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RELEASE DATE

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Community colleges change policy on illegal immigrants

RALEIGH – Based on an advisory letter from the Office of the Attorney General, beginning immediately, the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) will no longer admit individuals classified as illegal or undocumented immigrants into curriculum degree programs. This action is in response to the recent advice provided to the NCCCS general counsel by the Office of the Attorney General on May 6, 2008 and a subsequent meeting with the AG's Office on Monday, May 12. The System has asked the AG's Office to pursue further federal clarification.

"We asked the Attorney General's Office for clarification of our present policy and will abide by their advice," said System President R. Scott Ralls. "We will continue to be a primary source of economic advancement for the state by providing world-class education and workforce training to every student eligible to enroll."

In December 2007, the NCCCS sought clarification from the Attorney General regarding a System Numbered Memo, dated November 7, 2007, that had been sent to all 58 community colleges mandating they admit illegal aliens at the out-of-state tuition rate. That rate is calculated to equal 140% of what it costs the state to provide a full-time education to one student. The November directive was the result of the NCCCS interpretation of an earlier Attorney General advisory letter that said community colleges could not impose nonacademic criteria for admission, which supported the "open door" policy of the NCCCS.

In the May 6 letter, the Office of the Attorney General advised the NCCCS to return to the directive in System Numbered Memo 01-271, dated December 21, 2001, that prohibits undocumented students from taking curriculum degree classes. That memo places no restriction on high school students taking any community college classes or on any adult who seeks non-college level courses which include GED, Adult High School, ESL, and continuing education classes.

"We have accepted the Attorney General's offer to seek federal clarification of this issue, and they are pursuing that information," said Ralls. "Until we receive further clarification, we will no longer admit individuals classified as illegal or undocumented immigrants into curriculum degree programs."

A clarifying System Numbered Memo has been transmitted to all 58 community colleges today. In the memo, colleges were told to allow students admitted under the earlier directive to continue his or her program of study at the out-of-state tuition rate. A survey of the colleges for the 2006-07 academic year indicated that 112 curriculum degree students without proper residency documentation were enrolled among the 296,540 total number of curriculum students at that time. The higher number of 340 undocumented students which was released in December 2007 included students who later produced sufficient documentation.

The North Carolina 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.

[ATTACHMENT: Numbered Memo CC08-114](#)

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