

Board Sets Tuition, Fees for 2009-2010

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.

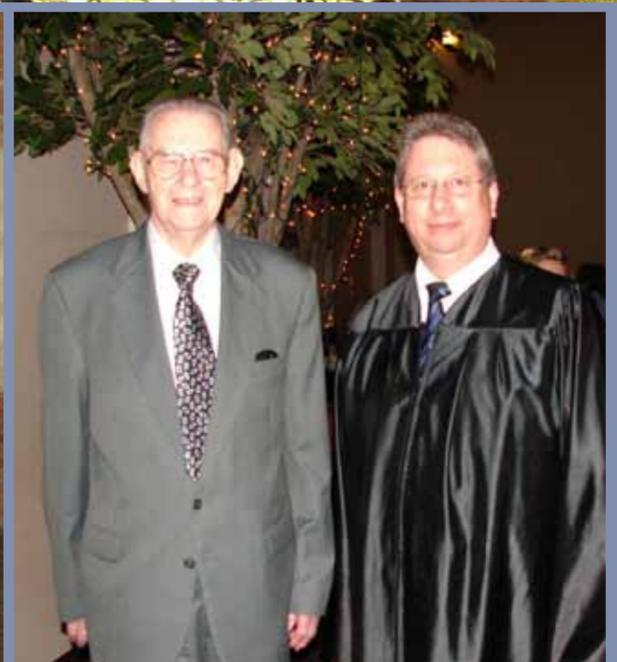
"Thankfully, the federal stimulus money the VCCS is receiving from the General Assembly is greatly reducing the size of this tuition increase," said Megan Beyer, chair of the board's budget & finance committee. "Without that federal money, it would have taken a tuition increase twice as big just to keep 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.



(Top) The VHCC Class of 2009 enjoys a moment in the spotlight. (Above, left) Delegate Charles W. Carrico Sr., a 1982 graduate of VHCC, and graduating student Brittany Lutz served as guest speakers for the ceremony. (Above, right) VHCC Retiree Kenneth Shoun was named professor emeritus. He is pictured here with his former student Jim Kroll, who now leads the Air Conditioning, Refrigeration and Heating program that began in 1969 under Mr. Shoun's leadership.

Carrico Urges Grads to Make Positive Mark

People are like pencils, Virginia Delegate Charles W. "Bill" Carrico Sr. told the VHCC graduating class of 2009, noting that it's what's inside that allows us to make our mark on the world.

"It's the spirit inside every man, woman, boy or girl that drives them to accomplish great things," he said. "It's the spirit that makes us get back up when we've been knocked down and to fight for what we're trying to achieve. ... So today my prayer for you is that you will go out into the world with the ambition to make your mark in a positive way and, when

necessary, that you won't be afraid to use your eraser on the mistakes that you've made."

Carrico is a 1982 graduate of VHCC's drafting program who worked for the Virginia State Police before an injury forced his early retirement. He currently represents residents of the 5th District in the State House of Delegates.

Graduating student Brittany Lutz also served as a guest speaker for the event, thanking members of the campus community who helped her make important decisions along the way.

Other highlights of the ceremony included

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Retroville Rocks Graduation Party

More than 400 graduates, family members, friends and College employees gathered on campus the evening before graduation for a celebration honoring the VHCC Class of 2009.

Local rock band Retroville provided the entertainment for the party, playing hits from the 70s and 80s while the crowd enjoyed a hamburger and hotdog feast. The event also featured children's games and an opportunity for graduates to pose for cap and gown photos.

Pictured at left is Retroville lead singer Wayne Kelly. Other members include Alan Linkous on keyboards, Daniel Thacker on drums, and Mike Thacker on guitar.



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Dennis Singleton, who mentored first-year students while serving as a VHCC Peer Ambassador, receives his diploma from Dr. Clear.

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recognition of John Snodgrass as a Distinguished Service Award winner. The DSA is the highest non-academic award presented by the College and was awarded to Snodgrass for his many years on the VHCC Board and his dedication to many community agencies.

Retirees Kenneth Shoun and Dr. Mike Rush were both honored with professor emeritus designation, the highest honor presented to a retiree. The awards were presented by Dr. Debbi Clear, vice president of Instruction and Student Services.

Shoun came to VHCC in 1969 to lead the Air Conditioning and Refrigeration program. During his tenure, the curriculum was restructured to include instruction in heating and a state-of-the-art laboratory was established to enhance instruction.

"Not only did Ken provide considerable expertise in his field but, as one of the original faculty members at VHCC, provided significant guidance in establishing a College to meet the needs of the community," Dr. Clear said in introducing him.

