

**Troy University
Alabama**

*Procedure for the Review and Approval
Of Consolidations/Mergers*

PROSPECTUS

Submitted to
**The Commission on Colleges
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools**

October, 2004

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1. ABSTRACT

The three independently accredited institutions under the Troy State University (TSU) System propose a merger into one institution to be effective August 1, 2005. This action will mark the culmination of over four years of dialogue and direction provided by the TSU Board of Trustees to enable the system to better serve students in Alabama, the nation, and the world. The rationale for this decision and the impacts on the participating institutions are described in this document.

On April 23, 2004, Dr. Jack Hawkins, Jr., Chancellor of the Troy State University System, officially notified Dr. James Rogers, Executive Director of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, that the Troy State University campuses were ready to proceed with final plans for the merger. Dr. Cameron Martindale, Senior Vice Chancellor for Advancement and President of Troy State University Montgomery, and Dr. Barbara Alford, President of Troy State University Dothan, joined in this communication. (See letters to Dr. Rogers, Appendix A-1.) Dr. Rogers' response dated May 11, 2004, outlined the requirements for requesting a substantive change and set a deadline of September 22, 2004, for receipt of the *Prospectus* by the Commission. (See letter from Dr. Rogers, Appendix A-2.) On April 9, 2003, Troy State University obtained approval to proceed with merger planning from the Alabama courts monitoring the Knight v. Alabama consent and remedial decrees. (See Court Order, Appendix A-3.) University administrators also have met with officials of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) and are on-track to obtain ACHE approval for the merger following the review by the Commission on Colleges.

A multi-campus team of professionals met with members of the Commission on Colleges staff on July 22, 2004, to review the proposed outline for the *Prospectus*. In accordance with Procedure Three, Appendix B, of Substantive Change For Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges, this *Prospectus* is submitted for Commission review and consideration.

The merged institution (to be named Troy University) will enroll over 24,000 students worldwide. Campuses will include the traditional main campus in Troy, Alabama, with a residential student population, campuses in Dothan, Montgomery, and Phenix City, Alabama, focusing primarily (but not solely) on non-traditional, adult markets, and fifty-eight (58) University College sites serving national and international adult learners. While retaining the flexibility required to meet the needs of these diverse student populations, the merger will insure uniform quality in programs and services to all Troy University students, regardless of base campus location or instructional delivery method. The merger also will dramatically increase accessibility and portability of higher education for Troy University students around the world. The merged institutions will define a new model of higher education for the 21st century.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION **(CR 2.1, CS 3.1.1)**

Provide a clear statement of the nature and purpose of the change in the context of the institutions' mission and goals.

Troy State University (TSU) traces its origin to the Troy State Normal School established on February 26, 1887, by an act of the Alabama Legislature. In 1929, it became Troy State Teachers College, and the college granted its first baccalaureate degree in 1931.

Continued growth in the college's programs prompted the Alabama Legislature to change the name to Troy State College in 1957. In the same year, the State Board of Education authorized the master's degree program. On December 14, 1967, the college's name was changed once more to Troy State University. Since that time, Troy State University has established a branch campus at Phenix City, Alabama, and has developed an international presence through University College—initiated to serve the higher education needs of American military personnel and their families around the globe.

Also in the 1960's, Troy State University responded to the needs of people in southeast Alabama by establishing degree completion centers at Fort Rucker (west of Dothan) and at Maxwell-Gunter Air Force Base in Montgomery. Both centers became degree granting locations in 1966. As the student service missions of these branches became more clearly defined, the Troy State Board of Trustees authorized both sites to seek independent regional accreditation, and both were successful—Troy State University Montgomery in 1983, and Troy State University Dothan in 1985. Since that time, all three entities (Troy, Montgomery,

and Dothan) have been separately accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award associates, bachelor's, master's, and education specialist degrees.

The confederation of three independent campuses was a logical configuration in the 1980's. State financial support of higher education in Alabama was over 90% of the regional average, and the absence of distance learning created environments where community universities were not only commonplace but were preferred. This situation began to change as economic conditions, politics, and the advent of technologically-delivered instruction altered the expectations of students and of taxpayers.

During this period, the three separately accredited institutions continued to share one authorizing structure and upper-level administration. The Troy State System, all campuses and locations, has always been under the direction of one Board of Trustees which retained ultimate authority for policies in Troy, Dothan, and Montgomery. Through the Board, most of the administrative responsibilities are and always have been delegated to the Chancellor, who in turn has delegated authority to the Presidents at Dothan and Montgomery. Fundraising has been directed by one TSU Foundation Board, with individual accounts (for Dothan and Montgomery initiatives) made available under one foundation umbrella. Capital campaigns included the active involvement of each campus chief executive officer, but were always managed as joint operations with shared goals and costs. In addition, certain functions for all three institutions (i.e. administrative computing, payroll) have always been centralized, and others (i.e.

financial aid) have been highly coordinated to serve the needs of mobile students. The three institutions, though now separately accredited, were only fifty miles apart, and the common name of "Troy State University" fostered a reasonable expectation in Alabama students of some parallelism in policies and procedures.

