

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
**Office of the State Auditor**



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**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Auditor recommends more monitoring, training for community colleges**

RALEIGH \_ The State Board of Community Colleges could strengthen the operations and financial integrity of North Carolina's community colleges with better monitoring of employment contracts and by-laws of local boards, as well as with improved training for local trustees and business office employees, State Auditor Leslie Merritt said in a management letter released Tuesday.

The recommendations were released along with a special review of Halifax Community College, which questioned significant changes made to the college president's employment contract. The proposals were based on observations, financial audits and special reviews at several community colleges around the state.

The proposals include review and approval of employment contracts for the presidents of all 59 community colleges by the State Board of Community Colleges, review of local by-laws and policies by the State Board to ensure they are not in conflict with state regulations, improved training for local trustees and business office staff, and an assessment of a system-wide internal audit function.

"These recommendations come not just from one review or a single audit, but several that we have conducted over the last several years," Merritt said. "We believe these are key areas that can be part of a proactive plan to strengthen the financial accountability and management of North Carolina's community college system."

In the case of Halifax Community College, some college trustees apparently were unaware of the financial impact of changes to the president's employment contract until the special review by the Office of the State Auditor had been completed. Reviews at Halifax and other colleges have revealed confusion among local trustees about their responsibilities and authority.

"We have a community college system that has long been a model for the nation," Merritt said. "We are offering these suggestions in the spirit of helping to strengthen the financial oversight and accountability of that system."

The management letter is available at the web site of the Office of the State Auditor, [www.ncauditor.net](http://www.ncauditor.net), under Audit Reports/Investigative.

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