

WCC Current

The Community Newsletter of Wytheville Community College

Volume 5, Number 2

Spring 2011

WCC named a top community college

Wytheville Community College was recently ranked among the top 120 community colleges in the United States by the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program, based in Washington, D.C.

The list of 120 community colleges represents the top 10 percent of the nation's two-year institutions of higher education.

The named community colleges are now eligible to compete for the \$1-million fund for the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence. The Aspen Prize

program was announced at the White House Community College Summit hosted by President Obama and Second Lady Dr. Jill Biden in October. Each of the 120 colleges ranked has demonstrated high standards for learning, college completion without delay, and for serving as training grounds for jobs that pay competitive wages, making them eligible for the prize. Winners will be announced in December 2011.

"It's very exciting and gratifying that Wytheville Community College has received this national recognition and was named to the list of the top 120 community colleges in the country," said President Charlie White. "WCC's faculty and staff work very hard to give our students every chance of success both in their studies and in their careers."

More than six million students – youth and adult learners – enroll in America's nearly 1,200 community colleges every year. Citing the urgent need to focus on the value and potential of community colleges, Aspen Institute College Excellence Program Executive Director Josh Wyner said, "We cannot be satisfied merely with the fact that students are admitted to college. We must set the bar for community colleges much higher. We must graduate students with degrees and certificates that make clear to families investing in education and employers looking to hire, that community college graduates have learned what they need to be success-



The ribbon is cut by dignitaries on the stage.

Snyder Auditorium formally dedicated on March 31

Wytheville Community College formally dedicated the newly-completed William F. Snyder Auditorium on the college's main campus during ceremonies held on Thursday, March 31.

The event was attended by about 150 people, including Dr. William F. Snyder, President Emeritus of WCC, and Carolyn Frazier Sanders, WCC's first "Mil-

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Johnson recipient of honorary WCC degree

Wytheville Community College recently conferred an Honorary Associate's Degree in Humane Letters upon Wytheville native Robert M. "Rob" Johnson. WCC President Charlie White, along with William "Bill" Dixon, Chair of the WCC College Board, and Larry Corvin, member of the WCC College Board, presented the award to Johnson on June 6.

Johnson, the son of Jane Johnson and the late Robert Eley Johnson, has been a long-time supporter of the college. He and his wife, Sherry, support two of the largest scholarship endowments managed by the WCC Educational Foundation: the "Robert Eley and Jane Johnson Scholarship Endowment" and the "F. Powell Johnson Memorial Scholarship Endowment." Interest earned from these endowments provides multiple scholarships annually to deserving WCC students.

Johnson recently established a matching "Student-to-Student Scholarship Fund," whereby he matches, dollar-for-dollar, donations from past recipients of both the "Robert Eley and Jane Johnson Scholarship" and the "F. Powell Johnson Memorial Scholarship." This matching scholarship is a way to encourage students to give back to WCC and to help future students.

Rob and Sherry Johnson also made a significant contribution toward the William F. Snyder Auditorium project to establish the "Robert Eley and Jane Johnson Lobby" in honor of his parents. The Johnson Lobby



Pictured from left to right are: Larry Corvin, WCC College Board member from Wythe County; Dr. Charlie White, President of WCC; Robert M. "Rob" Johnson; and Bill Dixon, Chair of the WCC College Board.

is located adjacent to the new 212-seat Snyder Auditorium. It is designed for activities associated with events held in the auditorium, as well as for use as instructional space.

"Wytheville Community College is pleased to be able to present Rob with this year's Honorary Degree," said Dr. Charlie White, WCC President. "Robert Eley Johnson was instrumental in the founding of WCC, and his son Rob is carrying on his father's legacy through his own support of the college. We are most grateful for all that Rob does to help the college serve our students."

Rob and Sherry Johnson currently reside in Paris, France.

