

New Tuition Rate Approved

The State Board for Community Colleges has approved a tuition increase that sets the new rate for VHCC's in-state students at \$121 per credit hour.

This new rate, which goes into effect for the Fall Semester, includes a \$1.50 student activity fee, a parking fee of 50 cents, and a technology fee of \$7.50 per credit hour. Students from Tennessee's Sullivan and Johnson counties will pay the special rate of \$136 per credit hour, while other out-of-state residents will pay \$312.60.

The approved 8.7 percent increase is needed to meet the goals of the State Board financial plan and support community college enrollment growth; expand science, teaching, engineering and mathematics programs; provide new facility operating costs; fill select vacant positions; and cover the inflationary costs of technology, utilities and general expenses.

Enrollment at Virginia's community colleges has grown by 48,000 students since 2008.

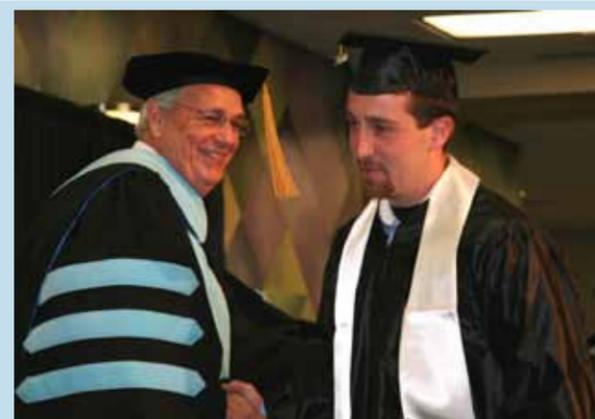
"We are grateful for the partnership that the Governor and General Assembly are sharing with Virginia's 23 community colleges during tight budgetary times. We are working with those leaders to keep tuition affordable for Virginia families while ensuring our community colleges are able to meet their needs," said Jeffery K. Mitchell, chair of the board's budget & finance committee. "The budget cuts and enrollment growth our community colleges have seen are unprecedented."

The Governor and General Assembly also supported a significant increase in financial aid in the 2011 state budget. State financial aid for community colleges was increased by \$5.4 million, a 20 percent increase, that will further mitigate the costs of enrolling in a community college for some of the state's most financially fragile students.

VHCC currently distributes more than \$6 million in financial aid each year.

The board's tuition decision is in accord with Achieve 2015, the new VCCS six-year strategic plan that calls for keeping community college tuition and fee rates at one-half or less than that of the comparable rates at Virginia's four-year universities.

Currently, mandatory tuition and fees at Virginia's Community Colleges are just over one-third (37 percent) of the comparable average tuition and fees charged by public four-year institutions.



Graduating student Michelle Sampson (left) delivered the Commencement Address. (Above, right) Phillip "Bucky" Blevins, SGA President for the 2010-2011 academic year, receives his diploma from President Ron Proffitt. (Bottom, right) Graduating students line up for the processional into the Grand Hall

Class of 2011 Celebrates Achievements

A tearful Michelle Sampson thanked her family, friends and God for providing the support needed to earn a college degree, then challenged her classmates to "take charge" of their futures.

"Virginia Highlands has diligently planted the seeds of education, nurtured them to sprouting plants, and now as we graduate, it's up to you to make the plant flourish and grow in your chosen fields of work and further study," she said. "We need to go from here and rise up to take charge of our future. You have the formula for achieving success in a positive way. You can take on anything and make it work."

Michelle was chosen from more than 250 graduating students to deliver the 2011 Commencement Address. She began by sharing details of her life, noting that she put her dream of becoming a nurse on hold soon after she became a teenage mother. She later married, moved to Mountain City, and with her husband, Dale, began an automotive repair business. Once the business was successfully operating, Dale encouraged her to pursue a nursing degree.

She became a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), then enrolled in VHCC's LPN-to-RN bridge program in Summer 2010. She graduated from VHCC with highest honor, earning an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Nursing.

"I came to Virginia Highlands as an undisciplined student, unsure of how to study or apply the knowledge I did have to my studies," she said. "I have learned these skills and more, such as time management, prioritization and delegation. I have built a good base of tools that I need to succeed

in my career, and I know Virginia Highlands Community College has give you your own set of tools to utilize that will enhance your new career, as well."

Michelle admitted that she often got discouraged during late-night study sessions that took time away from her family and work. Yet, she said, her strong faith and support network gave her the strength to adjust and move on from one challenge to another.

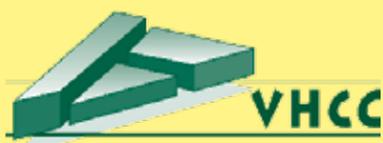
Along the way, she discovered that there were many similarities between the cars she worked on during her career as a mechanic and the patients she will care for as a nurse.

"People have blood, cars have oil," she said. "People have a heart, cars have an oil pump. When the electric system fails on both, we give them a jump start. When a car battery dies, we have a battery pack, and when the heart stops, we use a defibrillator."

Because of the similarities, Michelle said she may continue to carry a toolbox in the trunk of her car, just in case any of her patients have car trouble.

Other highlights of the Commencement Ceremony included the presentation of the Distinguished Service Award to Dr. Jim E. Geiger, VHCC Professor Emeritus and a former member of the VHCC Board. The award recognizes Dr. Geiger's service to the College, to the community, and to education. It is the highest non-academic award presented by the College.

And faculty members David and Schery Collins performed "Virginia Highlands Pride" a song they wrote about the College.



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 or contact her by phone at 276-739-2456. VHCC is an Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution.

