



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

AUDIT OF THE INFORMATION SYSTEMS

GENERAL CONTROLS

RICHMOND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

JANUARY 2008

OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR

LESLIE MERRITT, JR., CPA, CFP

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AUDITOR'S TRANSMITTAL

The Honorable Michael F. Easley, Governor
Members of the North Carolina General Assembly
The Board of Directors of Richmond Community College
Dr. Diane Honeycutt, President

Ladies and Gentlemen:

We have completed our audit of Richmond Community College. This audit was conducted during the period from June 18, 2007, through September 7, 2007. The audit was conducted in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* and *Information Systems Audit Standards*.

The primary objective of this audit was to evaluate information systems (IS) general controls at Richmond Community College. The scope of our IS general controls audit included general security, access controls, systems software, physical security, and disaster recovery. Other IS general control topics were reviewed as considered necessary.

This report contains an executive summary and audit results which detail the areas where Richmond Community College has performed satisfactorily relevant to our audit scope, where improvements should be made, and where further study is necessary.

We wish to express our appreciation to the staff of Richmond Community College for the courtesy, cooperation and assistance provided to us during this audit.

North Carolina General Statutes require the State Auditor to make audit reports available to the public. Copies of audit reports issued by the Office of the State Auditor may be obtained through one of the options listed in the back of this report.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Leslie W. Merritt, Jr.".

Leslie Merritt, Jr., CPA, CFP
State Auditor

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We conducted an Information Systems (IS) audit at the Richmond Community College from June 18, 2007, through September 7, 2007. The primary objective of this audit was to evaluate the IS general controls in place during that period. Based on our objective, we report the following conclusions:

General security involves the establishment of a reasonable security program that addresses the general security of information resources. Richmond Community College has established a reasonable security program that addresses the general security of information resources. *We did not identify any significant weaknesses in general security during our audit.*

The **access control** environment consists of access control software and information security policies and procedures. We found several weaknesses in access controls. Due to the sensitive nature of the conditions found in these weaknesses, we have conveyed these findings to management in a separate letter pursuant to the provision of North Carolina G.S. 147-64.6(c)(18).

Systems software is the collection of programs that drive the computer. The selection of systems software should be properly approved and the software should be maintained by the computer center. *We did not identify any significant weaknesses in systems software during our audit.*

Physical security primarily involves the inspection of the agency's computer center for the controls that should reasonably secure the operations of the computer center from foreseeable and preventable threats from fire, water, electrical problems, and vandalism. *We did not identify any significant weaknesses in physical security.*

A complete **disaster recovery** plan that is tested periodically is necessary to enable Richmond Community College to recover from an extended business interruption due to the destruction of the computer center or other Richmond Community College assets. *We did not identify any significant weaknesses in disaster recovery.*

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AUDIT OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

OBJECTIVES

Under the *North Carolina General Statutes* 147-64.6, the State Auditor is responsible for examining and evaluating the adequacy of operating and administrative procedures and practices, systems of accounting, and other elements of State agencies. IS general control audits are examinations of controls which effect the overall organization and operation of the IS function. This IS audit was designed to ascertain the effectiveness of general controls at Richmond Community College.

SCOPE

General controls govern the operation and management of computer processing activities. The scope of our IS general controls audit was to review general security issues, access controls, systems software, physical security, and disaster recovery which directly affect Richmond Community College's computing operations. Other IS general control topics were reviewed as considered necessary.

METHODOLOGY

We audited policies and procedures, interviewed key administrators and other personnel, examined system configurations, toured the computer facility, tested on-line system controls, reviewed appropriate technical literature, reviewed computer generated reports, and used security evaluation software in our audit of general controls. We conducted our audit in accordance with the standards applicable to performance audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States and *Information Systems Audit Standards* issued by the Information Systems Audit and Control Association.

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Richmond Community College is an open-door, comprehensive, public, two-year college and is a member institution of the North Carolina Community College System. Richmond Community College, located in Hamlet, North Carolina, was founded on April 2, 1964. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools accredits Richmond Community College to award associate degrees, associate in applied science degrees, diplomas, and certificates. Richmond Community College provides a variety of academic curricula leading to immediate employment or transfer opportunities to senior educational institutions. The College also offers continuing education programs comprised of non-credit courses related to occupationally specific areas such as fire service, law enforcement and emergency medical training, community service, business and industry, and adult basic skills education. Richmond Community College seeks to provide every student with an opportunity to develop the necessary knowledge, skills, and experiences needed to achieve both personal and career goals.

Richmond Community College computer services is administered by the Information Technologies division of the College. The Information Technologies division consists of a Systems Administrator, who is responsible for the entire computing of Richmond Community College. This position reports to the Vice President of Administration. The mission of the Information Technologies division is to provide assistance in the selection of computing hardware, software installation, and problem solving with courtesy, timeliness, and professionalism. The function of Information Technologies division is to provide quality support to faculty, students, and staff with computer hardware, software, and networking.

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AUDIT RESULTS AND AUDITEE RESPONSES

The following audit results reflect the areas where Richmond Community College has performed satisfactorily and where recommendations have been made for improvement.

GENERAL SECURITY ISSUES

General security issues involve the maintenance of a sound security management structure. A sound security management structure should include a method of classifying and establishing ownership of resources, proper segregation of duties, a security organization and resources, policies regarding access to the computer systems and a security education program. Richmond Community College has established a reasonable security program that addresses the general security of information resources. *Our audit did not identify any significant weaknesses in general security.*

ACCESS CONTROLS

The most important information security safeguard that Richmond Community College has is its access controls. The access controls environment consists of Richmond Community College's access control software and information security policies and procedures. An individual or a group with responsibility for security administration should develop information security policies, perform account administration functions and establish procedures to monitor and report any security violations. We noted a number of weaknesses in access controls. Due to the sensitive nature of the conditions found in the weaknesses, we have conveyed these findings to management in a separate letter pursuant to the provision of North Carolina G.S. 147-64.6(c)(18).

SYSTEMS SOFTWARE

Systems software is the collection of programs that the computer center uses to run the computer and support the application systems. This software includes the operating system, utility programs, compilers, database management systems and other programs. The systems programmers have responsibility for the installation and testing of upgrades to the system software when received. Systems software changes should be properly documented and approved. *Our audit did not identify any significant weaknesses in system software.*

PHYSICAL SECURITY

Controls over physical security are designed to protect a computer center from service interruptions resulting from fire, water, electrical problems, vandalism, and other causes. Richmond Community College's physical security controls ensure that the computer service center is reasonably secure from foreseeable and preventable threats to its physical continuity. *Our audit did not identify any significant weaknesses in physical security.*

AUDIT RESULTS AND AUDITEE RESPONSES (CONCLUDED)

DISASTER RECOVERY

Disasters such as fire and flood can destroy a computer service center and leave its users without computer processing support. Without computer processing, Richmond Community College would grind to a halt. To reduce this risk, computer service centers develop business continuity plans. Business continuity procedures should be tested periodically to ensure the recoverability of the data center. *Our audit did not identify any significant weaknesses in disaster recovery.*

ORDERING INFORMATION

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