

11. Bilateral Agreement Study ReportKarrie Dixon

Situation: Bilateral Agreement Study report submission

Background: The Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina and the State Board of Community Colleges were asked to study the various bilateral agreements and partnerships that exist between their constituent institutions throughout the State. The focus should be on those agreements and partnerships that aid in the transfer process and that encourages or require students to complete some coursework at a community college before attending or transferring to a constituent institution including data, to the extent that information is available, on the following:

- (i) A description of the agreement or partnership;
- (ii) The number of years it has been in existence;
- (iii) The number of participants by year; and
- (iv) An analysis of student outcomes after transfer under the agreement or partnership.

Recommendations on replication and expansion possibilities for the various agreements and partnerships were also requested.

Assessment: The President will submit the Bilateral Agreement Study report in late January through delegated authority.

Action: This is for Information Only.

Draft

REPORT ON STUDY OF BILATERAL AGREEMENTS AND PARTNERSHIPS THAT EXIST BETWEEN CONSITUEUT INSTITUTIONS OF THE NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND CONSTITUENT INSTITUTIONS OFTHE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

A Report to the:
Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee, Senate Appropriations Committee on
Education/Higher Education, and the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Education

Submitted By
The State Board of Community Colleges, and
The Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina

FEBRUARY 1, 2015

As Required by
Section 10.7 of Session Law 2014-100 (SB 744)

I. Background

The Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina and the State Board of Community Colleges were asked to study the various bilateral agreements and partnerships that exist between their constituent institutions throughout the State. The focus should be on those agreements and partnerships that aid in the transfer process and that encourages or require students to complete some coursework at a community college before attending or transferring to a constituent institution including data, to the extent that information is available, on the following:

- (i) A description of the agreement or partnership;
- (ii) The number of years it has been in existence;
- (iii) The number of participants by year; and
- (iv) An analysis of student outcomes after transfer under the agreement or partnership.

Finally, recommendations on replication and expansion possibilities for the various agreements and partnerships were also requested.

II. Definition of agreements and partnerships

As colleges and universities work together in many ways through both local and statewide agreements and partnerships, the first necessary step in a comprehensive study of these collaborations is to ensure clarity in the terminology that is used. With that in mind, UNC General Administration (UNCGA) and the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) have begun to develop a set of shared definitions for these strategies. Beginning first with a conversation at UNCGA in June 2014, followed by discussion with the Transfer Advisory Committee, North Carolina Community College Chief Academic Officers in July 2014, the following definitions were vetted by the UNCGA and NCCCS leadership and finalized in August 2014 for use in identifying and communicating shared strategies among the constituent institutions.

Partnerships

Relationships between the universities and community colleges extend beyond formal articulation agreements. In particular these institutional partnerships allow our institutions to leverage existing resources to achieve greater efficiencies in facilitating student access and success as they move from community college to senior institution.

Articulation Agreements

Broadly, Articulation Agreements are the principal instruments that facilitate transfer between institutions (Anderson, 2006). The primary objective of articulation policy is curriculum alignment, specifically the alignment of two-year program curricula to their four-year counterparts. There are several different types of articulation agreements which will be defined below.

1) Articulation Agreements for the Associate in Arts or Associate in Science

Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (CAA)

The CAA is a statewide agreement governing the transfer of credits from NCCCS to the UNC System. The CAA provides certain assurances to the transferring student; for example, students who earn an Associate's in Arts (AA) or an Associate's in Science (AS) degree according to the guidelines of the CAA will be treated as juniors at the receiving UNC institution. Benefits of the CAA do not apply to either the Associate in General Education (AGE) degree or an Associate's in Applied Science (AAS) degrees.

CAA Baccalaureate Degree Plans

Each UNC institution will develop, publish, and maintain four-year degree plans identifying community college courses that provide pathways leading to associate degree completion, admission into the major, and baccalaureate completion. Students who complete the AA or AS degree and the degree plan tracks published by a UNC institution, and who are accepted into that institution and into that major within four years of initial enrollment at the community college, will continue into that major at the UNC institution with all courses fulfilling lower division general education and other degree requirements.

CAA Extension Agreements

CAA extension agreements build upon the CAA framework to create transfer arrangements for individual NCCCS AA or AS programs to specific programs at UNC institution, and may include technical courses. Prior naming conventions include 2+2 or 2+3 programs.

CAA Bi-lateral Agreement

A CAA bilateral agreement is when one university and one community college join in a collaborative effort to facilitate the transfer of students from a specific AA/AS degree program to a specific baccalaureate degree program.

CAA Multi-lateral Agreement

A CAA multi-lateral agreement is one university and two or more community colleges collaborating to facilitate the transfer of students from specific AA/AS degree programs to a single baccalaureate degree program.

CAA Consortium Agreements

A consortium agreement involves multiple universities and two or more community colleges collaborating to facilitate the transfer of students from a specific AA/AS degree program to a specific baccalaureate degree program.

