

President's Report

State Board of Community Colleges

***Ms. Benita Budd, Instructor, Wake Technical Community College, and
President, NC Community College Faculty Association***

Thursday, March 17, 2011

Upon hearing Ms. Benita Budd's statement to the Joint Appropriations Education Subcommittee during a public hearing on Monday, March 7, Dr. Scott Ralls, NC Community College System President, asked Ms. Budd to provide a "guest" President's Report to the State Board. Ms. Budd's passion and energy both as an instructor and as President of the NC Community College Faculty Association made her one of several "star" presenters on behalf of our community colleges.

Ms. Budd's statement:

Mr. Chairmen, committee members, and guests, I am Benita Budd, an instructor at Wake Technical Community College, and I am honored to be President of the North Carolina Community College Faculty Association. The NCCCFA's motto is "Excellence through Teamwork," and we faculty are proud to work as part of the community college team during this difficult time of budget shortfalls and program cutbacks. Working together, we not only can make a difference; we do make a difference.

North Carolina is justly proud of its well-educated, highly trained, flexible workforce, and its power to attract new businesses and allow existing industries to expand. The quality of that workforce is dependent on the quality of their instructors, and our association emphasizes professionalism and excellence in teaching.

In the last 10 years, the support of the General Assembly has enabled us to improve the quality of our community colleges by improving faculty salaries from the national ranking of 49th to 36th. Thank you. With your help we have made great progress towards competitive salary levels, and when we turn this economy around, I hope that progress will continue.

I say "when we turn this economy around" because we will. Community colleges are the job drivers for our state, and our 16,000 faculty members drive the community colleges. But you don't need tests or testimonies to tell you we are effective: Your auto mechanic, your dental assistant, your child's day care provider? We taught them. The chef at your favorite restaurant, those new employees in pharmaceutical

manufacturing, video gaming, and computer technology? We taught them. The newly returned veterans and displaced workers who will leave today's unemployment line to enter tomorrow's job force? We are teaching them now.

We met the challenge of the last two years, when more than 50,000 displaced workers and high school graduates flocked to community colleges, resulting in a 25 percent enrollment boom. As college resources dropped by 12 percent, we met the challenge of increased teaching loads, often at personal cost to ourselves. We are dedicated, we are driven to stabilize and strengthen North Carolina's economy by ensuring our students are well prepared for the work ahead. We are doing our best to recover this economy, and we want to continue giving it our best effort. Reductions to enrollment growth funding and reductions to our budgets will seriously jeopardize our efforts and our students' opportunities to continue their educations or to find jobs.

These are very hard times. Nobody's happy with anybody, and sometimes it seems like we are doomed to struggle in divisiveness. So it's a rare and beautiful moment when we find common ground. Recent editorials and other public comments show that even the most politically divided groups agree on the importance and value of community colleges. Many of you may know how important your local community college is to your district and your constituents, and it is equally true at the state level. Please join us on this common ground of support for community colleges. The work we do is, and must continue to be, the foundation for North Carolina's economic recovery.