THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA SYSTEM

COMPREHENSIVE TRANSITION POSTSECONDARY (CTP) PROGRAMS REPORT TO THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

A Report to the
Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee

Submitted by
The University of North Carolina Board of Governors

February 25, 2026

As Required by
S.L. 2023-134, 2023 Appropriations Act (H.B.259) Section 8.12.(a)

COMPREHENSIVE TRANSITION POSTSECONDARY (CTP) PROGRAMS REPORT TO THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
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REQUIRE COMPREHENSIVE TRANSITION POSTSECONDARY PROGRAMS REPORT AND ESTABLISH CTP PROGRAM AT UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA WILMINGTON

SECTION 8.12.(a) Article 35A of Chapter 116 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read: "§ 116-298. Report: The University of North Carolina System Office shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by March 15 of each year on the impact on participants of CTP Programs at constituent institutions of The University of North Carolina. At a minimum, the report shall include the following information for each CTP Program at a constituent institution: (1) Admissions requirements. (2) Number of participants. (3) Participant outcomes, including credits earned toward a degree, diploma, or certificate and job placements for participants and graduates."

This section became effective January 1, 2024, and applied to the 2022-23 and 2023-24 academic years, and to each subsequent academic year, for Appalachian State University, the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and Western Carolina University. Effective January 1, 2026, three additional institutions (NC State University, North Carolina Central University, and the University of North Carolina Wilmington) began submitting data to the System for their recently launched CTP programs. Additionally, NC State University, North Carolina Central University, and the University of North Carolina Wilmington are required to submit reports directly to the North Carolina General Assembly.

Appalachian State University, the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and Western Carolina University each submitted the requested information to the UNC System Office. In the 2025-26 academic year, enrollment across all three programs totaled 73 students (see Appendix A).

Since this report is due before the conclusion of the spring 2026 semester, job placement data reflects the 2024-25 academic year.

Appalachian State University's Scholars with Diverse Abilities Program (SDAP)

Admissions Requirements:
To be eligible to apply to SDAP, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Are between 18 and 25 years of age at the time of admission.
- Have documentation that indicates an intellectual disability.
- Are enrolled in or have completed an occupational course of study (OCS) or similar program during high school.
- Are interested in having defined career, personal growth, social engagement, and health and wellness goals.
- Have the ability to effectively communicate with staff, supports, and peers.
- Have a base level of skills in areas of self-care, money management, and navigation.
- Are able to be unsupervised in a variety of settings.
- Are able to manage their own medication needs.
- Are not otherwise eligible to attend Appalachian State University as a degree-seeking student.

Number of Participants:
- 2024-25: 16 students
- 2025-26: 15 students

Participant Outcomes:
Credits Earned
Each student earns a minimum of 12 credits per semester or 24 credits per year
- 2024-25 Certificate Credits: 16 students × 24 credits = 384 student credit hours
- 2025-26 Certificate Credits: 15 students × 24 credits = anticipated 360 student credit hours

All credits for SDAP students are audited credits.

Job Placements
- Job placements 2024-25 — 100 percent of students employed in competitive integrated employment at locations such as Grandview Catering and Events, App Elite, Appalachian State Information Technology (IT) department, University Recreation Department, and Appalachian State Campus Dining.
- Job placements 2025-26 — 100 percent of students employed in competitive integrated employment at locations such as Grandview Catering and Events, App Elite, Appalachian State Campus Dining, Plemmons Student Union.
- Graduates 2024-25 — 100 percent employed at locations such as grocery stores, restaurants, assisted living facilities.

For more information about the program, visit: sdap.appstate.edu.

<p style="text-align: center;">**North Carolina Central University's Thrive Program**</p>

Please Note*:* North Carolina Central University is finalizing the development of its Thrive Program with a goal to enroll students in fall 2026.

Admissions Requirements:
- To date, NCCU admission requirements are in development.

