PITT COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Rob Goldberg, Media Relations Director
        Alex Freedman, Media Relations Specialist
        (w) 252-493-7732 | (w) 252-493-7554 | (c) 252-341-6225
        rgoldberg@email.pittcc.edu | afreedman@email.pittcc.edu

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Pitt Community College Announces Potential Data Breach

WINTERVILLE—The personal information of former students who completed the GED at Pitt Community College may be at risk due to a possible data breach.

PCC administrators announced Thursday that data for an estimated 5,300 former students may have been affected.

“Protecting student data is an integral part of the college’s operations,” said PCC Vice President of Administrative Services Rick Owens. “PCC places a high priority on its relationship with, as well as the trust of its students.”

Owens explained that the information was placed on a media storage device commonly known as a "thumb drive" in order to transfer that information to a secure location. He said the device was misplaced by a college employee before it reached the secure location.

Information believed to be contained on the device includes: full names, social security numbers, and addresses of the affected individuals at the time they took the exam.

According to Owens, PCC has conducted an intensive search for the storage device and interviewed the employee who misplaced it and other employees who may have had relevant information on the device’s whereabouts. Despite those efforts, he said, the college was unable to track down the thumb drive.

“The college does not believe that the device was stolen or that there has been any unauthorized access or use of the information,” Owens said. “It may have simply been discarded with materials that were being prepared for shredding.

“The College also does not believe that illegal use of the information is reasonably likely to occur or that there is a material risk of harm to any person,” he continued. “However, we have decided to provide this notice out of an abundance of caution.”

Individuals whose information may have been contained on the device is limited to those who took the High School Equivalence/General Education Degree exam at PCC between Jan. 1, 1967 and Dec. 31, 2001. Anyone falling into this category is asked to contact Owens at (252) 493-7442.

PCC is providing the following information to help individuals who may have been affected avoid financial loss in connection with this incident. The college encourages those individuals to immediately report suspicious or unusual activity on their accounts (or if they suspect fraud) to their financial institution(s).

If you discover any suspicious or unusual activity on your accounts or suspect fraud, report it immediately to your financial institution(s). In addition, you may contact the Federal Trade Commission ("FTC"), the N.C. Attorney General's Office, or local law enforcement to report incidents of credit card fraud or identity theft or to learn about steps you can take to protect yourself from identity theft. Contact information for the Federal Trade Commission and the North Carolina Attorney General's Office is as follows:

Federal Trade Commission
Consumer Response Center
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20580
1-(877) 438-4338
www.consumer.gov/idtheft

North Carolina Department of Justice
Consumer Protection Division
9001 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-9001
(877) 566-7226
You are also entitled to a free copy of your credit report every 12 months from each of the three nationwide credit reporting agencies. Learn more by going to www.AnnualCreditReport.com or by calling (877) 322-8228. You may contact the credit reporting agencies individually to request more information at:

- **Equifax**
  - (800) 525-6285
  - P.O. Box 740241
  - Atlanta, GA 30374-0241
  - www.equifax.com

- **Experian**
  - (888) 397-3742
  - P.O. Box 9532
  - Allen, TX 75013
  - www.experian.com

- **TransUnion**
  - (800) 680-7289
  - P.O. Box 6790
  - Fullerton, CA 92834-6790
  - www.transunion.com

**North Carolina Consumers Have the Right to Obtain a Security Freeze**

If you are a member of the class of individuals described above, you have a right to place a "security freeze" on your credit report pursuant to North Carolina law. The security freeze will prohibit a consumer reporting agency from releasing any information in your credit report without your express authorization. A security freeze can be requested in writing by first-class mail, by telephone, or electronically. You may also request a freeze by visiting the following Web sites or calling the following telephone numbers:

- **Experian**
  - Experian Security Freeze
  - P.O. Box 9554
  - Allen, TX 75013
  - www.experian.com
  - 1-888-397-3742

- **TransUnion**
  - TransUnion Protected Consumer Freeze
  - P.O. Box 380
  - Woodlyn, PA 19094
  - www.freeze.transunion.com
  - 1-800-916-8800

- **Equifax**
  - Equifax Security Freeze
  - P.O. Box 105788
  - Atlanta, GA 30348
  - www.freeze.equifax.com
  - 1-800-685-1111

The security freeze is designed to prevent credit, loans, and services from being approved in your name without your consent. However, you should be aware that using a security freeze to take control over who gains access to the personal and financial information in your credit report may delay, interfere with, or prohibit the timely approval of any subsequent request or application you make regarding new loans, credit, mortgage, insurance, rental housing, employment, investment, license, cellular phone, utilities, digital signature, Internet credit card transactions, or other services, including an extension of credit at point of sale. The freeze will be placed within three business days if you request it by mail, or within 24 hours if you request it by telephone or electronically. When you place a security freeze on your credit report, within three business days, you will be sent a personal identification number or a password to use when you want to remove the security freeze, temporarily lift it, or lift it with respect to a particular third party. A freeze does not apply when you have an existing account relationship and a copy of your report is requested by your existing creditor or its agents or affiliates for certain types of account review, collection, fraud control, or similar activities. You should plan ahead and lift a freeze if you are actively seeking credit or services as a security freeze may slow your applications, as mentioned above. You can remove a freeze, temporarily lift a freeze, or lift a freeze with respect to a particular third party by contacting the consumer reporting agency and providing all of the following:

1. Your personal identification number or password,
2. Proper identification to verify your identity, and
3. Proper information regarding the period of time you want your report available to users of the credit report, or the third party with respect to which you want to lift the freeze.

A consumer reporting agency that received a request from you to temporarily lift a freeze or to lift a freeze with respect to a particular third party on a credit report shall comply with the request no later than three business days after receiving the request by mail and no later than 15 minutes after receiving a request by telephone or electronically. A consumer reporting agency may charge you up to three dollars ($3.00) to institute a freeze if your request is made by telephone or by mail. A consumer reporting agency may not charge you any amount to freeze, remove a freeze, temporarily lift a freeze, or lift a freeze with respect to a particular third party, if any of the following are true:

1. Your request is made electronically.
2. You are over the age of 62.
3. You are the victim of identity theft and have submitted a copy of a valid investigative or incident report or complaint with a law enforcement agency about the unlawful use of your identifying information by another person, or you are the spouse of such a person.
You have a right to bring a civil action against someone who violates your rights under the credit reporting laws. The action can be brought against a consumer reporting agency or a user of your credit report.

The College regrets inconvenience caused to any of its students. The College knows that students' time and privacy are important, and the College sincerely desires to restore public confidence. If assistance in following the steps outlined in this notice is required, contact Rick Owens, Vice President for Administrative Services directly at (252) 493-7442 from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. EST Monday through Friday.

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