



**At Durham Technical Community College**

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## Press Release

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For immediate use

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### **Durham Tech Receives ‘Gateway to College’ Grant to Educate High School Dropouts**

(Durham, N.C.) – Durham Technical Community College has been awarded a \$300,000 planning and start-up grant from the Gateway to College National Network. Funding for the grant is provided by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation as part of the Early College High School Initiative. Durham Tech and Durham Public Schools (DPS) will collaborate on this high school dropout recovery program.

“Locally, regionally, and nationally there is a growing recognition that community colleges have a significant role to play in dropout recovery efforts,” said Dr. Bill Ingram, president of Durham Tech. “We are delighted that the Gateway to College National Network recognizes the potential in Durham Tech’s partnership with the Durham Public Schools.”

Gateway to College is an innovative program that allows high school dropouts (ages 16-21) to complete their high school diploma while at the same time also earning college credits. Students who have dropped out of school receive a second chance at education through this program. Founded at Portland Community College in 2000, the Gateway to

College program has since been replicated at 23 colleges in 14 states. At least two additional colleges, including Durham Tech, will join the Gateway to College National Network this year.

The first two cohorts of students - 25 in each group - will begin the program at Durham Tech in August 2010. An additional 125 students will be accepted each subsequent year. The grant will help fund additional faculty, staff, and numerous educational resources. Applicants for Gateway to College will be selected through outreach and a two-day application and interview process.

Dr. Ingram noted that the Gateway to College program makes resources available for high school dropouts that cannot be provided by other, more traditional high school completion efforts. "A GED alone is not the best solution for younger high school dropouts," he said. "The Gateway to College initiative will allow us to provide these students with the academic and social support mechanisms they need to be successful, both in completing high school and in pursuing higher education opportunities."

DPS Superintendent Dr. Carl Harris welcomes the partnership with Durham Tech to reach students who have dropped out of high school. "We want to provide every opportunity for students to be able to complete their high school education," he said. "This program provides a wonderful avenue for students to do so while also getting a start on college. We look forward to another in a long line of successful initiatives with Durham Tech."

"Durham Tech is a natural fit for Gateway to College because of its strong commitment to the academic success of all students. As an institution, it has dedicated significant resources and innovative teaching strategies to the benefit of students who have struggled in the past," according to Laurel Dukehart, executive director of Gateway to College National Network. "Because of this commitment, and because it is well-aligned with the goals of the school district, we are confident that this will be a very successful program."

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