Number of Participants:
The NCCU Thrive Program has a goal to enroll students in fall 2026.
- 2024-25: 0 students
- 2025-26: 0 students

Participant Outcomes:
Credits Earned
N/A

Job Placement
N/A

For more information about the program, visit: TBD

Additional Information:
NCCU Thrive: Initial Development and Programmatic Accomplishments Report

North Carolina Central University is finalizing the development of its Thrive Program with a goal to enroll students in fall 2026. NCCU Thrive is an inclusive postsecondary education (IPSE) program at NCCU designed to provide young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) a person-centered campus experience. Located within the School of Education, the program has reached several critical milestones in its initial development phase to prepare for its mission of academic excellence and transformational engagement.

Leadership and Organizational Milestones

The program has successfully established a robust leadership team and administrative structure:
- Director Appointment: Dr. Nigel P. Pierce was officially appointed as the director of IPSE in late spring of 2025. Dr. Pierce, an associate professor with extensive experience in special education and postsecondary transitions, leads strategic initiatives and day-to-day operations.
- Staffing: In December 2025, the program filled key roles, hiring Dr. Courtney D. Higgins as program manager and Michele L. Jones as executive assistant.
- Mission and Vision: In July 2025, leadership met with the School of Education associate dean to finalize the program's mission, vision, and organizational structure.

Strategic Partnership with NC State Elevate

The collaboration with NC State's Elevate program is critical to the development of NCCU Thrive. This partnership has been fostered through:

- Consultative Meetings: Formal meetings between NCCU leadership (including the provost and School of Education dean) and the NC State team occurred in August and October 2024. These sessions focused on program design, administrative strategies, and person-centered planning.
- Strategic Planning: Dr. Pierce actively participated in strategic planning events with the NC State team to learn best practices for program development.
- Ongoing Mentorship: In October 2025, Dr. Pierce held follow-up meetings with the Elevate team to continue refining the program's implementation.

Replicating the Elevate Programmatic Structure

NCCU Thrive is working to replicate and adapt the successful pillars of the Elevate model to fit the NCCU context:

- Academic Enrichment: Thrive offers students the opportunity to pursue educational credentials, including degrees, certificates, and non-degree credentials through inclusive enrollment in university courses.
- Career Preparation: Thrive's priority is developing robust career pathways through work-based learning structures.
- Personal and Holistic Development: Thrive emphasizes self-determination, self-advocacy, and independence, aligning with Elevate's personal development and independent living goals.
- Social Inclusion: The program provides individualized support to ensure scholars are fully integrated into campus life and extracurricular activities, a core component of the Elevate experience.

Stakeholder Engagement and Future Outlook

NCCU Thrive has prioritized building a strong support network:

- Campus Partnerships: The program has secured commitments from Student Affairs (Accessibility Services and Career Development), Academic Affairs, Housing, and the Registrar's Office to ensure equitable access for all scholars.
- Legislative and External Support: In September 2025, leadership met with North Carolina state representatives to provide progress updates.
- Technical Assistance: Conversations have been initiated with Think College for technical support, which began in January 2026.

North Carolina State University's "Elevate" Program

Admissions Requirements:

- Be a legal resident of the state of North Carolina.
- Be at least 18 years of age at the time of admission.
- Currently or have been eligible for Special Education services and entitled to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) through an individualized education plan (IEP) under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004*.
- *Must* be identified with an intellectual disability.

Number of Participants:

- 2024-25: 7 students (admitted spring 2025)
- 2025-26: 17 students (10 admitted fall 2025)

Participant Outcomes:

Credits Earned:

Each semester students enroll in a combination of 1-2 Elevate program courses (e.g., Academic Strategies, Healthy Relationships, Vocational Seminar) and 1-2 inclusive courses for foundational knowledge or aligned with their career goals. Students may enroll in 10-15 credit hours per semester. Upon completion of the four-year program, a successful student will achieve between 95 and 105 academic credit hours (Elevate program and NC State courses)

2024-25 Academic Year (spring semester only – 7 students):

- 63 credits earned toward GPA
- 19 audited course credits earned with satisfactory performance

2025-26 Academic Year (fall semester – 17 students):

- 132 credits earned
- 47 audited course credits earned with satisfactory performance

In 2025 students completed six Elevate program courses and 22 inclusive courses across 14 departments throughout NC State University. Students enrolled in a range of 10-13 credits per semester.

