



NC Community Colleges  
Hope • Opportunity • Jobs

Dr. R. Scott Ralls, President

## PRESS RELEASE

200 West Jones Street ■ Raleigh, North Carolina 27603 ■ [www.nccommunitycolleges.edu](http://www.nccommunitycolleges.edu)

**RELEASE DATE:** November 21, 2008

**CONTACT:** Audrey K. Bailey [baileva@nccommunitycolleges.edu](mailto:baileva@nccommunitycolleges.edu)

**PHONE:** (919) 807-6963 - office (919) 247-7149 - cell

### State Board of Community Colleges Addresses Economy Issues

RALEIGH - The economy was on the agenda for the State Board of Community Colleges at its meeting today, November 21. Several items dealt with issues related to the flagging economy or funding.

North Carolina Community Colleges were informed today that they now must revert three percent of this year's budget to the State. This imposes a special financial burden on the colleges because they are experiencing high enrollment growth that isn't funded. NC Community Colleges funding is based on enrollment numbers of the previous year. Excessive growth is not covered in the year it is achieved.

Some of the colleges will receive a small amount of financial assistance with State Board approval today of the allocation of \$2.5 million in Enrollment Growth Reserve Funds. The money goes to colleges experiencing high enrollment growth in curriculum, continuing education, or basic skills programs in the fall semester. Curriculum FTE across the state grew from 79,725 for the fall semester last year, to an estimated 84,902 for the fall semester this year, a 6.49% increase.

Funds were allocated by the NC General Assembly to assist colleges with an increase of more than five percent over the previous fall semester. Thirty-eight of the 58 community colleges have a reported enrollment increase of more than five percent in one or more program areas. There is reported growth in curriculum (27 colleges), non-curriculum (19 colleges), or basic skills (13 colleges) program areas. More than \$22 million is actually needed to cover enrollment growth expenses at the colleges. The \$2.5 million that is available will be prorated to the colleges based on each college's percentage of growth.

The Board also approved an agreement that will help small businesses operate more successfully. NC Community Colleges and the NC Department of Revenue's Taxpayer Assistance Program will work together to present educational business tax training classes and workshops for small businesses across North Carolina at each of the 58 community colleges. The State Board approved a memorandum of understanding between NC Community Colleges and the NC Department of Revenue that will have NCDOR's Taxpayer Assistance Program conduct seminars and workshops at all of the Small Business Centers located at each of the 58 community colleges.

“Our Small Business Centers provide valuable assistance and counseling to thousands of clients each year,” said President Scott Ralls. “This partnership with the Department of Revenue gives us the opportunity to combine our efforts to provide information that will give small businesses more tools to operate efficiently and successfully.”

Dislocated workers will benefit from a service agreement the State Board approved. The agreement is with the NC Rural Center to manage the external portions of a grant from the NC Department of Labor for the Growing America Through Entrepreneurship (GATE) project. The contract is for the first year of the three-year, \$1.6 million grant that will provide training and services to at least 720 dislocated workers at eight community colleges. The grant was acquired by the NC Department of Commerce, NC Community Colleges, the Rural Center, and NC REAL Enterprises, Inc.

The Board also approved JBL Associates, Inc. of Bethesda, Maryland as the consultant to conduct a study of the issues surrounding the admission of undocumented students into curriculum programs of North Carolina Community Colleges. The contract with JBL Associates, Inc. begins today, November 21 and runs through April 16, 2009 and cannot exceed \$74,997.

The State Board voted on August 15 that a comprehensive overview of events to date and additional information on practices and policies in other states is needed to assist in the development of a policy for North Carolina’s community colleges. At the same time, the Board voted to continue to ban the admission of undocumented students until a policy is established. The timetable for the report is to have preliminary findings to the State Board on March 19, 2009 and a final written report by April 16, 2009. The State Board plans to have a policy in place in time for the fall 2009 semester.

Four bids were offered for the contract, one from North Carolina. A committee rated the proposals on a scale of 1 to 5, based on three categories: Scope of Work, Experience and Expertise, and Quality of Proposed Plan of Work. The selected bid had the highest cumulative score. The contract has also been approved by the Governor’s Office and the Division of Purchase and Contract.

Finally, the State Board heard from Dr. Ralls, who in his President’s Report talked about how NC Community Colleges “are on the front lines every day, fulfilling North Carolina’s economy needs as much as we can, across our state, across industry sectors, in every county.” He shared success stories and highlighted several programs in operation that “make an even bigger difference in helping North Carolina through this tough economic battle.”

###