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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION
LAUNCHES NEW WORKFORCE SHORTAGE
STUDENT ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM**

Annapolis, MD (February 7, 2007) – The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) has launched a new program that consolidates seven of its career and occupational based programs into the Workforce Shortage Student Assistance Grant Program. The new grant program focuses on critical workforce shortage areas, which will be determined biennially by an established Advisory Council. The program will require recipients to agree to work in certain fields or areas in Maryland in order to receive the award.

“By consolidating these programs, the State will be more responsive and flexible in addressing our workforce needs,” said Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown. “This new grant program will help our institutions of higher learning to be ready to supply the workforce that is needed to keep our State strong and competitive.”

Applicants must be Maryland residents enrolled as full-time (12 or more credits per semester) or part-time (6-11 credits per semester) degree seeking undergraduate students, or as full-time (9 or more credits per semester) or part-time (6-8 credits per semester) degree seeking graduate students at an eligible Maryland institution. Detailed eligible majors and employment fields can be found on the MHEC website www.mhec.state.md.us and include the areas of child care providers, human services, teaching in critical shortage areas, nursing, physical and occupational therapy and careers in public service.

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Award amounts range from \$1,000 to \$4,000 per academic year based on type of institution and enrollment status. Awards are subject to the availability of funds. Applicants will be selected for awards based on merit and need-based criteria. Applications and all required documents must be submitted to the Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA) by June 1, 2007 to be considered for awards beginning in September 2007.

To be considered based on need, and to specifically apply for the public service based William Donald Schaefer Scholarship, applicants must file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by March 1, 2007. The FAFSA is not required; however, it will be used to determine the order in which students will be awarded.

Complete and mail application and required documents by June 1, 2007 to:

Maryland Higher Education Commission

Office of Student Financial Assistance

Attention: Workforce Shortage Student Assistance Grant Program

839 Bestgate Road, Suite 400

Annapolis, MD 21401

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