

## SURVEY INDICATES STUDENT SATISFACTION

A recent poll of VHCC students indicates an overwhelming majority are satisfied with their decision to enroll and feel the college is highly committed to new students.

In fact, 78 percent of VHCC students believe the college has a high or very high level of commitment to new students and 77 percent are highly or very highly satisfied with their decision to enroll. A similar survey in 2005 found 67 percent recognized VHCC's commitment to first-year students and 73 percent were highly satisfied with their decision to attend.

The results are good news for VHCC faculty and staff involved in the Foundations of Excellence, a national effort designed to improve the college experience for first-year students. VHCC was one of 10 two-year colleges nationwide to participate in the process in 2005 and help develop a model for use on two-year campuses.

As a result of what was learned then, VHCC revised its advising process, revamped the orientation course required for all new students, and began offering more student activities. The Quality Enhancement Plan, a major component in the accreditation process, also focused on the first-year experience.

The latest survey indicates the new programs have been successful and also helped identify areas where additional improvements are needed, said QEP Director Kim Morton.

"The feedback we got from students indicates that the new programs have improved the first-year experience for students," she said. "The only areas that didn't do so well were issues related to transferring and exposure to diversity, so we're going to take a look and see what we can do to improve in these areas."

Comments gathered from students indicate they have received tremendous help establishing goals, receiving academic help, and becoming part of the campus community.

Here's what students said:

- "They were willing to listen to my goals and dreams and make them happen."
- "I was made to feel like I was a part of the VHCC family and have really enjoyed being back in school after all these years."
- "The college makes a new student's transition easier in that there are many activities outside of class that allow students to become acquainted with each other, as well as with the faculty."
- "I'm not very good in math, so my scheduling advisor placed me in a developmental math class."

## STUDENTS VISIT VIRGINIA LAWMAKERS



**(Top photo) Students Samantha Narciso, Lindsey Minnigh, Caleb Frye and Jodad Rodriguez visited Delegates Terry Kilgore and Bill Carrico during a recent visit to the Virginia General Assembly. Students also met with Senator William Wampler, Senator Phillip Puckett and Delegate Joseph Johnson during the event, which is organized by the Virginia Community College System to encourage support for the state's 23 community colleges. (At right) Students and VHCC President Ron Proffitt stopped for a photo on the steps of the Capitol before heading to the House Gallery, where they were introduced by Delegate Johnson.**



## VHCC LOSES TREASURED FRIEND

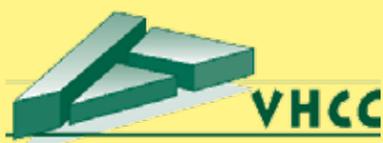
Dr. Catherine Smith, a generous VHCC supporter who is honored within the brick and stone labyrinth that is a centerpiece of campus, died Jan. 7. She was 98.

An Abingdon physician for more than four decades, Dr. Smith was licensed as both an obstetrician and psychiatrist. She delivered hundreds of babies throughout her career and focused her practice on treating both the minds and bodies of her patients. She was a founding member of the American Holistic Medical Association, and also served Washington County as a member of many professional and community organizations.

Dr. Smith's holistic approach to healing and support of education were honored on the VHCC campus in 2005 when horticulture students built the Catherine Smith Labyrinth, patterned after one at Chartes Cathedral near Paris. Because labyrinths have traditionally been a place for quiet meditation - often built within churches and hospitals - the labyrinth seemed a fitting tribute to Dr. Smith's healing philosophy.

In 2008, the Virginia Community College System established the Catherine Smith Commonwealth Legacy Scholarship to honor Dr. Smith's generous support of Virginia Highlands and her lifelong commitment to education.

Dr. Catherine Smith will be missed on the VHCC campus and throughout our community.



VHCC News is produced each month by Anne Dunham of the Office of Institutional Advancement. If you would like to suggest information for the newsletter, please send your ideas to [adunham@vhcc.edu](mailto:adunham@vhcc.edu) or contact her by phone at 276-739-2456. VHCC is an Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution.

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Students celebrated the beginning of the Spring Semester by participating in Craze Day, a week-long event that introduces students to new friends and valuable services that are available on campus. (Top photo) Students were invited to make tie dye t-shirts that will become a treasured souvenir of their time on campus. (Bottom photo) Members of the Student Success Center participate in the Wacky Photo event, taking full advantage of the wigs, hats and other props that were available. Rod Stewart, who turned 66 this month, put on his VHCC sweatshirt and stopped by for this photo. Someone send him some Grecian Formula before his upcoming tour!

