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CAPITAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE HITS RECORD HIGH ENROLLMENT AMID BUDGET CUTS

HARTFORD - More than 4,000 students have enrolled at Capital Community College in the spring semester that began last month giving the two-year public college in downtown Hartford its highest enrollment ever and a 10 percent increase over Spring 2008. Enrollment increased to 4,074 full and part time students at the campus in the renovated G. Fox building, marking the first time credit enrollment has surpassed 4,000.

The higher enrollments come as the college faces a five percent cut in state funds in the current fiscal year, and a projected 10 percent reduction for the 2010 fiscal year beginning July 1 in a budget to be finalized by the Governor and Legislature. Capital, one of 12 community colleges in Connecticut, relies on state assistance for 48% of its operating funds. The balance of funds comes from tuition, fees, grants and other income.

"We are an open enrollment institution and the first and only accessible path to higher education for many residents of Hartford and surrounding towns," said Dr. Calvin E. Woodland, Capital's President. "Dealing with an unprecedented enrollment surge and significant cuts in state assistance at the same time presents a serious challenge to our core mission."

Capital's admissions officials noted that enrollments at community colleges tend to increase during economic downturns and this year is no exception. "The growth in full-time students of more than 14% seems to indicate that more students are choosing an affordable community college over a more expensive public or private option," according to Patrick Tucker, Capital's Registrar. Marsha Ball-Davis, the director of admissions, agreed, noting "I think we are also seeing a trickle down effect; students who were planning on going to the four-year privates are going to the four-year publics; those who were planning on going to the four-year publics are attending community colleges." Full-time tuition at Capital is \$3,008 a year.

President Woodland pointed to expanded transfer opportunities for community college students to four-year colleges as a factor in enrollment growth. For example, the college's new Insurance and Financial Services (IFS) degree was developed in conjunction with more than 27 financial institutions in Connecticut to prepare students for careers in the insurance and financial services industry. Graduates of the IFS program transfer to CCSU and UCONN-Regional Campuses and are equipped for a variety of entry level jobs in the insurance and financial services field. The College also offers more than 60 associate degree and certificate programs, including nursing and allied health, accounting, communication media, computer and information systems, architectural engineering technology, natural sciences, liberal arts, early childhood education, criminal justice and social services.

The College's nonprofit foundation, which provides scholarships and resources for needed enhancements at the college, is seeking increased support to address budget needs and shortfalls. "We certainly can't make up for a projected 10 percent cut, but we will seek to broaden the base of community support for the critical educational services Capital provides for our most disadvantaged citizens," said Tom Trumble, chairman of the Capital Community College Foundation. "Investment in education will be important to a sustained economic recovery."