
Case study of East Mississippi Community College’s plan to assist the Sara Lee Corporation employees due to plant closing

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The aim or purpose of this study was to statistically determine whether there were significant differences in obtaining employment and wages after training provided by East Mississippi Community College (EMCC). The training was specifically provided to employees of Sara Lee Corporation, LLC, after the massive layoff when the company closed its plant in West Point, Clay County, Mississippi. The plant, a food-processing entity, had been in continuous operation since 1902 after it was founded by two brothers from Clay County, Mississippi. Data obtained from the Statewide Longitudinal Integrated Workforce Management System, as reported by EMCC and the Mississippi Department of Employment Security, were used in the study.

Descriptive statistics were used to quantify differences in age, training received, gender, race, and other characteristics. A logistic regression model was used to determine the odds of a Sara Lee employee being re-employed after training in manufacturing, retail, and other jobs. An ordinary least-squares regression model was used to determine wage rate after rehire and after training had been provided. The model also considered
whether other services received by the employees such as food stamps, unemployment insurance, had a significant impact on wages or obtaining employment after training.

The findings of the study indicate that there was a statistically significant difference in obtaining employment post-training based upon the type training received, and that particular training in manufacturing skills resulted in Sara Lee employees getting jobs in manufacturing. The results of the study showed a 90% employment rate. Income while employed at Sara Lee had a significant impact on employment income after training according to the study. Additionally, Black Sara Lee employees had a significantly lower wage rate than White Sara Lee employees and female employees had lower wage rates (more than $7,400) than male employees. Non-manufacturing jobs paid lower wages than manufacturing jobs, and younger Sara Lee employees were more likely (82.1 %) to find employment with higher wages. Finally, the researcher determined that other services received by Sara Lee employees had no significant impact on employment or wages.
DEDICATION

My son, John Wells, has been a great encourager to me throughout this effort toward my doctoral degree. He is a true hero of our country. My mother, Emma Hanson, who is 93 years old, has continued to offer words of praise as only a mother could. My brothers, Charles Peter and Paul, both far away and doing their own thing, have never failed to tell their big brother how much he means to them and how proud they are of him. Friends have at first wondered aloud why I would undertake such a project as I have reached and passed retirement age, but as time has passed, they have also climbed aboard and even pushed me and encouraged me to go for it. My colleagues at East Mississippi Community College (EMCC) have also been a source of strength. Two friends, Chad Stocks of Hinds Community College and Mike McGrevey at Mississippi State University, have worked side by side with me and have made me want to achieve this goal. They are a gift from God. My special friend and mentor, Dr. Raj Shaunak, at EMCC has inspired me to seek as I have never before done. He started my thirst for this effort.

Without question I reserve the most special thanks and the most special praise to my wife of 45 years, Linda. She has always stood by me, encouraged me, and blessed me with her leadership, her gentleness, and her wonderful caring spirit, without which I
would just be a bumbling man without much reason to want to succeed. Finally, I
dedicate this to my son Jay (October 22, 1972–August 20, 2002).
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks go to Dr. Rick Young, President of EMCC, who has been a good friend for many years and who has believed in me enough to use my very few talents to help this great community college continue to soar with his leadership. I am grateful to Dr. Raj Shaunak, who has given me inspiration. Without the help and counsel of Dr. Domenico Parisi of the National Strategic Planning and Analysis Research Center (nSPARC), this study could not have been completed, and I am grateful to him for that. I am most thankful to Mike McGrevey and Chad Stocks, two great friends who have walked this path with me as fellow students. They are truly great men. I am grateful for the technical assistance I received from Mark and Alison Alexander. Delphi Wilson and Dava Washburn were enormous help as I started my classes at Mississippi State University after a layoff of 37 years without being a student in the classroom. I thank my cousin Jack Hodnik. He said he would finish his book if I would finish this writing. He kept the bargain so I must too. Thank you, Cori, you are my special daughter-in-law.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This study provided East Mississippi Community College (EMCC) and the State of Mississippi with information that can lead to the improvement of instruction and delivery of training to the existing workforce. The study also provided insight for training of the dislocated workforce due to major layoffs at Mississippi industries such as Sara Lee. Particularly important is that lessons learned through this study could impact the expenditure of state training funds at a time when there is an economic downturn and all community colleges are seeking scarce funds to support their training efforts.

The main goal of the study was to provide the college, its partners in training, and subsequently the State of Mississippi with a measurement of the training provided to the Sara Lee workforce from 2007 through 2009. The results might benefit future funding decisions.

The importance of community colleges to the education and vocational training of the nation’s low-income youth and working class adults cannot be overstated (Holzer & Nightingale, 2009). Throughout much of the 20th Century, the nation’s publically funded community colleges opened the door to a broad base of students while serving local business as a cost-effective and responsive resource for workforce development (Jacobs, Mellow, Bailey, & Belfield, 2009).
Community colleges have provided postsecondary credentials needed by low-income youth and working adults to increase their earnings and overall skills to keep America’s workforce competitive (Holzer & Nightingale, 2009). According to Jacobs et al. (2009), 2008 data indicated that more than 6,596,356 students attended 1,152 two-year public community college for-credit programs. At least since 2008, an estimated 5 million students attended colleges in non-credit continuing education. This totals more than 11 million students enrolled in programs that advance the goals of a well-prepared workforce strengthening basic academic skills, such as reading and mathematics; earning an associate’s degree; gaining certification in an industry or discipline; or meeting the specific training needs of a partnering industry (Jacobs et al., 2009). Added to this list of community college functions is the role in economic development efforts that the community college plays in support of Mississippi’s actions to entice industry to locate nearby because of the job training capability the community college provides.

While the community college role is to provide education and training for the various student population groups and business and industry partners, the role of a community college’s workforce services arm becomes one of high importance when an industry closes its doors. Heidkamp and Kauder (2008) pointed out that strategies established in advance of major layoffs can yield information—that is, intelligence—that is vital to creating a more effective state rapid response system.

Statement of the Problem

Community colleges are collaborating with the state agencies responsible for assisting employees who suffer such a calamity as a plant closing. They must be both
prepared to react effectively to help the laid-off worker hone his or her skills and/or add new skills to his or her personal toolkit to re-enter the workforce. Heidkamp & Kauder (2008) stated, “How effective the response of the community college is, and the detailed analysis of the effects of the training provided by the community college to the laid-off worker, are not readily apparent” (p. 3). Further, in light of a major layoff, such as occurred from December 2006 through March 2007 at the Sara Lee facility in West Point, Mississippi, not much forewarning existed to give forewarning when such an extraordinary sized event occurs. In this case, a reliable measurement can really only occur after such a dynamic catastrophe bludgeons a local economy.

Of the 2,100 employees at the Sara Lee plant, roughly 1,200 of them were low-skilled workers. Nearly 1,000 of them received training at EMCC after the layoff occurred.

Not all employees lived in West Point, but rather many came from the surrounding communities as well. Consequently, the layoff affected not only West Point but was also felt throughout the region known as the Golden Triangle and even further out as well within the footprint of EMCC.

A key element in this study is what the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) refers to as a Rapid Response. In this case, EMCC was a major player. Parisi, Grice, Taquino, and Gill (2004) stated that “within the framework of workforce development in Mississippi, a Rapid Response system is designed to assist job seekers who have been terminated or laid off due to closure or downsizing of a business” (p. 3). Mississippi’s Rapid Response is generally focused on those employees, described as dislocated workers of 50 or more, who are part of a labor force that has been laid off by a
company. Such a Rapid Response usually entails an on-site orientation session. In this case study, such a session did occur at the Sara Lee plant. However, it was modified by the college, with cooperation from MDES, to include resume writing and counseling by the college staff. In addition to the usual information provided by the Workforce Investment Network (WIN) Job Center, the Rapid Response effort included the signing up of employees to take available training classes at EMCC’s Golden Triangle campus. The opportunity to sign up for classes occurred at the same time as the resume writing effort. Within the context of the Rapid Response, approximately 90% of the laid-off workers of Sara Lee received such counseling directly by EMCC personnel. As discovered by EMCC staff during this effort, many of the production employees had attained less than a high school education. Additionally, though highly experienced in the meat-packing business, the employees required improvement in basic mathematics and reading skills in order to be competitive for gainful employment.

Sara Lee employees who received notification that they were to lose their jobs were no less impacted by forces currently shaping the workforce. Underscoring their plight are the same factors identified by the Rand Corporation and testified to in U.S. Congress around the same timeframe that the Sara Lee workforce entered the jobless market. Karoly (2007) in her testimony before Congress on behalf of the Rand Corporation identified three key factors as having the most potential to affect workers and employers in the subsequent 10 to 15 years. The key factors include demographics, technological change, and globalization.

Karoly (2007) maintained that “demographics are relevant in that education attainment and labor force participation have shifted, bringing about a demand for a
different mix of goods and services. Concomitantly, technological demands further shape what goods and services are produced” (p. 3). The net effect of such a trend provided an enormous blow to the Sara Lee worker who has thus far only needed a high school education at best and a willingness to work at a repetitive job day in and day out just as his/her parents had done in the years before the Sara Lee layoff.

The higher expectations of the workforce, as Karoly (2007) attributed to technological advances, in turn, generated a performance work system that did not allow Sara Lee workers to enter in the new job market concurrently with the economic downturn that faced Mississippi in 2007 because of their lack of training and expertise. Karoly referred to this as a “redefinition of employer–employee relationships and work arrangements” (p. 4). Sara Lee employees had to retrain into areas that did not suitably fit the job skills that they had developed over the long period of time that they worked for the corporation.

When Sara Lee closed, the old-style system of production was prevalent in the region. At the same time, an enormous change was taking place with the new jobs being created by the likes of American Eurocopter, a division of European Aeronautic Defense and Space Company, Aurora Flight Services, Severstall Steel, Pacific Car Company, and others demanding precisely the job characteristics that Karoly was referring to in her testimony before Congress. Essentially, Sara Lee workers were being laid off just as these trends began to take full effect less than 8 miles from the Sara Lee plant in West Point, Mississippi, and within easy driving distance of the existing Sara Lee workforce located in the surrounding counties.
How to effectively meet the needs of a primarily aging workforce that has a record of accomplishment, such as showing up for work every day for years and high rates of productivity, but one of low work-skill levels, was a daunting task. Mississippi workers having a great work ethic is a slogan used throughout the state by economic developers. In the case of Sara Lee employees, the question is if this work ethic was sufficient to equip the workforce for the next employment challenge?

When determining whether the needs of the workforce are being met, steps must sometimes be taken to question whether this is actually so. Whether the workers are being given the chance they need to survive, much less to gain ground, is called into question. Sara Lee’s employees were no different than most Americans who need job-skills training. Americans need job-specific training to get their jobs, and they need upgrading to keep those jobs and get better ones (Carnevales & Johnston, 1989). To compete either for existing jobs or for new jobs because of an expanding industrial base locating nearby, more training is clearly the answer for both the employer and the employee.

A workforce with sound basic skills will strengthen its employer’s ability to compete, and, for the individual worker, basic skills are the keys to improving opportunity and quality of life (Carnevales & Johnston, 1989). Further, there must be sufficient funds available and existing mechanisms to properly utilize these funds. Regarding available funds, the magnitude of such a layoff as Sara Lee’s called for drastic action. Ting (1991) conducted a study of the impact of job training on the re-employment probability of dislocated workers (precisely the conditions surrounding the ongoing study presented herein). In his study, Ting analyzed the effect of different types of job-training
assistance programs and found that though the Job Training Partnership Act of 1982’s (JTPA) goal was to augment the skills of program participants to improve their employment probabilities, not all assistance programs were as effective as expected under the act.

Ting (1991) suggested that programs such as job-search assistance do not significantly impact re-employment opportunities. Training rules under the JTPA allowed greater discretion to states to provide a number of services including less expensive tracks such as job-placement services. Rather, Ting stated, “that for job training programs to be more effective, more emphasis should be given to classroom training programs which provide basic skill training for increasing dislocated worker’s human capital” (p. 41). In short, basic skills are critical to the probability of a dislocated worker’s obtaining employment. Ting’s study indicated that emphasis on skills training should result in the higher probability of that happening.

For a variety of reasons, with the passage of Mississippi’s Workforce Training Act of 2004, many community colleges have been able to tap a financial resource to make more training available to the workforce of the state of Mississippi. EMCC was prepared to respond with a plan of action, but a partnership between local state and federal agencies was needed to execute such a response. An allocation of much more funds than that available through the Workforce Investment Act of 2004 (WIA) was necessary to execute such a plan.

Collaborating with the Three Rivers Planning and Development District, EMCC sought additional dedicated resources in order to hire more counselors and instructors at the college. Equipment and materials as well as supplies were necessary in addition to
renovation and augmentation of buildings in West Point to bring the training closer to the
dislocated workforce. A $4 million National Emergency Grant (NEG) from the U.S.
Department of Labor was secured to offset the enormous financial burden of training
such a large number of people at one time. Individual training accounts (ITAs) were also
provided through the NEG funding mechanism.

In addition to career counseling and assessments, basic skills upgrades (Adult
Basic Education and General Education Degree) and short-term skills training for jobs
available in the region were offered to the Sara Lee Employees. Additionally,
medical/health classes, construction skills classes, and modern manufacturing
certification and advanced manufacturing courses were provided. Specific skills training
classes were provided to the Sara Lee workforce as well.

Another element adding to the Sara Lee workforce’s dilemma was the absence of
skills needed to meet the demand of the business and industry most likely to be the next
employer. There was clearly a lack of measurable credentials that would indicate that a
potential employee from the Sara Lee ranks could measure up to new standards necessary
to compete in the global market place. Helping underprepared adults such as these
otherwise very dependable workers required EMCC to align its training services offered
by the workforce division to meet the employees where they were and offer them an
opportunity to gain measurable credentials.

The Community College Bridges to Opportunity (2008) Initiative described this
as “ensuring that students acquire credentials for higher level employment and further
education” (p. 7). A descriptive term readily used is stackable credentials. By training the
Sara Lee workers and awarding them certificates of completion along with utilizing
WorkKeys® to test the workforce in order to award future workers with a Career Readiness Certificate, EMCC was able to add to the employees’ resumes. The problem, however, was that an easily workable tool did not exist to readily measure the effectiveness of the training received by the Sara Lee workers. How to determine whether the training received had any effect on the Sara Lee employees as they re-entered the workforce needed to be addressed.

**Purpose of the Study**

One of the worst economic downturns in modern history produced growing legions of workers who permanently lost their jobs. According to Bradley (2010), the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) estimated that there are about 4 million long-term, displaced or dislocated workers as referred to in Mississippi, workers among the nation’s 15 million unemployed. One in four of the displaced workers lost a manufacturing job (Bradley, 2010).

Mississippi is suffering from the effects of a major downturn in its economy. Its manufacturing base is directly affected by the downturn, which is in turn affecting many national and international companies with facilities located in the state. Because of the downturn, a significant portion of the workforce is affected and that workforce, if laid off, will require basic education, job-skill training and upgraded skills to compete for jobs in anticipation of an improvement in the economic climate. What some may say is the biggest factor in the failure to find work, after the Sara Lee closing, may be that the deep recession began just as that event occurred. The bleakest job market in a quarter of a century added additional burden on the workforce and on the trainers of them.
A key aspect of the area in which the bulk of the Sara Lee employees live is one that has been recognized as a problem in addressing workforce development and employee training. It is described by the Aspen Institute Community Strategies Group (2008) in its report to the National Fund for Workforce Solutions as “distance and density” (p. 6). The report indicates that in rural America, such as the area in which Sara Lee employees live, distance and density “profoundly affect every aspect of workforce development for employers, services providers and workers” (p. 6). Included in such service providers are community colleges and their workforce services components, which supply much of the training needed by the workforce. The workforce surely also includes dislocated or displaced workers as well as the incumbent workforce.

The Aspen Institute Community Strategies Group (2008) study provided examples of what it meant by distance and density:

- Good jobs, quality childcare, and affordable housing are seldom found in close proximity.
- Skill training, jobs and services can be spread out or non-existent.
- Federally supported “one-stop services centers” may be 30, 200, or more miles from workers trying to retool, retrain, or find employment.
- Access to postsecondary education or other workforce training providers often requires relocation for workers and their families.
- While Internet access can help overcome these barriers in some areas, others lack even basic local dial-up services, and high-speed access is unavailable at affordable prices across vast swaths of rural America. (p. 6)
Rural populations may have trouble even taking advantage of training opportunities simply because they have trouble affording fuel to drive their vehicles to the training center.

Another equally profound problem facing rural areas in providing workforce training is resource availability. The Aspen Study indicated, for instance, that those formulas to distribute financial resources give precedence to areas of higher density: “Maintaining accessible workforce system infrastructure costs more, because you must support more sites, each serving fewer workers, to maintain reasonable travel times for those served” (2008, p. 7). The result then, according to the study is that “most rural programs have a disproportionate share of available resources tied up in keeping the doors open and providing core services to job seekers (e.g., job search systems)” (Aspen Institute Community Strategies Group, 2008, p. 6). The study group concluded that the problem is compounded if the training had to be delivered for so many workers at one time.

A Bureau of Labor Statistics study indicated that in a cadre of 160,000 laid-off workers in 12 states, those who went through some form of training wound up earning little more than those who did not (Goodman, 2010). It gives rise to other questions—perhaps that other factors might come into play in that even if a job is found by a dislocated worker, after receiving training, it may be a low-wage job. According to Goodman, in essence, it may be that gains from participation in training may not be any more than very small ones, or even non-existent.

