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 2014-2015. The Quality and Assessment Center funds consist of $100,000 for operational costs and $340,000 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 2014-15. 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, course redesign for core courses affected by the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement, content for Department of Labor grants, 2+2 eLearning Initiatives, and other current and future SuccessNC initiatives, or other 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, and 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 2013-14 was very long, but some of the highlights include:

- **Technology vetting and enhancements:** Updated 38 technologies on the Technology Center Website and rendered 25 of them in an engaging interactive format using the latest in innovative software, created 40 interactive learning activities in support of Curriculum and Continuing Education course development, supported the VLC course pilot, supported the State Authorization Committee, and supported the Accessibility Committee. New technology vetting and collaborative research projects with the Quality and Assessment Center included BYOD, survey applications, help desk applications, live chat tools, web browser and LMS functionality, and cloud-based storage.

- **Conference training sessions, Webinars, and/or Online courses:** Onsite Training: Accessibility, Copyright and Fair Use, Course Evaluation Tools, Captioning, Camtasia, SoftChalk, Moodle, Blackboard; Webinars: NCCCS Resources, NCLOR, V-Scope, Late Nite Labs, Accessibility, Captioning, Mobile Apps for Teaching, Course Evaluation Tools, Course Communication Tools, State Authorization, SREB Electronic Campus; Online Courses: Accessibility in Online Teaching, Moodle Basics, Camtasia 8, SoftChalk Lesson Builder, Blackboard Learn, and Certified Online Instructor Courses.

- **Research and Best Practices:** Web Accessibility Guidelines, creating accessible digital content, VLC website development and design, and various other distance learning topics requested by local colleges. As part of the VLC continuous improvements process, the centers and Executive Board participated in a comparative analysis of North Carolina State University Distance Education and Learning Technology Applications (NCSU DELTA) Design Process and Practices, North Carolina Virtual Public Schools (NCVPS) Instructional Design Process and Practices, and external eLearning vendor development practices to improve processes and deliverables of the VLC.

- **Collaboration:** NC^{3}Atlas, Accessibility Committee, State Authorization Committee, eText Project and Report, the VLC Course Pilot of ENG 111, CIS 110, and Small Business Center Seminars, and other system-wide projects.

- **Development:** Curriculum courses: ART 111, ART 114, ART 115, BIO 168, BIO 169, HIS 111, HIS 112, MAT 110, MAT 121, MAT 143, MAT 152, MAT 171, MAT 263, PHY 151,

PHY 152, SOC 210; and the following Continuing Education Courses: NUR 3240, NUR 3241, COD-3105, COD-3120, COD-3130

For the FY 2014-15, 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, 2014, through June 30, 2015.

Fund Availability: Funding is contingent upon the availability of FY 2014-15 State General Fund appropriations.

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STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES
Overview of 2013-14 Technology Activities

Learning Technologies

- Virtual Learning Community
  - (May 2013 FC4): $650,000
  - (Jan 2014 FC8): $200,00
- Learning Management Systems
  - Blackboard (May 2013 FC5): $825,304
  - Moodle (May 2013 FC6): Not to exceed $545,000
- Blackboard Help Desk (May 2013 FC7): $520,500
- Virtual Computing Lab* (Nov 2013 FC7): $130,600
- Learning Object Repository (Apr 2013 FC6): $120,000
- Library Resources – Sirsi (Apr 2013 FC7): $446,814

*Crosses Fiscal Year

Information Technology

- College Information Systems (CIS)
  - Ellucian Colleague Operational Maintenance & Services (May 2013 FC8) $5,204,878
  - Ellucian Portal** (Mar 2013 FC5) $294,080
  - Ellucian SQL Analysis Study** (Jan 2013 FC6): $931,100
- Connectivity
  - Broadband (Apr 2013 FC5): $4,125,700

**Approved/Not Expended

Data Initiative

- SAS
- Data Warehouse
- Statewide Longitudinal Data System
- (P-20W)SAS

Total: $14,033,976

STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES
Overview of 2014-15 Technology Activities

Learning Technologies

- **Virtual Learning Community (May 2014 FC4) $650,000**
- **Learning Management Systems**
  - **Blackboard (May 2014 FC6) $806,574.83**
  - **Moodle (May 2014 FC7) $598,000**
- **Learning Mangement System Online Help Desk (May 2014 FC8) $541,320**
- Virtual Computing Lab (Nov 2013 FC7): $130,600
- **Learning Object Repository (May 2014 FC5) $120,000**
- Integrated Library System (Apr 2014 FC6): $466,361.97

Information Technology

- College Information Systems (CIS)
  - Enhancement and Support Services Agreement (Apr 2014 FC 7): $5,560,741
- Connectivity
  - Broadband (Jan 2014 FC10): $3,919,415

Data Initiative

- SAS
- Data Warehouse
- Statewide Longitudinal Data System
- (P-20W)SAS

Total: $12,793,012.80