



**Response of the  
Virginia Community College  
System  
to the Impact of the Aging of  
Virginia's Population**

**November 15, 2007**

## Signature Page

*Pursuant to legislation enacted by the Virginia General Assembly of Virginia, the **Virginia Community College System** submits this report of its progress in addressing the impact of the aging of Virginia's population.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Glenn DuBois". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G" and "D".

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Dr. Glenn DuBois, Chancellor of the Virginia Community College System

November 15, 2007

## Executive Summary

The Virginia Community College System (VCCS) continues to offer a variety of services and classes to the seniors of the state.

The VCCS strives to insure that senior citizens have access to all services and that they are encouraged to utilize the programs offered in a variety of topics. Seniors attend both credit and non-credit classes, and participate in an array of seminars targeted especially for their population, as well as the community at large. College workforce development centers offer extensive professional development opportunities, particularly computer classes designed specifically for senior citizens. Activities enjoyed by seniors include movies, lectures, and cultural events and trips that are offered by a number of the colleges. Services utilized by senior citizens are college libraries, computer labs, Veterans Affairs Offices, and “slim gym” fitness or recreational centers located on several of the campuses.

The VCCS intends to maintain its dedication to the support of senior citizens and strives to cooperate with local government in educational opportunities.

## Agency Description

### Virginia Community Colleges Mission Statement

*The mission of the Virginia Community College System is to provide comprehensive higher education and workforce training programs and services of superior quality that are financially and geographically accessible and that meet individual, business, and community needs of the Commonwealth.*

Shared values influence thinking, guide decisions, mold policies, and determine courses of action as Virginia's community colleges strive to fulfill our mission. These values include:

#### **Opportunity**

Serving a diverse student population through lifelong learning and student development services that are inclusive, accessible, affordable, and of the highest quality.

#### **Teaching and Learning**

Sustaining teaching excellence and setting high standards that promote and encourage student learning.

#### **Effective Learning Environments**

Maintaining innovative learning environments that encourage creativity and the acquisition of knowledge and skills that prepare students for changing work environments, responsible citizenship, and leading rewarding lives.

#### **Appropriate Use of Technology**

Using technology effectively to enhance instruction and learning and to expand access to educational opportunities through distance education.

#### **Professional Development**

Encouraging excellence and renewal in faculty and staff performance by providing on-going opportunities for professional growth and renewal.

#### **Community Service**

Serving our communities by providing facilities for cultural enrichment, promoting economic development and partnerships, and providing leadership and college talent to meet community needs.

#### **Accountability**

Demonstrating good stewardship by making effective and efficient use of resources, thereby ensuring accountability to the state and to the communities we serve.

## About the Virginia Community College System

When Virginia's General Assembly established the Virginia Community College System in 1966, the need for a comprehensive system was well known. Over the two decades after the end of World War II, leaders in government, business, professional sectors, and academia had called for a new approach to providing educational opportunity.

A key concern was Virginia's ability to develop a skilled and knowledgeable workforce to expand the state's economy. Although several state universities had established two-year, off-campus "branch" colleges, they did not provide a comprehensive community college program with "open door" access to all students. At the same time, the state's vocational-technical schools offered no college-level academic studies or associate's degrees. And in many parts of the state, citizens had no branch college or vocational school within commuting distance.

The VCCS is also directly involved in cooperative efforts to address the needs of surrounding communities through special classes and programs targeted at a number of groups, specifically including senior citizens.

Today our community colleges give every Virginian the opportunity to gain a quality education. Students may:

- Earn a two-year associate's degree or a technical diploma or certificate
- Take college courses for credits that may be transferred to a four-year institution
- Attend developmental, remedial, and continuing adult education programs

In 2006, our growing annual enrollment topped 233,000 students, with an additional 170,000 students in customized and noncredit courses for workforce development services.



## Enrollment History for 2006-07

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College/ System	Annual Full-Time Equivalent	Annual Headcount
Blue Ridge	2554	5729
Central Va.	2289	6986
D. S. Lancaster	746	2000
Danville	2530	6118
Eastern Shore	486	1106
Germanna	3008	7308
J. S. Reynolds	6544	18059
John Tyler	4028	10503
Lord Fairfax	3179	7987
Mountain Empire	1881	4368
New River	2672	6394
Northern Va.	25701	60982
Patrick Henry	1803	4092
Paul D. Camp	820	2276
Piedmont Va.	2409	6489
Rappahannock	1523	3924
Southside Va.	3134	8094
Southwest Va.	2349	5953
Thomas Nelson	5461	14170
Tidewater	16312	37771
Va. Highlands	1548	3384
Va. Western	4177	12677
Wytheville	1702	3972
VCCS	96856	240342

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## Data Requested

1. To the extent such data is available, the number of persons who received services from the agency in the past fiscal year who fell into each of the following age ranges: 65-74; 75-84; and 85 and older. If the agency can provide data that compares such numbers to numbers of senior citizens served in the past, please do so. If the agency lacks specific information about the numbers of senior citizens it serves, but has other evidence indicating that it is serving more or fewer senior citizens than it has in the past, please describe the basis for that estimation.

