

Athens State University Brings IT Knowledge into the Classroom through the SAP® University Alliances Program

Athens State Students Gain Competitive Edge by Learning Current, Essential IT Skills

Athens, Alabama — October 16, 2009 — Athens State University has joined the [SAP® University Alliances program](#), an initiative that brings SAP software, knowledge and skills into university classrooms around the world. The SAP University Alliances program provides university faculty members with tools and resources to teach students how to apply the latest technology in a business context, integrate business strategy and processes, and put information technology (IT) theory into practice. As a result of their participation in the program, students will gain hands-on experience that will have significant relevance to their careers and chosen field.

To take full advantage of the SAP software and give students greater opportunity for higher paying jobs, Athens State will offer an entirely new Bachelors of Science degree in Enterprise Systems Management (ESM) beginning Spring semester, January 2010. This interdisciplinary degree prepares students for a wide range of careers that require a blend of business and technical knowledge. It is ideal for students considering traditional information systems degrees or working professionals who desire to learn SAP software systems for career advancement. Studies have shown that graduates with SAP skills enter the job market with salaries of \$7,000 - \$10,000 per year higher than graduates in the same discipline without SAP experience.

"It is important for our students to have hands-on experience with tools that are an integral part of global business," said Dr. Linda Shonesy, Dean, College of Business. "In addition, we are supporting employers looking for workers skilled in using SAP software. The SAP University Alliances program allows us to prepare the next generation of knowledge workers to be productive with SAP software solutions and intelligently apply information technology in a business context."

The SAP University Alliances program is a global initiative with nearly 1000 member campuses in more than 50 countries. Through the program, member schools are given access to SAP® Business Suite software, including the enterprise resource planning (ERP) application **SAP® ERP**. This comprehensive business software suite supports business and information technology programs, helping students put classroom theory into practice through demonstrations, exercises and problem-solving, case studies, and academic projects. SAP provides licenses to its business software suite at no cost to member universities and technical institutes for use in disciplines such as management, operations research, accounting, finance, marketing, and information systems.

SAP University Alliances also provides valuable services tailored to the needs of Athens State University. These include:

- **The [SAP University Alliances community](#)** - The program features an advanced, interactive Web portal designed for the academic population worldwide that connects faculty, students, SAP customers and partners, and SAP internal experts.
- **Hosting services** – For an \$8,000 annual fee, Athens State gains access to SAP Business Suite via hosting from an SAP-licensed, non-profit University Competence Center at California State University - Chico which means there is no need to invest in a costly data center infrastructure to participate in the program.
- **Curriculum support** – SAP sponsors new curriculum efforts in the academic community in order to build a collection of ready-to-use, faculty-developed course materials that can be shared among member campuses.
- **Professional Development and Networking** – Athens State College of Business professors can take advantage of free SAP-sponsored curriculum workshops offered during semester breaks and annual academic conferences for members.

SAP is the world's leading provider of ERP and related applications. Global demand for certified SAP professionals increases every year, and SAP is dedicated to helping universities give students an education that has great relevance to their careers. The SAP University Alliances program supports the growing need for IT-educated graduates around the world and allows students to hit the ground running at companies that use SAP software. For more information, contact Dr. Lisa Rich at (256)216-5358 or lisa.rich@athens.edu.