Goodman maintained that both labor economists and workforce development experts say results from job training reflect the dubious quality of such short-term
programs. He questioned whether the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), which was written during the time of a robust economy, can be effective in helping low-skilled workers compete with those laid off with a higher skill set. Perhaps the shifting of entire industries and other factors such as global competition make it impossible for these types of programs to work.

To date, there is a paucity of quantifiable data available to determine if a laid-off workforce is receiving adequate training and is finding its way to a job, whether at the same pay, better pay or sometimes at less-than-satisfactory pay. Few, if any analyses, exist to determine if Rapid Response, the tool used to both initiate recovery of a workforce and to provide needed job-skill training, has been effective. Therefore, the purpose of this study, by utilizing a statistical analysis, is to determine whether the training provided by EMCC’s Workforce Division to the Sara Lee employees was effective and resulted in employment.

The measures for this study were the data collected by the National Strategic Planning and Analysis Research Center (nSPARC) at Mississippi State University as reported by EMCC. The college’s report was created as part of the Statewide Longitudinal Integrated Workforce Management System (SLIWMS) and Mississippi Department of Employment Services through the WIN Job Center located in the Golden Triangle area where the Sara Lee plant operated. This study was focused on the Rapid Response participation of a community college, which provided training to a workforce that had suffered a permanent layoff. The study analyzed the data collected to determine whether the training received by the laid-off workforce was effective as reflected in the outcomes of the training as measured by employment, wages, and other variables. Results
from this study gave a more complete picture of whether the training received was pertinent to the successful attainment of new employment.

The study gave the researcher a better understanding of the effects of individual characteristics that might explain differences in the results. The results might therefore assist further research particularly with many community colleges across Mississippi engaging in assisting laid-off workers, this research might aid in the improvement of the training provided; translating into adequate job-skills training that, in turn, translates into new or better employment opportunities.

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework of human capital is the basis for this study. In analyzing training programs under current laws, there is not necessarily an assurance of the effectiveness of these programs (Karoly, 2007). The theory of human capital assumes that people decide whether to invest in their human capital based upon analyses of the expected costs and future returns from the investments (Beaulieu & Mulkey, 1995). It is through this framework that it is imperative to understand the barriers that laid-off workers face, including a lack of measureable credentials such as high school diplomas, GEDs, or other industry accepted certificates. This theory is used to translate economics, people, education, skill, and individual attainment into scientific, measurable outcomes (Becker, 1975).

The lack of definitive measurement studies helps to underscore the dilemma in ascertaining whether community college workforce training programs are effective in response to the closing of a major industry resulting in mass layoffs in a community
college district. The theory suggests that investing in education and training will lead to better employment outcomes (Becker, 1975, 1994).

Additionally, the worker’s task in navigating the offerings on non-credit training after the magnitude of a life-changing occurrence as a plant closing becomes daunting. Calls for bold steps, which may indicate the questioning of the adequacy of such training, affect measurement as well. It is in this light that the theory of human capital is chosen.

**Research Questions**

This study specifically examined the following set of questions:

1. Are there differences evident in wages and employment in comparing those having received training or not? What are the wages for the new employment compared to wages earned at Sara Lee?

2. Do individual characteristics such as age, race, gender, or other effects help explain differences in workforce training outcomes for Sara Lee dislocated workers in re-employment or wages?

**Assumptions**

This study assumes that the data collected from the reporting by EMCC and MDES to nSPARC is representative of the population of the Sara Lee workforce. The study also assumes that sufficient data exist from the single community college and rapid response that occurred. Further, it is assumed that the specificity of the data collected will be sufficient to produce measurable results particularly since the time between the rapid response and end of training may have had an effect on the sample size and a random sample of participation was used. It is assumed also, that because the specific community
college did not fully take advantage of the Workforce Investment Act of 2004, the Rapid Response is directly tied to the WIN Job Center, (Scott, 2008).

**Delimitations**

This study was limited by the following:

1. This study did not compare or contrast experiences other than those in the Golden Triangle Region and its surrounding communities.

2. This study examined only the data directly provided to nSPARC by EMCC and MDES.

3. This study did not compare or contrast experiences between other community colleges in Mississippi that were involved with a Rapid Response or a layoff of the magnitude experienced at Sara Lee.

**Significance of the Study**

Pressure to produce measurable results is on the increase. To justify their expenditure of large sums of state dollars to adequately educate the workforce of the state of Mississippi requires some acceptable tool or method to measure such results in a manner that will satisfy those who are demanding such results. This study provided EMCC and nSPARC at Mississippi State University with such a tool. With such a high demand for education funds and parallel requirement by industry for a highly trained work force, this study could provide a way to accomplish both judicious spending and better training results particularly for dislocated or laid-off workers.
Definition of Terms

The terms listed in this section are provided for clarification of the use of the terms in the study:

*Rapid Response* refers to required state activities under the federal WIA designed to assist workers affected by a layoff in getting quickly connected to public worker assistance benefits and services (Heidkamp & Kauder, 2008).

*Community college* is an institution regionally accredited to award the associate in arts or the associate in science as its highest degree (Cohen & Brawer, 2003).

*Workforce Board* - The combined Workforce Advisory Council and the WIA Board, which provides oversight to the training funds authorized under the Workforce Investment Act of 2004 (HB 973)

*WIN Job Center* - One-stop employment centers created by the Workforce Investment Act of 2004 (Statewatch, 2004)

*Mississippi Community College System* - The 15 public educational institutions serving populations throughout the state (Davis, 1992)

*Career Readiness Certificate* - The Career Readiness Certificate certifies that job seekers have the core employability skills required across multiple industries and occupations (Bolin, 2006).

*WorkKeys* - A job assessment system that measures real-world skills that employers believe are critical to job success (Bolin, 2006)

*Stackable Credentials* - An idea promoted by several states in their efforts to train their workforces. Ohio, for example, uses a system of training established by the Ohio Legislature that would build or stack pre-college certificates on top of one another in
order to prepare students for college or entry-level employment (Bolin, 2006).

*State Board for Community Colleges* - This board coordinates the activities of the several public community and junior colleges. It provides reports of such activities and performs other duties as prescribed in the Mississippi Code of 1972 as amended, including but not limited to distribution of funds appropriated by the Mississippi legislature and from federal and other sources.

*WIN Network* - The Workforce Investment Network (WIN) in Mississippi is an innovative strategy designed to provide convenient, one-stop employment and training services to employers and job seekers. It combines federal, state and community workforce programs and services into physical locations throughout Mississippi.

*Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (Wired)/West Alabama and East Mississippi (WAEM)* is a two-state regional development effort managed by The Montgomery Institute of Mississippi and the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Development Agency. Four community colleges in Mississippi including Jones Junior College, Meridian Community College, East Central Community College and EMCC participated along with four Alabama community colleges (Bevill State, Shelton State, Wallace State and Alabama Southern).

**Chapter Summary**

This research study is organized into five chapters. Chapter I presents introductory elements of the study and includes the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, general research questions, assumptions, delimitations, and definition of terms. A review of related literature is compiled in
Chapter II, which addresses the questions of the effectiveness of training offered by EMCC to a specific segment of the workforce in the EMCC region. Measurement of the effectiveness is important to the leadership of EMCC and the state of Mississippi.

Chapter III of this study discusses the methods and procedures used to carry out the study. This chapter includes the research design, population and sampling procedures, instrumentation, validity of the instrument, reliability of the instrument, and data collection procedures. The results and statistical analysis of the study are presented in Chapter IV. The analysis of the study involves demographics of the sample of participants drawn from a database that received pertinent data from both EMCC and MDES, and an examination of the two research questions. The study concludes in Chapter V with a summary of the findings and implications, conclusions drawn from the study, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research.

Additional data are included in the study’s appendices, which provide narratives of the actual responses made by EMCC leadership and Workforce staff to address the Sara Lee closing. The information is drawn from reports made to the Appalachian Regional Commission and from press accounts written by the college.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A review of the literature related to this study is presented in this chapter. This review consists of eight points that are fundamental to this study: (a) a history of American community colleges, (b) a history of the community and junior colleges of Mississippi, (c) governance of Mississippi’s community colleges including local boards of directors and the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges (SBCJC), (d) a history of workforce training nationally, (e) a history of Mississippi’s workforce training, (f) an overview of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, (g) Mississippi’s Workforce Investment Act of 1994, and (h) rapid response to a workforce layoff, with analysis of the cooperative effort that EMCC participated in during the 2008 shutdown of the Sara Lee plant in West Point, Mississippi.

This study is timely in that WIA is currently under review by the U.S. Congress to be reauthorized. As a catalyst for the development of the workforce, the 1998 act provided much-needed dollars and guidance to provide training to the workforce. Extreme global competition and high unemployment during the current economic downturn may, however, require a bolder focus and foster stronger but measurable outcomes. Whether full employment is attainable remains to be determined, but key steps may be possible that can bolster the already successful training accomplished under the
current act, and might provide guidance to an even greater transformation than that already accomplished.

Three major contextual issues are shaping the reauthorization of WIA: (a) the imperative across the United States for better systems integration, (b) the realization that social change happens most effectively at the regional level, and (c) the need for new systems of accountability that better integrate the outputs of both economic development and workforce development systems (Padden, Hewat, Hollenbeck, Walshok, & Almandsmith, 2010). In expectation of the reauthorization it certainly could be anticipated that these issues will drive funding and programs which will affect Mississippi’s delivery of training based upon the reauthorized act. Perhaps this study can assist Mississippi in focusing on the most effective training mechanisms or best practices.

Perhaps the most effective tool that could be implemented to effectuate such broad changes would be to develop a cross-functional and cross-jurisdictional collaborative effort. Padden et al. (2010) advanced several points in a white paper that would characterize the new workforce systems envisaged by the reauthorization of the WIA of 2010. Among several ideas, Padden et al. suggested that a collaborative effort be accomplished, which would provide a structure for all key entities to be engaged and to strategically plan in order to train the current workforce and address the future needs as well.

Some community colleges in Mississippi and perhaps even around the country are already engaged in such a strategy. EMCC, for example, has developed into a strategic partner with economic developers within its area of service. This partnership provides key support that in turn engages the employer community suggested by Padden et al.
(2010). The result is an effective teaming among the various state and local organizations focused on job creation and retention.

Additionally, EMCC, through its collaborative efforts as it partnered with seven other community colleges in Mississippi and Alabama in one of the 13 national Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) Grant initiatives, effectively leveraged state, federal and local funding sources to focus on workforce development. (The WIRED grants were funded through competitive proposal sought by the U.S. Department of Labor.) Through this leveraged mechanism, EMCC helped design and implement innovative training capabilities to enhance training of the workforce for both incumbent workers and displaced workers. In effect, the efforts of community colleges such as EMCC can be the basis of the next generation of WIA.

**History of American Community Colleges**

The former president of the University of Chicago, William Rainey Harper, coined the term *junior college* (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). Harper maintained that college-bound high school students were inadequately prepared in their years in high school. Pushing the idea that students could be more successful by continuing their stay in high school, Harper persuaded the superintendent of public schools of Joliet, Illinois, to extend high school by several grades. Thus, in 1901, Joliet Junior College became the first public junior college in the United States (Vaughan, 2000).

Valentine (1949) said that this arrangement was an extension of a secondary school, while serving as the first two years of a college education. However, what began
in 1901 as a course of study that was a step beyond the regular high school curriculum became a separate institution that in 1917 was called Joliet Junior College.

The importance of Joliet Junior College to the subsequent creation of community colleges cannot be overstated, (Vaughan, 2000). The small beginnings provided impetus spawning and enormous change in education. The establishment of Joliet Junior College was important for a number of reasons because it:

- demonstrated that a well-equipped public high school could offer courses that were equal to courses offered by a university;
- showed that it was feasible and even desirable to use taxpayers’ dollars to offer postsecondary education in the community;
- shaped the courses and programs offered by virtually all modern community and junior colleges; and
- demonstrated that it was feasible and practical to accept the transfer of courses offered at a public junior college as the University of Chicago and Northwestern University had done, (Vaughan, 2000)

An upswing of the creation of more junior colleges occurred soon after the formation of the junior college at Joliet, Illinois. States formed their own public junior colleges early in the 20th century, among them being Mississippi, Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, and Illinois (Vaughan, 2000).

Initial focus of the junior college was on a liberal arts education aiming toward transfer of credits to the university, but, as a widespread depression affected the United States during the 1930s, junior colleges began offering job training as a means to offset massive unemployment. Two significant events had an enormous effect on junior
colleges after World War II. The first was the conversion of industry from a wartime footing to the manufacturing of consumer goods. American industry’s nearly exclusive production of the instruments of war gave way to goods that consumers could buy, and in the bargain, fostered greater employment that in turn created new jobs requiring new skills. The second significant event was the return of the servicemen from World War II, bringing with them a need for housing and job training. The demand for education spurred the growth of junior colleges and the term *community college* became popular after the war as many colleges adopted the new name. The federal government, responding to the demand of the returning soldiers, sailors and airmen, began giving financial assistance to further the education and training of the servicemen and women. The vehicle to accomplish this was the Serviceman’s Readjustment Act, passed by Congress in 1944, today commonly called the GI Bill. This was the first attempt by the federal government to provide student financial aid on such a large scale (Vaughan, 2000). Community colleges benefitted greatly from this program.

In 1948, the Truman Commission recommended that a network of community-based colleges be established to provide for local education needs. Cohen and Brawer (2003) suggested that this recommendation was part of a larger ideal: that all Americans willing and able to receive public education tuition free, and, regardless of race, color, sex, economic, or social status, should find it available universally. At the nexus of this ideal was the community college. The commission published a report known as the Truman Report. Bogart (1994) stated the following:

[W]hatever forms the community college takes, its purpose is educational service to the entire community and this purpose requires a variety of functions and
programs. The community college will provide college education for the youth of the community certainly, so as to remove geographic and economic barriers to educational opportunity and discover and develop individual talents at low cost and easy access. In addition, the community college will serve as an active center of adult education. It will attempt to meet the total post-high school needs of the community. (p. 62)

Community colleges thrived with their new responsibilities because they had no traditions to defend, no alumni to question their role, no autonomous professional staff to be moved aside, and no statement of philosophy or mission that would militate against their taking on responsibility for everything (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). Free from the fetters of the established university and college systems, the community colleges began to emerge as innovative places to get an education and training. Therefore, their inventions and innovations possess characteristics that helped them to develop and maintain an identity all their own (Vaughan, 2004).

During the 1960s, community colleges were becoming part of a national network. In fact, 457 community colleges, more than the total of all in existence before that time, came into being. A strong, thriving economic base provided the funding for the growth and construction of community college facilities. This was also a time of sweeping social activism that supported the idea of making education available to everyone, thus further enhancing the growth of community colleges. The term *community college* came to be representative of a comprehensive, publicly supported institution (Cohen & Brawer, 2003).
An outstanding attribute of the community college is its ability to adapt to the changing demands of the constituencies that it serves. Responding to these demands allows the community college to provide a quality education at a price the communities served can afford. That adaptation is reflected in the mission of the community college. According to Vaughan (2000), the community college mission is based upon five commitments: (a) open access admissions, (b) comprehensive educational programs, (c) community service, (d) teaching and learning, and (e) the fostering of lifelong learning. Vaughan concluded that the success of community colleges will depend on their ability to respond to a changing environment.

Community colleges had either a much simpler, straightforward purpose as a gateway to a 4-year college or as a vocational track when first established (Rosenfeld, 2001). Less than half of the rural colleges included economic development as part of their mission statements or allied themselves with economic development efforts. However, the adoption of an economic development mission by some community colleges, particularly in the South, has created a new direction for community colleges. This has allowed them to customize the training offered, as they have become essentially hybrids in nature. Rosenfeld concluded that during each transition through which the community college passes, there have been dramatic changes in the composition of community college enrollment. That enrollment can be reflected in a number of ways but can easily be identified as an economic downturn occurs—enrollment increases and during times of plenty, when people are employed, enrollment can go down.

Particularly important is the premise that rural community colleges are often the only institutions in rural areas that can both provide local education opportunities and
provide economic development (Rubin & Autry, 1998). Rural community colleges have evolved to become catalysts for economic development often shouldering additional burdens of assistance because rural areas do not have the large number of organizations in existence in urban areas available for economic development (Rubin & Autry, 1998).

Community colleges continue to flourish and grow despite lack of funding. They became the largest sector of higher education since their creation more than 100 years ago (Boggs, 2004). They enroll some 6.2 million full- and part-time students—more than 4 out of every 10 American undergraduates (Shaffer, 2008). Community colleges also produce graduates with the skills to handle a wide range of jobs that need more than a high school education, and they operate thousands of job-training programs that do not lead to a degree but help employers meet their staffing needs and help workers adapt to a rapidly changing job market. They are constantly remaking themselves in response to social, economic, and governmental transformation where it is controlled and managed (Foote, 1998). A basic problem facing community colleges could be whether they should continue to focus just on pointing the traditional student toward senior colleges or whether steps should be taken to transform the workforce by focusing the mission in a different way. The point is essentially one addressed by the Millennium Group as it reported in 1993 to the people of Mississippi.

The Millennium Group (1993) reported that the state can change the traditional approach to education by doing the following:

Drawing on the private sector leadership to establish the economic imperative for more extensive and rigorous education and training for all in the state, and, by initiating a practical response to that imperative through development of Tech-
Prep, community college career centers, and the systematic transfer of knowledge from universities and other research centers to the workplace (p. 7).

Community colleges have expanded their emphasis to include workforce development programs designed to meet the needs of business and industry. Directly responding to WIA, passed by Congress in 1998, community colleges offer workforce preparation and employment skills to job seekers and to those who want to further their careers (Milliron, & de los Santos, 2004). Community colleges have responded to the demand that required retraining of transitional workers and current workers because of changing economic and social forces. Those forces include the focus on productivity and high performance brought about by global competition, new technology that requires new skills, a push for quality assurance in manufacturing processes, and political pressure to modify the welfare system and put people to work (Leach, 1997).