Job Placement

In accordance with the Elevate program of study requirements, second-year students (seven) will begin internships in the spring semester of the 2025-26 academic year. Students will be working as interns for five on-campus and one off-campus employer.

Upon completion of the four-year program, a successful student will have:
- Fulfilled a minimum of 270 internship/work hours related to identified career goals
- Earned at least one micro credential or undergraduate certificate related to their career goals
- Participated in 16 social activities that foster social engagement skills related to their personal goals and interests.

Residential Independence

Elevate is a combination of commuter and residential students. As of fall 2025, approximately one-third of enrolled students live on campus. In partnership with NC State University Housing, Elevate anticipates that approximately one-half of the students will live on campus for the 2026-27 school year.

For more information about the program, visit: https://elevate.ced.ncsu.edu/.

University of North Carolina at Greensboro's Integrative Community Studies (ICS) Program

Admissions Requirements:
- Have a documented diagnosis of an intellectual disability. Refer to the American Association on IDD for a definition of intellectual disability.
- Be their own legal guardian.
- Be at least 18 years old by the fall semester for which they are applying.
- Have concluded secondary education with a diploma, certificate of completion, or equivalent before fall enrollment.
- Not meeting admissions requirements for Undergraduate Admissions.
- Have basic safety skills in unsupervised settings during non-service hours.

Number of Participants:
- 2024-25: 27 students
  - 1st year cohort – 6
  - 2nd year cohort – 6
  - 3rd year cohort – 3
  - 4th year cohort – 12
- 2025-26: 24 students
  - 1st year cohort – 10
  - 2nd year cohort – 7
  - 3rd year cohort – 4
  - 4th year cohort – 3

Participant Outcomes:
Credits Earned
- 100 percent of students earned credit toward their Integrative Community Studies (ICS) Certificate. ICS courses have gone through curriculum review and are listed in the course catalog; students do earn credit for these courses. These credits are only earned toward the ICS Certificate (not toward an undergraduate degree).
- Most students take a minimum of one additional course in another department for credit, which counts toward their ICS Certificate as well. Very few students take coursework for audit. Therefore, the majority of students are earning ICS credit as well as some "undergraduate" credits.
- All students enrolled carry a full-time courseload, which means a minimum of 12 credit hours per semester. This is met with a combination of ICS courses (certificate specific) and courses from other departments off campus which earn "undergraduate" credit (as noted in previous bullet).

Job Placement

- ICS does not "place" students in "Job Placements." The goal is for an internship site to potentially lead to a paid job or offer the experience (for their resume) to lead to paid employment in the same or similar field.
- Students are required to complete an internship in their second or third year as a part of the certificate requirements, along with volunteer and/or service-learning experiences.
- Students enrolled in the ICS program are not required to work while they are enrolled. Students must maintain a minimum of 12 credit hours of coursework; many enroll in 15 credit hours per semester. Therefore, working a job isn't always feasible. Some students work part time in jobs while they are enrolled to help pay their bills, but that may not always be related to their "career" goals.
- Examples of student volunteer/service learning, internship sites (paid and unpaid), and jobs in academic years 2024-25 and 2025-26:

Volunteer/Service Learning	Internships	Jobs
• SPCA • Spartan Open Pantry • Catalyst • Green Hill • UNCG Club Football • Reconsidered Goods • Salvation Army • Weaver House • UNCG E-Sports Arena • Aquatic Center • Office of Leadership & Civic Engagement • UNCG Gardens • ASL Network • ACE Spirit Week • Farmer's Market • Children's Museum • Backpack Beginnings • St. Phillip Community Garden of Peace	• A Special Blend • Hope Academy • Autism Society • Greensboro Science Center • Autobell • UNCG Women's Club Soccer Manager • Urban Ministries • Kellin Foundation • 6-TECH • Goodwill • Texas Roadhouse • Chatham Trades • One Step Further • ICS (Peer Mentor)	• 6-TECH • Texas Roadhouse • A Special Blend • Chatham Trades

For more information about the program, visit: https://ics.uncg.edu/.

