

PRESS RELEASE

North Carolina Community College System

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Statements concerning response from Homeland Security about admission of undocumented immigrants

Background: On May 28, 2008, at the request of the NC Community College System, the NC Attorney General's Office wrote to the Secretary of the US Department of Homeland Security, requesting clarification as to whether federal law bars admission of undocumented immigrants to the NC Community College System. By letter received July 24, 2008, the NC Attorney General's Office has informed the NC Community College System Office that the Department of Homeland Security, through the US Immigration and Customs Office, states that federal law does not bar admission.

Copies of the letters from Homeland Security and from the NC Attorney General's Office are available on the System Office website at
http://www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/News_Releases/20080725_homelandsecurityletter.pdf and
http://www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/News_Releases/20080725_immigrationdoc.pdf

NCGS 115-D, enabling legislation for the North Carolina Community College System, is accessible on the website of the North Carolina General Assembly at
<http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/gascripts/Statutes/StatutesTOC.pl?Chapter=0115D>.

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“On Thursday afternoon, the System Office received a letter from the NC Attorney General's Office informing us that the US Department of Homeland Security states that federal law does not bar admission of undocumented individuals. The letter cites NC General Statute §115D-5(a), which assigns to the State Board of Community Colleges authority to establish admission standards.

“This is an important issue for our colleges and our students, and given that authority, our State Board needs the opportunity to review and discuss these findings with the care and thoroughness they deserve. The System Office staff will work with the State Board to evaluate appropriate, timely action so our 58 community colleges have the information they need to educate students and prepare the workforce. Our current admissions practices will remain in place until the State Board has had the opportunity to discuss this issue further.”

(more)

**Statement from Hilda Pinnix-Ragland, Chair
State Board of Community Colleges**

“I am pleased that we have received the requested federal clarification regarding the admission of undocumented immigrants. Establishing admission criteria for the NC Community College System lies within the responsibilities of the State Board. Given this information and the critical nature of this issue, the State Board will review the letters and will open discussion regarding these findings at our next meeting.”

The NC Community College System enrolls more than 800,000 students in 58 comprehensive community colleges. Internationally recognized for the scope and quality of its programs, the system is North Carolina's primary provider of workforce preparation and adult education. For details, contact Chancy Kapp, kappc@nccommunitycolleges.edu, 919-807-6962.

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