In response to Congress, the Government Accounting Office (GAO) visited 20 community colleges in six states. GAO paid particular attention to those community colleges that have either one-stop job centers co-located at the college, with college staff serving at those centers, or Workforce Investment Boards that have community college presidents serving on them (Scott, 2008).

The information generated by the visits points out that community colleges are key providers of career and technical training and that they can customize training to meet employers’ needs. Through a variety of approaches, community colleges have provided outreach, relationship building, and data collection efforts to determine the best ways to meet training needs of the workforce (Scott, 2008).
According to Wilson (2009), community colleges have become nexuses of lifelong learning in their communities. The broad range of programs in comprehensive community colleges makes it difficult to determine a single mission for these institutions. Community college students attend to obtain certificates, diplomas and degrees in credit and non-credit areas. Students pursue college transfer programs, terminal and transfer technical programs, and vocational training and workforce development programs with industry. The students might attend workforce development programs with displaced workers; they pursue basic skills and remedial programs, Adult Basic Education (ABE) and General Education Degrees (GEDs), senior programs and vocational non-credit programs.

*Globalization* has become a buzzword to describe the phenomenon that economies, rural and urban, have increasingly become dependent upon global markets. The issue of globalization has placed a great deal of stress on community colleges as they try to meet the demands of the workforce training needs in the global market place. Further conflict exists as the community college strives to meet the training demands while the global marketplace changes the employment picture. An overriding problem exists in that jobs that once were plentiful for lower-skilled workers are disappearing or moving offshore or there is a more competitive market place (Dellow & Romano, 2006).

Emphasizing the necessity to expand the workforce training component of the community college beyond its traditional sense, the Millennium Group (1993) reported the following:

If the community college is to be successful in training the dislocated workforce, the state is at risk of not being able to compete globally, even the progress we are
making is being outstripped by the increasing demands of the economy, demanding an ever-smarter worker. (p. 8)

**History of Mississippi’s Community Colleges**

Mississippi became the first state to create a junior college system (Clayton, 2003; Young & Ewing, 1978). Before that occurred, though, Senator Julius Zeller had introduced Senate Bill 251 in 1922 that allowed state agriculture high schools to offer college courses. Pearl River Agriculture High School and Hinds Agriculture High School became the first to take advantage of the opportunity provided by Zeller’s legislation and established programs to offer college credit to high school graduates. In 1987, the term *junior college* was changed to *community college* (for 14 of the 15 institutions) to reflect a more modern name in their districts (Clayton, 2003). Jones Junior College, located in Ellisville, Mississippi, remains the only junior college located in the state of Mississippi.

Mississippi also became the first state in the nation to organize its community colleges under a statewide governing board, though in actuality the board provides oversight leaving the community colleges the autonomy through their local governing boards. Thus in 1928, Zeller introduced additional legislation, which created the Commission of Junior Colleges. Observers said that Mississippi was the only state that has a real system of community colleges, and this system has set a pattern for others (Clayton, 2003; Young & Ewing, 1978). Figure 2.1 illustrates EMCC’s district, which is comprised of six counties: Clay, Lowndes, Oktibbeha, Noxubee, Kemper, and Lauderdale.
The commission is known as the State Board for Community Colleges (SBCC; MCCB, 2012). This Board is responsible for coordinating, but not governing, the community and junior colleges’ efforts, particularly regarding vocational education and transfer programs to Mississippi universities. The SBCC also oversees the providing of short-term training through each community college’s Workforce Services division. Typically funded in the past from state appropriations to the SBCC, the training efforts were constantly subject to the availability of general funds appropriated by the
Mississippi legislature. Notwithstanding, SBCC, with strong support from Governor Haley Barbour, has been successful in securing funding for the community and junior colleges through access to the Mississippi Unemployment Trust Fund (kept funded by unemployment compensation taxes paid by industry into the fund). Directed at specific industry needs, this otherwise stable source of funding provides, either in the plant or at community college facilities, training for incumbent workers needing manufacturing skills upgrades, health and safety training, computer skills, or other training that helps Mississippi industry remain competitive in global markets. However, due to the recession the country is experiencing, including Mississippi, these funds have been jeopardized by the demands on the same fund for unemployment benefits. The legislation has a built-in floor below which all funds must be directed to unemployment compensation.

**National Workforce Training History**

The U.S. Congress’s earliest attempts to address vocational training were by its passage of a vocational education program in 1917 and in 1920 the Vocational Rehabilitation Act. The 1920 act was designed to assist servicemen returning from the campaigns of World War I in upgrading skills and ultimately finding a job. These programs, though limited, marked the beginning of the federal government’s involvement in employment assistance (Good & Teller, 1969). Then, in 1933, upon passage of the Wagner–Peyser Act, the federal government implemented additional programs to increase employment. The Wagner–Peyser Act provided funding for matching job specifications to individual skills and created a new partnership: Federal/State Employment Services (Marshall & Tucker, 1992). Driving the need for these programs
was the unemployment of nearly one-fourth of the nation’s workforce due to the depression of the 1930s.

America’s training of its workforce received an enormous boost with the passage of the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act in 1944. The act became known as the GI Bill of Rights, providing educational funds for eligible veterans returning from combat after World War II (Vaughan, 2000). The labor force and the needs of the job market began to change as more Americans began to seek employment in urban areas.

The influx of more women in the job market also impacted the workforce. Overall, these conditions set the stage for the so-called Great Society, programs that were started by the federal employment and training legislation of the 1960s (Marshall & Tucker, 1992). In 1962, Congress passed the Manpower Development and Training Act (MDTA). This legislation was designed to retain workers whose jobs had been eliminated because of changes in economic conditions or technological changes.

Close on the heels of MDTA was the passage of the Economic Opportunity Act in 1963, which established programs such as Job Corps and the Community Action Agency. Other programs such as Summer Youth Employment and Neighborhood Youth Corps also were enacted. One serious flaw arising from such a proliferation of overlapping programs was that, though they focused on job training and preparation for work, separate community agencies administered them thusly creating a proliferation of competition. This was the same year that the Vocational Education Act was passed. Congress designed this legislation to enable local institutions to help prepare unemployed youth by providing them with workforce training (Barlow, 1967).
Congress passed the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) in 1972. This act allowed local units or areas of jurisdiction to become a prime sponsor and not only provide training but also be involved in the decision-making process. The sponsors who received funding for training and employment services created local advisory councils. A noted result of this act was the incorporation of portions of the Economic Opportunity Act and the MDTA programs established in 1963 (Marshall & Tucker, 1992). Congress followed up a decade later by passing the Joint Training Partnership Act. This gave the states and local entities the capability to customize the design and operation of the training (Marshall & Tucker, 1992). Federal control was also reduced. JTPA was replaced by WIA, which also broadened the categories of training to include federally funded literacy programs and vocational rehabilitation. Job training and employment programs are coordinated along with other programs offered through a variety of federally funded agencies (Mississippi Workforce Education Act of 1994).

Community colleges have long offered workforce and training programs, so in one sense the work they are now doing with displaced workers is nothing new (Bradley 2010). The worker can no longer be fit into a specific category or stereotype. Bradley pointed out that “colleges have been charged with not only helping workers get new skills, but also with rebuilding the economies of their services areas” (p. 2). Also, colleges are working in a collaborative way in order to supply a trained workforce that will meet the standards that those industries in that service area demand. In Bradley’s study (2010), Tony Zeiss, president of Central Piedmont Community College, is quoted as saying that “American community colleges represent a critical part of the equation on how we’re going to rebuild the economy” (p. 2).
The issue of competency standards for workforce services was addressed by the National Governors Association (NGA) in 1991. In exploring public and private responses to the difficulties facing the U.S. economy, in its initiative, NGA recommended a “strategy for the states to follow for helping to bring excellence to the American workplace” (p. 3). By defining workplace competency standards, the skills of both the entering and existing workforce could be measured against performance standards and provide a framework for skills assessment. The ultimate provision would be “the attainment of a common set of competency standards against which all publicly funded and regulated providers of workforce development services can be held accountable” (NGA, 1991, p. 19).

The question of competency standards and the methods to measure them are continually raised throughout the country. For example, the state of Texas continues to monitor workforce development issues. The University of Texas at Austin, Ray Marshall Center, continues to monitor workforce development goals through its relationship with Travis County, Texas. Texas’s workforce system goals state that successful workforce development efforts are built around the following (Ray Marshall Center, 2007):

- Reducing turnover and increasing the economic mobility of workers
- Testing and adapting innovative approaches to workforce problems
- Catalyzing improvements in public systems and business employment practices
- Emphasizing a mix of labor force attachment and intensive skill training services tied to high-wage, high-demand sectors
In this case, in Texas, while cooperating locally as in the WIN Centers concept, there is a steady and ongoing attempt to measure outcomes of training provided to the workforce. In Mississippi this measurement is through the reporting to Mississippi State University. The researcher was unable to find a system existing at the WIN Centers.

**Mississippi’s Workforce Services Training**

Several studies (Voorhees & Milam, 2005; Van Noy, Jacobs, Korey, Bailey & Hughes, 2008) suggested that the focus of Workforce Training is changing; there has been a shift from providing for-credit courses at community colleges to job-training and to professional development. Mississippi is not dissimilar.

Community colleges traditionally prepare their communities (clients) to go to work. Students attend community colleges for the purposes of obtaining enough credits to attend and complete a degree at a 4-year institution. Community colleges are the first stop after high school for millions of students who want lower-cost, close-to-home entry into higher education. In fact, half of all those graduating with a bachelor’s degree today attended community college first (Shaffer, 2008). Four states—Iowa, Mississippi, New Mexico, and North Carolina—are ahead of the national rate on all five measurements of community college systems—share of higher education enrollments; share of total state population ages 18 and over enrolled in a community college; share of population ages 18 and over enrolled as a full-time equivalent; and the amount of community college growth outpacing or lagging 4-year colleges (Shaffer, 2008). However, large portions of the community at large that attend a community college obtain training and skills to compete in the workplace.
Cohen and Brawer (1996) said that communities view community colleges as agents of upward mobility for individuals and the occupational training center for the community. Community colleges, therefore, provide occupational training for specific skill sets in the workplace, pre-employment training, customized training at the plant site, and on-the-job training.

More recently, community college leadership has targeted workforce preparation and economic development efforts in Mississippi. Brought about primarily due to the passage of new legislation a system of education and training responding to the needs of industry and economic developers became a reality upon the implementation of the Workforce Education Act of 1994, (House Bill 1412, 1994). A major step toward an innovative way to train Mississippi’s workforce and entice new industry to invest in the state, the act provided for the continuing improvement through constant reassessment of the results of education of individual workers and employers (Mississippi House Bill 1412, 1994). The legislation also created a Workforce Development Council. According to the legislation, the council provides a forum for collaboration among state agencies; monitoring of the effectiveness of Skill/Tech, Workforce Development Centers, and District Councils; advice to the governor and public schools on effective school-to-work policies and programs; to work with industry to identify needs; and periodic assessments of the system. Typically, in keeping with federal and state legislation, community college staff, sometimes called program coordinators, developed a training package to meet an industry’s needs. There is collaboration, required by the law, involving the local Workforce Advisory Board comprised of representatives of business and industry (Cohen
Mississippi continued to follow that same path until the passage of a more comprehensive and better-funded bill (House Bill 973, 2004).

In 2004, through the passage of House Bill 973, the Mississippi legislature took a major step in the passage of the Comprehensive Workforce Training and Education Consolidation Act. This legislation combined the Workforce Advisory Council, which provided state funds, and the WIA Board, which provided federal funds, and created a new 37-member Workforce Investment Board. A major feature of the bill was the diversion of a portion of the Unemployment Compensation Fund, a Mississippi-mandated fund similar to those in other states, paid for by employers. This fund is designed to provide financial support in the instance when workers are laid off or lose their jobs.

This diversion was designed to fund vigorous training activities at community and junior colleges throughout the state of Mississippi. The bill also moved the control of the workforce training funds to the executive branch giving flexibility and greater coordination of trainings funds. This legislation sought to reduce some past inefficiency by consolidating the existing state investment boards that oversaw federal monies and state workforce councils that oversaw state monies (Wilson, 2009). The new law also reduced the number of workforce investment districts from six to four. The four current districts provide oversight and guidance to the local workforce efforts. The four current districts are the Mississippi Partnership, Delta, South Central Mississippi, and Twin Districts. Each of the districts has a close relationship with the community colleges in its jurisdiction. EMCC is located in the 28-county Mississippi Partnership district headquartered in Pontotoc, Mississippi. Figure 2.2 illustrates these districts.
The Partnership is part of the Three Rivers Planning and Development District. The other community colleges associated with the Partnership are Northeast Community College, located in Booneville, Mississippi, and Itawamba Community College, located in Fulton and Tupelo, Mississippi. The act also provided for the community colleges of Mississippi to exercise the option of becoming a one-stop job center by combining the functions of WIA Centers with the Community College Workforce Services functions.
This option allowed the community colleges to become a WIN Center and have all functions located on its campus (Mississippi Comprehensive Workforce Training Act, 2004).

Included as part of the oversight and coordination, SBCJC plays an important role under the new format for workforce training. Primarily the funding conduit, the SBCJC approves workforce training projects that are designed at the community college level. The projects, managed by project coordinators, can be short-term training courses, which fall among an approved grouping of training modules and can be for almost any type of potential career, including but not limited to healthcare, computer applications, safety training, and a myriad of others. The limitations on the program are directly dependent upon the amount of funds available to SBCJC from the source of the funds, which is the Unemployment Trust Fund providing support to qualified unemployed.

The National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) has said that the day when unskilled workers could show up [for a job] has passed (Moltz, 2009). NAM argued that community colleges, often on the front line of educating displaced or directionless workers, need to embed “workplace competencies and industry-wide technical skills” into their academic curricula (Moltz, 2009, p. 3). The American Council of Life Insurance (1984) has expressed similar concerns. Though stated in the early 1980s, the Council felt the economy then was one of continuing erosion of the infrastructure and a declining tax base. The conditions then were not unlike those of today. The Council recognized that there is a skills obsolescence occurring and changing production processes that will raise the need to retrain and relocate displaced workers. The Council displayed uncommon foresight.
EMCC and Rapid Response

A very crucial service that the community college provides occurs when jobs and training are scarce or non-existent. This activity occurs when a plant or large employer of more than 50 employees closes down its operation and permanently lays off its workforce. Cooperating with state government, community colleges are part of a team designed to assist workers affected by a layoff. Under the federal WIA, state governments are required to carry out a Rapid Response, which is led by the WIN Center and a state dislocated worker unit of that plant’s locale. The community college participates in such an effort generally providing brochures with information about training opportunities at the college. Rapid Response activities include at a minimum contact with the employer, contact with representatives of the affected workers, and communication with the local community to assess the scope, size, and duration of the layoff or other dislocation (Heidkamp & Kauder, 2008). Heidkamp and Kauder stated that “experience has shown that workers facing a layoff are more inclined to take advantage of, and benefit from, adjustment services before they leave their present job than after they leave the firm or organization” (p. 1). The U.S. Department of Labor (2009) called the Rapid Response a pro-active, business-focused, and flexible strategy for two purposes: first, to help growing companies access an available pool of skilled workers from other companies that are downsizing and, second, to respond to layoffs and plant closings by quickly coordinating services and providing immediate aid to companies and their affected employees.

According to the Unit for Community and Environmental Studies (2004) generally, the number of employees affected may not exceed 50 or sometimes 100—
usually a small number (p. 3). Regarding the case of EMCC’s Rapid Response participation, there were more than 1,200 employees, when the Sara Lee plant closed its doors in February 2007.

**Current Conditions Affecting Measurement**

In order to fully address the subject of this study, the setting in which the training occurred must be described. Common knowledge about the communities and the workforce residing there gives a clue to the demographics of the dislocated workers. In West Point, Mississippi, as revealed by the generations of worker families who were employed at Sara Lee over the years, it was a given that a person could find work at the company without the need for much education. (Press Release Story of Sara Lee Workers, see Appendix F) Thus, the task the workers faced was to enter unfamiliar surroundings. They either were going to go back to school, sometimes after a long period of time since they last attended and received a diploma, or perhaps, were going back after having dropped out before completing high school. In either case they faced a much different system, and at a much later age in life. On top of this obstacle, though they did not see it at the time, the U.S. economy was tightening, headed for a steep downturn at about the same time as the layoff occurred.

The National Commission on Adult Literacy (NCAL, 2008) recommended that current programs for adults be transformed into a system that can effectively serve 20 million American adults annually by the year 2020. One step to ensure that this can be accomplished is to focus the mission of this new system toward attaining readiness for postsecondary education and workforce training. NCAL called for strong, bold leadership
from state government, especially from their governors, and from business.
The commission also recommended increasing public investments in this new system in
order to reach $20 billion by 2020 plus additional support and involvement from
philanthropic organizations and business.

The current policies in Mississippi have produced 342,320 people, from 18 years
of age to 64 years of age, who have not completed high school or the equivalent.
Mississippi has 414,481 people, from 18 years of age to 64 years of age, who have
completed some college but do not have a college degree (Council for Adult and
Experiential Learning, 2008). As of 2008, Mississippi had awarded 44.7 GED certificates
per 1,000 adults between the ages of 18 and 24 years. This figure is just above the U.S.
average of 43.1 per 1,000 adults. However, contrasted with the top five states in the
country, which awarded 80 GED certificates per 1,000 adults between the ages of 18 and
24 years, Mississippi could do much better (Council for Adult and Experiential Learning,
2008).