University of North Carolina Wilmington's Inclusive Futures Program (IFP)

Admissions Requirements:
- Student has been enrolled in a high school special education program (such as the Occupational Course of Study or Certificate of Completion) that does not allow students to complete the requirements necessary for standard admission to UNCW.
- At least age 18 at the time of admission with a documented intellectual disability.
- Interest in attending college to learn and grow with peers.
- Interest in working in integrated competitive employment opportunities.
- Family/guardian support to engage in the program (admission, goal setting, transition from the program).
- Demonstrations of emerging safety, communication, and social skills in college and community settings (Does not need one-on-one assistance).

Number of Participants:
- 2024-25: 1 student (spring 2025 semester only)
- 2025-26: 5 students

Participant Outcomes:
Credits Earned
IFP students take a full courseload of credits each semester while in the program (i.e., minimum of 12 credits). In addition to coursework, students work on goals in academics, career development, independent living, self-determination, and campus engagement for 15 hours each week throughout each semester.
- 2024-25: 6 credits
  - Spring 2025 semester — 6 audited credits (i.e., typical UNCW courses successfully completed through IFP Learning Agreement)
- 2025-26: 60 credits
  - Fall 2025 semester — 30 non-transferable credits (i.e., IFP specific coursework); 30 audited credits (i.e., typical UNCW courses successfully completed through IFP Learning Agreement);
  - Spring 2026 semester (anticipated) — 30 non-transferable credits (i.e., IFP specific coursework); 30 audited credits (i.e., typical UNCW courses successfully completed through IFP Learning Agreement)

Job Placement
- 2024-25: 0
- 2025-26: 1
  - Fall 2025-Spring 2026 Internship Placement
    - Unpaid: UNCW Women's Basketball student manager

For more information about the program, visit: https://uncw.edu/ifp.

Additional Information:

The Inclusive Futures Program (IFP) is a two-year, 55-hour non-degree undergraduate certificate program designed to empower students with intellectual disabilities. Upon completion, students earn the Inclusive Life Skills and Career Development Certificate. This program offers inclusive education to promote personal independence and achieve gainful employment.

Western Carolina University's University Participant (UP) Program

Admissions Requirements:

Consideration for admission to the UP program is given to those who meet the following admission requirements:

- Age 18-25 at the time of admission with a documented intellectual disability (IQ ~ 70 or lower).
- Has been enrolled in a high school special education program (such as the Occupational Course of Study or Certificate of Completion) that does not allow students to complete requirements necessary for standard admission to WCU.
- Demonstrates communication skills adequate to interact with others on the WCU campus.
- Demonstrates socially acceptable behavior that will allow a favorable experience on the WCU campus.
- Demonstrates ability to be unsupervised overnight and manage own medications.
- Adequately motivated to learn and benefit from participation in the UP Program.
- Expresses interest in living and working as independently as possible in their community with paid employment at or above minimum wage, working 20 or more hours per week after completing the UP Program and supported by parents and families to do so.

All applicants to the UP Program are reviewed by the UP Program Steering Committee. This committee comprises the following individuals:

- A WCU undergraduate or graduate student
- Former parents of UP Program graduates
- WCU Director of Financial Aid
- UP Program Director
- UP Program Career Development Coordinator/Administrator
- Administration Representative from the College of Education and Allied Professions
- Representatives of Undergraduate Admissions
- Representatives of Educational Outreach
- Representatives of Residential Living
- Director of Accessibility Resources
- WCU faculty who have taught UP students
- WCU employers who have worked with UP students
- Representatives from Tutoring and Student Success Centers

Number of Participants:
- 2024-25: 12 students
- 2025-26: 12 students

Participant Outcomes:

Credits Earned

Across 12 students in 2024-25, 94 WCU courses were audited.