Spicer selected for \$10,000 Valley Proteins scholarship

WCC's own Jamison "Jamie" Spicer has been selected as part of the inaugural class of the Valley Proteins Fellows Program, administered by the Virginia Foundation for Community College Education. Out of the more than 400,000 people Virginia's community colleges serve across the Commonwealth, only

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Smyth County Education Center marks 20th anniversary

Wytheville Community College celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Smyth County Education Center (SCEC) with an open house held May 24 at the center near Atkins. About 100 people attended the event.

Guests were entertained by the old-time band the New Ballard's Branch Bogtrotters and enjoyed a barbecue dinner and cake. FM94! conducted a live remote during the event.

Speakers included Dr. Charlie White, President of WCC; Dr. David N. Johnson, President of Johnston Community College in Smithfield, NC, who was WCC's Assistant Director of Continuing Education in the early days following the opening of the SCEC; Dr. William F. Snyder, President of WCC when the center was opened; and Joe Bybee, who has worked at the center in various capacities since the mid-1990s.

Community leaders present included Dr. Mike Robinson, Superintendent of Smyth County Schools; Bill Thompson, who was President of the Smyth County Chamber of Commerce when the SCEC was opened; Cameron L. Wolfe, member of the WCC Educational Foundation Board and the architect who designed the center; and Sally Morgan, Smyth County's Economic Development Director. Del. Anne B. Crockett-Stark was also in attendance.

College officials present included WCC Board members, Robbie Doyle and Ron Thomason, both representing Smyth County, and Mava Vass, who represents Carroll County on both the WCC College Board and the WCC Educational Foundation Board; Donna



The Smyth County Education Center (above) is located near Exit 50 of Interstate 81. At left, Dr. David N. Johnson, former Director of Continuing Education at WCC, gives his remarks during the anniversary ceremony.

B. Hoffman, retired Smyth County representative on the WCC College Board; Henderson Graham, former WCC College Board member from Smyth County; and Walter Barton, retired WCC Educational Foundation Board member.

As part of the celebration, the college gave away an Anniversary Scholarship for 15 credit hours of tuition and fees at WCC during the fall semester. The scholarship was won by Virginia Holmes of Atkins, who elected to use it for classes during the summer term.

The Smyth County Education Center of Wytheville Community College was opened in January of 1991 and was dedicated on February 27 of the same year, with a ceremony that was attended by more than 100 industry, education, and community leaders.



The New Ballard's Branch Bogtrotters entertained those in attendance.

Vass, Kilgore honored with service and teaching awards

Mava Vass and Colene Kilgore have been honored with Distinguished Service and Teaching awards from Wytheville Community College. Vass received the Distinguished Service Award and Kilgore was announced as the recipient of the Distinguished Teaching Award at the college's annual Honors Convocation held April 26.

Dr. Charlie White, President of WCC, presented the awards to Vass and Kilgore.

Mava Vass was chosen as the 2011 Distinguished Service Award recipient in honor of all she has done for WCC over the years. She currently serves on both the WCC College Board and also the WCC Educational Foundation Board as a representative from Carroll



Colene Kilgore listens as White reads a list of her teaching accomplishments at WCC.

County. Her contributions to both boards have been significant. She regularly attends WCC programs and events, and she is a strong advocate for WCC throughout the college's service region. She initiated the "WCC Alumni Picnic" in Carroll County which has become a very successful annual event. She has also attended numerous state-wide meetings and recently hosted a luncheon on behalf of the college and has helped WCC forge new and lasting relationships with supporters.

A retired educator herself, Vass "truly understands the mission and goals of WCC and works tirelessly to ensure WCC's success in the classroom and in the community," said White.

Gerald Goad, Outreach Coordinator of WCC's Talent Search Program, nominated Vass for the award and wrote of her: "Her commitment to the college and to the WCC Educational Foundation in particular is extraordinary and helps WCC improve people's lives."

