



NRCC student Danny Hazelwood, left, one of 10 Valley Proteins Scholars in Virginia with Dr. Jack Lewis, NRCC President

NRCC student earns prestigious Valley Proteins fellowship

New River Community College student Danny Hazelwood has been selected as part of the inaugural class of the Valley Proteins Fellows Program, administered by the Virginia Foundation for Community College Education.

Hazelwood, of Blacksburg, is currently pursuing an associate degree at NRCC and is scheduled to graduate in spring, 2012. Upon graduation, he plans to transfer to Virginia Tech to study wood science. His goal is to complete a bachelor's degree there and build a woodworking business specializing in reclaimed woods and other raw materials.

Hazelwood's college career began after he graduated from high school in 1989 and attended Concord University. After his first year, work and financial strain made it too difficult for him to return and finish his degree. In 1991, he married, started a family and took a job as an insurance agent. Though he enjoyed his job assisting others with their insurance needs, Hazelwood still wanted to finish his education.

After observing his wife take classes at NRCC and eventually go on to earn her master's degree,

Hazelwood began attending NRCC in pursuit of an associate degree in fall 2010. He has maintained a 4.0 GPA for the past two consecutive semesters and says he feels he has a “strong purpose and enthusiastic commitment” to his education. As an additional motivator, both Hazelwood’s daughters will attend NRCC with him in fall 2011.

Out of the more than 400,000 people Virginia’s Community Colleges serve across the commonwealth, only ten were selected for the Valley Proteins Fellows Program. Each student will receive \$10,000.

The Valley Proteins Fellows Program was designed for high-achieving second year students at Virginia’s Community Colleges. In addition to covering the student’s full tuition and fees, the fellows participate in a unique leadership curriculum – including leadership programs and a community service project – and they receive individualized assistance in obtaining financial aid and transferring to four-year universities. “Students who are named fellows exemplify the best and most motivated students and demonstrate academic and leadership potential, along with an innate desire to excel,” said Angie Covey, executive director of the NRCC Educational Foundation.

“There’s no question about it; these students are some of the best in Virginia and this fellowship will give them the tools to be even better and fulfill their incredibly high potential,” said Julien G. Patterson, chairman of the Virginia Foundation for Community College Education.

The fellows program is made possible through a generous donation of Valley Proteins, Inc. The Winchester-based company has been in the recovery, rendering and animal by-product recycling business for more than 50 years and currently operates 12 plants in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina. The management of Valley Proteins is committed to outstanding corporate citizenship, excellent customer service, technological innovation and support for the community college mission.

“The Virginia Foundation for Community College Education is dedicated to expanding opportunities by leveraging partnerships,” said Glenn DuBois, chancellor of Virginia’s Community Colleges. “This program is a great example of the synergy that comes from joining together employers that are vested in the quality of tomorrow’s Virginia workforce and the community colleges that elevate it every day.”