

PRESS RELEASE

North Carolina Community College System

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State Board approves tuition waiver for Katrina evacuees Halifax Community College President to be placed on paid administrative leave

RALEIGH – The State Board of Community Colleges enthusiastically and unanimously approved a Resolution today that will help Hurricane Katrina evacuees who enroll in a North Carolina Community College. The Resolution allows a tuition waiver for any evacuee who has already paid community college tuition in his or her home state and will allow an in-state tuition rate for evacuees who enroll for the first time.

“We are happy to be able to help in this way,” said State Board Chair Hilda Pinnix-Ragland. “Education is so essential and job preparation will be vital as these individuals begin to rebuild their lives. This action will make that transition a bit easier.”

The State Board was unable to take this action earlier. General Statutes prohibit granting a tuition waiver or allowing in-state tuition status without legislative approval. The General Assembly sets tuition rates and unlike the University of North Carolina Board of Governors, the State Board of Community Colleges had no authority to change or waive tuition in this instance. An Executive Order declaring a State of Emergency and a subsequent Executive Request to State Board Chair Hilda Pinnix-Ragland from Governor Michael Easley enabled the State Board of Community Colleges to take this action.

The State Board approved the Resolution (attached) allowing a tuition break for students from Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. It also gives System President Martin Lancaster the authority to provide guidance to the colleges as to the implementation of the Resolution.

The State Board also unanimously approved a motion directing the Halifax Community College Board of Trustees to place HCC President Ted Gasper and his administrative assistant on paid administrative leave until the investigation by the Halifax Board has been received and acted upon by the State Board.

The approved motion reads as follows.

“The Chairperson of the State Board of Community Colleges is hereby authorized to respond fully to Halifax Chairperson Lillie Soloman’s letter of September 6, 2005 and to elaborate on the following:

- 1) The Halifax Board meeting held to appoint an investigatory committee was unlawfully convened, and therefore a lawful convened meeting shall be held by the Halifax Board to elect, by a majority vote of the Halifax Board, a committee to conduct the investigation.
- 2) The Halifax Board of Trustees shall place Dr. Gasper and his administrative assistant Faye Pepper on paid administrative leave until the investigation is complete and the State Board has acted on the investigation.
- 3) Failure to comply will result in the withholding of State funds.

Ms. Rai Glover officially joined the State Board today. State Supreme Court Justice Mark D. Martin issued the oath to the Charlotte businesswoman. Ms. Glover is the Senior Vice President and Market Development Manger for Bank of America's Global Business and Financial Services covering headquarters in Charlotte and North Carolina.



The Board heard a presentation on the outstanding work being accomplished by Rowan-Cabarrus Community College as they help thousands of former Pillowtex employees rebuild their lives.

In other action the State Board:

- ◆ Approved former State Board Chair James J. Woody, Jr. of Roxboro and former State Board member and NCCCS Vice President for Business and Finance Thomas King of Raleigh as the recipients of the prestigious I. E. Ready Award, to be presented in November at the Day of Recognition Luncheon
- ◆ Made its three appointments to the Textile Center Advisory Board. They are Tedd Smith of Asheville, Fred Hunneke of Kinston, and Billy Ragsdale of Jamestown.
- ◆ Approved Barbara Currier as the NCCCS coordinator for foundations support and alumni affairs, a new position made possible by a legislative appropriation. She is currently the foundation director at Piedmont Community College.
- ◆ Approved a curriculum program new to the NCCCS in Agriculture Biotechnology. It will be offered by Southeastern Community College
- ◆ Approved \$80,000 to be distributed to 43 colleges to provide funds that will support Nursing students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The money will be used to provide direct academic assistance to students who might be in danger of not completing their course of study.

**Resolution of the
North Carolina State Board of
Community Colleges**

WHEREAS, the State Board of Community Colleges has great sympathy and compassion for the many individuals evacuated from Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama as a result of the widespread devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina and its subsequent flooding; and

WHEREAS, the Governor of the Great State of North Carolina declared a State of Emergency on September 3, 2005, to permit North Carolina to more easily conduct humanitarian relief efforts necessitated by the effects of Hurricane Katrina; and

WHEREAS, the Governor identified the out-of-state tuition rates of community colleges as a hindrance to North Carolina's humanitarian relief efforts; and

WHEREAS, under the powers vested in the Governor by the General Statutes of North Carolina, Governor Michael F. Easley officially requested that the State Board of Community Colleges waive community college tuition for all evacuees who had paid tuition to a community college operating in the affected states; and

WHEREAS, the Governor has officially requested that the State Board of Community Colleges permit all other evacuees to enroll at a community college at the in-state tuition rate; and

WHEREAS, the State Board of Community Colleges is statutorily obligated to cooperate with any such request of the Governor during a declared State of Emergency;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED by the State Board of Community Colleges, that each of North Carolina's 58 community colleges shall not require payment of any additional Fall 2005 tuition for any person whose evacuation to North Carolina was a direct result of the threat and/or devastation of Hurricane Katrina when said person already paid Fall 2005 tuition to a community college in the affected states.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the State Board of Community Colleges that until the termination of the "State of Emergency due to Hurricane Katrina," the in-state tuition rate shall be charged to all other persons whose evacuation to North Carolina was a direct result of the threat and/or devastation of Hurricane Katrina.

The President of the North Carolina Community College System shall provide guidance to the colleges as to the implementation of this Resolution

This the 16th day of September, 2005.

Hilda Pinnix-Ragland, Chair
State Board of Community Colleges

H. Martin Lancaster, President
N.C. Community College System