The Distinguished Service Award is designed to recognize members of the WCC community who have given the college exceptional service, other than teaching, in a manner that is beyond normal expectations and above specific monetary compensation. The award is intended to recognize outstanding individuals who have given to the enduring life of the college in unique and exemplary ways.

Colene Kilgore is an Assistant Professor of Ac-



WCC President Charlie White presents the Distinguished Service Award to Mava Vass.

Upcoming Events

July 15--"Access WCC" radio program airs on WXBX, 95.3 FM and WWWJ, 1360 AM.

July 16--Bluegrass and Old-Time Jamboree, Snyder Auditorium, WCC campus, 7 p.m.

July 29--WCC Carroll County Alumni Picnic, 5-7 p.m. at the Carter Pines Picnic Shelter in Hillsville.

August 14--WCC Grayson County Alumni Picnic, Fire Department, Independence, 2-4 p.m.

Roberts, Spicer named Students of the Year

Wytheville Community College has named two Students of the Year for 2011.

Rhonda C. Roberts of Galax and Jamison W. Spicer of Wytheville were chosen for the annual honor.

Matthew Arnold of Max Meadows, Staccotta R. Dickerson of Wytheville, Sara B. Looney of Bastian, Lisa A. Sayers of Austinville, and Adrianna H. Umbarger of Sugar Grove were finalists for the award. All seven students graduated during commencement exercises held at Wytheville Community College May 13-14.

Roberts was a Nursing student at WCC. She was active in the Student Government Association and Phi Theta Kappa, the two-year college honor society. Roberts served as President of her Nursing class and she completed the Twin County Leadership Institute Program. She also was a member of the WCC Legislative Advocacy Team and the Virginia State Board of



WCC President Charlie White poses with the college's two Students of the Year for 2011, Rhonda C. Roberts and Jamison W. Spicer.

Nursing's Student Committee.

Roberts was also named to the All-State Academic Team. She serves as PTO secretary at Oakland Elementary School and assists with youth activities at her church. After graduating from WCC, Rhonda plans to continue her studies in Nursing and eventually become a nurse educator.

Spicer is a Science major. He is a peer tutor in the Academic Resource Center at WCC. Spicer is the Student Government Association President, a member of the Outdoor Club, Project AIM, and the ACE Club. He has also served on many WCC award committees. Spicer has volunteered at campus events, including the American Red Cross Bloodmobile, Spring Fling, and the WCC Volleyball Team. After graduating from WCC, he plans to continue his education in engineering at the University of Virginia.

Roberts and Spicer were also named to Who's Who Among Students in American Junior Colleges for 2011.

Spicer gave the student commentary at WCC's commencement on May 13 and Roberts did the honors on May 14.

To be considered for Student of the Year, a student must maintain a grade point average of 3.2, demonstrate leadership skills by contributing time and efforts to campus and community activities, and be a spring graduate of the current year. The selection committee reviews nominations received from WCC faculty and staff and chooses the finalists. The committee then interviews each finalist for the Student of the Year Award.



Groundsman Course

Nine students completed a Groundsman Training course held at the Smyth Education Center. The 128-hour program covers the construction, maintenance, and repair of electrical distribution and transmission lines and equipment. On-Ramp Grant Program funds paid the tuition for the students. Pictured are: (first row, l-r) Jonathan Davis (Marion), David Myers (Independence), Anthony Thompson (Marion), and Charles Bartlett, instructor; (second row) Debra Rhodes, On-Ramp Grant Advisor, Brandon Richardson (Fancy Gap), Charles Moore (Marion), Steven Quilllen (Atkins), and D.J. Jamerson (Abingdon), Not pictured: Michael Gravely (Marion) and Clifford Boyer (Fries).

•Auditorium

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lion Dollar Donor” and the person who first conceived the idea of constructing an auditorium for the purpose of honoring Snyder.

