



NEWS RELEASE

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Federal Stimulus Funds Help State Board Mitigate Tuition Increase

*~ Community college tuition & fees increase less than half of comparable
increases at public four-year universities ~*

RICHMOND —The State Board for Community Colleges, in a unanimous vote, set the 2009-2010 in-state tuition and mandatory fee rate at \$92.70 per credit hour. As a result of the \$6.55 per credit hour increase, a full-time, in-state student, taking a total of 30 credit hours, will pay an additional \$196.50 for the academic year.

Board members say the increase is essential to serving the record-setting number of traditional students and laid-off workers who are turning to Virginia's Community Colleges for an opportunity in this recession. More than 16,000 new students began attending a Virginia Community College over the last two years. Enrollment during the recently concluded spring semester was unusually high, up more than 7 percent. Indications are mounting that a similar increase will occur during the summer.

Across the state, 30 new community college buildings are opening – more than one million square feet of instructional space – to meet the growing need.

“Thankfully, the federal stimulus money the VCCS is receiving from the General Assembly is greatly reducing the size of this tuition increase,” said Megan Beyer, chair of the board’s budget & finance committee. “Without that federal money, it would have taken a tuition increase twice as big just to keep the lights on and instructors in the classrooms to serve these students.”

Virginia's Community Colleges will receive \$19.4 million for each of the next two years under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

"This tuition rate is reasonable and responsible, and it allows our colleges to balance the affordability and accessibility demands that are being placed on them," said Rob Shinn, chairman of the state board. "Our community colleges should also be commended for the belt-tightening they have done to serve more and more people during a time of shrinking public resources."

The board's tuition decision is in accord with a long-term commitment the State Board made at the beginning of the *Dateline 2009* strategic plan to avoid tuition increase spikes, and to keep the community college tuition and fee rates at one-half or less than that of the comparable rates at Virginia's four-year universities.

VCCS mandatory tuition and fees are currently one-third of the average tuition and fees charged by four-year institutions. And the VCCS tuition and fee increase of less than \$200 for a full-time student is less than half of the comparable average tuition and fee increase of \$402 for a full-time student at Virginia's four-year schools.

The State Board also agreed to increase the tuition differential rate for Northern Virginia Community College by \$3.00 per credit hour – bringing the differential total to \$11.35 per credit hour. Officials at NVCC, the nation's second largest community college, say the increase is needed to accommodate the needs of the region's exploding population. The college's enrollment, which increased 4.5 percent last fall and 6 percent in the spring, is expected to climb this summer by 8 percent.

The board also approved a first-time tuition differential rate for J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College of \$1.10 per credit hour. College leaders say the differential will allow them hire much-needed full-time faculty members and counselors.

About Virginia's Community Colleges: *Created more than 40 years ago, the VCCS is comprised of 23 community colleges located on 40 campuses across the commonwealth. Together, Virginia's Community Colleges serve more than 337,000 students in both credit and non-credit courses. For more information, please visit myfuture.vccs.edu.*

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