
GBC'S HISTORY AT A GLANCE

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Great Basin College was the first community college to be established in Nevada. It is the primary provider of post-secondary education in rural Nevada. With its main campus in Elko, centers in Ely, Pahrump, and Winnemucca, and satellite facilities in 27 communities across rural Nevada, GBC's service area covers 86,514 square miles and serves a population of nearly 150,000. The college was founded in 1967 by a group of ten determined businessmen in Elko. They saw a need for post-secondary education and community service classes. The group raised \$45,000 in just 30 days as seed money for the school, first known as Elko Community College (ECC). Originally housed in the basement of Elko's Grammar School #1, the first classes were offered in September of 1967.

Elko Community College offered mostly adult-education courses and was governed by an advisory board working with the Elko County School District. In 1969, control of the school was given to the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE). Budget constraints at the state level that year nearly derailed the college, but a gift from billionaire Howard Hughes kept the institution afloat. Elko Community College graduated its first class of associate-degree students in 1970. Eight students walked at commencement that year. The college then entered a long period of growth and development.

In 1973, the college's growth required that it move to its present campus site, the old Ruby View Golf Course. NSHE officials changed the name of the college to Northern Nevada Community College (NNCC) to better reflect the communities it began to serve. By that time, programs were developed and offered in Elko, Lander, Eureka, White Pine, and Humboldt counties. Educational centers were established in Winnemucca, Ely, Battle Mountain, Wells, McDermitt, and the Duck Valley Indian Reservation in Owyhee.

In 1974, the college was accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, giving the degrees awarded to students the academic credibility they needed in order to transfer to other colleges and universities. The decade saw the development of many new programs, including diesel technology and the college's successful nursing program. As the mining industry began to grow in the 1980s, programs in electrical systems technology, industrial maintenance, and welding technology were developed, providing skills for well-paying jobs in the region's booming economy. Academic transfer programs were built as well, and students were afforded an opportunity to initiate their higher education locally and transfer to other universities in the region to complete their bachelor's degrees.

By the 1990s the college was on track to become one of the most innovative and effective rural colleges in the nation. Distance learning technologies were introduced. Interactive video classrooms provided access to hundreds more students. GBC experienced significant physical growth with half a dozen new buildings constructed on its Elko campus and classroom buildings erected in Ely and Winnemucca. In 1995, the college changed its name to Great Basin College, better reflecting the rural landscape it served, and preparations began to offer select baccalaureate degree programs. In 1999, GBC accepted its first class of students enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts— Education program.

The new millennium saw the addition of resident housing and meteoric growth in distance-learning technologies. An online campus was established, providing more access and flexibility for GBC students. Baccalaureate programs in several other disciplines were added, including nursing, professional studies, social work, and applied science. In 2006, the NSHE Board of Regents expanded the GBC service area to include Nye County, and a campus center was opened in Pahrump. Based upon GBC's success in serving Pahrump and several other remote locations throughout rural Nevada, the Board of Regents again in the spring of 2014 expanded the college's service area.

GBC assumes the responsibility for providing post-secondary education to the 10 most rural counties in Nevada.

The Great Basin College Foundation is integral to the future of GBC. Established in 1983, to date it has provided GBC with nearly \$30 million in private support.