The 212-seat auditorium provides a permanent home for the WCC Drama Program, as well as space that will be utilized for instruction, lectures, other cultural programming, and meetings. The facility also features the Counts Drug Stage, the Robert Eley and Jane Johnson Lobby, the Bill and Rita Dixon Dressing Rooms, a small catering kitchen, and restroom facilities.

Sanders provided \$300,000 for the project, as well as pledged an additional \$300,000 in a dollar-for-dollar matching challenge grant that was the basis for the college’s first-ever capital campaign. The campaign exceeded the \$300,000 matching challenge, raising a total of \$900,000 for the Snyder Auditorium Project, with more than 150 donors supporting the project. In addition to General Obligation Bond funds, a total of \$1.5 million was raised for the project.

In welcoming those in attendance, WCC President



William F. Snyder makes remarks during the dedication ceremony for the auditorium named in his honor.

auditorium project, who were present on the stage, which included Sanders; Reed Counts, Dennis Counts, and Bill Weisiger from Counts Drug, Inc. (\$100,000); Bill and Rita Dixon (\$50,000); Charlie Robbins, Regional President of BB&T (\$30,000); and William F. and Wilma Snyder (\$25,000). White also recognized the family of Robert Eley and Jane Johnson (\$100,000), though no family members were able to attend the ceremony. Lastly, he acknowledged retired WCC faculty member Art Davis and his marketing class students from 2000-2002, who raised \$10,000 for the project through various fundraising activities.

“The Snyder Auditorium is a great addition to our campus,” said White. “It will serve both college and community needs. And I am especially pleased that the facility is named in honor of Bill Snyder. Bill is a long-time friend.” White then recapped Snyder’s ca-



William F. Snyder and WCC’s first Million Dollar Donor, Carolyn F. Sanders, prepare for the ribbon-cutting.

Charlie White acknowledged the fact that completing the auditorium project took longer than expected: “I know this has been a long time coming, but the day has finally arrived. Please know that we do appreciate your generosity, and we are sorry that the project has taken so long. I think that you will agree that the auditorium was worth the wait.”

White then recognized the major contributors to the

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•Auditorium

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reer at WCC, including his service as Dean of Instruction from 1974 until he was named WCC's President in 1980, a position he held until his retirement in 2001.

Bill Dixon, WCC's current Board Chairman, retired from the college as Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services and was a fixture on the stage in Grayson Commons during many dramatic, musical, and comedic productions. "This new Snyder Auditorium provides a new, better-designed home for the WCC Drama Program," said Dixon. "And, the facility will be available for many other cultural and educational activities. I see this facility as being a tremendous asset to WCC and the entire community." He then recognized WCC's theatre program director, Dr. Janice Pryor, who was present in the audience.

Next, WCC Educational Foundation President Robert Kegley gave those in attendance a brief history of the Snyder Auditorium project. He noted that Carolyn F. Sanders was originally approached about a donation to the college and she proposed the concept of building a new auditorium for WCC.

Sanders' idea planted the seed that eventually grew into WCC's first capital campaign, which was called "Forging Futures." That campaign raised a

total of \$3 million for several projects and programs on campus, which included the Snyder Auditorium. Kegley recognized Charles Lacy of Wytheville, who served as the Foundation Board President during the capital campaign, for his outstanding leadership. He also acknowledged the contributions of the Honorable Thomas M. Jackson, who served as the capital campaign's chair. Jackson then stepped to the podium and gave his remarks.

Next, Dr. Jennifer Sager Gentry, Vice Chancellor of Institutional Advancement for the Virginia Community College System, brought greetings from the VCCS.

Snyder was then given an opportunity to address the audience, during which he spoke of the great honor that had been bestowed upon him by being chosen as the namesake of the auditorium. He thanked Sanders and the many other contributors to the auditorium project and lastly thanked his wife, Wilma, who was present on the stage, for her love and support.

Those on the stage then gathered to cut a burgundy ribbon that officially dedicated the facility. Following the ceremony, a reception was held in the Johnson Lobby adjoining the auditorium.