As of 2008, adult education programs in Mississippi served adults without high
school diplomas at a lower rate than the U.S. average. Mississippi served 78.2 adults per
1,000, ages 18 to 64 years, compared to 101.7 per 1,000 for the U.S. average. In
Mississippi, the number of adults served, compared to the top states in the country at an
average of 207.3 adults per 1,000 was less than half as many (Council for Adult and
Experiential Learning, 2008).

Adults who need to upgrade their academic skills typically must complete basic or
developmental education before they can enroll in college-level courses. In order for
these adults to earn a certificate or a degree, they need to successfully transition from one
program or institution to the next along what might be termed as an education pipeline. Research identified gaps they face—both personal and institutional—as well as barriers to their bridging these gaps. These data are presented in Table 2.1.

Sustaining economic growth depends on the talented, educated, tech-savvy workforce. What presents a barrier to this is that approximately 20% of Mississippi’s population 25 years of age and older have never earned a high school diploma; this amounts to nearly 400,000 citizens (Elliot, 2008). These citizens, in general, have a very limited economic prospect because they lack the life skills, such as the ability to communicate and perform basic calculations, and their work skills are inadequate in a globalized, 24/7, technically oriented economy. According to the U.S. Department of Labor (2009), by 2012 the nation will have a shortage of skilled labor and be at a competitive disadvantage in the global marketplace. As reported in Reach Higher, America, 24 of the 30 fastest-growing occupations will require workers to have some postsecondary training or instruction. In addition, these jobs will require less than a 4-year degree (National Commission on Adult Literacy, 2008).
# Table 2.1 Barriers to Bridging the Gaps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GAPS</th>
<th>Barriers to Bridging the Gaps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **From:** Adult Basic Education (ABE) or English as a Second Language (ESL)  
**To:** College Credit | • Few ABE students persist in the program.  
• Few ABE students ever earn a GED.  
• Most GED holders do not enter college.  
• Few GED holders ever earn a college credential. |
| **From:** Developmental Education  
**To:** College Credit | • Taking remedial courses lowers the chances of earning a credential.  
• Many college students require developmental education.  
• Multiple developmental education courses lower the chances of college success even further. |
| **From:** Non-Credit Training  
**To:** College Credit | • Lack of college credit for prior training, work experience, and occupational certificates |
| **From:** Some College  
**To:** College Credential | • Low degree attainment by nontraditional first-time college students  
• Limited supportive services available for students  
• Restrictions on use of financial aid  
• Challenges posed by adult personal and workforce experiences |

Source: Ohio Stackable Credentials, 2008

Students graduating from community colleges with 1-year certificates significantly outpace high school graduates in annual earnings, while students who attend a community college but do not receive a degree or certificate lead high school graduates
by 5%. College graduates, on the other hand, even with no advanced degrees, earn, on average, 40% more than high school graduates (Grubb, 1996, 2001). While these figures represent averages, and the payoff for a college credential may vary by sex, age, social class, background, and field of study, clearly the economic payoff to a community college credential, no matter how minor, is quite significant (Townsend, 2001). If this is so, then a broader pipeline, perhaps with multiple entry and exit points leading to a community college certificate or degree, could be a significant factor in increasing economic returns to Mississippi citizens.

The community college model of education and training delivery can be significantly improved through vertical integration by way of stackable credentials. There is a fissure between the traditional vocational education programs and job-training programs. These job-training programs are focused on high school dropouts, job re-entry for dislocated workers, displaced homemakers and welfare recipients. Even though these programs provide short-term training in simple skills, they would benefit greatly if they had the option to feed into community college certificated programs and associate programs that provide greater skills and bring greater economic returns (Grubb, 1996).

Grubb (1996) has argued that training programs should be connected vertically, so that graduates of programs providing lesser skills or short-term training could later enter programs offering higher skills, longer training, and, typically, more important certificates or degrees. Moreover, training programs should also be oriented horizontally, with trainees exposed, as needed, to various kinds of learning such as technical skills, academic achievement, job search, career counseling, and even remedial education.
The vision of creating a vocational education system that reduces obstacles to pursuing higher academic degrees clearly resonates with the frequent call in recent years for workers who are not just technically competent but are also equipped with higher-order thinking skills such as problem solving, decision making, teamwork, and the ability to learn independently, (Hanson & Stocks, 2009). Broadly speaking, this could entail a progression of pre-college certificate programs that would build, or stack, on top of one another, with the purpose of re-engaging adults with school in order to prepare them for college and entry-level employment. More importantly, this could be just the tool to upgrade the skills of the dislocated worker.

Particular importance can be placed on building basic academic, computer, and work-readiness skills through self-paced, distance learning and assessment techniques. Adult learners could earn non-credit certificates after demonstrating the mastery of core competencies. The resulting credentials, stacked on one another, would allow adults to build basic academic and work-readiness skills while being able to progress through an adult re-entry pipeline and work toward additional education and training, inclusive of college credit for industry-recognized certificates, (Hanson & Stocks, 2009).

According to Hanson & Stocks there likely could be multiple entry points to such a pipeline, which could have the largest effect on the broadest number of Mississippians as opposed to traditional methods of addressing such education needs. For example, an adult education pipeline re-entry point could implement a stackable credential system incorporating and integrating the Career Readiness Certificate (CRC); fast-track, online job training; ABE; training for a GED; and community college certificates and associate degrees (Hanson & Stocks, 2009) Students could start at or be met at the level they are;
meaning that they could earn credit based on life experiences, work experience, and military experience. Special counselors called navigators could be employed to work with targeted individuals to help them navigate the various re-entry points of the pipeline.

Hanson and Stocks indicated that a second example could be a pre-college stackable certificate, which would be a uniform system of certificates earned before an adult is enrolled in an institution of higher education. Such a certificate could provide a clear and accessible path for adults seeking to advance their education leading to college credit (p 9). In this case, the CRC could be integrated with ABE/English as a Second Language classes and combined with prior work experiences tied to gaining admittance to career and technical programs offered by Mississippi’s community and junior colleges. To progress it would be essential that the earned certificates must articulate in such a way that they ensure the most effective interconnection of competencies offered in specialized training programs. Thus, the certificate would meet expectations of both the workplace and higher education and be available from an array of providers, including adult career centers maintained by community action agencies, institutions of higher education, and employers. Figure 2.3 illustrates the basic principles of the re-entry pipeline. Regardless of the manner in which such a pipeline might be envisaged, SBCJC would need to establish uniform standards for such certification because much of the certification would result from competencies and work experiences.
Figure 2.3  Stackable Credential Pipeline with Navigator

Source: Hanson, & Stocks, 2009, Unpublished Paper

A college-level certificate is a third example. This certificate would be one earned while an adult is enrolled in an institution of higher education that can be transferred to college credit in different subject competencies. This would be based on competencies and experiences, rather than time spent in a classroom (Hanson & Stocks, 2009). A funding mechanism for this type of certificate would need to be devised by SBCJC to address the barriers that prevent adult learners from succeeding. Perhaps additional attention to funding of the CRC, Adult ABE, and GED students at the full-time
equivalent (FTE) state support would be necessary for such students enrolled in regular college-credit programs.

Whether a student is moving from some college classes for credit or from ABE/English as a Second Language to college credit or from short-term training to credit, there appear to be leaks in the current pipeline. This is of particular importance to the dislocated worker faced with a layoff, having to make choices for retraining and learning new skills. If needing basic education skills, for example, half the adults who enroll in ABE classes drop out before attainment of 35 hours or 10 weeks of class time, and only 10% of ABE students attend classes continuously for 1 year (Comings, Parella, & Soricone, 1999). Also, few ABE students ever earn a GED. Only 7% of students in federal- and state-funded WIA Title II adult education programs earned a GED in the year following their participation (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). A study found that 70% or more of ABE students never earn a GED (Strawn, 2007).

Moreover, most GED holders do not enter college, although 65% of the students who take the GED, when asked, say that they are doing so in order to attend college (Tyler, 2001). Tyler added that few GED holders ever earn a college credential of any type, with only 5 to 10% finishing even 1 year of college and 0.5 to 3% ever earning an associate’s degree. Thus far, a pretty grim prospect faces a person laid off from work after so many years at the job and having to decide how to become an attractive employee again with new and better skills.

If a dislocated worker manages to move through the pipeline, he or she may still face developmental education classes because he or she is so ill prepared. Two-thirds of the students in remedial reading were enrolled in at least two other remedial classes
Andelman, 1998). Taking remedial courses lowers the chances of a student earning a credential. Just 30% of first-time undergraduates enrolling in remedial reading courses completed a certificate or a degree within eight years after leaving high school, compared with 69% of those not needing any remediation (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Thus it certainly could be more difficult for a dislocated worker to gain certification by being faced with the task of remediation after being out of school for such a long time.

About 40% of all community college students require at least one remedial class (McCabe, 2000). According to Hamilton (as cited in Tyler, 2005) and to Reder (2007), an estimated 25 to 85% of GED holders entering college need further remediation. Multiple developmental courses lower the chances of college success even further. Only one-fourth of the students who take three developmental education classes complete all three courses in five years, with only 4% graduating and 78% leaving school without a credential (Grubb, 2001).

Non-credit training to for-credit programs fare no better, particularly without some form of credentialing to show for the efforts required. With the lack of college credit for prior training and occupational certificates, non-credit workforce education may not articulate and transfer into for-credit programs, forcing adult learners to retake coursework if and when they enter degree programs. Further, with low degree attainment rates for nontraditional students enrolling in college for the first time, nearly half (47%) drop out without a degree (Berkner, He, & Cataldi, 2002). Just 27% of nontraditional students earned an associate’s degree in 5 years, compared to 53% of traditional undergraduates (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).
Nonetheless, the community college remains as a quick connector to and from the workforce. Students, no matter what age, appreciate the low cost of attending a community college and also the great flexibility to earn or learn skills that will help them in the workplace. The Jacobs and Voorhees 2006 essay stated that 42% of the job growth by 2010 will be accounted for by community colleges. They indicated that more than 80% of new jobs created in the next two decades will require some education short of a 4-year college degree.

While these statistics indicate that the community college should play an important role in the workplace, Jacobs et al. (2006) indicated that the community college approach to workforce development will be much different. Born of the necessity to measure outcomes of programs funded by federal programs such as the Perkins Vocational and Education Act of 1998 and other funding mechanisms, community colleges do report whether career and technical graduates have been placed in the specific career field for which they have been trained. However, little is known about what experiences students have regarding opportunities of employment of further education marked by credentials of some sort following workforce education.

Jacobs and Voorhees (2009) suggested that a vertical and horizontal continuum can be used to measure students’ experiences at community colleges. Jacobs and Voorhees found that at the upper end or most vertical plane of the continuum, much is known of student outcomes because of the required outcome measurements. Figure 2.4 illustrates this idea. Good records are kept because of the funding mechanisms’ expectations. In the horizontal plane, however, less is known about student successes, particularly as the vertical plane lowers.
In the horizontal workforce, transitions are defined as those transitions other than those that start at one level of education (such as secondary education) and pass through other levels of education (such as community colleges) ending ultimately with a first job. There is less indication of a linear progression of a student in the horizontal transition.
because there is entry into the community college environment generally after a period of time has lapsed. This time lapse can be accounted for by events that the student has experienced. Such events could be a period of employment or unemployment. It also could begin after a student may have attained some postsecondary education, dropped out of school or had a major event occur such as a layoff followed by a Rapid Response. Jacobs and Voorhees (2006) stated that “it is critical, in the context of training and retraining of the workforce and continuous acquisition of skills needed for successful employment, that community colleges make further progress in promoting horizontal transitions with attendant better measurements” (p.135).

The role of the community college has truly evolved into a hybrid form in which it provides expanded training for a variety of purposes. The community college role nationwide, as in Mississippi, changed from one of preparation just beyond high school to meeting entrance requirements for a 4-year college, to technical training and beyond. One other such purpose is to provide training, new skills, basic education and specific tools that will create a competitive worker through short-term classes that will result in a credentialed worker, one who is able to compete in the global marketplace. The community college has another focus too, which is to help those who have been laid off from a facility. That focus becomes important when the community college participates in a Rapid Response for according to Milliron and de los Santos (2004) the community college has become the nexus of lifelong learning in their communities.

Heidkamp and Kauder (2008) reported that Rapid Responses are a critical service because they:

- give rapid response professionals a clearly defined role;
• deliver services through a well-trained team;
• engage proactively;
• provide the maximum amount of pre-layoff transition
• are quick to get resources where they are needed; and
• monitor and evaluate the results.

Because there was such a large layoff at Sara Lee and there was nearly 3 years of training provided to that workforce, there is a real need to determine whether the training provided by a community college has accomplished, in fact, what it was intended to, as measured by a Rapid Response activity in which the community college participated. To determine whether this has occurred, a study should be done to develop a proper measurement. The Ray Marshall Center (2010) at the University of Texas at Austin devised a strategy to measure return of investment (ROI) for workforce services (p.1-5). The estimates are done at 5-year and 10-year increments. The Ray Marshall Center (2010) found that this is better than an annual measurement to measure overall performance. This study tracked a specific Rapid Response provided to a specific cadre of laid-off workers to see if they found employment and upgraded their skills as well as whether the Rapid Response they experienced and the follow through at the community college over the 3-year time period actually benefitted them. Though the Sara Lee study did not measure ROI, it provides a measurement that can be refined and built upon for measuring effectiveness of training offered by community colleges in the state of Mississippi.

An overarching consideration for the measurement or defining of success of community colleges is that tools used in the past to make such determination may not
accurately reflect actual success. The federal government has used a 3-year graduation rate of first-time, full-time students as its measurement. Yet, Scott (2008) wrote that “community colleges should be prepared to offer prospective industry who are searching for a location and finding a trainable workforce as a distinct measurement of effectiveness. Stiffler reported that “Duke University and CFO Magazine found that CFO’s reported that difficulty in attracting and retaining quality employees is their top concern, even in a downturned economy” (p.3).

According to Bradley (2011), “40 community colleges have been selected to pilot the new Voluntary Framework of Accountability or VFA” (p. 8). The VFA is designed to provide a metrics tool to “identify measures for which there is broad consensus” (p. 9) that will eventually lead to an effective measurement of institutional effectiveness that can be applied to all 1,200 existing community colleges.

The measurement may establish a tool that can be applied to traditional community college students as they are constituted as more part-time in nature—the traditional part-time student being one taking traditional for-credit classes, either for transfer to a 4-year institution or as part of a certificated 1- or 2-year program. However, there still remains the task of measuring the effectiveness of short-term, non-credit training as provided by the Workforce Services component of many community colleges.

Recommendations for measuring outcomes come from other sources as well. Applied to public school vocational education, the Southern Regional Education Board provides excellent research on vocational education successes. A report by the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama (PARCA, 2009) entitled Changing Trajectories, Building Paths for Careers and Institutionalizing Collaboration addresses some ways to
measure effectiveness. The report’s conclusion was that for its subject matter (high school vocation/technical training) the best measurement of institutional successes may be the Alabama High School Graduation Examination. The report suggests that the test results may be the “best indicator of readiness for either postsecondary education or employment” (p. 1) especially at the Level IV indicator.

The report provided a caveat in its summary that point to the dilemma of this study of a community college’s effort to train individuals in response to the massive layoff. This PARCA (2009) caveat simply stated the following:

There is no integrated system at the federal, state, or local levels, for directly and systematically tracking vocational placement for high school students. It is unlikely that a fully integrated system will be available for use in the foreseeable future as changes in federal privacy laws will be needed to accommodate accurate tracking. (p. 18)

One major recommendation of the report was an implementation of a performance tracking system. While focused on high school vocational training, the recommendation is quite pertinent to the current study. A key recommendation was to “use data to make decisions” (PARCA, p. 18). Because of the importance to the final consumer of the product, the business and industry of the region, metrics must be developed to ensure that there is, in fact, an acceptable product (a trained workforce ready to go to work). An analysis of the data generated by such metrics may provide such a measuring tool.

Many states, Mississippi among them, are searching for ways to justify spending priorities on all areas, but particularly education Mississippi Statewide Longitudinal Data
System Act, (2011). West Virginia’s legislative Joint Standing Committee on Government Operations (as cited in Messina, 2011) said that it “found no way to determine the number of jobs created or retained through three different workforce grant programs overseen by the Council for Community and Technical College Education” (p. 30). Messina (2011) stated that the council “looking for performance measures found that outcome measurements are limited and unreliable” (p.30). Even in the latest session of the Mississippi legislature, there continues to be a struggle to get at the issue of measurement. In the 2011 session, the governor signed into law House Bill 875 Statewide Longitudinal Data System Act (2011), a measure designed to study whether funding for the state’s 15 community and junior colleges and 8 public universities should be determined based upon some tool of measurement. The bill calls for a report to the 2013 legislature by a body created in the bill called the Education Achievement Council. The council’s stated goal is to determine whether graduation rates can be used to determine productivity and thus determine how to fund each public institution. Whether such a measurement is either valid or can actually determine whether there is productivity remains to be seen (H.B 805, Mississippi Community and Junior College Support of Workforce Services Act, 2011).

Even so, Mississippi’s colleges and universities are now required to report additional statistics to a statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS) similar to the nSPARC data system located at Mississippi State University. Required by new legislation signed into law by former Governor Barbour, the statistical reporting will include data to help decision makers develop policies toward job training to meet the demand of business
and industry. Additionally, the data collected could drive accountability and investment decisions related to workforce training objectives.

