ENGAGING DIVERSE STUDENTS IN A SWIFT TRANSITION TO 
ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING

AACC WEBINAR
APRIL 23, 2020

MODERATOR: DR. KEVIN CHRISTIAN, DIRECTOR OF DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND EQUITY
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

PRESENTERS: DR. MELVA BLACK, INTERIM DEAN OF HUMANITIES, VOLUNTEER STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
GEORGE ROBERSON, STUDENT, VOLUNTEER STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
40 Community & Technical Colleges Powering Tennessee

- 13 community colleges
- 27 colleges of applied technology

Dr. Melva Black is Interim Dean of the Division of Humanities and Assistant Professor of Communication at Volunteer State Community College in Gallatin, TN. In 2018 she established an initiative for male students of color to assist with retention and completion. Since its inception there has been 100% student retention. Prior to her work in higher education she served for 20+ years in government and non-profit youth and community service-related programs. For approximately 13 years she served as Program Director of a non-profit health and education capacity building effort in rural communities in South Africa and Haiti; working to decrease disparities among the disenfranchised.
My name is George Roberson. I am a native of Greenville, Mississippi. At the age of 12 my family and I moved to Atlanta, Georgia and two years later settled in Hendersonville, Tennessee, just outside of Nashville. I am a graduate of Beech High School. Currently, I am a second-year graduating student at Volunteer State Community College. During my college studies, I became a student-athlete and earned my way as a two-year starter as Center on the men’s basketball team, held a work-study job in the Humanities division office, and was a member of Men of Color Achieving Success (MOCAS) Initiative, which supports male students of color in retention and completion. Through this program I have gained and honed skills like proper etiquette, professional engagement in and out of the workplace, personal financial management, political awareness and responsibility, and how to navigate the higher education landscape.
VSCC DEMOGRAPHICS

- 4 campus locations
  - Gallatin, TN (main campus)
  - Livingston & Cookeville (Upper Cumberland)
  - Springfield
  - Wilson County (underway).

- Current enrollment 11,384

- Fall 2019 students:
  - Total enrollment 9227
  - Female students 62%
  - Male students 38%
  - White students 76%
  - Black students 8%
  - Hispanic students 7%
  - Lottery scholarships 18%

- Student demographics

- Academic programs

- 2018-2019 awards: 800 University Parallel/Tennessee Transfer Pathway; 452 Health & Related Programs

- 2018-2019 retention rate 50.9%; 2016-2019 three-year graduation rate 23.4%
PREPAREDNESS PLAN

- Response plan:
  a. 3.1 Mitigation – you have limited contact with other people, the campus is still open
  b. 3.2 Isolation – we are fully online with limited access to campus resources
  c. 3.3 Quarantine- total closure of the campus with all instruction provided online

- Extended spring break one week to prep for total online format March 23

- Identification of division course online preparedness & modifications

- Identification of course online challenges (i.e., EMP, Music, Art)

- Identify students and faculty needing technology assistance (i.e., laptop/internet) – daily reporting

- Identify faculty and students not logging in online courses- daily reporting
THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE: DR. BLACK

- Nashville & Cookeville tornado (March 3 & March 28)
- Lack of technology access and use
- SGA expressed lack of input concern
- Fear, Anxiety, Failure
- Withdrawals (COVID-19 & move to online)
- Withdrawal spring 2020 < spring 2019
- Course peer support
- VSCC laptop distribution/ free internet access resources
THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE: G. ROBERSON

- Vol State Notification
- Student Reaction
- Faculty Engagement
- Adapting to Online Learning
- Obstacles to Online Learning
- Lessons Learned
OPERATING IN A MANDATED ONLINE HOMEBOUND WORKSPACE

**DR. BLACK**
- Frequent faculty Zoom meetings; course updates, operation procedures, etc.
- Increased student engagement (i.e., phone calls, emails, early alerts)
- Faculty support groups; Mindfulness sessions
- Examination of long-term course reorganization
  - Traditional/face-to-face
  - Dual enrollment
- Intentional self-care (i.e., exercise, meditation, social communication, etc.)

**G. ROBERSON**
- Family bonding
- Working
- Missing peer social interaction
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