Truck Driver Training Program graduates five in Galax class

The WCC Truck Driver Training Program held a graduation on May 13, at the Crossroads Institute in Galax.

Five students earned program completion certificates. Jamin K. Martin, of Pulaski, received the Student Achievement Award. This award goes to the student who achieves the highest average grade in all five courses and maintains exceptional attendance.

The other graduates were Joseph S. Hall of Claudeville, Julia G. Jessup of Ararat, Matthew B. Nester of Hillsville, and Christopher S. Slate of Pulaski.

Wytheville Community College is currently registering students for Truck Driver Training classes that will begin on June 27 at Marion Senior High School in Marion and August 22 at the Crossroads Institute in Galax.

For additional information about the program contact Bill Reeves at 276-744-4980 or via email at wcreevb@wcc.vccs.edu.



Bill Weisiger (left), Reed Counts, (center) and Dennis Counts pose by the wall plaque recognizing Counts Drug, Inc. The auditorium's stage is named in honor of the company. The three men helped cut the ribbon that dedicated the auditorium.



Pictured above are Brenda Wittwer (seated), her husband, George, and Dr. Rhonda K. Catron-Wood.

Wittwers donate grand piano to WCC

George and Brenda Wittwer of Wytheville recently donated a Baldwin Grand Piano to Wytheville Community College.

Valued at \$12,000, this very generous gift is a welcomed addition to WCC. The college has a long history of providing opportunities and experiences for the community and its students to become involved in the arts locally, and the addition of this Grand Piano is expected to enhance and expand those opportunities.

“We are very excited to receive this generous gift,” said Dr. Charlie White, President of Wytheville Community College. “The piano is a terrific addition to the newly dedicated Snyder Auditorium and will enable the college to expand our cultural offerings.”

Brenda Wittwer, a native of North Carolina, is a concert pianist who began playing the piano at age 4. She studied piano pedagogy at Queens University in North Carolina, where she earned a bachelor’s degree in music. Mrs. Wittwer has performed at venues

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counting at WCC. She holds a B.S. from the University of Virginia at Wise and a M.A. from Virginia Tech. Kilgore was nominated by two separate individuals: a current student in her class, as well as a WCC alumna who was a student in her class last year. Current student Dena Collins wrote: “Ms. Kilgore was one of the most dedicated, knowledgeable, and caring teachers of them all. She is an understanding, compassionate human being first, and a dedicated teacher second. She truly cares about her students and wants them to succeed. My college success is largely due to her.” Jo Ann Monk, the alumna who nominated Kilgore said, “She made learning easier and more interesting. I feel like I owe a lot of my success in college to her. She always went beyond the call of duty to make her students succeed in her classes.”

In addition to excellence in the classroom, Kilgore is a dedicated faculty member who regularly attends WCC programs and events. She also serves on the

WCC Scholarship Foundation Board of Directors.

Any WCC full- or part-time teaching faculty member is eligible for the Distinguished Teaching Award. Consideration is given to such qualities as the ability to inspire students to perform beyond normal expectations; responsiveness to needs within and outside the class; contributions to improve the intellectual climate of WCC; the individual’s depth and breadth of expertise, sensitivity, enthusiasm, and dedication; and the degree to which a nominee stands unique and distinguished in the eyes of the students and the WCC community.

Nathaniel W. Pendleton, Jr. established the Distinguished Service Awards Program in memory of his father, Nathaniel Willis Pendleton who was Wythe County’s representative in the Virginia House of Delegates. Pendleton worked with State Senator E. Woodrow Bird to introduce the necessary enabling bill in the 1962 General Assembly to establish WCC and appropriate its operating funds.

Two WCC faculty members share award

Two Wytheville Community College faculty members share this year's Improvement of Instruction Award.

Martha Holder, Assistant Professor of English, and William L. "Bill" Grose, Instructor of History, were presented the award by WCC President Charlie White at the college's annual Honors Convocation held on April 26.

