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College Foundation of North Carolina Recognized as Model Service to Help Students Get to College

Raleigh, N.C. – A new report released by the College Board Advocacy & Policy Center recognizes College Foundation of North Carolina (CFNC) as a model of how multiple state wide organizations can combine resources to offer comprehensive, free information for state citizens. CFNC was one of 12 programs in the country highlighted as successfully providing information and services to encourage financial aid application and college enrollment.

The College Board report said, “CFNC provides an extensive number of no cost services geared toward college educators, students, parents, counselors and school administrators. Its services include statewide training programs, financial aid process overview, financial literacy courses, career planning tools and educational publications...

“CFNC is a highly visible state initiative that focuses on encouraging financial aid application and college enrollment. It has regional representatives in seven communities across the state, as well as other staff members who provide college access workshops, presentations and training sessions for audiences that range from elementary students to adults...

“People primarily access CFNC services through its website, CFNC.org, which currently has more than 2.4 million user accounts and almost 10,000 visitors a day...During the past year alone, the number of North Carolina students filing the FAFSA has increased more than 50 percent, and nearly 355,000 college applications were submitted by North Carolina students using CFNC.org.”

The College Board nationwide study was conducted in collaboration with the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) to emphasize best practice models and to make recommendations on how community colleges can help more qualified students take advantage of need based aid. The CFNC approach is given as an example of one of the ways states’ community colleges can increase the number of students applying for and receiving financial aid.

Even though low and moderate income students attending community colleges are probably eligible for need based financial aid, these students are the least likely to apply for funds. The report showed:

- Nationwide, in the 2007 08 academic year, 58 percent of Pell Grant eligible students who attended community colleges either full or part time applied for federal financial aid, compared with 77 percent of eligible students at four year public institutions;
- During the two year period from fall 2007 to fall 2009, full time enrollment at U.S. community colleges increased by 24.1 percent; and
- Students are reluctant to apply for aid in part due to lack of basic understanding, inconsistent or inaccurate information, distrust of government agencies, difficulty using resources during designated hours and a lack of human or technological resources on campus.

George Boggs, AACC president, said of the report: "Community colleges are being called upon to increase college access and student completion rates. That means we will need to do everything that we can to make college affordable to students...

"The challenge is clearly laid out in this report: community colleges serve the most financially disadvantaged students in all of higher education, yet too many qualified students are not getting the financial help they need. I hope this 'call to action' will make financial aid a higher priority for all of us in community college leadership."

The entire College Board report is available online at http://advocacy.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/10b_1790_FAFSA_Exec_Report_WEB_100517.pdf.

About CFNC

College Foundation of North Carolina (CFNC) is a free service of the State of North Carolina that helps students plan, apply, and pay for college. CFNC is a partnership of Pathways, the N.C. State Education Assistance Authority, and College Foundation, Inc

- *Pathways, created by the N.C. General Assembly in 1999, is a state-wide initiative to increase the college-going rate of North Carolinians by providing: comprehensive college and career planning resources; electronic applications and transcripts accepted by all 110 North Carolina colleges and universities; and, information on*

student financial aid and college affordability. Pathways is administered by The University of North Carolina General Administration in collaboration with the N.C. Department of Public Instruction, the N.C. Community College System, and the N.C. Independent Colleges and Universities.

- *The North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority (NCSEAA), established in 1965, is the State agency that promotes access to higher education by administering financial aid and savings programs, informing students and families about paying for college, teaching educators about financial aid administration, and advocating for resources to support students.*
- *College Foundation, Inc. (CFI), a nonprofit corporation serving North Carolina students and families since 1955, administers a portfolio of more than \$4 billion, including low-interest federal education loans, the State's college grant programs, and the tax-free "529" college savings program on behalf of the N.C. State Education Assistance Authority. CFI also delivers information to North Carolina students and families about paying for college and provides technology services for CFNC.org.*

CFNC offers resources toll-free at 1-866-866-CFNC and at CFNC.org.

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