

## Technical College Getting a Boost

Technical college getting a boost

By MICHAEL HALL The Brunswick News

Altamaha Technical College is expecting to see a 7 percent increase in overall enrollment for spring semester.

Altamaha Tech has campuses in Jesup, Baxley, Camden County, Hazlehurst and Glynn County.

For Adrian Chambliss, a cosmetology student at the college's campus at the Golden Isles Career Academy, it means having new people to meet.

"I like having all of the people around and making new friends," Chambliss said as she styled a mannequin's hair Friday.

Lorette Hoover, president of Altamaha Technical College, said the increase is a sign the switch to the semester system is going well.

The Technical College System of Georgia switched from a quarter to semester system in fall 2011.

"It is nice to see they are successfully navigating the switch from quarters to semesters," Hoover said.

Although enrollment is not final, Hoover is confident the number of students will be up from last semester, when it was down by 21 percent.

"We can already tell our numbers will be better than we initially expected," Hoover said.

Hoover attributes the increase to programs at the school designed to help students bridge the gap left by state cuts to HOPE, a state lottery funded scholarship that now only pays 90 percent of tuition and does not cover student fees.

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Hoover said Nelnet Education Planning and Financing is helping more students pay those fees through a short-term loan

program.

The Altamaha Technical College Foundation is also awarding more scholarships than ever before, Hoover said.

Students are taking more hours now than they did previously, something Hoover said is happening because 15-week semesters allow more time for class and study than 10-week quarters.

"It also shows that our students are becoming more serious about their studies," Hoover said.