In the 1980's each institution developed its own mission statement, approved by the single Board of Trustees. These statements were revisited regularly, assessed during self-studies and at other times between reaffirmations, and reviewed by SACS Visiting Teams. In the mid-1990's, the campuses were still operating under the philosophy of a system of complementary parts. The campus in Troy was the traditional, residential institution. Montgomery was (by court decree) an evening institution focusing on working adult students. Dothan was a day and evening commuter institution also focused primarily on adults. However, by the late 1990's, the increasing popularity of distance learning, coupled with an intensifying competition for college students in general and the drastic reduction in state support of higher education, brought a new set of expectations to the Troy State System. As detailed in the next section of this *Prospectus*, it was no longer acceptable to maintain three separately accredited institutions, operating independently with different programs, policies, procedures, and marketing strategies, all within the same 100-mile corridor of southeast Alabama. In February, 2000, the Board of Trustees instructed the Chancellor to begin bringing all campuses together.

Although much work was necessary to accomplish this goal, two critical components of an institution are its brand identity and its mission. A systemwide management team for advancement began a two-year process to identify the multiple images that applied to Troy State University. (Although the process is too lengthy to detail in this *Prospectus*, all documents relating to this endeavor will be made available to the Visiting Team in Fall 2005.) Through comprehensive surveys of various internal and external constituencies, the management team was able to discover the positive attributes associated with the University. Unfortunately, the team also determined that there was a lack of consistency in philosophy and image from one TSU location to another. Their work led to a list of recommendations to develop a brand identity for the University. This, in turn, led to a relationship and contract with STAMATS, a nationally renowned higher-education marketing firm, to assist the University in solidifying its image. As part of this endeavor, the Chancellor asked the consultants to study the name of "Troy State University" to determine if it was appropriate to the emerging institution. The conclusion by STAMATS was revealing, yet not surprising to many in leadership at Troy State University. The University had rapidly become a major participant in delivery of quality higher education around the world. It also was continuing its leadership in distance learning within the state and now (with Internet capabilities) nationwide and worldwide. The University also continued to strengthen its core programs and to experience rapid, sustained enrollment increases within the state of Alabama. STAMATS determined that universities whose names contained the word "state"

but did not also include the name of the state in which they were located were often viewed as regional institutions—an identity that no longer matched the vision of Troy State University. Their recommendation that the institution change its name to Troy University was discussed and tested with various internal and external constituent groups and was met with overwhelming support. On April 16, 2004, the Board of Trustees officially changed the name of the institution to Troy University. (See Board Resolution, Appendix A-4.) The change was effective immediately, with recognition that legal and regulatory steps would need to be taken to make the change official for some functions (i.e. federal financial aid, contracts). All changes would be completed no later than August 1, 2005. A thorough, institution-wide marketing plan also has been developed and is being implemented to promote the consistency of name, brand, and promise that is now and will be “Troy University”. This plan and the documents that support and advance the initiatives will be available to the Visiting Team.

As the brand identity was being forged, the Executive Vice Chancellor, Dr. Ed Roach, led a parallel effort to develop a single statement of philosophy applicable to the university as a whole. The process began with system leadership reviewing the missions of the three independent institutions to determine areas of commonality and to identify statements that might no longer be consistent with the emerging, single institution. A first edition of the combined statements was reviewed and discussed by the Chancellor’s Cabinet, and a drafted mission statement was then distributed throughout the institutions, primarily through electronic means, to all faculty, staff, students, alumni, and

members of the Board of Trustees. Response to the new statement was favorable. Suggestions were received and compiled by the Executive Vice Chancellor, who worked with the Senior Vice Chancellors to incorporate these as appropriate. On April 6, 2004, the Chancellor's Cabinet voted approval of the new Troy University Mission Statement. (Documentation of the full process along with minutes of the April 6th meeting will be available for the Visiting Team.) On April 16th, the Board of Trustees received a review of the rationale for the change and an overview of the process undertaken to create the new statement from Executive Vice President Roach. The Board approved the new statement (see Board Resolution, Appendix A-5) which reads:

"Troy University is a public institution comprised of campuses throughout Alabama and worldwide. International in scope, Troy University provides a variety of educational programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels for a diverse student body in traditional and nontraditional and emerging electronic formats. Academic programs are supported by a variety of student services, which promote the welfare of the individual student. Troy University's dedicated faculty and staff promote discovery and exploration of knowledge dedicated to life-long success through effective teaching, creative partnerships, scholarship and research."

(Approved by the Board of Trustees April 16, 2004. The mission will be reviewed every five years.)

The statement was widely distributed through University websites (which will be consolidated into a single web presence by August 2005), and the statement will appear in graduate and undergraduate Bulletins (catalogs) scheduled to be printed in January 2005.

