

TUITION-FREE ENROLLMENT AVAILABLE AT WCC

By Sandy Sheets

Beginning fall, 1999, it is possible for most students to attend Wilkes Community College tuition-free. Both the North Carolina House and Senate have approved a budget bill that designates \$5 million for need-based financial aid at North Carolina Community Colleges. The aid is designed to offset the tuition increase of \$95 per semester for full-time North Carolina residents that is being implemented this fall semester. According to those authoring the bill, it is the intent to ensure that all North Carolina residents (in need of assistance) can attend a community college by accessing Pell Grants and other federal aid, the new state grants, or federal tax credits.

To be considered for any type of tuition assistance, all students must complete the *1999-2000 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)* and should do so as soon as possible. Those students who have already applied for financial aid will automatically be considered for the new state grant and do not need to re-apply. Contact Alan Whittington, Director of Financial Aid, at 336-838-6144 or e-mail at whitting@wilkes.cc.nc.us for an application or any assistance needed.

In announcing budget approval for this new state grant, North Carolina Community College System president H. Martin Lancaster said, "Thanks to this bold leadership, more North Carolinians will have the chance to come to community colleges for the high-tech training and education they need to compete for good jobs in the future. The \$5 million for a new financial aid initiative will make a community college education tuition-free for most students when combined with the benefits of federal Pell Grants and the Hope Scholarship/Lifetime Learning Tax Credits."

Although the new state grant funds tuition only, students qualifying for other student financial aid could receive help with fees, books, supplies, transportation and other college related costs.



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