Rush was hired in 1971 to serve as assistant to the learning lab coordinator, but later served in a variety of roles. He was serving as coordinator of student development and assessment in 1993 when he left to take a vice president's position at Southwest Virginia Community College. Following his retirement, he returned to VHCC as a member of the Foundation board and currently serves as a member of the College Board.

"Many of you may know Mike for his many valuable contributions to our campus and to our community – or perhaps as a member of the local rock band Phantom," Dr. Clear said. "I'm proud tonight to introduce him as VHCC Professor Emeritus Dr. G. Michael Rush."

The May 15 ceremony was the College's 40th commencement ceremony. Laura Lee, chair of the VHCC Board, welcomed family members and guests, noting that the event marked the 25th anniversary of her graduation from Virginia Highlands.

"To our graduates, congratulations!" she said. "The diplomas, certificates and degrees you are about to receive mark a tremendous milestone in each of your lives. It is my hope that this achievement begins a lifelong journey of learning for each of you, and that your lives will be forever enriched as a result of your time at Virginia Highlands."

Strategic Priorities Set

Funding, staff staffing levels, student success, course offerings and facilities were named the top five strategic priorities during an April planning retreat attended by College leaders.

The meeting was facilitated by Scott Barnes, vice president of financial and administrative services at Danville Community College.

Now that the priorities have been established, a series of task forces will be formed during the upcoming fall semester to address the goals. The plan will be completed by December.

If you are interested in serving on a task force or learning more about the strategic planning process, contact Jennifer Addison at jaddison@vhcc.edu.

Gibian Artwork Comes to Campus

Works by Abingdon artist Kathy Gibian are now on display in the Learning Resources Center as part of VHCC's ongoing effort to bring local art to campus.

The works are on display in the first-floor hallway outside the theater and library.

Gibian studied fine art at Auburn University. Throughout her career, she has continued her education in the private study of painting, watercolor, and silkscreen. She also received instruction in monotype and pottery through the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts' Adult Studio Program.

Since moving to this area, she has continued her studies in painting, printmaking, clay, and puppet making at both Arrowmont and Penland School of Arts and Crafts. She currently serves as outreach instructor in the education department of the William King Regional Art Center.

"Making art is something I do because I enjoy it" she said. "This show is a collection of pieces that explores how things fit together; a concept that allows many different interpretations beyond the actual making of the piece."

VRS Offers Helpful Webinars

As a new educational resource for members, VRS is now offering webinars on various topics.

Webinars are interactive seminars that you may view on your computer while listening to the presenter via phone. The current offering is titled *Overview of VRS Benefits* and will be presented on June 9th and June 23rd.

Registering for a webinar is easy and can be done by going to www.varetire.org/Members/RetPlanning/MemEdu/Webinars.asp. You may also easily access the VRS web site from the Human Resources web page under the FYI-Retirement Planning section.

Help Desk Support Program Begins

Full tuition scholarships are now available for Virginia residents accepted into VHCC's fast-paced Help Desk Support program that leads to jobs with the region's IT industries.

Classes, which will begin on June 1 and continue through December, will include online and on campus courses, as well as tutor work sessions. Courses will focus on help desk support, database software, spreadsheet software, operating systems, hardware and troubleshooting, security, advanced operations in Word, Windows Server 2003, and preparation for employment.

The Virginia Tobacco Commission has provided funding to offer full tuition scholarships for Virginia residents accepted into the program. Out-of-state residents also are invited to apply for the program and may be eligible for financial aid through traditional federal programs.

Please contact Joyce Lindsey at (276) 739-2437 or jlindsey@vhcc.edu for more information.



Industrial Maintenance Program Created

VHCC has partnered with the Smyth County Career and Technical Center to provide a new Industrial Maintenance program that combines courses needed for jobs in the region's manufacturing industries.

The first course, Industrial Safety, is a hybrid class that will begin with a mandatory class session on Monday, June 15, from 6- 8:30 p.m. at the Smyth County facility. The hybrid feature includes some face-to-face classroom meetings with the instructor and some work completed at home or online via Blackboard. The class will end on August 6.

The Industrial Safety class provides a basic understanding of safety and health in an industrial situation, including information about hazardous materials, substances, conditions and activities and the prescribed methods and equipment needed for employee safety and protection.

Other classes in the Industrial Maintenance program include Blueprint Reading, Electricity Fundamentals, Basic Fluid Mechanics, Industrial Solid State Devices and Circuits, and Programmable Logic Controller Systems. The final course allows students to customize the program by choosing between classes in machining, welding, electronics or engineering. Dates for these courses will be announced soon.

Contact the Center for Business & Industry at (276) 739-2430 or cbi@vhcc.edu for more information.