



# The Economic Value of Southeastern Community College

Southeastern Community College (SCC) creates a significant positive impact on the business community and generates a return on investment to its major stakeholder groups—students, taxpayers, and society. Using a two-pronged approach that involves an economic impact analysis and an investment analysis, this study calculates the benefits received by each of these groups. Results of the analysis reflect fiscal year (FY) 2019-20.



COLUMBUS COUNTY, NC



## ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

In FY 2019-20, SCC added **\$119.6 million** in income to the Columbus County economy, a value approximately equal to **7.2%** of the county's total gross regional product (GRP). Expressed in terms of jobs, SCC's impact supported **2,311 jobs**. For perspective, the activities of SCC and its students support **one out of every 10 jobs** in Columbus County.

### OPERATIONS SPENDING IMPACT

- SCC employed 278 full-time and part-time faculty and staff. Payroll amounted to \$13.9 million, much of which was spent in the county for groceries, mortgage and rent payments, dining out, and other household expenses. The college spent another \$10.2 million on day-to-day expenses related to facilities, supplies, and professional services.
- The net impact of the college's operations spending added **\$16.6 million** in income to the county economy in FY 2019-20.

### STUDENT SPENDING IMPACT

- Some in-county students, referred to as retained students, would have left Columbus County for other educational opportunities if not for SCC. These retained students spent money on groceries, mortgage and rent payments, and other living expenses at county businesses.
- The expenditures of retained students in FY 2019-20 added **\$2.3 million** in income to the Columbus County economy.

### IMPACTS CREATED BY SCC IN FY 2019-20



Operations spending impact  
**\$16.6 million**



Student spending impact  
**\$2.3 million**



Alumni impact  
**\$100.7 million**



TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT  
**\$119.6 million**

OR

Jobs supported  
**2,311**

## ALUMNI IMPACT

- Over the years, students have studied at SCC and entered or re-entered the workforce with newly-acquired knowledge and skills. Today, thousands of these former students are employed in Columbus County.
- The net impact of SCC's former students currently employed in the county workforce amounted to **\$100.7 million** in added income in FY 2019-20.



## INVESTMENT ANALYSIS

### STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

- SCC's FY 2019-20 students paid a present value of **\$4.6 million** to cover the cost of tuition, fees, and supplies. They also forwent **\$30.7 million** in money that they would have earned had they been working instead of attending college.
- In return for their investment, students will receive a cumulative present value **\$133.8 million** in increased earnings over their working lives. This translates to a return of **\$3.80** in higher future earnings for every dollar students invest in their education. Students' average annual rate of return is **22.5%**.

### TAXPAYER PERSPECTIVE

- Taxpayers provided SCC with **\$16 million** of funding in FY 2019-20. In return, they will benefit from added tax revenue, stemming from students' higher lifetime earnings and increased business output, amounting to **\$35.1 million**. A reduced demand for government-funded services in North Carolina will add another **\$3 million** in benefits to taxpayers.
- For every dollar of public money invested in SCC, taxpayers will receive **\$2.40** in return, over the course of students' working lives. The average annual rate of return for taxpayers is **9.0%**.

### SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE

- In FY 2019-20, North Carolina invested **\$58.4 million** to support SCC. In turn, the North Carolina economy will grow by **\$398.7 million**, over the course of students' working lives. Society will also benefit from **\$7.7 million** of public and private sector savings.
- For every dollar invested in SCC in FY 2019-20, people in North Carolina will receive **\$7.00** in return, for as long as SCC's FY 2019-20 students remain active in the state workforce.

### STUDENTS SEE A HIGH RATE OF RETURN FOR THEIR INVESTMENT IN SCC



Average annual return for SCC students

**22.5%**



Stock market 30-year average annual return

**10.6%**



Interest earned on savings account (National Rate Cap)

**0.8%**

Source: Forbes' S&P 500, 1991-2020. FDIC.gov, 6-2021.

### For every \$1...



Students gain in lifetime earnings

**\$3.80**



Taxpayers gain in added tax revenue and public sector savings

**\$2.40**



Society gains in added income and social savings

**\$7.00**