STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES
Allocations for Virtual Learning Community Centers

Request: The State Board of Community Colleges is asked to approve $650,000 to renew funding for three existing Virtual Learning Community (VLC) Centers: The Professional Development Center at Wake Technical Community College ($110,000), the Technology Center at Fayetteville Technical Community College ($100,000), and the Quality and Assessment Center at Surry Community College ($440,000) for 2013-2014. The Quality and Assessment Center funds consist of $125,000 for operational costs and $315,000 for collaborative projects that are the combined efforts of all three centers.

Background: The Virtual Learning Community is a collaborative effort of the North Carolina Community College System to increase the quality and availability of online learning and support services for the benefit and success of distance learning students. The VLC began as a collaborative process for developing online course content, which was supported by the 58 college presidents. In 1999, this idea became a reality and the VLC has been growing ever since.

The role of the VLC expanded in 2006, when VLC strategic objectives moved beyond course development in order to bring about change and raise the bar for distance learning across the state. Centers were created to support professional development, technology enhancement, and quality and assessment. The VLC Professional Development Center at Wake Technical Community College coordinates efforts to deliver the training opportunities necessary to deliver online courses and programs based on sound pedagogy and the latest technology tools. The VLC Technology Center at Fayetteville Technical Community College coordinates a vetting process of learning technologies to address the rapid changes in online course delivery. The VLC Quality and Assessment Center at Surry Community College coordinates the research and documentation of distance learning standards, guidelines, and best practices for online course delivery, as well as needs assessment for distance learning resources. The State Board of Community Colleges approved the proposal in May 2011 that the location of these centers become permanent, contingent upon satisfactory performance.

Rationale: Based on the review by the VLC Executive Board of the VLC projects completed for the current year, the examination of the outreach to colleges in our system, the ability to reinforce quality standards and create rich, interactive content for courses and programs, the Executive Board recommends the current centers at Wake Technical Community College, Fayetteville Technical Community College, and Surry Community College be renewed for 2013-14. All fifty-eight (58) colleges and hundreds of educators from the NCCCS have participated through the annual process of Requests for Proposals (RFP), Requests for Nominations, contracted employees or volunteers to work on projects and initiatives, or professional development.

The VLC plays an important role in implementing system-wide initiatives, such as developmental education redesign, curriculum improvements, Innovative Ideas recommendations, 2+2 eLearning Initiatives, and other current and future SuccessNC initiatives, or grant projects. Future course redesign or content development will rely upon the progress of system initiatives and completion of course competencies. Funding for all projects for course redesign, content development, and special initiatives are routed through the Quality and

Assessment Center at Surry Community College for distribution of contracts and/or duties for fulfillment of the needs of special projects. This center is tasked with the coordination of efforts by all three centers. By coordinating initiatives of NCCCS that affect distance learning programs, the VLC will provide a higher return on investment of system resources and will be the vehicle to improve the scalability of these efforts.

Permanency of the centers depends upon successful completion of all projects, proper budget management, widespread participation of other colleges through Requests for Proposals on projects, development of an approved succession plan, and completion of an annual report to the NCCCS Executive Director of eLearning and Learning Technology Systems, who coordinates and provides programmatic direction for the VLC Centers. The Centers have accomplished all of these benchmarks. The list of projects for 2012-13 is very long, but some of the highlights include:

- **Vetting of learning technology tools:** Interactive immersive environments (Jibe and Second Life), Thinking Strings, OER e-book collections, Matrix of file types and which devices they are supported by, Livescribe, Movi-Jabber, Evernote, OneNote, e-book authoring software (i-Author, eBook Maestro Pro, Course Avenue Studio, and Smashwords), i-Book app, Articulate/Storyline, Crazy Talk Animator, Go Animate, Interaction Builder, Virtual classroom solutions (Adobe-Connect, Big Blue Button, Blackboard Collaborate, MediaSite, Move-Jabber, and WebEx), developed Interactive 3-dimensional learning activities, supported the eText pilot, supported the VLC course pilot, supported the State Authorization Committee, and supported the Accessibility Committee.
- **Conference training sessions, Webinars, and/or Online courses:** Conference presentations: NCCCS Conference session on VLC, NCCIA – Free Tools for Online Learning, Sloan-C ET4Online Conference – VLC Modeling Teaching and Learning in the NCCCS; Webinars: Accessibility Introduction, Accessibility- Captioning Online Videos, Blackboard 9.1 Grade Center, Blackboard – Getting Started, Copyright and Fair Use in the Online Course, Finding Grants, Moodle Integration Point Training, SoftChalk – three-part series, State Authorization Webinars, SREB Webinars, VLC Resources – V-Scope Explorer; Online Courses: Fundamentals of Accessibility, Moodle 2 Quick Start, and Certified Online Instructor Courses.
- **Research and Best Practices:** Certified Online Instructor Course – Part I and II, ACA eText Development, Small Business Seminar online template, Open Source content for ACA and other online AAS courses, Social Media applications in education, VLC trademark, Adaptive Release, PSY-150 Pilot, website development and design, and various other distance learning topics requested by local colleges.
- **Collaboration:** Integrated Teaching and Learning Gateway, eText Pilot, LearnSmart and Adapt Courseware Pilots, Accessibility Committee, State Authorization Committee, Basic Skills Professional Development Courses and e-books, and Small Business Center Online Seminars
- **Development:** Thirty-seven (37) courses from the Code Green SuperCIP and DOL grants: ACM 110, AGR 170, AHR 120, AHR 160, ANS 110, ANS 150, ARC 131, ELC 133, ELC 112, ELC 117, ELC 128, ELC 131, ELC 228, ELN 131, ELN 132, ELN 133, ELN 232, ELN 246, ENV 110, ENV 218, HOR 112, HOR 160, HOR 166, HYD 110, ISC 112, MEC 111, MEC 180, MNT 110, SBCN-1, SBCN-2, SBCN-3, SST 140, VEN 133, WLD 112, and WLD 110.

The budget for FY 2013-14, will be allocated differently than we have in prior years. In the past we have had many projects that were collaborative between the centers and have required contracting with each other to complete the project and make payments for participants involved or for project costs. In order to alleviate the numerous contracts between centers, each college will be allocated an operational budget to cover salaries, benefits, travel, supplies, equipment, software, etc. that are needed for the individual centers. The remaining funds for projects or content development will be allocated to Surry Community College, which will serve in a fiduciary capacity for managing all project funds for the VLC. All three center directors will still have administrative responsibilities for projects, will facilitate participant selection, oversight of projects, and review that deliverables are of the highest quality and meet VLC standards. The funding for the projects will be managed by Surry Community College but the responsibilities for the projects will be shared among all three centers.

Allocation Amount and Time Period: Funding from state appropriations as follows: Surry Community College, Quality Assessment Center, $440,000; Fayetteville Technical Community College, Technology Center, $100,000; Wake Technical Community College, Professional Development Center, $110,000, for the period of July 1, 2013, through June 30, 2014.

Fund Availability: Funding is contingent upon the availability of FY 2013-14 State General Fund appropriations.

Contact:
Dr. Saundra Williams, Senior Vice President and Chief of Technology
Technology Solutions and Distance Learning

Wanda Barker, Executive Director of eLearning and Learning Technology System