

Cutting costs, not corners

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As North Carolina faces the largest budget deficit in our state's history, all state-funded agencies are facing extraordinary budget cuts. Richmond Community College, along with all public schools and universities, has been asked to share in cutting costs to help balance the state budget. Our challenge is to manage the budget reductions without losing sight of our core mission and without reducing our programs and services at a time when our community needs us the most.

There is no doubt that the next two years will be difficult for Richmond Community College. While our funds are being cut, our enrollment is going up. Why? Because when unemployment goes up, our enrollment goes up. A review of RCC's enrollment trends over the past few years shows that as plants closed and unemployment rates increased the number of people who enrolled for retraining increased accordingly. We expect a record enrollment for fall 2009, based on the current unemployment rates in Richmond and Scotland counties.

For many of the people whose lives have been impacted by the recession, the opportunity to come to college is a dream come true. Some want to enter a healthcare field, while others plan to enroll in college transfer programs so they can pursue bachelor's degrees and become teachers, counselors, and engineers. Others need to brush up on their basic skills, earn a GED, or enroll in short-term training classes. Some come to RCC to qualify for a Career Readiness Certificate. Earning a degree or learning a new skill at RCC gives students much more than an education; it also boosts their self-esteem and builds their confidence.

The people in our community look to RCC for hope and opportunity. To that end, we are dedicated to preserving the integrity and quality of instruction we deliver in our classrooms as well as the services provided by each department. Our faculty agree that their furlough leave cannot come at the cost of instructional time, and our staff will schedule their leave so all areas continue to provide needed services to students. While we face a hiring freeze, we can and will employ highly qualified adjunct faculty so that we can continue to offer the classes our students need. We will cut expenditures such as out-of-state travel and supplies, but we will not cut class offerings. We will work creatively to leverage our diminished resources to retrain laid-off workers, create new programs, and help our community's economic recovery.

The slogan of our community college system is "Creating Success." At RCC, we pledge to help each person who walks through our doors achieve success. When we help a student reach a new milestone in his or her life, we have achieved success. When we provide a person with the skills needed for a new job, we have achieved success. When we increase the educational level of our workforce, we have achieved success.

These are tough economic times, but you can count on Richmond Community College to continue to deliver the quality education and services that you have come to expect from your community's college.

We will cut our costs, but our doors will always be open.

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