The bill creates a governing board, comprised of the agencies required by the act to report to the SLDS and the State Workforce Investment Board. Among the objectives of the board, according to the act, is the following requirement (HB 608, 2011):

Identify critical research and policy questions to be addressed by education and workforce programs. In essence, Mississippi has taken another step toward determining a measurement for workforce (as well as Kindergarten through College) effectiveness. Still there appears to be no existing tool that can provide this information to stakeholders or policy-makers of Mississippi. (p. 3)

In another similar move to determine measurement, Kentucky’s Council on Postsecondary Education “approved a plan that could change the way public colleges receive funding” (Bradley 2011, p. 3). The plan, a 5-year endeavor, will base funding, if enacted by the legislature through its funding mechanisms, “not only on how many students enroll but on how many graduate” (Bradley, 2011, p.3). The issue of taking into consideration enrollment being attached to graduation rates is precisely what State Board of Community College Executive Director Eric Clark has called for when the Mississippi legislature adopted HB 805. Clark (2011, as cited in Harrison, 2011) stated that while he did not oppose the use of productivity in a funding formula, “enrollment must remain a factor, especially on the community college level” (p. 1). Clark (2011, as cited in Harrison, 2011) added that “any funding formula must factor in enrollment; otherwise the schools could not function” (p. 1).
Neither Kentucky nor Mississippi has yet determined what the measurement must be. There is still little or no available tools to measure what the funding will buy in education. However, a growing number of states are seeking answers to this question and others related to productivity of the higher education and workforce training systems.

Chapter Summary

Chapter II included a history of the development of community colleges in the United States and Mississippi. From a very small beginning of Joliet Junior College in Chicago, community colleges have grown to become an important education tool both in the United States and in Mississippi. As the nation’s demand for education and training grew so grew the community college. A major impact was of course the returning servicemen and women after World War II. A unique difference in Mississippi is that Mississippi led the country in forming a model body of governance for the community colleges in the state. Mississippi community colleges all function within well-defined regions of counties and EMCC’s area of responsibility was noted with both state and local funding. The chapter also detailed Mississippi’s Workforce Training efforts and the funding mechanisms were presented, including how the funding is administered through regional entities called Workforce Investment Districts. These regional workforce entities each have governing boards helping pass through both federal and state funding to assist the community colleges in workforce training, a very important part of the role EMCC played in assisting Sara Lee employees. The legislation passed by Congress and the Mississippi legislature was presented as well. Congress’ support comes through various Workforce and Career Technical mechanisms Mississippi’s support is strong and it is
important to note that the Mississippi legislature has been instrumental in funding training and since 2004 there have been specific funds available for this purpose. A map of the regional funding districts was also provided, which helps describe the partnerships necessary to fund workforce training on the scale described in this study.

Barriers to access to training and a discussion of the issue of credentialing, credit and non-credit training efforts were also presented. For example, a flow chart that details the various steps that a prospective trainee can use to enter a pipeline to successfully navigate the system provides one illustration of what may be an avenue community colleges can provide to assist the workforce. A discussion of the reporting requirements for the 15 community and junior colleges in Mississippi was also presented. The reporting requirements illustrate that perhaps the state of Mississippi is attempting to find a way to measure the success or failure of training as this study attempts to do. The community colleges, reporting to nSPARC, EMCC included, provided the data that were the basis for this case study.
CHAPTER III
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter presents the research design and methodology used to document the training provided by EMCC’s Workforce Services Division to the laid-off workers of the Sara Lee West Point, Mississippi manufacturing facility. The study focused on the training provided to a large number of employees who were laid off due to a plant permanently closing its doors. On January 29, 2007, Sara Lee Food and Beverage Corporation, Clay County, Mississippi’s largest private employer and one of the largest in EMCC’s district, announced that 1,200 employees would lose their jobs on March 30 of that same year. Though primarily from West Point, Mississippi, many of the affected employees lived in the surrounding communities so this decision reached everywhere within the college’s district. This announcement came on the heels of a previous company decision to permanently lay off 400 employees the year before in December 2006. This event created an opportunity for both state agencies and EMCC to step up to meet the challenges presented by this unfortunate decision, and also required an action called a Rapid Response because more than 100 employees were affected by the company’s decision. An immediate Rapid Response was conducted as the first steps were taken to address this problem (see Appendix A for a more complete description of this effort).
With such a large workforce needing assistance, it became readily apparent that an enormous allocation of time and money would be essential to mount an effective response to this event. The level appeared to be far greater than any previous effort EMCC had ever experienced.

EMCC working with the cooperation of the human resources department of Sara Lee, met with the affected employees, helped prepare resumes for them, and offered training opportunities to the workers to minimize the economic impact of the Sara Lee decision and put these employees back to work as soon as possible. Initially, at the Rapid Response meetings with employees, more than 1,000 of these employees were assisted in preparation of a resume, and while that occurred, the employees signed up for a variety of classes offered by EMCC at its Golden Triangle campus. Based upon initial discussions between the employees and EMCC Workforce staff, it appeared that the needs of these employees ranged from not only resume writing and career counseling but also basic skills training and Adult Basic Education, as well as short-term skills training leading to longer term education. The training effort was envisaged to take place during a sustained effort over a period of at least 3 years to address the needs of such a large population of affected individuals.

The purpose of this research was to determine the effectiveness of the training provided to a portion of the workforce in a community college district. By looking at a specific identifiable group of training recipients over a specific period of time, and, which has been permanently laid off, it might be determined if the training essentially helped them to get a job, a better job or better wages. The information gathered in the research
can provide important assistance to policy makers to help focus local, state and federal dollars on training needs.

**Research Plan**

To address the two hypotheses that training will indeed produce better outcomes and wages will be affected, the study utilized data from SLIWMS housed at nSPARC located at Mississippi State University. SLIWMS was originally designed and implemented by nSPARC in part to track progress in all workforce education endeavors in the state of Mississippi. Community colleges, which are part of that system, are the main providers of publically funded workforce training in Mississippi. By 2007, all 15 community and junior colleges had joined the system and began collecting and submitting training data to nSPARC. These data are stored in the longitudinal management system.

In the progress of this study, for the training data, only data submitted by EMCC were used. EMCC, because the Sara Lee dislocated workers were located within its district boundaries, was charged with the responsibility of providing training to these workers.

Sara Lee Corporation began its process of layoffs in December 2006. Inasmuch as the bulk of those laid off occurred in 2007, this study utilized data from SLIWMS after December 2006 and ending before July 2009.

This study also used other data to address the questions addressed by this study. Specifically, the study used data from the Mississippi Unemployment Compensation System, maintained by MDES. These data cover the same period of time as the other data
submitted by EMCC. The data in this system included information on employment, wages, and unemployment compensation benefits received by the dislocated Sara Lee workers as well as age, race, and sex. Because of the requirement of EMCC to report data to the longitudinal study and since MDES is also required to submit data to the SLWIMS, a match of MDES data is assured for this study’s purposes.

In essence, this study compared the two groups of data regarding those who received training from EMCC as well as other services such as unemployment compensation and other benefits provided by MDES through its WIN Job Center located in the EMCC district. Thus, it should be concluded that those who received training will have had a better outcome and this should remain true with all other factors.

**Measurement**

1. The workforce received training to gain new and/or different skills; therefore, it is hypothesized that the result of the training would be that the dislocated Sara Lee employees would get a job.

2. It is hypothesized that a comparison of wages of the Sara Lee employees at the time of the layoff to current wages of the employees will indicate that the better wages were the result of training received.

**Dependent Variables**

There were two dependent variables identified in this research study:

1. The first dependent variable is described as the employment retention rate. This rate is measured as the number of individuals who became employed after the Sara Lee closure in Quarter 3 and/or Quarter 4 in 2008.
2. The second dependent variable is the annual wages of the dislocated Sara Lee workforce after the workforce received training. The study used the annualized wages based on Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 reported wages in 2008. These variables and data sources are depicted in Table 3.1.

**Independent Variables**

Again depicted in Table 3.1, a number of independent variables are identified in this study. Control factors exist and can be described as Income While Employed at Sara Lee, Age as of June 30, 2007, Gender being 1 = Female and 0 = Male, and Race being 1 = Black and 0 = White. Additional variables include the type of training received, if any, from EMCC including both manufacturing type training and non-manufacturing type training.

Other independent variables, found in Table 3.1, are characterized as Other Services Received such as receiving WIA services, unemployment insurance benefits or food stamps. Finally, the independent variables described as the Industry of Employment after the Sara Lee closure are listed as Manufacturing, Retail Trade, Services, or Others (described as employed in other industry).
Table 3.1 Variable Descriptions and Data Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Names</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dependent Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment After Sara Lee Closure</td>
<td>1= Employed in Q3 and/or Q4 in 2008 (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income After Sara Lee Closure</td>
<td>Annualized Wage Based on Q3 and Q4 in 2008 (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income While Employed at Sara Lee</td>
<td>Annualized Wages in Q1 and Q2 in 2007 (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demographics</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Age as of June 30, 2007 (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>1=Black; 0=White (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>1=Female; 0= Male (b)</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>EMCC Training Received</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Majority of Training Received (&gt;50% of hours) was Manufacturing Related (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Manufacturing</td>
<td>Majority of Training Received (&gt;50% of hours) Was Non-Manufacturing Related (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Training</td>
<td>Did Not Receive Training (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Services Received</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>WIA</td>
<td>1= Received WIA Services (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UI Benefits</td>
<td>1= Received Unemployment Insurance (a)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food Stamps</td>
<td>1= Received Food Stamps/EBI (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Industry of Employment After Sara Lee Closure</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>1=Employed in Manufacturing Industry (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>1=Employed in Retail Trade (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>1= Employed in Service Industry (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>1=Employed in Other Industry (a)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source:  
 a= Statewide Longitudinal Data Management System  
 b= East Mississippi Community College
Data Collection Procedures

The population (participants) of this study was the laid-off employees of the Sara Lee manufacturing facility. Specifically, only those employees who were affected by the February 2007 layoffs were included. The participants, affected by the layoff and subsequent Rapid Response, attended classes provided by EMCC during a period beginning in March 2007 and concluding in December 2009. To be correctly compared, the data were collected by SLIWMS. The data were matched by SLIWMS by comparing them to the data maintained in the EMCC Workforce Services database and reported to SLIWMS as required by law. The Mississippi Unemployment Compensation System maintained by MDES also submitted data pertinent to this study to SLIWMS. The EMCC data indicate dates and time as well as which and how many classes each Sara Lee employee attended. The MDES data, though affected by a 6-month lag in reporting to the state, indicate such matters as prior and post training wages, previous and current employment, and other indicators such as WIA services, unemployment compensation (UI benefits), food stamps and counseling services. Manufacturing and non-manufacturing classes were identified as healthcare related, computer skills, welding- and construction-related skills classes, ABE and basic skills classes as well as basic manufacturing skills classes, all done for non-credit purposes.

Prior to beginning research, the author received approval from Mississippi State University’s Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects to use the SLIWMS data (Appendix B). All documentation related to the approval of the use of the data were completed and submitted before any analysis of data was conducted. The EMCC President and the EMCC Vice President for Workforce and Community Services
gave approval to conduct this research on data submitted by EMCC to nSPARC (Appendix C), and the nSPARC director gave approval for research on nSPARC data (Appendix D). In addition, because of the protected nature of certain data submitted to SWLIMS by Mississippi Department of Employment Services, a Memorandum of Understanding between the researcher and MDES granting permission to use the data submitted by MDES for this study was signed. The approval and the Memorandum of Understanding are included in Appendix E.

**Population and Sampling Procedure**

There was no need for random sampling of the subjects. The entire population of the specific group of Sara Lee employees (as noted in the population discussion) that participated in the training offered at EMCC was included.

According to Bingham and Felbinger (2002), uncontrolled selection means that the evaluator cannot control who will or will not participate in the program. This phenomenon is called selection bias. In this case, the factor that may eliminate a participant is not that the researcher did not select that participant for study but that the participant may have been entered or registered for a class but may not have completed it for a variety of reasons. Therefore, there may be no measurable data available for that participant. There appeared to be no selection bias in this population under study.

**Analytical Strategy**

This study was designed to test the relationship between each dependent variable, that is to say employment rate and wages of the dislocated workers, and the independent variables of having received manufacturing or non-manufacturing training, having
received unemployment compensation, age, gender, race, and other benefits.

The study uses two statistical methods to answer the questions for the study. It uses a logistic regression for the dependent variable employment after receiving training. Because the dependent variable, employment, is measured as a dichotomous variable, the most appropriate statistical approach is to use logistic regression. Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) described a logistic regression as a multiple regression analysis involving the use of two or more measured variables yielding continuous or categorical scores. The variable is dichotomous in that the categorical variable has only two values, in this case 1 or 0. The use of the logistic regression is considered most appropriate when the dependent variable in the analysis is a dummy variable.

The second dependent variable, wages, is measured on a ratio scale. Because this is so, the most appropriate approach to use is an ordinary least-squares regression method. An ordinary least-squares regression is used when “the measure of the criterion variable is a continuous scale, the measures of the predictor variables are continuous or categorical scales, and the relationship between the predictor variables and the criterion variable is linear” (Gall, et al., 2007, p. 360). A simple quantitative descriptive statistics analysis was conducted to generally describe the participants in the study.

Logistic Regression Model

\[
\log \left( \frac{Pi}{1 - Pi} \right) = \alpha_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 \ldots + \beta_kX_k
\]

where \(Pi\) = the estimated expected probability of a Sara Lee dislocated worker obtaining a job (1);

\(1 - Pi\) = the estimated expected probability of a Sara Lee dislocated worker not
obtaining a job (0);

\( \alpha \) = the regression constant: the estimated log odds of the probability of obtaining a job when all independent variables equal 0;

\( \beta_1 \) to \( \beta_k \) = the estimated expected change in log-odds of the probability of obtaining a job for each unit change in the corresponding independent variable.

The model was transformed into a multiplicative probability model for each dependent variable as follows:

\[
\left( \frac{P_i}{1 - P_i} \right) = \exp(\alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + ... + \beta_k X_k)
\] (3.2)

The first analysis investigates the bivariate relationships between each independent variable and of the probability of gaining employment. The second analysis determines if relationships between training and obtaining employment hold when controlling for other variables. Table 4.1 in Chapter IV illustrates the Logistic Regression of Employment after the Sara Lee closure.

**Ordinary Least-Squares Regression Model**

The Ordinary Least-Squares (OLS) Regression Model can be illustrated as:

\[
Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + ... + \beta_k X_k + \varepsilon
\] (3.3)

where \( Y \) = the expected value of the average wage gain after training;

\( \alpha \) = the constant/intercept or the expected value of \( Y \) when all the independent variables equal zero;

\( \beta \) = the partial slope coefficient or regression coefficient. \( \beta \) represents the change in the variable \( Y \) associated with a unit of increase in the independent variable \( X \) when all other independent variables in the model are held constant;

\( X \) = the independent variable;
\( \varepsilon = \text{error terms as (1) the effects of } Y, \text{ the dependent viable of variables not included in the equation, and (2) a residual random element in the dependent variable. This second analysis illustrates the probability of obtaining higher income after training.} \)

Table 4.2 in Chapter IV presents the OLS Regression of Income after the Sara Lee closure.

Reliability/Validity

A design is internally valid to the extent that the impact is attributable to the treatment and no other factors (Bingham & Felbinger, 2002): “Internal validity is the degree to which a research design allows the investigator to rule out alternative explanations of the results of the study, or that the independent variables did, in fact, cause the dependent variable” (p. 21). Each of the questions and the data were analyzed to determine if they represent the content of the study. It was found that they did. As pointed out in Chapter IV, both regression models showed a significance of less than .01 or .001 meaning that there was a high degree of probability that the tests were both reliable and valid. According to Bingham and Felbinger (2007), “[a] measure is reliable to the extent that essentially the same results are produced in the same situation, and that these results can be reproduced repeatedly as long as the situation does not change” (p. 38).

Chapter Summary

Chapter III presented a discussion of the logistic regression designs used in this study, a simple logistic regression is used to determine the effects of training on the first
variable, employment retention. An ordinary least squares regression is used for the second dependent variable annual wages. The choosing of these measurements was discussed to illustrate that a number of independent variable such as age, gender and race all impact the measurement of wages. These models provide the simplest most direct way to measure the dependent variables to determine the effectiveness of the training on the Sara Lee employees. Validity and reliability of the instruments were assessed. With the significance illustrated by both models, it was found that there was a high degree of probability that the tests conducted were reliable and valid. In the following chapter, Chapter IV, descriptive statistics of the population of dependent variables included in the study are presented. The results of the logistic regression analysis of obtaining a job are presented. The logistic regression analysis of the possibility of obtaining a better wage indicates that employment in manufacturing provided a significantly higher earning capacity than those Sara Lee employees who were employed in retail trade, service industry jobs or other types of employment. Significantly, retail trade showed the lowest wage compared to manufacturing. On average these wages were $12,648.00 less than manufacturing wages with women more likely employed in retail trade than would men.
CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this case study was to examine the effect of EMCC’s Workforce Services Training on a specific group of people. In this case the employees of Sara Lee Corporation who were laid off from work when the plant where they worked permanently closed its doors in March 2007. The study attempted to determine whether training received would result in the employees obtaining new employment, what kind of employment, and whether there may exist differences in wage attainment. Also, the study analyzed whether individual characteristics such as age, gender, and other services received affected attainment of employment. The dataset consisted of a random sample ranging from a low participation of 395 to a high of 706 participants depending upon the three analyses run. There was no selection bias, as discussed in Chapter III.

