

Services, Opportunities Earn Employee Kudos

VHCC employees are pleased with the services and opportunities available to students, the quality of education offered on campus, the strong focus on students, and the friendly and support campus climate.

But campus facilities and grounds could stand some improvement and class offerings would appeal to a more diverse audience if expanded to include more web-based courses and more flexible scheduling, employees said.

The comments were gathered during an October in-service that marked the first step in the strategic planning process. A total of 61 employees participated, commenting on the college's strengths and weaknesses before considering issues that should become priorities. The comments are being compiled to create goals for the coming years.

Those surveyed were most complimentary of the student services including financial aid, transfer programs, student activities, recruitment and retention efforts, dual enrollment and small class size. Others lauded the "sense of community" and the "bang for the buck" students receive, while excellent faculty and staff and strong marketing/public relations efforts also got high marks.

As VHCC celebrates these successes, there is a need for continued renovation and upkeep of aging facilities, as well as a need to alter class scheduling to meet the needs of the community.

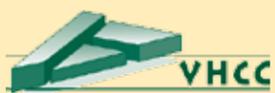
"VHCC needs to be more diverse in course/program offerings -- more online, night and accelerated programs," one employee commented.

After considering the strengths and weaknesses of the College, employees also had an opportunity to comment on areas that should be priorities in the coming years. Academics and student support services was the overwhelming choice, with many noting that VHCC has maintained a high level of success by constantly changing to meet the needs of the community.

In a subsequent meeting with members of the VHCC Citizen Advisory Committees, a group of community members who advise the College on matters concerning programs and services, additional input was gathered. Those comments are still being compiled.

The strategic planning process will continue through 2009 and the final plan will be unveiled in March 2010. The exact time line for completing the goals has not been determined.

For more information, contact Jennifer Addison at (276) 739-2458 or jaddison@vhcc.edu.



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.

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It is the Veteran

It is the Veteran, not the preacher, who has given us freedom of religion.
It is the Veteran, not the reporter, who has given us freedom of the press.
It is the Veteran, not the campus organizer, who has given us the freedom to assemble.
It is the Veteran, not the lawyer, who has given us the right to a fair trial.
It is the Veteran, not the politician, who has given us the right to vote.
It is the Veteran, who salutes the Flag, who serves under the Flag.

VHCC Veterans Share Military Experiences

Remind Crowd to Thank Vets for Their Military Service

VHCC veterans led a Nov. 11 celebration honoring the nation's heroes with a heartfelt reminder to take time throughout the year to voice appreciation and remember the sacrifices made by members of the U.S. armed forces.

"I consider myself lucky to be standing here today," said Sgt. Eric Hoffman, a VHCC student and a member of the Tennessee Army National Guard who recently returned from his second active-duty assignment in Iraq. "Unfortunately not everyone gets a plane ride home. Veterans Day is a day to remember the sacrifices of the men and women who volunteered to serve their country to ensure the freedom we exercise with each and every breath we take."

Sgt. Hoffman and Lance Corporal Minnie Salyers, a VHCC student who served in the U.S. Marine Corps, shared their military experiences and encouraged the campus community to remember the hardships faced by our nation's veterans – and not just on Veterans Day.

Lance Corporal Salyers said she followed in the proud tradition of her family when she became a Marine, noting that her family tree includes highly decorated veterans of the Civil War, World War II, and the Vietnam War. A recent

trip to visit her grandfather in a Veterans Administration hospital reminded her how much they and others who served our country had each sacrificed.

"Some had a lost their leg or maybe an arm or maybe just – as one woman told me – time away from her children and family while she was on deployment," she said of those she saw in the hospital. "I didn't get to talk to them all and learn their stories, but it was written on their faces that they each and every one had stories to tell."

As we remember those who died in military service, we should be mindful of those now serving, Sgt. Hoffman added.

"There are thousands of men and women weathering the cold mountains of Afghanistan and blistering heat of Iraq, he said. "Each and every day is a trial until they get home. Their families endure equal hardships awaiting their return."

"While you are thinking about what I just said, store it in a place where it can be found rather easily," he continued. "If you see your buddy's wife struggling... offer a hand. When someone from the American Legion asks for a donation ...give a little. And, perhaps most important, thank today's service members and their families for the sacrifices they have and are making for our America."

Pa Rumpa Pum Pum

Talented members of the VHCC Percussion Ensemble braved the cold and icy conditions on Nov. 21 to participate in the Abingdon Christmas Parade sponsored by the Kiwanis Club. The band has become a crowd favorite and will continue spreading holiday cheer on Dec. 6 as they march down State Street for the annual Bristol Christmas Parade. The Percussion Ensemble is directed by Jay Oberfeiting.



Koats for Kids Closet Accepting Donations

The annual VHCC Koats for Kids closet is once again seeking donations of warm clothing including warm coats, jackets, sweaters, sweatshirts, gloves, mittens, and other garments that protect against the cold. All sizes are needed and will be available at no charge for students and their families.

Donations may be taken to Project EXCEL in ISC-122 or ISC-126.

The Koats for Kids Closet will open soon in the Dressing Room used by the Theatre Arts Department near the rear entrance of the Learning Resources Center, LRC-608. For additional information, please contact Mike Fillnow at mfillnow@vhcc.edu or (276) 739-2405.

Employees Double Gifts to Foundation

Campus donations to the VHCC Educational Foundation have more than doubled over the previous year and are being designated for a wide variety of programs that will directly impact student learning, Vice President David Matlock reported recently.

Employees are invited to make a one-time contribution by check or divide their gift into smaller payments through payroll deduction. Donations also may be designated for a particular campus program, Matlock said, noting that those most often chosen by employees include the Presidential Scholarship Fund, Campus Professional Growth and Development, Keyser/Aday Theatre Fund, Veterans Emergency Fund, Becky May Scholarship Fund, Coastal Ecology Fund, the Percussion Ensemble Fund, and the Greatest Needs.

Those interested in making a donation by payroll deduction should finalize their pledge by December 4 by contacting the Foundation Office at (276) 739-2473 or (276) 739-2449. Checks should be made payable to the VHCC Educational Foundation.

All contributions are tax deductible.



Hundreds of area 8th Graders were treated to an up-close look at a variety of career options - from Motorsports to Law Enforcement and just about everything in between during the Educational Talent Search Eighth Grade Career Carnival. The event, held at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center, introduces students to career possibilities and the skills needed to be successful.

Kick the Habit with Quit for Life

Are you ready to kick that tobacco habit?

Help is just a phone call away. CommonHealth's Quit for Life tobacco cessation program is provided free to employees, spouses and dependents over age 18 who are eligible to participate in the state health benefits program.

Call 1-866-784-8454 to enroll and you will be assigned a Quit Coach who will work with you to create a personal quitting plan. The plan may include nicotine replacement patches, nicotine gum or covered smoking cessation drugs. Your Quit Coach can help you decide if one of these products will work for you.

For more information about Quit for Life, please go to <http://commonhealth.virginia.gov/programs/quitforlife.html>



FROM THE
ARCHIVES

What ever happened to that old Thrifty Matic machine? It was the latest technology in 1970 when VHCC had a masonry program, but it hasn't been seen around here lately. Thirty years from now, photos of our laptops and cell phones will probably be featured here!