

# Transfer Articulation: The Road Ahead

Dr. Sharon Morrissey

Senior Vice President for Academic & Student Services  
and Chief Academic Officer  
NC Community College System Office

Dr. Suzanne Ortega

Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs  
UNC General Administration

Education Oversight Committee

NC General Assembly

Tuesday, September 11, 2012

# Comprehensive Articulation Agreement History

- 1990s: Multiple Bilateral Transfer Agreements
  - 16 university catalogs X 58 community college catalogs
  - Transfer agreements tended to be between local institutions
  - Students complained about transfer barriers, both among community colleges and between community colleges and universities



- Solution:  
A Statewide Comprehensive Articulation Agreement

# Comprehensive Articulation Agreement History

- 1995 Session of the General Assembly, HB 739
  - Instructed the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina and the State Board of Community Colleges to develop a plan for the transfer of credits between the institutions of the NCCCS and the constituent institutions of UNC.
  - Instructed the State Board of Community Colleges to implement common course descriptions for all community college programs by June 1, 1997.

# Comprehensive Articulation Agreement Fundamentals

- Requirements to Meet the CAA Basics:
  - Must graduate from NCCCS with an AA or AS degree OR complete the 44-hour general education CAA core
  - Must have an overall GPA of at least 2.0 on a 4.0 scale
  - Must have a grade of “C” or better in all CAA courses
- The NCCCS Student Applying to UNC:
  - Guaranteed admission to one of the 16 universities but not to a specific UNC campus or specific major
  - Has fulfilled the lower-division general education requirements of the UNC campus to which the student is admitted
  - Will receive at least 64 semester hours of credit upon admission to the UNC campus and transfer with “Junior Status”

# The CAA Today

- Transfer Advisory Committee (TAC)
  - Hears Appeals
  - Manages/Oversees Policies, Transfer Courses, Pre-Major Agreements
- 644 College Transfer Courses
  - 198 General Education
  - 446 Pre-Major/Elective
- 30 Pre-Major Agreements
  - 25 Associate in Arts
  - 5 Associate in Science

# NCCCS Credentials Designed for Transfer

- Associate in Arts and Associate in Science
  - Designed for transfer to UNC
  - 44 semester hours of general education courses
  - 20 hours of pre-major and elective courses
- Associate in Fine Arts
  - Designed for transfer; often performance or portfolio-based
  - Includes 28 semester hours of general education
  - Transfer of general education and fine arts courses determined on a course-by-course basis as course or elective credit

# NCCCS Credentials

## Not Designed for Transfer

- Associate in Applied Science
  - Designed as terminal degrees to prepare skilled employees for the workforce
  - 15 semester hours of general education courses
  - 49-56 hours of applied technical courses
- Associate in General Education
  - Designed for individuals wishing to broaden their education, with emphasis on personal interest, growth and development
  - Option for students competing for admission into an allied health program
  - Not designed for transfer

# NCCCS Enrollments

## Fall 2011

### Fall 2011 NCCCS Enrollment by Program Degree (Students with Declared Majors)

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| Associate in Applied Science<br>(including Certificates & Diplomas) | 150,550 |
| Associate in Arts and Associate in Science<br>(including Diploma)   | 61,235  |
| Associate in Fine Arts  | 1,614   |
| Associate in General Education                                      | 37,043  |



# 2009 Transfer Numbers

| Fall 2009 NCCCS Transfers to UNC System                         | Associate Degree Graduates | Transfers with 24+ Hours (but without degree) | Total Transfers |
|---|----------------------------|---|-----------------|
| Associate in Arts, Associate in Science, Associate in Fine Arts | 2,714                      | 5,274   | <b>7,988</b>    |
| Associate in Applied Science, Associate in General Education    | 717                        | 1,342   | <b>2,059</b>    |
| <b>Total Transfers</b>  | <b>3,431</b>               | <b>6,616</b>                                  | <b>10,047</b>   |

# Bilateral Agreements

- AAS is intended as a terminal degree to prepare students for employment in mid-skill technical and professional fields.
- In some cases, AAS degree completers may transfer a portion of their credits based on a Bilateral Articulation Agreement between a university and one or more community colleges.
- Transfer credit awarded is limited and variable, depending on the program and institution
  - For the most part, 100 and 200-level technical courses taken at the community college cannot be transferred as upper division major courses at the university

# Bilateral Agreements: A sample from Biotechnology

- Alamance CC NC Central University
- Cleveland CC UNC Charlotte
- Cleveland CC UNC Greensboro
- Fayetteville TCC UNC Pembroke
- Forsyth TCC Winston-Salem State University
- Fayetteville TCC Fayetteville State