In this chapter, three different analyses are conducted, and the results are presented. The first analysis examines the employment rate, after the Sara Lee closure, after participants have received training. The second analysis examines the extent to which training, demography, income, and other services received by the employees influence the odds of retaining employment after the closure of Sara Lee. The third analysis examines the extent to which training, demography, income, and other services received by the participants influence the average income of the Sara Lee employee after
the closure of the Sara Lee plant. Before addressing the findings of the three analyses, a discussion of the descriptive statistics for this study is presented.

**Descriptive Statistics**

Table 4.1 presents the descriptive statistics for all of the variables described in the study. Descriptive statistics quantify the variables that may have had an effect on participants’ gainful employment after receiving training from EMCC. The statistics indicate that 75.7% of the former Sara Lee employees were successful in obtaining employment after receiving training from EMCC. The statistics also indicate an after-training average income of $26,768.11 for those individuals who gained employment. This average in wages is less than what the former Sara Lee employees would have continued to earn while remaining employed at Sara Lee. The average wages earned pre-training was $31,906.40.

An analysis of the demographics of the Sara Lee workforce receiving training indicates that 89.0% were Black, while 11.0% were White. An overwhelming 68.6% of those receiving training were male, and 31.4% were female. On average, the age of the participants in this study was 44 years. The youngest employee was 22 years of age, while the oldest employee involved in training was 66 years of age.

Fourteen percent (14%) of the laid-off Sara Lee employees elected to receive manufacturing training from EMCC, while 20.3% received non-manufacturing training. After training, employment statistics indicate that former Sara Lee employees, 23.3%, were successful in obtaining employment in some kind of manufacturing setting. After-training numbers indicate that 12.4% of those receiving training found employment in
retail trade. While 10.4% found employment elsewhere, 52.9% found employment in the service sector of the local economy.

An overwhelming 85.2% of all employees received unemployment insurance benefits. Other services received were WIA benefits (21.3%), and food stamps, which accounted for 16.4% of Sara Lee Employees.
Table 4.1  Descriptive Statistics ($n = 602$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Names</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dependent Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment After Sara Lee Closure</td>
<td>0.757</td>
<td>0.429</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income While Employed at Sara Lee</td>
<td>28,768.110</td>
<td>16,138.330</td>
<td>686</td>
<td>96,289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demographics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>44.037</td>
<td>9.370</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race (1 = Black)</td>
<td>0.890</td>
<td>0.347</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex (1 = Female)</td>
<td>0.314</td>
<td>0.464</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EMCC Training Received</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>0.140</td>
<td>0.347</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Manufacturing</td>
<td>0.203</td>
<td>0.402</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Training</td>
<td>0.657</td>
<td>0.475</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Services Received</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIA</td>
<td>0.213</td>
<td>0.410</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UI Benefits</td>
<td>0.852</td>
<td>0.355</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Stamps</td>
<td>0.164</td>
<td>0.371</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Industry of Employment After Sara Lee Closure</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>0.243</td>
<td>0.429</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>0.124</td>
<td>0.330</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>0.529</td>
<td>0.500</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>0.104</td>
<td>0.305</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: East Mississippi Community College and Statewide Longitudinal Integrated Workforce Management System, 2011

**Employment Rate After Training**

This study conducted an analysis of the rate of employment after receiving training from EMCC. The results of this analysis are reported in Table 4.2. A histogram
graphically presents these data in Figure 4.1. Table 4.2 indicates that of the 97 participants receiving manufacturing training, 87 former Sara Lee employees subsequently were employed in manufacturing and 10 were not for an employment rate of 90%. Table 4.2 data indicate that 130 Sara Lee employees received non-manufacturing training resulting in 103 employees obtaining employment 27 left unemployed. The employment rate for this group was 79%. Twenty-seven participants receiving non-manufacturing training remained unemployed during the time period of this study. There were 479 employees who received no training. A large percentage of these Sara Lee employees, nearly 64%, who received no training were employed during the time of the study. This group totaled 334 with 145 not obtaining employment. The employment rate for those receiving no training was 70%. These data are depicted in chart form in Figure 4.1.
Table 4.2  Employment Rate After Sara Lee Closure by EMCC Training Received

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Employment Rates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>Not Employed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Manufacturing</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Training</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statewide Longitudinal Integrated Workforce Management System, 2011

Figure 4.1  Employment Rate After Sara Lee Closure by EMCC Training Received

Source: Statewide Longitudinal Integrated Workforce Management System, 2011
Relationship Between Training Received and the Odds of Employment

The results of this analysis are shown in Table 4.3. Logistic regression was used to determine the relationship between training received and the odds of employment. The model shows that the odds of a displaced Sara Lee employee gaining employment after receiving manufacturing training were 3.245, whereas the odds for an employee receiving non-manufacturing gaining employment were 1.438. Therefore, according to the data, manufacturing training significantly affects the odds of gaining manufacturing employment. Age had no significant impact on the odds of obtaining employment. The data indicate that the odds ratio is very close to 1 (0.959), which shows that a former Sara Lee employee, regardless of age, would gain employment after training. Data also indicate that race does not play a significant role in whether a former Sara Lee employee would gain employment. The odds that a Black employee would be employed over a White employee are 1.195. Gender does have a significant difference. The odds that a female would be employed over a male are 1.627. Thus, women are more likely to find employment after training. Data also indicate that income while employed at Sara Lee had a significant impact on employment after the Sara Lee closure.

The data indicate that there is little or no significance in whether Sara Lee employees received food stamps, unemployment insurance benefits, or WIA training support or counseling. The numbers indicate negligible influence of these additional services.
Table 4.3 Logistic Regression of Employment After Sara Lee Closure (n = 602)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Odds Ratio</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Odds Ratio</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EMCC Training Received (Ref = No Training)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>3.245 **</td>
<td>3.101 **</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Manufacturing</td>
<td>1.438</td>
<td>1.425</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demography</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.959***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race (1 = Black)</td>
<td>1.195</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex (1 = Female)</td>
<td>1.627+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income While Employed at Sara Lee</td>
<td>1.036***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Services Received</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIA</td>
<td>0.982</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UI Benefits</td>
<td>0.736</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Stamps</td>
<td>0.836</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-2 Log Likelihood: 653.5 626.6

*** p <0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p, 0.05; + p < 0.1

Source: Statewide Longitudinal Integrated Workforce Management System, 2011
Table 4.4  OLS Regression of Income After Sara Lee Closure ($N=395$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>28,110.0***</td>
<td>(1,017.6)</td>
<td>44,712.0***</td>
<td>(2,180.8)</td>
<td>26,282.0***</td>
<td>(775.0)</td>
<td>30,321.0***</td>
<td>(1,336.2)</td>
<td>35,523.0***</td>
<td>(2,529.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMCC Training Received (Ref. = No Training)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>4,158.4+</td>
<td>(2,222.2)</td>
<td>2,633.8</td>
<td>(2,020.2)</td>
<td>1,224.2</td>
<td>(1,686.2)</td>
<td>938.2</td>
<td>(1,637.8)</td>
<td>996.9</td>
<td>(1,694.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Manufacturing</td>
<td>-2,544.7</td>
<td>(2,110.9)</td>
<td>1,442.0</td>
<td>(1,872.5)</td>
<td>-1,377.3</td>
<td>(1,596.0)</td>
<td>-322.7</td>
<td>(1,553.9)</td>
<td>1,075.8</td>
<td>(1,563.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demography</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-10.3</td>
<td>(82.1)</td>
<td>-229.9***</td>
<td>(74.1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race (1 = Black)</td>
<td>-18,748.0***</td>
<td>(2,266.7)</td>
<td>-10,090.0***</td>
<td>(2,040.7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex (1 = Female)</td>
<td>-7,427.1***</td>
<td>(1,654.9)</td>
<td>-191.9</td>
<td>(1,573.4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income While Employed at Sara Lee</td>
<td>696.6***</td>
<td>(37.5)</td>
<td>643.9***</td>
<td>(38.2)</td>
<td>599.8***</td>
<td>(53.0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry of Employment (Ref. = Manufacturing)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>-12,648.0***</td>
<td>(2,171.0)</td>
<td>-10,371.0***</td>
<td>(2,233.2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>-3,782.5*</td>
<td>(1,510.6)</td>
<td>-1,480.0</td>
<td>(1,556.1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>-5,303.5*</td>
<td>(2,149.3)</td>
<td>-6,142.8**</td>
<td>(2,255.6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services Received</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIA</td>
<td>545.9</td>
<td>(1,515.2)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UI Benefits</td>
<td>1,828.0</td>
<td>(1,725.9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Stamps</td>
<td>-1,860.6</td>
<td>(1,996.8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R Squared</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** $p$, 0.001; ** $p$, 0.01; * $p$, 0.05; + $p$ < 0.01

Age and wage-before are centralized at the mean.
Source: Statewide Longitudinal Integrated Workforce Management System, 2011
Relationship Between Training Received and Income (Wages)

Table 4.4 provides the analysis of data regarding the effect of training received on wages after training. The data indicate that, on average, training received from EMCC in manufacturing skills results in a $4,158.40 higher wage than training in non-manufacturing skills. Post-training wages indicate that compared to pre-training wages (that is, wages received while employed at Sara Lee), training received in non-manufacturing skills produces on average a wage decrease. These data indicate that post-training wages decreased by $2,544.70 for those Sara Lee employees who were provided non-manufacturing skills training.

Demographic data reveal additional factors related to the training received and wages. Data indicate that older workers from Sara Lee are less likely to make more money after receiving training than younger former Sara Lee employees post-training. A $10.30 decrease in wages for older Sara Lee employees is indicated.

Similarly, race has a significant impact on the wages of post-training Sara Lee employees. Black Sara Lee employees are less likely to experience a wage gain compared to White Sara Lee employees post-training. A tremendously disparate difference of $18,748.00 less in wages earned post-training for Black Sara Lee employees compared to White employees exists.

Just as with Black Sara Lee workers, Sara Lee female employees were less likely to experience a wage increase, post-training. On average, women had a difference of $7,427.10 less in wages compared to Sara Lee men who had received training from EMCC. Another significance shown in Table 4.4 is that former Sara Lee employees who earned at a higher level while employed at Sara Lee experienced an advantage in the
labor market. They found employment and, more importantly, on average experienced an increase in their wages by $696.60.

Finally, the sector of the economy in which the Sara Lee employee was employed, pre-training, had an effect on the income of Sara Lee employees post-training and employed. Data indicate that employment in manufacturing provided a significantly higher earning capacity than those Sara Lee employees who were employed in either retail trade, service industry jobs or other types of employment. Significantly, retail trade showed the lowest wage compared to manufacturing. On average these wages were $12,648.00 less than manufacturing wages with women more likely employed in retail trade than men.

Chapter Summary

Chapter IV presented the results of the statistical analysis along with a discussion of the data. This chapter examined two questions for this study:

1. Are there differences evident in wages and employment in comparing those having received training or not? What are the wage differences for the new employment compared to wages earned at Sara Lee?

2. Do individual characteristics such as age, race, gender, location, or other impacts help explain differences in workforce training outcomes for Sara Lee dislocated workers in re-employment or wages?

In regards to question one, the study found that there were significant differences in wages and employment post-training. The results of the study reveal data that indicate that the training received by Sara Lee employees had a significant effect on the type of
employment and the wages received post-employment. Employment in manufacturing, prior to-training had an effect on employment in manufacturing post-training.

Addressing question two shows that statistics also indicate that age, race, and gender also had an effect on the amount of income of Sara Lee employees. On the other hand, other variables such as food stamps, counseling and unemployment compensation had little or no effect. Tables 4.1 through 4.4 along with Figure 4.1 present the statistical analysis used to address these two questions. Wage results were specifically addressed in Table 4.4. These results provide support for each of the hypotheses discussed in this chapter. The following chapter, Chapter V, provides a summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations.
CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter is a summation of the research study. The chapter begins with a summary of the findings of the study, followed by conclusions drawn from the study’s findings. The chapter also includes limitations, implications for practice, and recommendations for further research. The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of training provided by a community college, in this case specifically EMCC, to a large number of employees of a manufacturing industry who had been laid off due to a plant closure. The employees were Sara Lee workers who lost their jobs in March 2007.

Two research questions were addressed in this study:

1. Are there differences evident in wages and employment in comparing those having received training or not? What are the wage differences for the new employment compared to wages earned at Sara Lee?

2. Do individual characteristics such as age, race, gender, location, or other impacts help explain differences in workforce training outcomes for Sara Lee dislocated workers in re-employment or wages?
Purpose of Study

The study attempted to show whether training received would result in the trainees obtaining employment. What kind of employment they might obtain based upon the training received was also examined. In addition, whether certain differences may exist in wage attainment was also assessed.

The study found that 75.7% of the former Sara Lee employees were successful in obtaining employment after receiving training from EMCC. While this possibly is an excellent number of employees who obtain a job, there is a negative side to the results as well. The study shows that after-training average income, $26,768.11, is considerably less than what formers Sara Lee employees earned pre-training, $31,906.40. Thus, perhaps it can be determined that receiving training form EMCC does not guarantee a high annual wage when controlling for variables as predicted in the OLS model. Perhaps this might also be explained as being expected since a large portion of the Sara Lee employees had worked for the company for a long period. After being laid off, but after training, the Sara Lee employees were literally starting over in a new occupation and hence could not command higher wages because of things such as longevity or positions of leadership. Possibly it can also be explained by the period of time during which the layoff of the employees occurred. Both the state of Mississippi and the United States were entering into a recession about the time of the layoff in March 2007. This may help explain that the new places of employment were under stress enough that would disallow the payment of comparable wages.

The performance of EMCC training indicates that focusing on certain skills sets had an important effect on the employment of the Sara Lee workers. The study found
specifically that workforce training provided by EMCC, which focused on manufacturing skills, significantly improved the trainee’s ability to find a job particularly when controlling for demographics and wages while employed at Sara Lee.

The study results indicate that the manufacturing employment rate for Sara Lee employees who received manufacturing skills training was 90%. The employment rate for those receiving non-manufacturing training was not as high as for manufacturing, although the rate is still nearly 80%. Even less successful were those who chose not to participate in training at EMCC. While the employment rate is relatively high for manufacturing jobs after training, those employed in the manufacturing industry post-training also had significantly higher earnings than those employed in other industries. Income while employed at Sara Lee also impacted the job seeker post-training. Those who earned more while at Sara Lee had a labor market advantage. They were more likely to find employment and attain higher earnings as well.

Younger former Sara Lee employees were more likely to find employment, and with higher wages. The average age was just over 40 years with the oldest being 66 and the youngest 22 years of age. Possibly this can be accounted for because the younger Sara Lee employees were relatively aggressive in seeking re-employment when they entered the new job market. Perhaps more likely employers wanted a younger workforce. A younger workforce, particularly those members in so-called Generation Y and the Millennial Generation, may have a greater knowledge of technology, while at the same time have a lesser fear of adopting new technology. Those members of the workforce from these generations have grown up with computers and cellular phones, and to a lesser extent the Internet and social media. Some if not all of those technologies may be entirely
foreign to an older employee. Possibly a younger workforce may bear a lower initial wage cost due to the level of experience compared to an older worker. Also, a younger employee, especially one with less experience, may hold a hidden perceived advantage to potential employers versus a more experienced older employee. The younger employee may be more open and receptive to new methods, tasks, and responsibilities when compared to an older employee who has significant experience at one firm and had only that experience for comparison.

Race did not have a significant impact on re-employment. Statistics indicate that 89% of the Sara Lee employees in the study were Black. However, the study reveals that while being re-employed successfully, Blacks had significantly lower wages than White Sara Lee employees.

Women were significantly more likely to be paid less than men when re-employed after training. Women, on average, made $7,427.10 less than their male counterparts, and while more likely to be re-employed; they were also more likely to be employed in a low-wage retail industry.

The study also indicates that there were no significant impacts on re-employment if Sara Lee employees received any unemployment compensation, food stamps, or other services. This factor is a possible reflection on the work ethic of the Sara Lee workforce. Perhaps while necessary to sustain them while being retrained, the various other assistance provided by other agencies appeared to have had no negative effect. It did not appear to divert the Sara Lee employees from seeking a new job.
Conclusions

In this study the researcher examined the question of whether the training provided by EMCC to a specific group, in this case the employees of Sara Lee Corporation who had lost their jobs in March 2007, was effective. The researcher had questioned whether there would be differences in employment and wages post-training and in particular industries. A second question asked was whether age, race, gender, and other impacts would explain differences in workforce training outcomes for the Sara Lee employees. The following conclusions are drawn from the results of this study conducted to ascertain whether EMCC’s workforce training efforts met the needs of Sara Lee workers. The study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of the training offered by EMCC. Based on the statistical analysis of the data submitted by EMCC and MDES, it was determined that the training was indeed effective.

Conclusion I

There are significant differences evident in wages and employment between those who received training from EMCC and those that did not. There were also differences in wages for the new employment compared to wages earned at Sara Lee.

Conclusion II

Individual characteristics such as race, gender, and age do explain differences in workforce training outcomes. However, other impacts such as unemployment compensation, WIA had no effect on training outcomes or obtainment of employment.
Implications for Institutional Practice

The study demonstrates that workforce training provided by a community college in Mississippi has an impact on employees who have been laid off and need re-training to re-enter the workforce. Because of this noted practice, there is a method available to measure what that effectiveness might be compared to studies on return on investment, for example, being conducted by the University of Texas at Austin.

The study introduced the use of data being submitted by community colleges and being used for accountability purposes mandated by the Mississippi legislature and the State Workforce Board. Specifically, the study shows that these data may be used to determine non-credit workforce training effectiveness. The study specifically shows that the data available can be used for broader research purposes.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to one community college district. It was further limited to the reported information of one specific workforce group, that of the Sara Lee employees who experienced a plant closing. Because there is a 6-month lag between obtaining employment and its reporting by MDES, not all of the data for all of the employees laid off were available at the time of the study period. Additionally, at the time of the layoff and during the time the study group was receiving training, the state and the country were experiencing an economic downturn that continues as this study concludes.

