

The New College of Virginia

Martinsville, Virginia

For Immediate Release

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Virginia Tech to Assist NCV Planning Commission on New Educational Opportunities in Martinsville-Henry County

MARTINSVILLE, VA. (Nov.10, 2005) – Virginia Tech and the New College of Virginia (NCV) Planning Commission reached an agreement today to work together “on planning, developing and implementing appropriate educational strategies that will result in baccalaureate degrees in Martinsville-Henry County.”

The agreement, in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding, was signed by Charles W. Steger, Virginia Tech’s president, and Robert H. Spilman Jr., chairman of the NCV Planning Commission. The Memorandum of Understanding is an agreement in principle with the further scope of work yet to be determined.

The agreement says that Virginia Tech will “assume the lead academic role” and will designate staff and faculty to help establish the new educational programs. NCV will reimburse Virginia Tech for its services and expenses. NCV and Virginia Tech will remain financially independent of each other.

Spilman said, “This agreement is an important and exciting step towards fostering educational and economic development opportunities to benefit not only the Martinsville-Henry County area but also all of Southside and the Commonwealth.”

Steger said, “Our history, our legacy, is based on leveraging the transformative power of education to help communities help themselves. We are committed to helping Southside Virginia develop new educational opportunities and economic development strategies and see this as a logical extension of our work in Danville.”

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Other significant provisions of the agreement include the following:

- NCV will have “a significant physical presence in Martinsville-Henry County.” Its program will be designed to increase college-level opportunities for students throughout Virginia, especially those from underserved regions of Virginia.
- The NCV Planning Commission will hire “an experienced higher education executive as soon as practicable” to serve as a chief academic officer of the Planning Commission.
- NCV plans to open its doors to students “in the fall of 2007 or as soon thereafter as is practicable.”
- NCV and Virginia Tech will work with other entities, such as the State Council for Higher Education in Virginia, on this project. “To the extent practicable, it is anticipated that the [New] College model will consist of a science and technology-based curriculum and pedagogy and will utilize innovations such as accelerated degree tracks, knowledge managers” and co-op programs with area companies and agencies. “Virginia Tech will assist the College in seeking and establishing cooperative relationships with other education institutions in the region and in the Commonwealth.”

Virginia Tech’s Outreach Task Force, directed by Vice Provost John E. Dooley, and representatives of the NCV Planning Commission will meet soon to begin implementation of the agreement.

Dooley added, “Virginia Tech does not have off-campus undergraduate degree programs. We think we can best help the Martinsville-Henry County region by using our land-grant university experience to help them get a new program or institution off the ground. We see ourselves helping the New College of Virginia Planning Commission address educational needs and identify ways to bolster economic development.”

The Harvest Foundation of the Piedmont created the New College of Virginia Planning Commission in March 2005 to plan a college meeting the terms of the Harvest Challenge. In January 2004, the Harvest Foundation pledged \$50 million as a challenge to the Commonwealth of Virginia to establish and maintain a baccalaureate college in Martinsville-Henry County.

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