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VIRGINIA EDUCATION WIZARD UNVEILS SCHOLARSHIP SWEEPSTAKES

*Virginia's Community Colleges offer financial support
for signing up for new online career, college planning tool*

NORFOLK, Va. – To reward current and prospective students for taking smart first steps in planning their career and college future, Virginia's Community Colleges are offering a scholarship sweepstakes to individuals who register with the Virginia Education Wizard (www.VaWizard.org). Virginia's Community Colleges unveiled the Wizard last month as a one-stop resource that brings together real-time information that helps students and families make informed college and career choices.

The sweepstakes prizes include two scholarships for one year of full-time community college tuition, valued at \$2,500, along with awards for single-course costs and textbooks. To be eligible for the awards, which will be presented before Fall 2009 classes begin, individuals must create a free personal profile at the Virginia Education Wizard. The scholarships are funded by the Virginia Foundation for Community College Education.

"We have heard resoundingly that the Wizard is a valuable new tool as students plan their future," said Dr. Glenn DuBois, chancellor of Virginia's Community Colleges. "We believe that these scholarships and other rewards will attract even more users to the site, where they can get all the information they need to make smart choices – right at their fingertips."

Since the Wizard launched in early March, the site has attracted nearly 50,000 individuals. Most visitors spend almost 6 minutes at the site. Of those visitors, nearly 10,000 people created profiles, with almost half of those already affiliated with Virginia's Community Colleges – mostly as students. Any individual who created a profile since the Wizard's launch in early March is eligible for the scholarships and other financial awards.

How to register with the Wizard

Registering with the Virginia Education Wizard – and to become eligible for the scholarships and other financial incentives – is easy. The Wizard's life-like online guide, Ginny, helps users build their profiles,



which the site then uses to tailor information according to users' interests. Users can create their profiles in a few quick steps that take less than 5 minutes.

"While the site provides a wealth of information about careers, classes and more, users can really maximize their experience by creating their profile," DuBois said. "As an intuitive site, the Wizard can help users hone in on potential job tracks or college paths that get them where they want to go most efficiently."

As students make their college and career choices, their profile becomes an active resource that can prompt them by e-mail when more action is needed, such as for important dates in college transfer.

What the Wizard offers

The Wizard guides users from finding a career to earning the right job credentials or preparing for continued education:

- **Careers:** Users can take Interest and Values assessments to find careers that match their interests. They also can explore a specific job and get real-time details about the demand for those jobs and local salaries.
- **Programs and Majors:** The Wizard details programs across Virginia's Community Colleges, including majors and careers. Users can investigate courses offered across the state – or just those at their nearest campus.
- **Paying for College:** Users can find out what they can expect to pay at different colleges, then get estimates on how much financial assistance they might receive. The site also details scholarships available solely for community college students.
- **Transfer:** The Wizard outlines pathways to four-year degrees, including guaranteed admission to 25 Virginia institutions. The tool plans, tracks and prompts necessary steps for easy transfers.

Virginia's Community Colleges developed the proprietary Wizard with \$2.5 million in federal funds. Programming was completed by Richmond-based Chmura Economics & Analytics and internal IT professionals at Virginia's Community Colleges. The career and jobs features draw in real-time market data pulled from Chmura Economics & Analytics.

About Virginia's Community Colleges: *Created more than 40 years ago, Virginia's Community Colleges are 23 individual schools located on 40 campuses across the Commonwealth. Nearly half a million students take classes at one of Virginia's Community Colleges. Together the colleges enroll more than two-thirds of the total public undergraduate population in Virginia. For more information, please visit myfuture.vccs.edu.*

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