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**Report to the State Board of Community Colleges
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Keeping pace, doing more, and leading North Carolina's future – those are three overarching challenges facing North Carolina's community colleges, and during the past month, I have witnessed the fruits of our System's leadership.

Three weeks ago I had the chance to meet with the advisors for the 17 new minority male mentoring programs that you approved at last month's Board meeting. They are eager to expand this very important program to their communities throughout the state – Minority Male Mentoring is a pioneering program that is a recognized outside North Carolina, because as I have frequently heard, we are the only state system taking a systemic approach to addressing the real challenge of minority male college going and retention rates.

Two weeks ago I had the chance to be a part of the state team that traveled to Washington to receive the 2008 Harvard Innovation in American Government Award for the *Learn and Earn* initiative. I have reported to you on this before when we were named finalists, but I think it deserves repeating how central North Carolina community colleges are to this initiative that has now sparked national recognition. In addition to our key role in Learn and Earn Online, today 54 of the 60 Early College High Schools in the state, which is equal to approximately one-quarter of all the Early College High Schools in the United States, are operating on the campuses of North Carolina's community colleges.

During the past month, I have also had the opportunity to visit two North Carolina community colleges – one in the west, and one in the east -- that are out in front leaders in an area where it will be vital, I believe, for our System to help lead our state in the future -- energy-saving "green" technologies.

At Haywood Community College in Waynesville, they are planning several new programs of study that reflect sustainable initiatives, such as low impact development, green construction, and diesel mechanics. In June 2008, the Haywood Board of Trustees adopted a policy calling for the college to play a significant leadership role in sustainability practices – to "teach, demonstrate and use sustainable development technologies that promote the economic, environmental and social health of the College and the communities it serves." President Rose Johnson has pledged to cut emissions on campus, utilize green building practices, and incorporate sustainability into the curriculum. The college has placed recycling containers throughout the campus. A hybrid car and two electric vehicles have replaced gas powered vehicles. A permeable surface courtyard and a rain garden reduce water run-off, a sustainable demonstration

house is planned for the near future, and the college's comprehensive master plan is incorporating "green building" techniques.

Just the other day, I was able to spend half a day with President Rusty Stephens on the campus of Wilson Community College. Talk about a learning experience – as they develop their campus around green technologies, they are also creating a true learning laboratory to lead the way in fostering a "green collar workforce." They are incorporating green into their technical education programs that will make their students more competitive for tomorrow, and they will soon open their new Student Center which will be one of the first Gold LEED buildings on a community college campus in the nation.

Wilson and Haywood Community Colleges are not only two of North Carolina's leaders in fostering examples of sustainability and green workforce development, but they are gaining attention as two of the nation's leaders. But they are not alone in their commitment. Wake Tech's Northern Wake campus was the first college campus in the nation built to LEED - Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design – standards, Central Carolina has developed a two-year alternative energy technology program through BioNetwork, and Nash Community College has partnered with the Advanced Vehicle Research Center to incorporate alternative fuel technologies into their automotive programs.

Just this past week, it was announced in Caldwell County that Google is partnering with Caldwell County to capture methane gas at the county's Mount Herman landfill, and the greenhouse gas credits gained through the initiative will be used to help fund development of a new research greenhouse at Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute. And at nearby Asheville, a newspaper article profiled DeAnna Hatch, CEO of OrganoFuels, a technology start-up developing algae-based gasoline at A-B Tech's Center for Business and Technology Incubation on their Enka Campus.

These initiatives indicate that focusing on green is not just about environmental stewardship; it is about North Carolina's future economic prosperity in a world where our long-term competitiveness greatly depends on energy efficiency and sustainability. As Tom Friedman says in his new book, green is the new red, white and blue, and "in a world that is getting hot, flat, and crowded, the task of creating the tools, systems, energy sources, and ethics that will allow the planet to grow in cleaner, more sustainable ways is going to be the biggest challenge of our lifetime."

No reason why North Carolina's community colleges shouldn't lead the way in this biggest of all challenges, and provide North Carolina with a world-class green workforce. Several of our community colleges are well on the way in setting the example, and next month at the System Conference, we will partner with the Institute of Emerging Issues to brainstorm with conference participants on ways we can develop Systemwide leadership in this area. Creating success

in technical education, with an integration and focus on new green technologies, will be key to these efforts, so suggests a recent Emerging Issues industry survey. North Carolina's Community Colleges have played a vital role in the economic prosperity of our state over the past 50 years, and developing the capabilities to educate and train a "world class" green workforce will be important if we are to provide the same type of economic opportunities for North Carolinians over the next 50 years.