

## **For Immediate Release**

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## **eCollege<sup>®</sup> Comments on Blackboard eLearning Technology Patent**

*eCollege Confident Patent Won't Affect the Quality and Innovation of the Products and Services it Provides to the Education Industry*

**CHICAGO – August 7, 2006** – eCollege<sup>®</sup> [Nasdaq: ECLG], a leading provider of value-added information services to the post-secondary education industry, commented today through a senior executive on the recently announced eLearning technology patent issued to Blackboard, Inc. and that company's subsequent lawsuit alleging patent infringement by a smaller competitor.

“As one of the pioneers of online education, we launched our first customer's eLearning program in January 1997, before Blackboard even existed,” said Oakleigh Thorne, chairman and CEO of eCollege. “In fact, we had online programs for numerous institutions up and running more than a year before the filing of Blackboard's patent application.”

“After consulting with patent counsel, we believe the patent is invalid,” said Thorne. “We are confident that the patent will not impact our business, our technology or our ability to continue providing our customers with high quality, innovative and proven eLearning solutions.”

Thorne concluded his comments by stating, “The fact that one company has been granted a patent for such a broad application and now is engaging in litigation with another eLearning provider is unfortunate for a market that traditionally has been fueled by innovation and choice. It also is unfortunate that Blackboard chose not to issue a press release when the patent was awarded this past January, at a time when the Department of Justice was investigating the antitrust ramifications of Blackboard's merger with its competitor, WebCT.”

### **About eCollege**

eCollege [Nasdaq: ECLG] is a leading provider of value-added information services to the post-secondary and K-12 education industries. The Company's eLearning Division designs, builds and supports some of the most successful, fully online degree, certificate/diploma and professional development programs in the country. The Company's Enrollment Division,

Datamark, Inc., helps institutions build new enrollments and increase student retention. Customers include publicly traded for-profit institutions, community colleges, public and private universities, school districts and state departments of education. eCollege was founded in 1996 and is headquartered in Chicago, with the eLearning Division headquartered in Denver. Datamark was founded in 1987 and is headquartered in Salt Lake City. For more information, visit [www.eCollege.com](http://www.eCollege.com) and [www.Datamark.com](http://www.Datamark.com).

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