

To the New York Times editor:

RE “As State Colleges Cut Classes, Students Struggle to Finish” (new article August 24):

Your front page article brings needed attention to a real and growing problem for many students (and their parents) expecting to graduate in 2004, or in 2005. There will be fewer college courses, sections and seats available to students. This problem may be even greater in the South, where the almost half of the population growth for the U.S. has occurred in the past 10 years and college enrollments continue to outpace national increases.

There is a partial answer for the South and the nation provided in general by technology and in specific by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), an interstate compact of 16 states. The SREB Electronic Campus (www.electroniccampus.org) is a “marketplace” of more than 8,000 online courses from colleges and universities that can make available “virtual seats” to help replace those lost. Not all courses are available online, but a growing number are, with the quality of these courses backed by both the institution and SREB’s Principles of Good Practice.

For students in this academic emergency, SREB’s Electronic Campus may offer an immediate solution to finding the courses they need to graduate.

Governor Ronnie Musgrove, Mississippi
Chair, Southern Regional Education Board