First partnership class graduates

A graduate recognition celebration honoring Wachovia Partnership East’s first graduating class will be held Dec. 13 at 6:30 p.m. at Craven Community College.

Sixteen students who completed their general education requirements in the WPE Coastal Consortium are graduating with degrees in elementary education. Six of the sixteen candidates already are employed in the public schools as teacher assistants.

In August 2002, the students started out as teacher education candidates enrolled in the new College of Education initiative at Craven Community College. The partnership expanded and now includes 18 community colleges, one private college, a U.S. Air Force base and 29 public school partners across three hub sites at Craven Community College, Wayne Community College and the Rocky Mount campus of Edgecombe Community College. There now are 214 students in the program.

Interest in the model and the potential to impact the rural communities of eastern North Carolina led to financial support from Wachovia and the name change. Wachovia Corp. gave $1.25 million in March, the majority of which goes directly to student scholarships.

In addition to Wachovia’s gift, a federal grant of $800,000 was awarded for the recruitment of special education teachers; the Golden Leaf Educational Consortium provided funds for the establishment of Teacher Resource Centers; and other groups have created scholarships designed specifically for partnership students.