Recommendations

Recommendations were made based upon the analysis of this study. These recommendations were made to the community college for further research.
Recommendations for Community College

With major layoffs in Mississippi still occurring, this study provided EMCC as well as the State of Mississippi with information that can help improve training for dislocated workers. EMCC as well as Mississippi’s community colleges in general should embrace higher levels of workforce training and apply similar measurements to determine the effectiveness of training provided. The colleges should provide innovative and modern training to help dislocated workers find re-employment in their areas of jurisdiction.

It was impossible to know the type and amount of jobs that were available at the time of the Sara Lee plant closure. Notwithstanding that issue, the community college should encourage dislocated workers to undertake training where there is a possibility of employment. As shown by this study, the dislocated workers who were trained in manufacturing had a distinct advantage of re-employment in manufacturing. Knowing the types of jobs available may help the community college apply the type of training needed for the dislocated worker to compete.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study was limited to one plant closure and one community college’s district; therefore, further research is recommended. The following should be considered:

1. Because this study was limited to EMCC’s jurisdiction, a larger study involving additional community colleges from different geographical areas of Mississippi would reveal whether the results would hold true in those areas.
2. Further research should be undertaken to determine to what extent non-credit training compares to the effectiveness of for-credit training in community colleges as it relates to job attainment.

3. With certain areas of the state experiencing chronic unemployment, community colleges in those regions of Mississippi should embrace higher levels of workforce training and apply similar measurements to determine the effectiveness of such training.

Chapter Summary

Chapter V summarized the research study findings and presented conclusions drawn by the researcher. The study found that while 75.7% of the former Sara Lee employees were successful in obtaining employment after training wages were not necessarily any better than pre-training wages. Manufacturing training significantly impacted Sara Lee employees with a job success rate of 90% in manufacturing jobs post training. Younger workers were more likely to find employment after training than older workers. Race had little or no effect since the demographics of the Sara Lee employees indicate that a significant portion were black. Women were less likely to be paid as well as men. Implications of the research study were presented for institutions to place into practice. This study introduces the use of data submitted by community colleges for accountability purposes and shows that this data can be used to determine non-credit effectiveness. However no consideration was given to economic downturn. The chapter concluded with recommendations for researchers interested in future research related to community college workforce training effectiveness.
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Elliott, S. (2008). *Mississippi values, dropout recovery initiative: Pay me now or pay me later*. Jackson, MS: State Board of Community and Junior Colleges.


Hanson, B. J., & Stocks, C. L. (2009). *An evaluation of stackable credentialing provided to the workforce with an emphasis on the unemployed and underemployed in Mississippi* (Unpublished paper). Mississippi State University, Starkville, MS.


APPENDIX A

ARC FINAL REPORT DOCUMENTS

100
Final Report EMCC Katrina Construction-Related Skills Training Program

East Mississippi Community College
P.O. Box 100
Mayhew, MS 39753

ARC Project No: MS-15473-06

July 1, 2006 to August 31, 2008

Raj K. Shaunak, PhD
V.P. Workforce and Community Services
East Mississippi Community College
P.O. Box 100
Mayhew, MS 39753
rshaunak@eastms.edu
662-243-1911
Name of Project: EMCC Katrina Construction-Related Skills Training Program

ARC Project Number: MS-15473-06

Grantee Name: East Mississippi Community College

Grant Period: July 2006 to August 31, 2008

Project Director: Dr. Raj K. Shaunak

ARC Grant Amount: $474,144.00

Background:

The East Mississippi Community College district is greatly divided economically and socially. The northern portion of the district is known as the Golden Triangle. The Golden Triangle has attracted many new businesses, and there are many economic and job opportunities for individuals with the necessary skill-set. In contrast, the southern portion of the district has almost no manufacturers and few economic opportunities.

Some counties are historically characterized by high unemployment, low educational attainment, depleted work skills, and very few meaningful job opportunities. Kemper and Noxubee, like other Mississippi communities, are losing the low skilled, low wage jobs to foreign competition. The increasingly competitive global market demands that area business and industry incorporate the most efficient production practices to remain financially and economically viable. For businesses to maintain the competitive edge, they must have employees who are willing and able to acquire the skill-sets for the 21st Century marketplace.

If we are to break the cycle of poverty, and move individuals from dependency to enterprise, it is essential we address employment opportunities for individuals who are
motivated to participate in the educational and training opportunities available through EMCC.

Being able to provide an adequate workforce is essential to Mississippi’s future. Job creation through economic growth and the attraction of industry to the region are key components in rebuilding Mississippi in the post-Katrina era. With all the economic development that is occurring in the Golden Triangle, there has never been a greater need for the rapid training of a skilled workforce. A great demand for skilled employees is evident throughout the Golden Triangle. It is paramount for EMCC to train individuals entering the workforce to be able to adapt to new opportunities.

On the 29th August, 2005 the coast of Mississippi was devastated by Hurricane Katrina. The state will be recovering for years, and the economic impact is, as of yet, unknown. Economic growth, job creation, and the preparation of a viable, trained workforce in Mississippi is one of the fundamental goals of EMCC. The EMCC college district lost 33% of its manufacturing jobs in the period from 1993-2003. Most of these jobs were low skilled and low paying and were lost to foreign countries that had lower wages. Fortunately, the economic tide has turned in parts of our district.

In the aftermath of hurricane Katrina during August 2005, the Gulf Coast of Mississippi was devastated and the economy of the state was left perilous at best. The effects of the hurricane were not confined just to the Gulf Coast. Even 200 miles in the hinterland of Northeast Mississippi, there was substantial damage in Columbus, West Point and Starkville. The leadership of our Governor, Haley Barbour, was instrumental in ensuring that all necessary resources were brought to bear not only for the immediate relief but also to help rebuild a better Mississippi. The awarding of this ARC grant to
EMCC enabled us to train individuals in the rebuilding of the Golden Triangle Region of Mississippi.

Although the Golden Triangle had begun to see new business locations (American Eurocopter, Talley Defense Systems, etc) prior to Katrina, it was post-Katrina that the aggressive economic growth began in our area. In the last few years, many existing businesses (Weyerhaeuser, Baldor Electric, Eka Nobel, Southern Ionics, Holcim) have expanded their operations.

Several ambitious businesses with 21st Century manufacturing processes have located in the Golden Triangle area. First it was the arrival of American Eurocopter (subsidiary of European Aeronautic Defense and Space Company), a manufacturer of helicopters for the U.S. Coast Guard, Homeland Security, and the LUH for the army. The arrival of American Eurocopter in the Golden Triangle served as a catalyst for many other defense related industry to locate in our region such as Stark Aerospace and Aurora Flight Systems (both make unmanned aerial vehicles), Talley Industries (shoulder fired missiles), Semi-South Conductors, II-VI (silicone carbide crystals for power sources), and International Military Group (mine resistant military vehicles). In 2005, SeverCorr a mini-steel mill located at GTRA 1700 acre mega site. With its $1.5 billion investment, the steel mill employs 500 employees and produces high-quality steel for the automotive industry. Approximately 8 suppliers and affiliates of SeverCorr have also located at this mega site. The “Jewel in the Crown” was the announcement in May 2007 that Pacific Car Company will be locating its North American Engine Plant in EMCC’s neighborhood. The Pacific Car Company construction phase is in full gear and many individuals trained through this ARC grant have found meaningful, well paying jobs at this facility.
Activities:

Since the awarding of this ARC grant in July 2006 until August 2008, EMCC has trained 1467 individuals in various construction related skills training programs. Additionally, we have provided Adult Basic Education to 1932 individuals. EMCC successfully leveraged this ARC funding to get state grants to better meet the training needs of the residents from the distressed counties in our district (Clay, Noxubee, Kemper, and Oktibbeha). The ARC Budget for this project was $474,144. With the help of Governor Barbour and the State Board of Community Colleges we leveraged $442,699 of WET funds from the state of Mississippi.

Upon receiving the ARC Grant in August 2006, EMCC began offering construction related skills training at the Mayhew Campus. The course offerings included Basic Construction Skills, Masonry, Blue Print Reading, Residential Electrical, Commercial Electrical, National Electric Code, Plumbing, HVAC, and Welding. The training classes were designed to range from six to eighteen weeks in duration, depending on the course. These short-term training courses were offered in non-traditional times and manners to make the best use of available resources and also to best serve the needs of area workers. The curriculum for the training followed state and /or nationally approved curriculum design, modified to fit the short-term training requirements. Students were prepared for state licensures and certification as needed e.g. Southern Building Code, National Electric Code, American Welding Association, EPA certification. We partnered with employer groups to determine their skills needs and then customized the training to their industry standards. We currently have class offerings in West Point, Mayhew, Macon, Scooba, and DeKalb.
Mayhew Campus: Due to the great economic development that is occurring in Golden Triangle area on the one hand and the January 2007 mass layoff at Sara Lee on the other, the EMCC Mayhew Campus is at the epicenter of training activity that is occurring in our district. With the assistance of the ARC Grant and the State Workforce Development funding, EMCC has been able to train 1044 individuals in various construction related skills at the Mayhew Campus. Additionally, we have served 1256 individuals through our Adult Basic Education programs so that they may either access additional education and training or seek gainful employment opportunities.

In August 2007, EMCC established a new state of the art, 20 booth welding lab and built a new construction skills training facility. EMCC has made an investment in excess of $350,000 in this infrastructure and equipment to meet the increasing demand for welding skills training and construction related skills programs. Since the inception of the ARC Grant in July 2006, 641 individuals have participated in the short term welding skills training at the Mayhew campus. We hired a fulltime welding instructor along with two adjunct instructors to meet this increasing demand for welders.

We also hired a fulltime instructor to teach 204 students Basic Carpentry, Blue Print Reading, and Plumbing. Three adjunct instructors teach HVAC (302 students) and the electrical programs (159 students). At EMCC we are constantly evaluating the demand by area employers for skilled workers and aligning our training programs to meet their needs. This customized, flexible skills training that meets industry skills standards and provides the participants with the relevant skill set, has made EMCC one of the premier training institutions in Mississippi.
West Point and Clay County: In the early spring of 2007, we were all euphoric about the great economic development that was occurring in the Golden Triangle of Mississippi. However, we were humbled and devastated when we learnt that Sara Lee Corporation was shutting down its pork processing facility in West Point, Mississippi. Bryan Brothers, a homegrown business started over 100 years ago was a flagship business and employer in the area and region. 1600 employees were terminated and the secondary and tertiary economic effects would impact the whole area. Dr. Rick Young, the president of EMCC charged us to “bring all resources to bear” to meet the needs of our community and neighbors. We partnered with the elected officials from the City of West Point and Clay County, West Point Schools Superintendent, 4 County Electric Power and other stakeholders to provide any assistance that we could so that these unemployed individuals could find jobs as early as possible. For the initial month or so EMCC provided resume writing and job search skills training, and other counseling services including budgeting, stress management, and dealing with creditors. EMCC staff was at Sara Lee conducting these workshops from 6 in the morning until 10 p.m. In the meantime we aligned resources to provide skills training for these employees so that they could obtain jobs in the new industry cluster that was emerging in the Golden Triangle. We began assessing the literacy skills of the laid off workers and guided them into remediation or towards technical skills training. At least 500 individuals were found to have sub-literacy levels (i.e. they were functionally illiterate). In order for these individuals to get jobs in the 21st Century workplace they will need a sustained effort to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.
EMCC is committed to provide long-term Adult Basic Education resources for these individuals. We are offering classes at many venues and flexible times to meet the needs of the participants. In order to overcome childcare and transportation barriers, we have partnered with the City and County officials in renovating an old TVA facility located in West Point. Thus far the partners have expended approximately $300,000 in facility upgrade and equipment purchases. We have ABE classes, construction classes and we have invested in a new welding lab to train the residents of Clay County. Thus far we have trained about 96 individuals in blueprint reading, construction skills, and welding.

Additionally, 312 individuals have participated in our Adult Basic Education classes. The availability of the ARC grant was heaven sent and timely to meet the resource needs in providing the training for the residents of Clay County. The facility renovations at the EMCC West Point Clay County Center are almost complete. The construction skills class participants helped build and renovate the facility. West Point/Clay County Inmates were trained in the relevant skills and were crucial in getting the facility completed. We are currently partnering with International Military Group in training their employees as they build the MRAP (Military’s Mine resistant up-armored vehicles).

**Noxubee County:** For EMCC, Noxubee County remains a challenge in overcoming the barriers to training due to historically high unemployment rate, low educational attainment, lack of relevant skills and work experience, low motivation, and few meaningful employment opportunities. We have developed great trust with some of the elected officials, the Mayor of Macon and the President of the County Supervisors, who
are forward thinking and are renovating an abandoned cut and sew factory, so that we can have a local training center. Thus far we have trained 157 individuals in construction related skills and have provided Adult Basic Education to 82 individuals. We are also working with the Noxubee County Correctional Facility in providing GED preparation for those inmates that are within 3 years of release. To date we have served 41 inmates as they pursue a GED. This year 14 inmates achieved a GED. We are also partnering with the Noxubee school system’s Career Technical department in providing employability skills training, and Dual enrollment classes.

**Kemper County:** In the spring of 2007, EMCC completed a new welding lab at the Scooba Campus in Kemper County. This welding lab has 12 welding stations and the complementing equipment. Over $150,000 investment has been made by the college thus far. Since the fall of 2007 we have provided training to 170 individuals in welding. With the prospect of a major company associated with clean coal technologies locating in Kemper County, we are anticipating a big demand for welders. We therefore will continue to enhance this program in Scooba. Through our Adult Basic Education Program, we have also served 86 participants at the Scooba Campus and an additional 55 individuals are being served at the Kemper Neshoba County Correctional facility.

**Project Outcomes:**

The ARC EMCC Katrina Construction Related Skills Training Programs Grant has enabled EMCC to dramatically enhance the training provided the residents of our community. We have far exceeded the outputs that we had expected at the awarding of the grant.

- We have trained 1467 individuals in various construction related skills
A major portion of these individuals have either found meaningful employment or increased their wages due to skills upgrade.

- We have made training flexible and accessible by offering it at various locations (Table 2). We are offering training in West Point, Macon, Mayhew, and Scooba.

- We have had 1932 participants in our Adult Basic Education Programs. In order to remove some of the transportation related barriers; we offer classes at multiple sites. (Table 3).

- We have been good stewards of the resources that were awarded through this grant. To date we have spent $470,999.80 of the ARC grant and matched $442,698.82 from other sources.

- We have invested $600,000 in infrastructure at the training centers in West Point, Mayhew, Macon, and Scooba. EMCC is committed to provide this training for the long-term. We will constantly analyze our offerings to improve delivery and quality. We will continue to dialog with employers to seek their advice on relevant skills training.

- We are grateful to the ARC for this grant and hopefully will partner with us again to sustain the momentum that has been generated and perhaps make some historical changes and impact on the lives of the residents of the distressed counties of Clay, Noxubee and Kemper.
Table A.1  Number of Participants by Type of Construction Related Class

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<tr>
<th>Type of Class</th>
<th>July 1,2006-June 30, 2007</th>
<th>July 1,2007-June 30, 2008</th>
<th>July 1, 2008-Aug 31, 2008</th>
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<tr>
<td>NEC Code</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blueprint Reading</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>68</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bricklaying</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Carpentry</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>204</td>
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<tr>
<td>HVAC</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>302</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plumbing</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residential Electric</td>
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<td>Commercial Electric</td>
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<tr>
<td>Welding</td>
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<td>375</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>641</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>608</strong></td>
<td><strong>709</strong></td>
<td><strong>150</strong></td>
<td><strong>1467</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A.2  Training Participation by Location from July 1, 2006 to August 31, 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Class</th>
<th>West Point/Clay County</th>
<th>Mayhew Campus</th>
<th>Macon/Noxubee County</th>
<th>Scooba/Kemper County</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NEC Code</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blueprint Reading</td>
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<td>57</td>
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<td>68</td>
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<td>Bricklaying</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<td></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Carpentry</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
<td>204</td>
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<tr>
<td>HVAC</td>
<td>302</td>
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<td>Plumbing</td>
<td>20</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Electric</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>56</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commercial Electric</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welding</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>96</strong></td>
<td><strong>1044</strong></td>
<td><strong>157</strong></td>
<td><strong>170</strong></td>
<td><strong>1467</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table A.3    ABE Participation by Location July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of Class</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>July 1,2006-</td>
<td>July 1,2007-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>June 30, 2007</td>
<td>June 30, 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryan Library/Clay County</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMCC GT Campus</td>
<td>865</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>1256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kemper Library, DeKalb</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noxubee Library, Macon</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMCC, Scooba</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Point Center</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIN Center/Yorkville</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kemper Correctional Facility</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noxubee Correctional Facility</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,187</strong></td>
<td><strong>745</strong></td>
<td><strong>1932</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Problems Encountered:

For EMCC, the southern counties served as the greatest challenge in overcoming the barriers to training due to historically high unemployment rates, low educational attainments, lack of relevant skills and work experience, low motivation, and few meaningful employment opportunities. With almost no manufacturers and few economic opportunities, it is hard to compete for the new job opportunities in the increasingly competitive global market.

For businesses to maintain their competitive edge, they must have employees who are willing and able to acquire the skill-sets for the 21st Century marketplace. The goal of EMCC is to train the low-skilled and uneducated populations within our district to be prepared for the fast-paced modern industries. If we are to break the cycle of poverty, and move individuals from dependency to enterprise, it is essential we address
employment opportunities for individuals who are motivated to participate in the educational and training opportunities available through EMCC.

