

**LORD FAIRFAX COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
A Brief History – 1970 to 2007

Lord Fairfax Community College (LFCC) opened its doors September 28, 1970 to 577 residents of the Shenandoah Valley and Piedmont regions. Twenty-three full-time faculty provided instruction under the leadership of LFCC's first president, William H. McCoy, at the nearly-completed building off Route 11 near the town of Middletown, Virginia. In June 1972, 92 students received degrees at the College's first Commencement ceremony. On December 18, 1972, the College received accreditation from the Southern Association of Community and Junior Colleges.

By 1980, the College had a student population of almost 2,000 with approximately 8,000 people being a part of the LFCC experience during the first 10 years. As LFCC entered this new decade, computerization dramatically affected everything at the College. By 1984, the community's need for technical training necessitated the expansion of LFCC's facility to add a 16,083-square-foot science and technology building. The Alson H. Smith Jr. Technology Center was dedicated May 1985 and included facilities for data processing, word processing, engineering, drafting and design and horticulture.

In 1987, William H. McCoy resigned as president to become president at North Florida Junior College and Marilyn C. Beck, dean of academic affairs at Lurleen B. Wallace Community College in Alabama, joined the College as LFCC's second president January 1988. That fall, the College had a record-breaking 21-percent increase in enrollment and a student headcount of more than 2,500 with the Learning Resources Center overwhelmed by the influx of new students. As result, the College received funding to build a new Learning Resources Center and expand the student center at the Middletown Campus. Although the groundbreaking took place in 1989, the building was then delayed by the state until 1993-94. In 1988, businessman and College supporter, Bob Sowder, donated a barn with 2.5 acres of land near

Warrenton to the LFCC Educational Foundation that would be affectionately be known as “The Barn” and ultimately the location of the College’s Fauquier Campus. In the same year, the College converted to the semester system, facilitating the transfer of students from LFCC to four-year institutions.

On September 18, 1990, LFCC celebrated the successful completion of 20 years of serving over 30,000 local residents. In 1990, nearly 3,000 students attended LFCC—an 81-percent increase in the student body since 1970—and employed 40 full-time faculty members, which represented a 42-percent increase in 20 years. Unfortunately, Virginia’s fiscal crisis that year slowed the College’s forward movement with the operating budget cut to approximately 18 percent less than the previous year’s budget. But LFCC continued to expand in spite of monetary cutbacks. In 1991, a \$161,000 high-tech, mobile classroom took to the road. A gift to the College from the LFCC Educational Foundation, the 37-foot recreational vehicle included 12 computer stations donated by Potomac Edison valued at \$66,000 and over the course of its lifespan, served thousands of individuals and hundreds of companies. In April, 1995, a 24,411-square-foot Learning Resources Center was dedicated at the southern end of the Middletown Campus. The \$3.2 million facility was built with a combination of state bond proceeds and contributions from local jurisdictions. The library portion of the new building was named in honor of businessman, LFCC supporter and Fauquier County resident, Paul Wolk. In addition, Old Dominion University began its Teletechnet nursing and engineering technology programs allowing students to complete the last two years of a baccalaureate degree at LFCC via interactive audio and video technology.

During the 1990s, the continuing education program offered everything from fly fishing to real estate license training and the focus was moving to customized training for area businesses and industries. In March 1996, the College began holding credit and noncredit courses at the Dowell J. Howard Vocational-Technical Center in Winchester. “The Barn” in

Fauquier County began offering classes with two classrooms, a learning lab with 12 computer terminals, a small office and renovated corncrib “library.” In July 1992, all of Fauquier County became a part of LFCC’s service region—no longer sharing the county with Germanna Community College. In 1993, Fauquier County’s supervisors set aside approximately 50 acres of land for the College’s expansion and in 1996, the Virginia General Assembly appropriated \$7.2 million to construct an expanded campus on the Sowder property. In October 1999, the official dedication of the new Fauquier Campus took place.

In August 2003, John J. “Ski” Sygielski became LFCC’s third president. During his first four-year tenure, he led: (1) the renovation of space to construct the art annex and construction of a new Facilities Operation Center on the Middletown Campus; (2) efforts to become a host for the Mountain Vista Governor’s School at both campuses; (3) opening the College’s 5,000-square foot Luray-Page County Center; (4) work to design and build the two-story, 46,870-square-foot Science and Health Professions Building; (5) securing off-campus space in Middletown for the Office of College Advancement and Small Business Development Center; and (6) planning for the two-story, 30,000-square-foot, multifaceted Corron Community Development Center at the Middletown Campus. In 2006, only seven years after the grand opening, the Fauquier Campus had served more than 1,500 students.

At the end of the 2006-07 academic year, LFCC boasted serving 13,328 students in credit classes taught by 61 full-time faculty and 427 adjunct faculty. From graduating 92 students in 1972 to 562 in 2007, the College has grown remarkably in enrollment, facilities, and services in its first 37 years becoming the seventh largest community college in the Commonwealth. No wonder LFCC was recently recognized as the 12<sup>th</sup> fastest growing community college of its size in the nation.