2) Articulation Agreements for the Associate in Applied Science (AAS)

AAS Lateral & Consortium Agreements

AAS Lateral & Consortium Agreements stem from transfer arrangements created for individual NCCCS AAS programs to specific programs at UNC institutions. These arise from Special circumstances such as: different accreditation criteria for faculty in transfer and non-transfer programs, the different general education requirements for transfer and non-transfer programs, and the workforce preparedness mission of the community college AAS programs. Prior naming conventions include 2+2 or 2+3 programs. The following are several types of lateral and consortium agreements:

AAS Bi-lateral Agreement

An AAS bi-lateral agreement is when one university and one community college join in a collaborative effort to facilitate the transfer of students from a specific AAS degree program to a specific baccalaureate degree program (e.g., AAS in Criminal Justice to Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice or Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice).

AAS Multi-lateral Agreements

An AAS multi-lateral agreement is one university and two or more community colleges collaborating to facilitate the transfer of students from specific AAS degree programs to a single baccalaureate degree program (e.g. UNCW's Aquaculture Technology Articulation Agreement with Brunswick Community College and Carteret Community College which governs the transfer of credit between the AAS degree in Aquaculture Technology and Bachelor of Science degree in Marine Biology).

AAS Consortium Agreements

A consortium bilateral agreement involves multiple universities and two or more community colleges collaborating to facilitate the transfer of students from a specific AAS degree program to a specific baccalaureate degree program.

Statewide AAS Lateral Agreements

Though none currently exist, a statewide lateral agreement would occur when all 16 UNC universities and all 58 NCCCS institutions agree on articulation from a specific AAS program to a specific baccalaureate degree program (e.g., Minnesota's statewide RN to BSN program).

3) Articulation Agreements for the Associate in Fine Arts (AFA)

AFA Lateral & Consortium Agreements

AFA Lateral & Consortium Agreements stem from transfer arrangements created for individual NCCCS AFA programs to specific programs at UNC institutions. Prior naming conventions include 2+2 or 2+3 programs. The following are several types of lateral and consortium agreements:

AFA Bi-lateral Agreement

An AFA bi-lateral agreement is when one university and one community college join in a collaborative effort to facilitate the transfer of students from a specific AFA degree program to a specific baccalaureate degree program.

AFA Multi-lateral Agreements

An AFA multi-lateral agreement is one single university and two or more community colleges collaborating to facilitate the transfer of students from specific AFA degree programs to a single baccalaureate degree program.

AFA Consortium Agreements

A consortium bilateral agreement involves multiple universities and two or more community colleges collaborating to facilitate the transfer of students from a specific AFA degree program to a specific baccalaureate degree program.

Statewide AFA Lateral Agreements

Though none currently exist, a statewide AFA lateral agreement would occur when all 16 UNC universities and all 58 NCCCS institutions agree on articulation from a specific AFA program to a specific baccalaureate degree program.

4) Programs and Services

In addition to the aforementioned policy levers, we recognize that some of the most successful efforts to foster transfer student success occur through smaller, targeted institutional efforts.

Formal Transfer Student Support Programs

Formal programs are those that require a prospective transfer student to apply and be admitted into the program and/or meet specific requirements before acceptance (e.g. completion of an Associate's degree). Examples of formal programs are UNC Chapel Hill's C-STEP Program and UNC Charlotte's/Central Piedmont Community College's Passport program.

Informal Transfer Student Support Programs

Informal programs do not require admission into the program but are differentiated from normal support services in that they have a program name and dedicated staff (e.g., Appalachian State's Jumpstart Program).

Transfer Student Support Services

Any specific services provided to transfer students, which may include transfer advisors, a transfer student office with dedicated staff, etc.

III. Process for Agreement and Partnership Data Collection

Initially, UNCGA's Office of Transfer Articulation asked their institutions to provide data on their agreements, partnerships, and programs which included all of the following information:

- (1) A description of the agreement or partnership;
- (2) The number of years it has been in existence;
- (3) The number of participants by year; and
- (4) An analysis of student outcomes after a transfer under the agreement or partnership.

The campuses were provided a template to complete, a copy of the Senate Bill 744, and a copy of the transfer definitions. The campuses provided information on their agreements, partnerships and programs. The Office of Transfer Articulation compiled the institution data into one system document which was then shared with NCCCS in November 2014.

NCCCS submitted the data, organized by community college and academic program, to each individual community college for review in December 2014 and asked colleges to indicate whether agreements are active, discontinued, or ending in the near future. Upon receipt of verified data from community colleges, NCCCS and UNCGA compared university and community college data to develop a complete listing of active bilateral agreements and the participating institutions as of January 2014 as shown in the following table.

IV. Table Agreements, Partnerships, and Programs

(Not complete at time of printing)

V. Recommendations

This study provides evidence of the following:

- There are a number of successful local collaborations among constituent institutions.
- A process is needed to ensure accurate system (UNCGA and NCCCS) knowledge of agreements.
- A process is needed to ensure that system (UNCGA and/or NCCCS) changes which can impact local agreements are communicated in a timely manner to prevent unintended barriers to student credential completion.
- Successful local/regional agreements and partnerships should be evaluated and communicated for possible replication among other constituent institutions.

References

Anderson, G.M., Alfonso, M., and Sun, J.C. (2006) Effectiveness of statewide articulation agreements on the probability of transfer: A preliminary policy analysis. *The Review of Higher Education* 29(3): 261-291.