



## **The President's Perspective**

**December 2010**

### **“HCC among fastest growing community colleges in the nation”**

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President, Halifax Community College*

HCC is one of the nation's fastest growing public two-year colleges according to an analysis completed by *Community College Week*. The publication reviewed enrollments from fall 2008 to fall 2009 and HCC ranked 28<sup>th</sup> in the top 50 community colleges with enrollments under 2,500. In that time period, HCC grew by 25 percent with enrollment increasing from 1,374 in fall 2008 to 1,711 in fall 2009, netting 337 additional students.

As *Community College Week* Editor Paul Bradley stated in the publication's Nov. 29 cover story, “From coast to coast, the nation's 1,200 community colleges are seeing record demand as the economy reels from persistently high unemployment, stagnant home prices, home foreclosures and tepid economic growth.”

Even with the stellar enrollment growth that HCC has experienced in recent years, there are concerns. In previous years, community colleges were compensated with additional monies when enrollments grew. With the budget issues facing the state right now, there will be some challenges in providing resources for the number of students currently attending.

The North Carolina Community College System is considering some reduction options, totaling \$107.7 million in preparation for the 2011-12 budget. As prioritized by the North Carolina Association of Community College Presidents, options include:

- An increase in tuition by \$10 per credit hour, raising in-state tuition from \$56.50 to \$66.50 per credit hour, adding up to \$46 million
- A reduction in the amount of funding for Basic Skills by \$5.25 million
- An increase in the recurring management flexibility reduction by \$29 million
- A reduction in categorical funding, which includes funding for certain specialized centers and programs by \$2.1 million
- Move existing categorical healthcare and technical education funds into the instructional formula and revamp the funding formula to weight the amount of state funding for high-cost, high-demand courses, which would result in an overall \$25 million reduction

At this point, these are just options and we won't know until early 2011 whether or not these have been included in the governor's budget, whether or not the General Assembly will enact them and what the actual cuts will total.

Keeping in mind our ever-expanding enrollment, even in the face of cuts, we need to continue to advocate for our expansion priorities. These total \$52 million and include:

- Fully funded enrollment growth and equipment needs that go along with increased numbers of students
- Limit the cuts to our colleges since every reduction has an impact on our students and the ability we have to provide job training and education. At this point, proposed cuts would mean our colleges stand to lose up to 1,000 faculty and staff positions based on average cost of annual salary and benefits
- Fund summer developmental programs to support student success in college-level courses and increase completion rates

From the President's Perspective, this fiscal year 2011-12 will represent the most difficult budget in the North Carolina Community College System's history. Plus, it comes at a time when the demands on our colleges are at their peak. It is imperative that all of us continue to impress upon our state leadership the challenges we face and the importance of funding our budget priorities.

Feel free to send me an e-mail message at [president@halifaxcc.edu](mailto:president@halifaxcc.edu) with your thoughts or ideas about this issue or others. Also, to learn about our current programs—stop by campus, call us at (252) 536-HCC1 (4221), or visit us online at [www.halifaxcc.edu](http://www.halifaxcc.edu).

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