Holder and Grose co-teach a new WCC course called "Taking History Literally," which combines the study of American history and literature.

A WCC student who is taking the class wrote: "I have found a passion for American history, not only because of this class but also because of the encouragement of Ms. Holder and Mr. Grose." Students have the opportunity to learn about historical events while simultaneously studying literature that was being written during similar time periods.

Dr. Bruce Brown, WCC's Dean of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Business Technologies, noted that the course is "one of the most powerful and effective



Pictured from left to right are Martha Holder, Bill Grose, and WCC President Charlie White.

initiatives" he has seen in his 35-year career in education.

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across the country, and she is currently a member of the Rainier Trio, which recently performed at WCC's Snyder Auditorium. She has devoted much of her life to music, and she provides weekly collaborative piano sessions for several music students through the Virginia Tech Fine Arts Initiative in Wytheville.

George Wittwer is a native of Switzerland and a dual citizen of the United States, who spent his formative years living in South Africa. He moved to the United States for college, where he remained after completing his studies. Mr. Wittwer now manages the local facility for Con-way Freight, where he also handles special projects.

Mr. and Mrs. Wittwer have been married for 30 years, and they have three sons who reside in Texas. They are active members of St. Paul United Methodist Church, where they both sing in the Sanctuary Choir.

For more information about the Wytheville Community College Educational Foundation, please contact Dr. Rhonda Catron-Wood, Vice President of College Development at (276)223-4771.



Pauley Honored

Joey W. Pauley of Bluefield, Administrative and Office Specialist III in Purchasing, receives the Support Staff Employee of the Year award from President Charlie White.

Simmerman named Support Staff Emeritus

The 2011 Wytheville Community College Support Staff Emeritus honoree is Lisa P. Simmerman of Wytheville. This recognition honors retired support staff personnel who served WCC for a minimum of ten years and whose performance and contributions were meritorious.

Simmerman is a 1994 graduate of Wytheville Community College. She joined the staff at WCC in 1991. At the time of her retirement in December of 2009, she held the position of Financial Services Specialist I in the Business Office.

The college honored Simmerman for her years of dedicated service to the faculty, staff, and students of WCC during end-of-term activities at the college. She was also recognized during the May 13 commencement ceremony.



Lisa Simmerman receives her Support Staff Emeritus award from Charlie White.

Janet L. Pratt Named 2011 Faculty Emeritus at WCC

Janet L. Pratt of Saltville has been selected as Professor Emeritus of Wytheville Community College for 2011. This honor may be bestowed upon retired WCC faculty members who held faculty rank, had a minimum of ten years of service, and made meritorious and significant contributions to the college.

Pratt earned her bachelor's degree in Nursing in 1961 from the Medical College of Virginia and her master's degree in 1980 from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. She joined the faculty at WCC in 1974 and taught in the Nursing department until her retirement as an Associate Professor of Nursing in June of 2002.

The college honored Pratt during end-of-term activities and she was also recognized at the May 13 commencement ceremony.

•Share

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Holder has been a WCC faculty member since 2000. She holds a B.A. and a B.S. from Appalachian State. Grose joined the faculty in 2004. He holds a B.A. from Emory & Henry College and an M.A. from Virginia Tech.

The Improvement of Instruction Award was established to recognize notable contributions to the improvement of instruction at WCC by full-time employees who hold faculty rank or who work as an instructional assistant. An endowment created by Dr. and Mrs. Len O'Hara funds the award.



Retired nursing professor Janet L. Pratt receives her Faculty Emeritus award from Charlie White during end-of-term activities held at the college.

Anderson recipient of Outstanding Adjunct award

Timothy Anderson of Princeton, West Virginia, has been named Wytheville Community College's 2011 Outstanding Adjunct Faculty Member of the Year.

Anderson began teaching at WCC in 2005 and has taught courses in business, economics, finance, and marketing. He earned his Bachelor of Arts degree from Concord College in 1999 and his Master of Business Administration degree from Liberty University in 2004.

