

High-paying jobs drive enrollment

One school boosting Virginia's numbers in higher education is **Jefferson College of Health Sciences**.

Located in Roanoke, the private school offers associate, bachelor's and master's degrees in 15 health-care disciplines.

Enrollment at the school has taken off in recent years – from just more than 600 students in 2002 to more than 1,000 full-time students in 2008. School officials attribute this chiefly to the overwhelming demand in the health-care field for trained professionals and the salaries they can command.

"In tough economic times, JCHS graduates entering the health-care profession report starting salaries between \$50,000 and \$80,000 per year," according to Mark Lambert, the school's coordinator of communications and college relations.

"Forty percent of our grads reported making more than \$50,000 a year as a starting salary," Lambert said.

New this fall are master of science degrees in occupational therapy and physician assistant. The school also anticipates adding a new bachelor of science degree in emergency health services and fire technology.

– **Bonnie V. Winston**