	65-74	75-84	85+	Total
2006-07	3,293	690	206	4,189

2. Identify the agency services that are utilized by senior citizens 65 and older in significant numbers. Indicate whether the agency has the capacity at present to serve all interested seniors or whether the demand for certain services exceeds the agency's capacity. If so, does the agency maintain waiting lists for services?

The VCCS offers classes, both credit and non-credit, to all citizens regardless of age. Many senior students have the option of attending tuition free under the **Senior Citizens Tuition Assistance Policy**. In addition to the credit and non-credit classes and programs offered to all of Virginia's citizens many of the colleges have special classes and resources available to seniors which are offered in support of their communities such as:

- Special classes and programs in finance, life skills, and health aimed at seniors
- Health screening clinics organized in cooperation with the localities

Currently the VCCS has the capacity to meet the demand in senior services. None of our colleges reports the necessity to establish waitlists for senior citizen services.

3. Identify current agency programs, specifically designed to serve seniors 65 and older, that fall into any of the following six categories: Health Care/Wellness; Education; Public Safety; Recreation; Financial Security (including Housing); and Transportation.

Virginia's Community Colleges offer a wide range of classes, clinics, and programs that cover all of these areas. Some are credit classes while many are non-credit offerings for a small fee. Others are offered by the colleges along with local government or non-profit organizations as the sponsors for both enrichment and enablement. Some examples are but not limited to:

- **Senior College Experience** – This is a program based at a senior residential and healthcare facility that offers classes in a number of topics including computer basics and digital photography.

- **Elder Scholars Lecture Series** – 10 lectures this year dealing with topics that include “Sports in the 20s,” “Pearl Harbor,” and “Aging and Cancer.”

- **Rappahannock Community College Foundation Institute for Lifelong Learning Seminars**

- **Non-Credit Programs in Retirement Planning**

- **A Community Arboretum** that has a significant number of seniors participating in garden tours and plant sales.

- **Cooperative arrangements with local transportation** companies to supply transportation for seniors

- **Reminiscent Writing** class specifically designed for senior citizens

- **Computer classes** geared specifically for seniors

4. Identify the extent to which your agency provides “consumer-oriented” publications and websites online that are designed to be “senior-friendly.” If the information you currently provide is not readily accessible to seniors, identify any steps your agency is taking to improve accessibility.

The VCCS is dedicated to a continuing effort to maintain compliance with Office for Civil Rights mandates such as Title II, Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504 of Federal Law in addition to all resulting and related State Legislation. However, in addition to mandated services and programs the VCCS colleges have offered additional resources. Our colleges are equipped with software that displays larger format print for the visually challenged with links to text only pages for those with special screen readers. The VCCS offers a variety of accommodations for all of our students.

5. Describe the effect that the aging of the agency’s own workforce will have on its ability to deliver services. Consider the number of retirements expected in the next two years, the effect these retirements might have (*e.g.*, loss of leadership or institutional knowledge in certain programs), how losses might be replaced (*e.g.*, promotions or transfers, recruitment, use of wage staff, including retirees, re-engineering, outsourcing), and the costs or savings from the replacements (*e.g.*, staff development cost, salary savings). This item might be addressed by summarizing relevant portions of the agency’s workforce plan.

In general the colleges’ reports for this survey did not indicate that this is currently a matter for great concern. At those colleges where this is becoming an issue the institutions have developed plans to fill those positions. For the majority of colleges it seems that retirements are currently proportional and fit into the colleges HR plans for the next two years. This is not

to say that the VCCS isn't aware of the possible future demographic implications of an aging population.

6. Describe any other services or programs that the agency has implemented or plans to implement in the future to address the impact of the aging of Virginia's population.

The VCCS continues to be a leader in producing health care professionals needed by Virginia. Registered Nurses, Nursing Assistants, Practical Nurses, and EMTs are certified at Virginia Community Colleges.

Some colleges are seeking grants in cooperation with local governments and non-profit organizations to establish walking/biking trails and create and co-sponsor community programs targeted to senior citizens. Colleges are offering credit and non-credit opportunities in such subjects as finance, health, and general personal improvement. There are continuing efforts to provide appropriate credit, non-credit, and personal enrichment opportunities as part of the development of strategic plans. Most of our colleges do, or shortly will be offering, Podcasts on a broad number of topics as a student resource where appropriate. Though this is a relatively new development, it presents real possibilities for the visual and hearing impaired.