In order to get the programs jumpstarted, in both the southern counties as well as the Golden Triangle, the main challenges were three fold:

a) To find a skilled individual who would be both: the project manager and lead instructor at the salary we were able to afford,

b) Finding appropriate space/equipment to provide the training at the various times (morning, afternoon, and evenings),

c) Provide the training at various locations that would be convenient to the trainees (e.g. West Point, Macon, Scooba). This was essential in order to overcome the barriers of transportation and childcare in EMCC’s rural environment.

All of these problems were addressed by EMCC to accommodate the targeted populations. As a result, training opportunities were presented to people that were never before presented

**Program Continuation and Sustainability:**

In order to continue to serve the EMCC district to the degree that we have in the past years and far above the current level, the current services and infrastructures must be maintained.

Within EMCC’s six county district Clay County will continue towards the completion of the EMCC West Point Clay County Center. The availability of the ARC grant was heaven sent and timely to meet the resource needs in providing the training for the residents of Clay County. The construction skills class participants will continue to
play an important role in building and renovating the facility. The EMCC West Point Clay County Center will continue to be a hub for the northern part of our district that will provide not only degree programs such as carpentry and truck driving but also adult basic education services, welding, and academic courses.

EMCC will sustain services in Noxubee County through the continued growth of the old cut and sew facility designated for training. Additional classroom space will be added to serve a greater number of carpentry and other construction skills as well as adult basic education. The additions will be funded through local funds. Dual enrollment will also continue to grow through the efforts of both Noxubee County High School and EMCC. The GED classes for both the prisoners and the general public continue to grow in popularity and are currently being offered in three locations within the county and with more to come based on resources and needs.

Mayhew will grow the already popular welding and construction classes to meet the expanding needs within the Golden Triangle area. With the modern industries that are coming to our area, much higher skills are needed by a larger amount of people, unlike anything that this area has ever seen. EMCC will continue the commitment of creating the most effective training possible to accommodate as many participants as possible, to replenish the local pool of potential employees. This will not only create satisfaction of existing business and industry, but will also serve as a beacon of light to future industries that are looking to locate to our area.

Lastly, EMCC will continue Kemper County’s welding and electrical lineman programs along with adult basic education and other classes to meet the training needs of these people. Kemper County will continue to be a challenge that EMCC is willing to
face head on. EMCC will stay committed to playing a role in recruiting new business and industry into the area and training the community for the 21st century jobs.

Conclusions and Recommendations

East Mississippi Community College serves Clay, Kemper, Lauderdale, Lowndes, Noxubee, and Oktibbeha counties in east central Mississippi. In addition to the traditional career-technical and academic offerings, EMCC is a leader in providing workforce development training and community services. For the past 5 years, the Workforce Services Division has trained about 12,000 individuals annually. The mission of the East Mississippi Community College Workforce Services is to enhance the economic opportunities for the residents of our district in order for them to achieve the American Dream. The services available through the Workforce Education and Training Program include career counseling, referring individuals to training or jobs, and basic literacy skills training and high school equivalency education for individuals seeking training and retraining to be successful in the new economy. Business and Industry workforce training needs are met through Workforce Services at EMCC. These services to Business and Industry include pre-employment training and customized incumbent worker training. Workforces Services division serves as a catalyst for training the workforce in the EMCC six-county district.

EMCC partnered with the Mississippi Partnership and other WIA One-Stop Centers to successfully accommodate the needs of Dislocated Workers. We shall continue and grow these partnerships and will also seek area employer’s assistance in providing educational and training opportunities to our customers. The State Board of Community of Colleges was very instrumental in making our foray into the construction
skills related training and have committed continued support in our efforts.

From our experiences we would recommend that various partnerships are developed to serve the common purpose and leverage all providers’ meager resources. In the future, EMCC will continue to provide training to the six counties within our district based upon local need. We have enjoyed working with the ARC grant and have used the funds to greatly enhance the quality of our training through proficient instructors, better instruction materials and through our infrastructures.
APPENDIX B

IRB LETTER OF APPROVAL
April 18, 2011

Bruce Hanson
201 Crescent Cove
Columbus, MS 39701

RE: IRB Study #10-267: A Case Study of East Mississippi Community College's Plan to Assist the Sera Lee Corporation Employees Due to Plant Closing

Dear Mr. Hanson:

This email serves as official documentation that the above referenced project was reviewed and approved via administrative review on 4/18/2011 in accordance with 45 CFR 46.101(b)(4). Continuing review is not necessary for this project. However, any modification to the project must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to implementation. Any failure to adhere to the approved protocol could result in suspension or termination of your project. The IRB reserves the right, at anytime during the project period, to observe you and the additional researchers on this project.

Please note that the MSU IRB is in the process of seeking accreditation for our human subjects protection program. As a result of these efforts, you will likely notice many changes in the IRB’s policies and procedures in the coming months. These changes will be posted online at http://www.orc.msstate.edu/human/ahrrpp.php.

A signed formal approval letter will only be mailed at your request. Please refer to your IRB number (#10-267) when contacting our office regarding this application.

Thank you for your cooperation and good luck to you in conducting this research project. If you have questions or concerns, please contact Christine Williams at cwilliams@research.msstate.edu or call 662-325-5220.

Sincerely,

Nicole Morse
Assistant Compliance Administrator

cc: Ed Davis (Advisor)
APPENDIX C

EMCC PRESIDENT’S AND EMCC VICE PRESIDENT’S

LETTERS OF APPROVAL
January 12, 2012

Christine Williams
MSU IRB Compliance Administrator
Office of Regulatory Compliance & Safety
Post Office Box 6223
Mississippi State, MS 39762

Dear Ms. Williams:

By this letter, please be advised that Bruce Hanson is authorized to use data supplied to the Workforce Performance Management System by East Mississippi Community College (EMCC). This approval is to assist Mr. Hanson, a member of the EMCC staff, in his meeting the Mississippi State University requirements in completing his dissertation leading to the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Community College Leadership.

Sincerely,

Rick Young, President
East Mississippi Community College
March 2, 2010

Dr. Domenico Parisi
Director and Professor
nSPARC
203 Robert Louis Jones Circle
Mail Stop 9622
Mississippi State, MS 39762

Dear Doctor Parisi:

By this letter, the Center is authorized to use data supplied to the Workforce Performance Management System by East Mississippi Community College (EMCC) to answer the following questions:

- What were the outcomes from the training opportunities provided through EMCC in response to the closure of the Sara Lee Plant in West Point, Mississippi;
- How many individuals availed themselves of the services provided by EMCC;
- How many individuals went through actual training;
- Of those who went through training, did they find jobs; and if so how long did it take;
- What are the wages for the new jobs relative to the wages the Sara Lee employees earned at the time of their termination;
- Are there any differences evident in wages and employment time comparing with and without training;
- How many employees received unemployment compensation benefits and for how long;
- How many Sara Lee employees have not entered the workforce since their termination;
- What were the outcomes for those who were NOT served by EMCC in categories such as jobs, wages, unemployment compensation or retirement, and, finally;
- Please conduct a multivariate analysis of the data to understand how individual characteristics help to explain the differences in each of these questions.
The purpose of this request is to assist Mr. Bruce Hanson, a member of the EMCC staff, in his meeting the Mississippi State University requirements in completing his dissertation leading to the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Community College Leadership.

I very much appreciate your assistance and I remain;

Sincerely

Raj Shaumak, PhD
Vice President, Workforce Services
APPENDIX D

NSPARC APPROVAL LETTER
April 15, 2011

Mr. Christine Williams
Compliance Administrator
Office of Regulatory Compliance and Safety
Mailstop 9563

Subject: Bruce Hanson’s Dissertation Research

Dear Ms. Williams:

Please accept this letter as permission for Mr. Bruce Hanson to use nSPARC data as part of his dissertation work in the Department of Leadership and Foundations under the direction of Dr. Ed Davis.

Mr. Hanson’s research involves the study of community college leadership and data residing with nSPARC will be critical to his research. Please note that Mr. Hanson will not have access to any identifiable data. In fact, all analyses will be conducted by nSPARC staff and only statistical output will be made available to Mr. Hanson. At no time will Mr. Hanson have access to identifiable data.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide any additional information regarding data for Mr. Hanson’s dissertation research.

Sincerely,

Domenico “Mimmo” Parisi
Director
APPENDIX E

MDES APPROVAL LETTER AND MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
Mississippi Department of Employment Security

Haley Barbour
Governor

Les Range
Executive Director

January 10, 2012

Mr. Bruce J. Hansen
201 Crescent Cove
Columbus, MS 39705

Re: MOU WITH MDES

Dear Mr. Hansen:

MDES received your correspondence requesting permission to use statistical data regarding the 2007 lay-off at Sara Lee. Rather than sending you a letter granting permission, MDES asks that you sign the enclosed Memorandum of Understanding, which grants permission to use the data.

There are two copies of the MOU enclosed. Please sign and then return all copies to my attention at the address listed below. One fully executed original document will be returned to you upon countersignature.

If further information is necessary, please do not hesitate to contact me at (601) 321-6074 or email lbrady@mdes.ms.gov.

Sincerely,

LeAnne F. Brady
Senior Attorney

Enclosure(s)

Increasing Employment in Mississippi
STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
COUNTY OF HINDS

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN THE
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT SECURITY
AND BRUCE J. HANSON

This agreement, is made and entered into by and between Bruce J. Hanson and the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (herein referred to as "MDES"), for Mr. Hanson to use certain statistical data for his dissertation. This agreement shall become effective on the date it is signed by both parties and shall remain in effect until it is terminated by either party.

Now, therefore, in consideration and understanding of the issues and purpose set forth above, both parties agree to the following:

I. Project Overview

Bruce J. Hanson is currently completing his dissertation and needs permission to use certain data. Specifically, Mr. Hanson requests permission to use the data submitted to NSPARK at Mississippi State University (MSU) by MDES regarding training received by employees laid off at Sara Lee in 2007 from East Mississippi Community College. Mr. Hanson has received permission to use the data from MSU's Institutional Review Board, and has agreed to only use the statistical analysis of the data and not the actual data. By entering into this MOU, MDES agrees to permit Mr. Hanson to use the statistical data of those Sara Lee employees who were trained at EMCC after the 2007 lay-off.

II. Confidentiality

By signing this MOU, MDES gives permission to Mr. Hanson to use the statistical data described above for educational purposes only. Mr. Hanson agrees that he will not use the data for any other purpose. By signing this agreement, Mr. Hanson acknowledges that he will not be given access to any identifying information and will have access to, and the use of, statistical data only. If at any point during the course of this agreement, Mr. Hanson gains access to any identifying or confidential information, Mr. Hanson agrees that he will not use or release this information. If it is determined that Mr. Hanson has failed to comply with any provision of this agreement, this agreement must be suspended until corrective action has been taken to ensure that no further breach will occur. In the absence of prompt and satisfactory corrective action, MDES has the right to cancel this agreement.

III. Dispute Resolution

In the event that either party has an issue concerning the nonperformance or violation of the terms of this Agreement, the complaining party shall notify the other party, and allow the other party reasonable opportunity to correct the nonperformance or violation before availing itself of any other legal remedy allowed by law.
IV. TERMINATION

Notwithstanding any other provision of this Agreement to the contrary, this Agreement may be terminated by either party with thirty (30) days written notice at any time during the contract.

V. MISCELLANEOUS

A. Assignment. Unless expressly authorized, this Agreement may not be assigned without prior written consent of both parties hereto.

B. Amendment. This Agreement may not be amended or modified in any respect except by an instrument in writing signed by both parties hereto.

C. Entire Agreement. All prior agreements, representations, statements, negotiations and undertakings, between the parties on matters addressed herein are superseded hereby.

D. Binding Effect. This Agreement shall inure to the benefit of, and be binding upon, every successor or permitted assign of the parties hereto.

E. Applicable Law. This Agreement shall be subject to, and interpreted by and in accordance with, the laws of the State of Mississippi.

F. Best Efforts. MDES agrees to exert its best efforts in the performance of its obligations under this MOU. However, it disclaims any liability to anyone for the consequences of any unintentional error or mistake on its part in providing this service.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have caused this Agreement to be duly executed and to become effective on the day it is signed by both parties.

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT SECURITY

[Signature]  
Deputy Executive Director/CFO

Date: ____________

[Signature]  
Executive Director

Date: ____________
APPENDIX F

EMCC SARA LEE NARRATIVE
Press Release of EMCC Workforce Services

Answering the Call
By
Bruce J. Hanson
Workforce Services
March 1, 2007

If ever there was a time for Workforce Services to be mobilized, it surely was on February 12, 2007. That was the date that the entire Workforce Services team, headed by Raj Shaunak of the Golden Triangle Campus, picked up lock stock and barrel and headed to the Sara Lee Plant in West Point, Mississippi. Much of the news coming out from this well known north Mississippi community was bad. EMCC was there in the very beginning when EMCC President Rick Young told a packed audience on the day after the announcement of Sara Lee’s plant closing that EMCC would do everything it could to help the workers.

Coming on the heels of a reduction in workforce in December of 2006, affecting over 400 employees, was the announcement by the Chicago-based Corporation that it was closing the doors of a plant that had operated for over 90 years. “We sent our entire team from Workforce plus members of the community college placement staff, adult education staff, and academic counselors to help these proud workers,” Shaunak said. “We were assisted by members of the Mississippi Department of Employment Services, Win Centers, and others to take on this gigantic effort,” he added.

The team quickly geared up for a two week onsite effort to meet with all 1200 employees affected by the closing to help them write a resume while signing them up for
training to help them either hone their skills or build new ones to compete for a new job. “We had already been training or retraining over half of the workers laid off in December”, Shaunak stated. “It was natural for us to keep on with the entire workforce from union to non-union, supervisors to the newest employees,” he added.

Generally, this kind of effort follows on the heels of what is referred to as a Rapid Response. Rapid Response is the State’s effort to bring together all job-related agencies in a coordinated effort to give workers an idea of what they can do to find new employment and register for unemployment compensation and similar necessities. However, Rapid Response efforts, which usually involve many employees and all responsible agencies at one time, do not provide as much immediate personal assistance and require the affected worker to find these services by oneself. “By sitting down with the Sara Lee Human Resource Personnel, we were able to focus our team efforts on the workers prior to a planned Sara Lee job fair,” said Dr. Shaunak.”

Many had a fresh and up to date resume in hand as they looked at employment opportunities,” he added. The result was a relatively smooth exercise at the plant site and convenient to the workers being affected by the plant closing.

To date over 900 Sara Lee employees have signed up for some short term or longer term training opportunities at EMCC. Much of the training will be offered free of charge or can be paid by benefits the employees are eligible for in conjunction with their loss of employment. Many of the employees have signed up for multiple classes, some have even signed up as husband and wife teams as they seek training to improve their job skills. “What is so heartening about this,” Shaunak says, “is the enthusiasm these employees have demonstrated. They’re also very skilled, long term employees with
strong family ties and an excellent work ethic.” he stated. “They seem determined to improve their skills even in the face of such turmoil.”

The next steps are already underway at the EMCC Golden Triangle Campus. The initial sign-up materials are being computerized for immediate follow-up by Workforce staff led by Dava Washburn, leader of the displaced workers team. As classes are scheduled and instructors found, the team will contact each of the employees to give them specific starting dates and times. Some of the classes will be set up in West Point, so Sara Lee employees can take advantage of a more convenient location closer to their homes.

The scale of this event is huge, but the staff of East Mississippi Community College’s Workforce Team is ready to answer the call.
CAMPUS NEWS

West Point: A winning partnership

By Bruce Hanson
EMCC

A year ago, the EMCC West Point/Clay County Center was just a well-worn group of 1950s buildings. Today not only are Adult Basic Education classes, computer classes and academic classes taught at the Center, but a new welding classroom/lab and a construction skills building have been added. EMCC’s truck driver courses are also taught at the center and workforce training is offered there as well. Who would have thought that the promise made by EMCC President Dr. Rick Young to “pull out all stops” to help West Point would have resulted in a cooperative effort between West Point, Clay County and the college and the new presence EMCC now has in West Point?

Dr. Young had met with about 500 citizens of the city and county on the Saturday after the fateful announcement by Sara Lee to close its facilities in Clay County, after 92 years of operation. He said the college would be there for them. We’ve kept our promise, and the result is the new West Point/Clay County Center. Many of the affected Sara Lee employees have taken advantage of classes at the Center and EMCC plans to grow the college’s offerings in the future.

Working with West Point High School, EMCC staff members have kicked off training for GED students. Carpentry students have helped in the fitting out of the welding lab.

As it stands right now, two of the three original buildings have been completely renovated with modern equipment: air conditioning, Internet service, computers, modern bathrooms and the like, added where needed. An administrative addition is getting its final touches; it will house the college’s administrative staff, provide office space for instructors and include space for enrollment and other activities at the Center. One building, with high bay areas and plenty of work space, remains to be renovated. It will be used as a local industry training complex.

As the center continues to grow and provide educational opportunities to the people of West Point and Clay County,
EMCC will become even more of an asset to this community, bringing education closer to the people. Credit for the Center can be spread among many people. It could not have been accomplished without the cooperation, physical and financial help from the city and the county leadership and workforce. The 4-County Electric Power Association played an important role and of course the work, the actual labor, could not have been accomplished without the help of the prisoners of the Clay County Sheriff’s Department and the Department of Corrections.

It has truly been a cooperative effort – and we look forward to continuing to expand its services.

*Bruce Hanson of EMCC’s Golden Triangle campus is the college’s community entrepreneurial development facilitator.*