

# New England College plans presidential convention

◆ **Social media:** College offering scholarships to YouTube contest winners.

By MEGHAN PIERCE  
*Union Leader Correspondent*

HENNIKER — The Center for Civic Engagement at New England College will host College Convention 2012 and a related Social Media Contest, in which five creative and politically plugged-in students could win a college scholarship.

The three-day program, set to take place Jan. 3 to 6 at the Grappone Center in Concord, is designed to create a venue for high school and college students from around the country to meet with presidential candidates, issues advocates and the media in a convention-like setting just before the New Hampshire primary.

College Convention 2012 programs include presenta-

tions by presidential candidates, issue forums, workshops and panel discussions with the people most closely involved in New Hampshire's presidential primary.

"College Convention is a unique opportunity for students to participate in the laboratory of democracy that is the New Hampshire primary," Wayne F. Lesperance Jr., director of the Center for Civic Engagement, said in a statement. New England College has invited all current presidential candidates to the convention and is posting the candidates' responses to the invitation as they come in at [www.collegeconvention.nec.edu](http://www.collegeconvention.nec.edu), as well as through other social media channels

"For this year's College Convention," Lesperance said, "social media will play a much more significant role than ever before. Our Facebook page has been active for quite some

time and we plan to maximize the power of social media throughout the event."

New England College cites the growing importance of social media in presidential campaigns in its plans to award five full renewable scholarships to incoming and transfer students who submit the best one- to three-minute YouTube video.

Students submitting to the juried contest are asked to present their own inaugural speech or answer the question "What is at stake for the 2012 presidential election?"

Short films may be submitted until Dec. 2. More information about the contest can be found at [www.collegeconvention.nec.edu](http://www.collegeconvention.nec.edu).

According to Michele Perkins, president of New England College, "College Convention is an excellent example of the kind of educational experience that we offer our students."