FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 1, 2014

SAVING MONEY & FINDING THE RIGHT FIT: 24 COLLEGES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE 2014 VIRGINIA PRIVATE COLLEGE WEEK IN JULY

24 Colleges to Emphasize Quality and Affordability of Private Higher Education during Special Sessions for Prospective Students and Families

Participating Students Will Receive Three College Application Fee Waivers – Saving Money When Applying to College

Bedford, VA...Prospective students are invited to participate in Virginia Private College Week from July 28-August 2, hosted by the Council of Independent Colleges in Virginia (CICV).

Colleges will offer a campus tour and information sessions about admissions, financial aid and academic programs. College officials will also address common myths regarding the cost of a private college education (see page 2).

Students who visit at least three institutions during the week will receive three application fee waivers. Students may use these waivers to apply to any three participating CICV colleges for free.

“Visiting campuses in person is one of the most important steps in the college search process,” explains Robert Lambeth, President of CICV. “I encourage parents to explore which college will be the best fit for their son or daughter, and I want to reassure them that a quality education at a Virginia private college is affordable and within reach.”

Sessions at most colleges will begin at 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Monday through Friday, and at 9 a.m. on Saturday, August 2. For more information about CICV and Private College Week, including a list of participating colleges and exceptions to this schedule, please visit http://www.vapricatecolleges.org/Our-Colleges/Virginia-Private-College-Week.aspx.

The Virginia Private Colleges website provides information concerning the quality and affordability of Virginia private colleges to students and parents by increasing awareness of its member institutions and addressing myths concerning private higher education and its costs. The website is a user-friendly, informative tool to help identify which Virginia private college is right for any qualified student.
Common Myths about a Private College Education

Myth: Private colleges are too expensive.
Fact: Last year, 85% of undergraduates at Virginia private colleges received grant aid (which does not need to be paid back!). Their average financial aid package was almost $17,000. Virginia residents attending a private college in the state will also receive the undergraduate Tuition Assistance Grant (TAG) award, which will be $3,100 for 2014-2015. Some of those who do not receive grant aid benefit from federal tax credits and deductions.

Myth: Private colleges cost significantly more than public colleges.
Fact: The cost difference between public and private college tuition is far less than many families assume, thanks to significant institutional, merit and need-based grants and the TAG award. When the number of years to obtain a degree is considered, the cost at private colleges can be similar to a public college.

Myth: Private College v. Public College – there’s not much difference, really.
Fact: Parents and students should compare the time it takes to graduate as well as overall graduation rates, class size, student/faculty ratio, and personal attention received by students. Virginia private schools will rank favorably: 16 students is the average class size and 11:1 is the average student/faculty ratio. Virginia private colleges also spend greater percentages on instruction and academic support than Virginia 4-year public colleges. Virginia private colleges are strongly committed to graduating students in four years or less.

Myth: Private liberal arts colleges won’t prepare me for a job.
Fact: In today’s competitive marketplace, the benefits of graduating from a private liberal arts college are more valuable than ever. Students learn to think critically, analytically, and creatively and to communicate well – attributes sought by employers in all professions. Many of Virginia’s business and professional leaders are graduates of Virginia private colleges.

Myth: Private colleges are not diverse.
Fact: When you compare the demographics of public colleges to those of private colleges, you’ll see that Virginia private colleges enroll a higher percentage of African American undergraduates than Virginia public institutions. They also enroll a larger percentage of Pell Grant recipients (students who receive federal need-based aid). In addition, at small private colleges, you will get to know nearly everyone. If the value of diversity is to learn to appreciate others, small private colleges often offer greater diversity than public colleges.

Myth: Virginia 529 Plans can only be used at public institutions in Virginia.
Fact: Virginia 529 plans can be applied to the tuition at any Virginia private college. In fact, all four savings programs offered by The Virginia College Savings Plan can be used at Virginia private colleges: the Virginia Education Savings Trust (VEST), CollegeAmerica®, CollegeWealth®, and the Virginia Prepaid Education Program (VPEP).

Note: The 24 CICV colleges offering undergraduate programs will participate in Virginia Private College Week. Appalachian College of Pharmacy, Appalachian School of Law, Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM), and CICV’s affiliate member, George Washington University, will not be participating. Virginia Intermont College will not be participating.