Sheppard and Mercer earn the 2005 Academic Excellence Award at BCCC

Two Beaufort County Community College students received the Academic Excellence Award on April 27 during a ceremony at the North Raleigh Hilton. Receiving the award were James H. Mercer of Belhaven and Cheryl Lynn Sheppard of Washington. Mercer is working toward a degree in Medical Laboratory Technology at BCCC. Sheppard is enrolled in BCCC’s college transfer program. Each has a 4.0 grade point average.

A commercial fisherman for 25 years, Mercer entered the MLT program in August 2003 and is currently completing his clinical work. He serves on BCCC’s safety committee. He is the MLT program’s Student of the Year. The son of Jack and Rachel Mercer, Mercer said he was inspired to study medical laboratory technology because his wife, Patricia, is a nurse.

Sheppard is a graduate of Washington High School. The daughter of Glenda and Roy Duke and Frank and Lucy Sheppard, Sheppard has one son, Kenny. She hopes to continue her studies at East Carolina University and pursue a bachelor’s degree in biochemistry after graduating from BCCC.

The Academic Excellence Awards are offered annually to recognize and promote scholarship among the more than 750,000 students in the N.C. Community College System. Nominations for the award are based on a grade point average of 3.5 or better and a student’s involvement on campus and in the community. Instructors within their academic divisions nominated the students. Two students from each of the state’s community colleges were honored at an awards luncheon.

“These students are being honored because of their strong determination to succeed,” said NCCCS President H. Martin Lancaster. “Each man and woman also had the guidance of talented instructors and the support of loving family and friends.”

The awards ceremony traditionally features student testimonials, when three students share their college experience with the audience. This year, Donna Holt from Surry Community College, Vitaliy Semenov from Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College and Bernard Zdancewicz from Halifax Community College were chosen to tell their dramatic stories.

Holt related how the worst day of her life, being notified that she and her husband were both being laid off from their jobs at a textile mill, turned out to be the best day because they both went back to school and were now about to embark on their new

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