

So Many Choices

By Dr. Al Roberts

The Model T was America's first automobile priced for the middle class. In writing about it, industrialist Henry Ford quipped, "Any customer can have a car painted any color that he wants so long as it is black."

Not all early cars were black. Cars built by craftsmen—and even some of the first production models of the Model T—sport different colors. The switch to all-black was made to accommodate nascent assembly lines and to overcome technical problems related to paints. The one-color-fits-all approach didn't last long.

After the end of World War I, improvements in painting technologies opened the way for car manufacturers to offer a variety of colors. By 1926, even Henry Ford found himself bowing to customer demand and offering more choices.

It seems that in every area of human endeavor, individual needs based on unique circumstances call for customized solutions.

This is especially evident in education. Students come from diverse walks of life. They face multi-faceted challenges. Daily, they juggle numerous obligations, and each faces different sets of complications and worries.

For this reason, Southside Virginia Community College offers courses in a variety of places and with a wide array of scheduling options. SVCC serves students from more than seven different physical sites across its service area. Classes include those taught in traditional 16-week semesters, but others are available in shorter formats of twelve, ten, eight, five, or even four weeks. Some classes are held during the day; others meet at night.

And, just as improvements in painting technologies ushered in a rainbow of car color choices, the present internet age has introduced a host of new technologies for teaching. SVCC makes full use of these state-of-the-art developments to offer classes in a wide variety of formats, including online, hybrid, compressed video, and shared distance learning courses. Online courses can be completed from anywhere with a computer and a reliable internet connection. Hybrid courses combine the benefits of seated and online components. Compressed video technology makes courses available at more locations by enabling instructors and students to connect with two-way communication tools. Furthermore, shared distance learning lets SVCC students broaden their online class choices to include offerings from other partner institutions.

So many choices! Yet, not every choice is right for every person. At SVCC, counselors work with each individual to customize a roadmap to success. This dedication to personalized assistance helps ensure

that every individual finds just the right mix of class schedules, formats, and locations to successfully reach his or her chosen destination.

If you're ready to start or to continue on an education journey, call 888-220-7822 or visit www.southside.edu for assistance in choosing the right education model for your lifestyle.

Dr. Al Roberts is president of Southside Virginia Community College, an institution of higher learning that provides a wide variety of education opportunities to a diverse student population within a service area that spans ten counties and the city of Emporia. He can be reached via email at al.roberts@southside.edu.