



July 8, 2016

Dear faculty, staff, students and supporters of Virginia's Community Colleges:

More than 30 years ago, a community college became a launch pad for a working class kid who didn't even know the meaning of the word, "matriculation." I didn't understand my own potential. I couldn't see it. My professors could, however, and they knew how to inspire. By engaging with me, they created a spark that produced not just another community college graduate, but a community college career focused on paying it forward.

As community college leaders, we shape tomorrow by helping individuals acquire skills and knowledge. More importantly, we help open their eyes to their own potential. That is the magic of the community college experience, and our most powerful, most transformative moments happen on a close, personal, and human level.

The community college mission is a noble endeavor. It contains a unique element, however, that is often overlooked and that is our responsibility to evolve – not just in what we do but in how we do it. We cannot respond to Virginia's unmet workforce training and higher education needs by standing still.

Reflecting the communities we serve, our colleges have become bigger, more expensive and increasingly complex to operate. We are serving more people, more businesses and more communities in more and different ways. And the resources that support our work are straining under a growing list of demands.

Virginia's Community Colleges embrace a new era of shared services; and we remain true to our mission in doing so. This manual explains the *what*, *why* and *how* of this effort in great detail. The spirit of this work, however, is simple: we prioritize the students we serve by ensuring the dollars that support our mission are spent as close to them as possible. That means, by extension, our administrative "backroom" functions must be performed well and done as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible.

When I was a student, no question, my journey would have been cut short had my financial aid papers never been processed, if the goods and services necessary to operate the college were never purchased, nor if my professors were ever hired. Those things set the stage. But it was what happened on that stage, the advisors who guided me, the classmates who pushed me and the instructors who inspired me that made the difference. Together, let us strive to see more of those magical moments occur at each of our community colleges, and bring our mission to life.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Glenn DuBois".

Glenn DuBois
Chancellor