In nominating Anderson for the award, his supervisor, Dr. Bruce Brown, Dean of Humanities, Social Science, and Business Technologies, wrote: "Tim is passionate about community college education. His students are inspired by his teaching, as he is able to make difficult subjects come alive and be relevant to their lives. Tim has a strong work ethic and an ability to look beyond the surface to get to the heart of the matter in any subject he teaches."



Anderson receives the Outstanding Adjunct Faculty Member award from Charlie White.

•Spicer

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10 are selected for the Valley Proteins Fellows Program. The fellowship's estimated value is \$10,000.

Spicer, a resident of Wytheville, graduated from Fort Chiswell High School in 2009. He is Student Government Association President and is also a member of the Outdoor Club, the ACE Club and Project AIM. He has served on the WCC Distinguished Service Awards Committee. He is also a math tutor in the Academic Resource Center. Spicer received the "WCC Student of the Year" award for 2011. He will return to WCC next year to complete the necessary courses for transfer to a four-year program. However, he has currently completed enough courses to receive his associate's degree in Science from WCC. He received this degree at the May 13 graduation ceremony, where he gave the student commencement address. When he completes his studies at WCC, he plans to transfer to the University of Virginia to pursue a degree in engineering.

The Valley Proteins Fellows Program was designed for high-achieving students at Virginia's community colleges. In addition to covering the student's full tuition and fees, the fellows participate in a unique leadership curriculum – including leadership programs and a community service project – and they receive individualized assistance in obtaining financial aid and transferring to four-year universities.



Groundbreaking

Representatives from WCC and the Wythe-Bland Foundation broke ground on April 14 for the college's new walking and biking trail. Pictured above are: (l-r) Cullen Barker, Project Manager for Inland Construction; Larry Corvin, and Dick Dalton, both WCC Board members, Betty Munsey and Jack Bryant, both Wythe-Bland Foundation Board Members; Gail Catron, Executive Director of the Wythe-Bland Foundation; Dr. Charlie White, President of WCC; Steve Moore, Board Chair of the Wythe-Bland Foundation; Stephen Bear, Vice President of the Wythe-Bland Foundation; and Bill Dixon, WCC Board Chair.

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ful in their lives and careers.”

Wyner added, “Unprecedented numbers of students are choosing to attend community college as the cost of four-year college grows increasingly out of reach for many families in America. To ensure student success and fuel economic growth for communities and the nation, community colleges must—now more than ever—make a commitment to excellence and stronger student outcomes.”

WCC, which serves a rural area composed of the counties of Bland, Carroll, Grayson, Smyth (Marion and eastward), Wythe, and the city of Galax, enrolls approximately 4,300 individuals in credit courses each year. Many of those individuals are low-income, first-generation college students.

The college offers a wide variety of academic programs, from transfer programs designed to allow graduates to seek a bachelor’s degree at a four-year college or university to occupational-technical programs designed to train students to directly enter the workplace following graduation. The college also offers various shorter-term options, including Career Studies Certificate programs that are aimed at training students for specific jobs or to allow workers to re-train/upgrade their skills in order to find better jobs or obtain promotions with their current employers.

Dr. Jill Biden, a lifelong educator who continues to teach English at Northern Virginia Community College, noted that, “The country is becoming increas-

ingly aware of the importance of community colleges in educating our way to a stronger America. I am inspired by all of today’s community college students – the workers who have returned to school to improve their job prospects, the mothers who juggle jobs and childcare while preparing for new careers, and those who work diligently while at community college, preparing to transfer to a four-year institution.”



Heal the Earth

During March, Joyce Rouse, better known as “Earth Mama,” entertained two groups of area daycare children, one at the Wytheville Meeting Center and the other at the Crossroads Institute. Her motto is “Helping Heal the Planet One Song at a Time.” Rouse donated her performances through the WCC Educational Foundation.

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