Virginia Highlands
Community College
www.vhcc.edu

or call
276-739-2400

Para la ayuda en español, llama por favor

(276) 739-2436



Glade Aid



The campus community came together in the aftermath of the April 28 tornado that swept through the Glade Spring community to assist with the relief efforts by sponsoring Glade Aid at the Coomes Community Center. The day-long event included live music from local bands, children's games, and horseshoe and corn hole tournaments. Just over \$6,700 was raised and will be donated to the Washington County Long Term Recovery Group.

Below are the words of Virginia Highlands Pride, a song David and Schery Collins wrote and performed at the 2011 Commencement Ceremony.

VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS PRIDE

WRITTEN BY SCHERY AND DAVID COLLINS

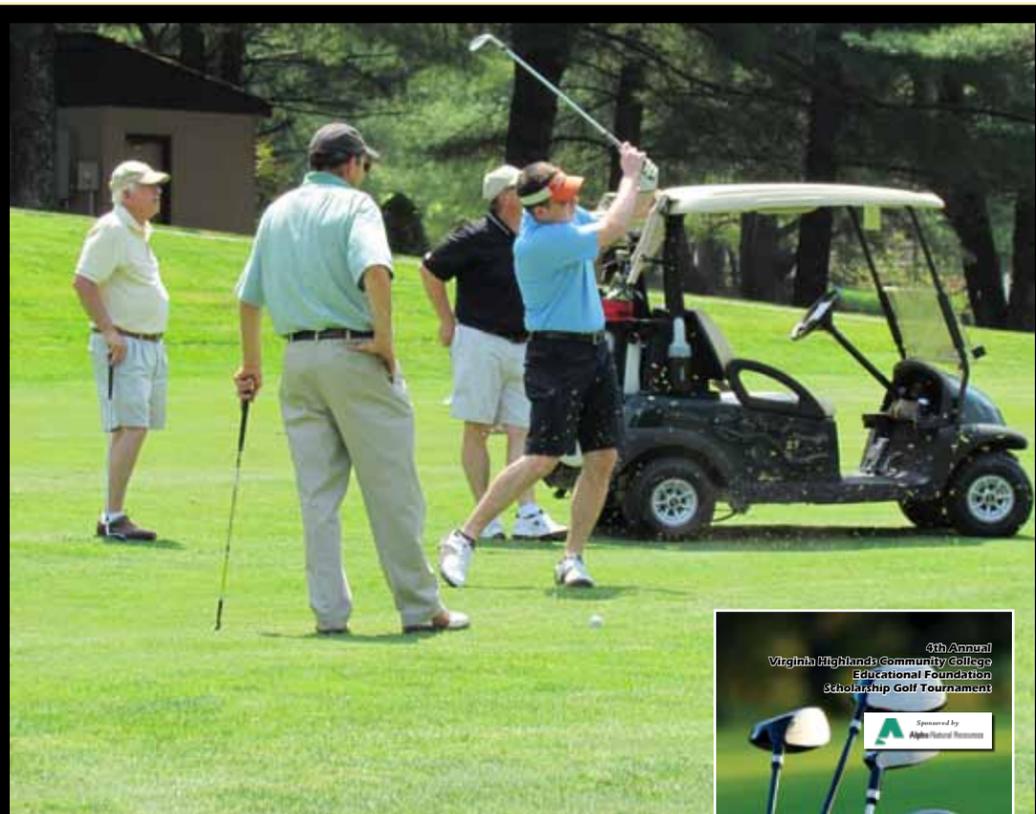
Mountains high, valleys wide, rivers running through;
 Highlands pride, we shall strive to learn and live what's true.
 On this hill wolves ran free, strong of heart and mind;
 Like the wolves it's our decree—a new world we will find.
 Our bounteous land, traditions rich, Virginia Highlands strives
 To open doors, fulfill dreams, providing better lives.

On this night, in this place, we stand to sing this song.
 A new class joins a growing throng—over ten thousand strong.
 We're justly proud of what we've earned and learned on our way.
 Through sacrifice and working hard we've earned the right to say—
 "Our bounteous land, traditions rich, Virginia Highlands strives
 To open doors, fulfill dreams, providing better lives".



Great Expectations

Great Expectations Coach Criss Golden is joined by Leah Braswell, who earned an Associates Degree in Nursing, and Amanda Lester, who was awarded a Police Science degree during the 2011 graduation ceremony. Both Leah and Amanda attended VHCC through the Great Expectations Program for students in foster care.



More than 100 community members participated in the 4th Annual VHCC Educational Foundation Scholarship Golf Tournament sponsored by Alpha Natural Resources on April 25 at Glenrochie Golf Club. The tournament raised about \$31,000 for campus scholarships.

Presidential Inauguration set for Sept. 9

A formal inauguration ceremony will be held for VHCC President Ron Proffitt at 11 a.m. on Friday, Sept. 9, 2011, at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center.

The guest list includes VCCS Chancellor Glenn DuBois, representatives from Virginia community colleges and four-year schools, VHCC Board members, VHCC Foundation Board members, faculty, staff, students and others with close ties to the college.

Dr. Proffitt assumed the presidency on July 1, 2010. It is customary within the VCCS for presidents to be on the job for one year before the inauguration ceremony is held.

A reception will follow the ceremony.



Graduation Celebration

(Above) Ivy Road entertained a crowd of more than 400 during the annual Graduation Celebration held Thursday, May 12, on the Campus Commons.

(Right) Alex Wilson enjoys a Chik-fil-A sandwich during the party, which was attended by graduates, family members, and friends.