Across 12 students in 2025-2026 so far in fall 2025, 45 WCU courses have been audited, spring 2026 courses TBD.

For students completing the program during 2024-25, 100 percent of students received University Participant (UP) Program Certificates of Accomplishment. WCU does not offer a degree or diploma, but

a certificate with specific requirements with total hours and goals. UP students at WCU do audit seven-12 credit hours (taking courses offered to all other WCU students) each semester within the WCU course catalog. WCU doesn't have specialized coursework only for UP students to take as they are taking courses with and/or courses are facilitated with peer support.

The UP Certificate of Accomplishment is awarded after a two-year period based on satisfactory completion of at least 80 percent of their goals each semester and continued growth in each of five program components. These components include the following:

- Personal development skills (e.g., communication skills, personal care skills, self-determination, etc.)
- Community participation skills (e.g., using public transportation, budgeting, grocery shopping, etc.)
- Vocational preparation skills (e.g., learning specific job skills on or off campus)
- Social participation and learning (e.g., participating in university functions such as athletic events, belonging to university clubs or organizations)
- Course auditing (e.g., auditing three to four courses per semester).

Job Placement
For 2024-25, 12 students completed internships, 11 of which were paid internships. Students worked an average of 10 hours per week in on- and off-campus jobs. Job locations for each semester are below.

Fall 2024 Semester Internships/Jobs
- Aramark Services, on campus
- Campus Recreation Center at WCU
- Career and Professional Development at WCU
- Comfort Inn
- Entourage with WCU Admissions
- Jackson County School Nutrition
- Kneedler Childcare Center
- Mountain Heritage Center
- Reid Gym/Health and Wellness
- WCU Athletics
- WCU Bookstore
- WCU Print Shop

Spring 2025 Semester Internships/Jobs
- Aramark, Chick-Fil-A
- Best Day Ever Doggy Daycare
- Campus Recreation and Wellness Fitness Assistant
- Comfort Inn
- Entourage Admissions Office
- Jackson County Adult Day Program
- Parking Operations/Transportation
- Reid Gym/Health and Wellness

- Residential Living Housekeeping
- School of Teaching and Learning Office

- WCU Bookstore
- WCU Marketing

Fall 2025 Semester Internships/Jobs
- American Red Cross/health field
- Aramark, Chick-Fil-A and Panda Express
- Campus Recreation Center Fitness Assistant
- Carly and Cass retail store
- Cashiers Highlands Humane Society
- Cullowhee Gardens
- Cullowhee Kid
- Food Lion
- Girls on the Run Assistant Coach
- Jackson County Department on Aging
- LIFE@WCU, Educational Outreach
- Mountain Heritage Center
- Reid Gym/Health and Wellness
- Skyland Care Center
- WCU Athletics
- WCU Instructional Technology and Marketing

For more information about the program, visit: up.wcu.edu or
https://www.wcu.edu/learn/departments-schools-colleges/ceap/stl/special-education-programs/university-participant-up-program/.

Additional Information:
WCU UP became the first accredited inclusive postsecondary education (IPSE) program in the country and remains one of only four nationally accredited IPSE programs through 2030. Accreditation was awarded in May 2023 by the Inclusive Higher Education Accreditation Council.

Appendix A

Student Enrollment

	Appalachian State University	NC Central University	NC State University	UNC Greensboro	UNC Wilmington	Western Carolina University	Total
2022-23	12	-	-	33	-	12	57
2023-24	18	-	-	29	-	10	57
2024-25	16	-	7	27	1	12	63
2025-26	15	-	17	24	5	12	73

CTP Programs

	Year the program started
Appalachian State University	2011
NC Central University	TBD
NC State University	2025
UNC Greensboro	2007
UNC Wilmington	2025
Western Carolina University	2007