

Agreement Eases Transition of South Piedmont

Community College RN and Engineering Students into the UNC System

State Board of Community Colleges, UNC Board of Governors sign Uniform Articulation Agreements for RN to BSN and for Engineering programs

Building on the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (CAA) already in place between the University of North Carolina system and NC Community Colleges, the UNC Board of Governors and State Board of Community Colleges have approved two supplemental articulation agreements that will provide seamless education pathways for students wishing to pursue specialized degrees in the high-demand careers of nursing and engineering.

These agreements create uniform requirements for students moving between North Carolina's two public higher education systems and will help students avoid course duplication, shorten the time to degree completion, and eliminate the need for multiple agreements between institutions. In the process, they will help address the needs of both employees and employers by building a pipeline of skilled, talented citizens for promising careers.

"It is important that we provide our students seeking four-year degrees with a concise and seamless transition to the university," said South Piedmont Community College's Interim Vice President of Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer, Joyce Long. "These new agreements do just that for students entering our nursing and engineering programs."

The Uniform Articulation Agreement between Associate Degree Nursing Programs and the RN to Bachelor of Science Nursing Programs promotes a clear pathway for moving from community colleges to public universities, while also responding to the health care industry's increasing demand that nurses resume BSN degrees. A report published in 2010 by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Institute of Medicine recommended increasing the proportion of nurses with a baccalaureate degree to 80 percent by 2020 to meet the evolving demands of the health care industry.

Currently there are 11 RN to BSN programs within the University system and 55 NC community colleges offering Associate Degree Nursing programs. In most cases, these colleges have bilateral articulation agreements in place with multiple universities. The number of programs and differing requirements for transfer can create unnecessary barriers for nurses seeking to continue their education, often resulting in increased time, duplication of courses and added cost to complete their BSN degree.

The Uniform Articulation Agreement between Associate in Engineering Programs and Baccalaureate Engineering Programs allows students to begin engineering studies at a North Carolina community college and then have the opportunity to transfer seamlessly to one of the UNC system's engineering programs. The new agreement outlines a pathway that includes an Associate in Engineering degree designed specifically to meet the prerequisite requirements of those UNC programs.

Engineers are often listed among the positions that industry struggles to fill. The development of this new articulation agreement stemmed from the Building Engineering Pathways grant, which was funded by the Golden Leaf Foundation with the goal of expanding the pipeline to four-year engineering degrees. By providing a unified, seamless pathway to an engineering degree, the two public higher education systems are increasing students' opportunities to pursue engineering, while also responding to industry's workforce needs.

Five of UNC's 16 constituent universities currently offer Bachelor of Science in Engineering programs. The Associate in Engineering Program is a specialized college degree transfer program in engineering majors and requires higher-level math courses, along with other general education and pre-major courses designed to prepare students to enter universities as juniors.

"These articulation agreements are the work of dedicated faculty, staff and partner organizations who sought ways to expand educational pathway opportunities for our state's future nurses and engineers," said NC Community College System President Dr. Scott Ralls. "Through these agreements, our institutions are ensuring that students have opportunities not only to transfer to a public university, but to pursue specialized degrees in the most efficient and cost effective way possible."

"One out of every four UNC students is a transfer student, and our faculties are committed to creating more seamless pathways for students who hope to pursue specialized degrees in high-demand fields such as nursing and engineering," said UNC President Thomas W. Ross. "More than 24,000 students who began their studies at a NC community college are now undergraduates on a UNC campus. By working together, our two systems can continue to grow that number and better meet North Carolina's future workforce needs."

While these agreements streamline education pathways, they do not guarantee entrance into these rigorous bachelor programs of study. However, these articulation agreements will keep costs lower for students by offering more course work at community college, eliminating course duplication and reducing time for those who continue toward their bachelor degree goals. Both articulation agreements go into effect for the fall 2015 semester.

This Week in Sports

AHS Athletic Director Terry Mabry has released this week's schedule.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18

- AHS: Soccer vs. F. Hills - Away 4:30 Double Header
- AHS: V Baseball vs. Pur-nell Swett - Away 5:00
- AHS: JV Baseball vs. P. Swett @ Home 4:30

THURSDAY, MARCH 19

- AHS: Soccer vs. Marvin Ridge - Away 5:30
- AMS: Baseball & Softball vs. Sycamore Lane - Away 4
- AMS: Soccer vs. Sycamore Lane @ Home 4:00

SATURDAY, MARCH 21

- AHS: Track @ Marvin Ridge



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