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North Carolina Community Colleges earn top grades for performance

Raleigh: North Carolina's community colleges serve many diverse customers and give them all excellent service. That's according to the latest report on how well the colleges perform in several areas including employment rate of completers, employer satisfaction, and if students reach the education goal they had when entering the community college.

The new report on performance measures, the way the General Assembly assesses how well the North Carolina Community College System is doing its job, indicates that all 58 comprehensive community colleges met or exceeded the state's rigorous standards in four performance areas. Those indicators are: progress of basic skills students, employment of graduates, employer satisfaction with graduates, and business and industry satisfaction with customized training.

These are four of the 12 standards described in the annual *Critical Success Factors Report*, which documents each community college's performance. This reporting is part of the strict accountability requirements of the General Assembly. This year's report shows once again that North Carolina's community colleges are a great investment paying tremendous dividends to the communities they serve.

For the past seven years, community colleges have had the opportunity to earn the designation of "superior" based on their performance results. The first year, only four of the 58 comprehensive community colleges earned a "superior" ranking. After that first year, improvement was impressive. Twenty-six were ranked "superior" the second year and 31 in the third. After that the number of colleges stayed in the mid 30s and this year has the highest number of colleges achieving that coveted ranking that could mean extra funds for the college.

This year, 38 colleges have the "superior" ranking, even with the inability of some colleges to complete their reporting due to minor data recovery problems. Three colleges ranked superior for the first time: Brunswick County (Supply), Johnston (Smithfield) and Pamlico (Grantsboro) Community Colleges. Seven colleges received a perfect score, meeting or exceeding the average percentage in all 12 standards.

"This is our opportunity to prove the value of this system and show how well our colleges are performing," said System

President H. Martin Lancaster. "Our open doors provide a convenient, affordable, and superior quality education experience for our students in spite of the funding challenges we face."

The seven community colleges with a perfect score are: Central Carolina (Sanford), Durham Technical (Durham), Forsyth Technical (Winston-Salem), Isothermal (Spindale), Piedmont (Roxboro), Vance-Granville (Henderson), and Wilkes (Wilkesboro).

Blue Ridge Community College (Flat Rock) has the distinction of being the only community college to have earned superior rankings in each year the report has been generated.

"Our colleges strive to give their communities the best service because they know that for many, they represent the best chance for success," said Keith Brown, associate vice president for planning, accountability, research and evaluation at the System Office. "This report shows they succeed."

Examples of 2005-2006 results include:

- **Business/Industry Satisfaction with Customized Training:** Every business and industry client registered satisfaction with services provided by community colleges, earning all 58 community colleges and the system as a whole a 99 percent average, compared to the statewide standard of 90 percent.
- **Employer Satisfaction with Graduates:** The statewide average for 2005-06 was 97% with all community colleges meeting or exceeding the performance standard of 85%.
- **Goal Completion of Completers:** The proportion of graduates of certificate, diploma, or degree programs who say they met their stated goal is a statewide average of 99% with 57 community colleges meeting or exceeding the System standard of 90%.
- **Progress of Basic Skills Students:** The statewide average for 2004-05 was 82% with all 58 community colleges meeting or exceeding the performance standard of 75%. Basic skills services include literacy, ESL, and other non-curriculum or certificate resources.
- **Employment of Graduates:** Community college students get jobs. The statewide average for 2003-04 was 99.51% with all 58 community colleges meeting or exceeding the performance standard of 95%.
- **Student Satisfaction of Completers and Non-Completers:** Not every student needs to graduate to complete his or her education goal. Very often students are hired in their chosen profession before obtaining a degree. The standard in this area is 90% satisfaction. Fifty-seven colleges reported an average of 97% satisfaction in this area.
- **Licensure or Certification Exams for First-Time Test Takers:** The statewide average for 2004-05 was 85% of test takers receiving a passing score the first time they sat for a certification exam. Forty-three community colleges met or exceeded the performance standard of 80%. Community colleges prepare students for a myriad of professions that require state licensure or certification, including nursing, aviation maintenance, emergency medical technician, and dental hygiene.

The following community colleges earned superior rankings:

Alamance	Isothermal
Beaufort County	Johnston
Blue Ridge	Mayland
Brunswick	Nash
Caldwell CC & Technical Institute	Pamlico
Carteret	Piedmont
Catawba Valley	Richmond
Central Carolina	Robeson
Central Piedmont	Rockingham
College of The Albemarle	South Piedmont
Davidson County	Southwestern
Durham Technical	Stanly
Edgecombe	Surry
Fayetteville Technical	Vance Granville
Forsyth Technical	Wake Technical
Gaston College	Wayne
Guilford Technical	Western Piedmont
Halifax	Wilkes
Haywood	Wilson Technical

The complete **2007 Critical Success Factors Report** is available on the NCCCS Web page at <http://www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/Publications/docs/Publications/csf2007.pdf>

The report is filled with comprehensive information about the Community College System in several areas including workforce development statistics, diverse population learning needs, technology, and System resources.

The North Carolina Community College System enrolls more than 800,000 students in 58 comprehensive community colleges. Internationally recognized for the scope and quality of its programs, the System is North Carolina's primary provider of workforce preparation and adult education. For details, visit www.nccommunitycolleges.edu.

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