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

The original academic calendar for Spring Semester 2011 listed Feb. 15 and Feb. 16 as faculty in-service days. However, because of recent snow days, CLASSES are now scheduled on these two days.

**All Thursday day and evening classes will meet on Tuesday, Feb. 15, and all Wednesday day and evening classes will meet on Wednesday, Feb. 16.**

## HRMS COMING

The Virginia Community College System (VCCS) is currently in the process of implementing a PeopleSoft system for all HR/Payroll operations. The project is called the Human Resource Management System (HRMS). This new system will affect every VCCS employee as it includes a number of self-service operations.

Faculty, staff, administrators and work-study students will use a self-service component with access to online time sheets, electronic submission of leave request to supervisors, and electronic signatures. Supervisors will be able to electronically approve online time sheets, leave requests and pay processing requests. HR and Payroll will have one system to key, process and store employee data. College and VCCS leaders will have access to a variety of management reports to address budget and strategic planning needs.

HRMS is scheduled to go live on March 21, 2011 and the VCCS is currently scheduling training statewide for Human Resource and Payroll personnel. Training for all employees will begin later in February.

Watch your email for more details and VHCC training schedules.



**Blood Drive • January 31  
10 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
VHCC Campus**

**The severe winter weather has had an adverse effect on our blood inventory.  
All blood types are needed!**

## CIVIL WAR LECTURE SERIES PLANNED FOR FEBRUARY

A weekly lecture series entitled "1861: Virginia Prepares for War" will be presented Thursday evenings in February through a joint sponsorship by the Arts Array at Virginia Highlands Community College and the Washington County Civil War Sesquicentennial Committee.

Each lecture is free to the public and will be presented at 7:30 p.m. in the Executive Auditorium of the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center.

The first lecture is scheduled for Feb. 3 and is entitled "To Secede or Not to Secede: Southern Mountain Politics 1860-1862." The lecture will be presented by Dr. Bob Hutton, a Washington County native who teaches history at the University of Tennessee. Dr. Hutton is currently completing his first book, *Blood Breathitt: Death and Politics in Southern County*.

"The Civil War played out differently in the southern Appalachians than in much of the rest of the South," Dr. Hutton said. "Despite their popular image, 19th mountaineers were a heterogeneous group of people: rich, poor, slaveholder, non-slaveholder, white, black, American, southern, rebel, Unionist, Democrat, old-line Whig, Virginian, and Tennessean. As the country moved to war in 1860 and 1861, all of these identities influenced their ultimate allegiances

and the course of the war in the mountains."

The Feb. 10 lecture featured Dr. Brian Wills, a former professor of history at UVA-Wise who now directs the Center for the Study of the Civil War Era in Atlanta. He is the author of *Gone with Glory: The Civil War in Cinema* and a biography of General Nathan Bedford Forrest.

Dr. Wills will discuss the range of cinematic depictions of the war and speculate as to whether there will be a resurgence of Civil War films as the 150th anniversary approaches. His lecture is entitled "The Civil War in Cinema."

Dr. Brian McKnight will focus on Champ Ferguson, the most notorious Confederate guerrilla leader. Ferguson admitted personally killing over 100 men and overseeing the massacre of wounded men and prisoners after the Battle of Saltville. "Champ Ferguson's Borderland War" will be presented on Feb. 17.

Dr. McKnight teaches history at UVA-Wise and is the author of *Contested Borderland* and the forthcoming *Confederate Outlaw: Champ Ferguson and the Civil War in Appalachia*.

The final lecture in the series will be delivered on Feb. 24 by Mike Shaffer, a Civil War historian and chairman of the Washington County Civil War



Sesquicentennial Committee. He will focus on the war fervor in the region during his talk, which is entitled "Washington County Enlists: 1861 and the Call to Arms."

"The year 1861 would prove an eventful time for young men in our region," Shaffer said. "With the Old Dominion preparing to leave the Union, some 200 volunteers began rudimentary drill procedures under the tutelage of Captain William E. Jones. The Washington Mounted Rifles soon mustered into the 1st Virginia Cavalry, and participated in the war's first great battle near Manassas."

The Arts Array is the community cultural outreach series of Virginia Highlands Community College. For more detailed information about the series, contact Ben Jennings, the Arts Array coordinator, at [bjennings@vhcc.edu](mailto:bjennings@vhcc.edu) or phone him at (276) 739-2447