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## Departing UVa President Will Help Raise Money for Community-College Students



**Andrew Shurtleff, The Daily Progress, AP Photo**  
**University of Virginia President John T. Casteen III says philanthropy must help support community colleges to make up for shortfalls in state support.**

*By Kathryn Masterson*

When John T. Casteen III retires in August after 20 years as president of the University of Virginia, his days of college fund raising will not be over. Mr. Casteen, who helped the University of Virginia raise more than \$2-billion in its current campaign, has agreed to help raise money for the state's community colleges.

Mr. Casteen will join the Board of Directors of the Virginia Foundation for Community College Education, which raises scholarship money to help students, including young people in foster care, attend Virginia's 23 community colleges.

Glenn DuBois, chancellor of the Virginia Community College system, says Mr. Casteen's expertise, connections, and ability to articulate the community colleges' mission on a large scale will be huge assets to the foundation and the students it supports.

"I think he's making a big statement about access to postsecondary education," Mr. DuBois said. "His voice is a strong one. It gives us a lot of credibility and will attract investors."

Mr. DuBois says that he called Mr. Casteen about the board position soon after hearing about his plans to retire because he knew the Virginia president would be flooded with requests, and that he wasn't surprised that Mr. Casteen accepted. The president of the state's elite public university has been involved with Virginia's community colleges for years, signing guaranteed transfer agreements and speaking about the need to increase access to higher education. Last spring, Mr. Casteen was the keynote speaker at a ceremony honoring donors to Virginia's community colleges, and Friday evening he will give the commencement address at [Tidewater Community College](#), which serves the southeastern Virginia area where Mr. Casteen was raised.

Like most community-college fund-raising arms, the Virginia Foundation for Community College Education is relatively new and small, compared with organizations at many four-year institutions. Active since 2005, the foundation has raised \$5-million for

scholarships. (In addition, each of the system's colleges have their own foundations, and have raised more than \$150-million in total.)

Mr. Casteen said in an interview this week that access to education, especially for Virginians, is one of two main issues he will advocate for after retirement. (The other is the environment; Mr. Casteen serves on the board of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.)

"The fundamental right in the society we live in is the right to learn," said Mr. Casteen, who plans to return to UVa to teach after taking a sabbatical.

As president of the University of Virginia, Mr. Casteen believes he has a role to play in supporting the state's community colleges. "They send us excellent students and provide an alternative for people who don't have access or prefer being at home," he said. "Their impact on Virginia has been very dramatic."

In his new role as a member of the foundation's board, he can help fill in the gaps where public support falls short of the needs of the system, which is seeing record enrollments. "The State of Virginia is clearly not going to pay the bills," he said.

Last month, the State Board for Community Colleges approved a midyear tuition increase to offset a series of state budget cuts.

"The thing that concerns me is Virginia at this point does not have the structural capacity to raise the money it needs to spend," Mr. Casteen said. "I'm convinced community philanthropy is essential to carrying out the common obligations financed by taxation."

Mr. Casteen believes community colleges have a powerful argument for why their local communities should support them financially, because they offer affordable education to residents and help the economy with work-force development and retraining.

He doesn't yet know the details of what he'll do for the foundation, but he says he's ready whenever it needs him. "I don't have any idea what they'll ask me to do, but I'll do it," he says.