



## The President's Perspective

May 2010

### **“Graduation, enrollment and budget issues: What HCC is doing”**

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President, Halifax Community College*

As we wrap up another successful year, I thought it would be a good idea to share an update with you about what HCC is doing.

One of our biggest events is HCC graduation. I consider this the best day of the year at the college. HCC's 43<sup>rd</sup> annual graduation will be held in the Centre at 10 a.m., May 15. The speaker is Dr. Sharon Morrissey, senior vice president for academic affairs at the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS). Attorney Q. Shante Martin, general counsel for the NCCCS, will bring greetings from the system's Board of Trustees. This year, we will award 430 degrees, certificates, and diplomas, including the General Education Diploma (GED). The unduplicated count of graduates is 384 with a breakdown of 334 curriculum and 50 GED. We will have approximately 205 of our graduates participating in the ceremony and all of the 128 associate degree students will participate in our wonderful hooding ceremony. We will also have 128 hooders participating.

As one group of students graduates, another group enrolls. So far, we have enrolled 494 students for the summer 2010 semester. Last year, we had 399 students for summer 2009. We have already registered 766 returning students for the Fall Semester 2010. It would appear that our enrollments for the Fall Semester 2010 will also continue to increase.

With higher student enrollment comes the issue of how best to provide resources for those students. Budget priorities for 2010-2011 include:

- Fully funded enrollment growth: an additional \$85 million is needed to meet the burgeoning enrollment at all 58 community colleges—31,000 new full-time students have enrolled since August 2009, which is equivalent to the entire student body at N.C. State University.
  - HCC's full-time student figures for 2008-09 totaled 1,277 and for this year, it is estimated to be around 1,592. The increase in full-time students could be up to 315 due to enrollment increases.
- Limit management flexibility cuts to no more than 2 percent: current-year cuts and reversions combined with the enrollment explosion have reduced community college per student funding by 18 percent this year. The funded amount per student is already below

- public school and university levels. Reductions to per student funding further hinders colleges' ability to offer high-cost programs such as technical education and health care.
- Last year, the management flexibility cut for HCC was \$251,087. We cannot continue to do more if this increases by the proposed 3.5 percent. If the current Governor's budget is enacted, HCC's budget will be cut by \$378,145 next academic year.
  - Fund equipment growth to support the new student growth (\$5 million): going into this year, community colleges could only replace their current technology and equipment once every nine years, that is, assuming it could be purchased at the original price.
    - I asked the vocational and technical faculty what it would cost to update our equipment and the needs totaled \$600,000. Plus, we need to update computers around campus. The library needs to replace 68 seven-year-old computers and additional campus technology needs total \$89,000.
  - Limit tuition increases to no more than \$5 per credit hour: low-income North Carolinians turn to community colleges more than any other higher education sector and our tuition increased by 19 percent last year.
    - We are acutely aware that low-income students like we serve in Halifax and Northampton counties turn to community colleges more than any other higher education sector and again we increased community college tuition by 19% last year.
  - Increase community re-entry education at state prison facilities at higher than the proposed \$19.8 million recommended by the governor: If we are funded at current levels,
    - HCC will lose about \$643,000 in funding for the coming year, plus we will not be able to keep eight faculty positions and 85 training slots will not be filled.
  - Dual enrollment: any proposed change to programs that accelerate college completion should be delayed until at least January 2011 to allow time to communicate with students and parents.
  - Direct lending: the Joint Select Committee on State Funded Student Financial Aid is considering a proposal requiring all state community colleges to participate in the federal direct loan program. The system office has asked for flexibility to restructure funds from instruction to student support to manage the requirement and unprecedented student demand for financial aid. If this is enacted, colleges request a state date of July 1, 2011.

From the President's Perspective, this has been a busy and productive year. As we graduate hundreds of students, we also look forward to providing educational opportunities for many more. We will have to wait and see how budget priorities are dealt with at the state level in order to determine how best to meet the needs of current and future students.

Feel free to send me an e-mail message at [president@halifaxcc.edu](mailto:president@halifaxcc.edu) with your thoughts or ideas. 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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