# How Are College Transfer Students Advised?

- Three major advising opportunities
  - Talk to an Advisor at a Community College campus
  - Talk to an Advisor at a UNC campus
  - Use the online Transfer Navigator tool
- Taking the right course is a shared responsibility:
  - Both NCCCS and UNC advisors need to give good advice AND students need to ask for advice and then follow it

# What are the Challenges to Seamless Transfer?

- Inadequate advising at the community college
- Students don't understand why they should complete the general education core or the AA/AS before transferring
- Students misunderstand the transferability of AAS and AGE degrees
- Students change majors or fail to declare a major
- Transfer student swirl

# Student Experiences

- Associate in Arts/Associate in Science
  - Student A: Planned to transfer to one university, but ended up going to another
  - Student B: Loved studying history
  - Student C: Early transfer who had not completed the 44-hour general education core

# Improving Seamless Transfer: Technical Challenge & Technical Opportunity

- Creating a “transcript warehouse”
- Mapping all NCCCS courses to all General Education requirements across all UNC campuses
- Mapping all NCCCS courses to all major requirements across all UNC campuses
- Mapping all UNC General Education course requirements to all other UNC campus General Education course requirements
- Keeping these cross walks up to date
- Implementing academic progress software for NC community college students to ensure that students take the right courses for their transfer pathways

# Improving Seamless Transfer: Progress to Date

- CAA Steering Committee appointed in April 2012
- Committee submitted a research and policy agenda on July 3, 2012
- Group reconvened in August 2012 to begin developing work plan and timelines
- NCCCS will hire staff member to coordinate CAA disciplinary panels and work with Transfer Advisory Committee of the CAA no later than September 30, 2012



# Improving Seamless Transfer: Progress to Date

- Research and Policy Questions (Sample)
  - What are the most common transfer majors?
  - How many transfer courses articulate for course credit? For elective credit?
  - How many hours do transfer students take to graduate compared to native students?
  - What are the best predictors of transfer student success?
  - What should the community college student's first year of coursework include?

# Improving Seamless Transfer: Progress to Date

Discussions with Columbia University's Community College Research Center and the North Carolina Higher Education Research Consortium to perform data analyses and provide research-based evidence to inform CAA revision

# Improving Seamless Transfer: Next Steps

- Launch research agenda
- Review general education requirements across the universities to identify commonalities
- Engage general education faculty discipline committees to evaluate college transfer courses and revise/update as needed
- Engage program faculty to develop clear pathways to majors

# Expected Outcomes

- Highly-structured NCCCS transfer pathways leading to major fields of study
- Fewer NCCCS first-year elective options
- Transfer students select pre-major upon completion of first 30 hours
- Improved transfer course mapping technology tools
- Improved transfer advising capacity
- More students complete degrees before transfer
- Reduced costs to students and the State through increased efficiencies

# Timeline

Fall 2012

- Launch research agenda
- Analyze universities' general education requirements
- Identify and evaluate best practices in other states
- Identify technology tools/updates to support course mapping

Spring 2013

- Evaluate research findings (part 1)
- Convene discipline committees to redesign general education requirements
- Develop structured first-year pathways

Fall 2013

- Evaluate research findings (part 2)
- Present Interim Report to Education Oversight Committee
- Convene program major faculty to design pathways to majors—second 30 hours
- Circulate revised general education and program pathway models to chief academic officers
- Revise Career & College Promise College Transfer Pathways

# Timeline - continued

Spring 2014

- Obtain approval from BOG and SBCC
- Launch communication & professional development campaign
- Re-define role/scope of Transfer Advisory Committee (TAC)
- Present Final Report to Education Oversight Committee

Fall 2014

- Implement revised Comprehensive Articulation Agreement
- Develop process and schedule for ongoing evidence-based review/updating of CAA

Future

- Provide Annual Reports to Education Oversight Committee on Transfer Students' Credit Articulation, Performance, Graduation Rates

# What We Are Doing in the Interim

- Increasing Awareness of Transfer Navigator
- 2012 Transfer Student Success Conference
- UNC Transcript Data Warehouse
- NCCCS Completion by Design Initiative

# Hold Us Accountable

- Two-year timeline to complete the research, engage faculty discipline committees, and redesign community college transfer pathways
- Interim report of research findings and progress towards goals
- Follow-up reports on college transfer students' credit hours articulated, performance, and graduation rates
- Ongoing evidence-based reviews/updates to CAA