

# **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

BETWEEN

SOUTHWESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE, SYLVA, NORTH CAROLINA

AND

WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY, CULLOWHEE, NORTH CAROLINA

## **I. PARTIES**

This Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”), is made and entered into by and between the Southwestern Community College, Sylva, North Carolina (“SCC”) and the Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, North Carolina (“WCU” or the “University”), collectively referred to as the “Parties.”

## **II. BACKGROUND**

Western Carolina University creates learning opportunities that incorporate teaching, research, service, and engagement through on-campus, off-campus, on-line and international experiences. The university focuses its undergraduate, master's and doctoral programs, educational outreach, research, creative, and cultural activities to sustain and improve individual lives and enhance economic and community development in Western North Carolina and beyond.

SCC is a comprehensive community college within the legislatively created North Carolina Community College System and serves Jackson, Macon, and Swain counties and the Qualla Boundary. The mission of SCC is “a learning and teaching institution offering high-quality, innovative instruction and support, which promotes student achievement, academic excellence and economic development.”

The Parties have a shared geographic perspective and a shared desire to strengthen the learning community and workforce development of Jackson County, Macon County, Swain County, the Qualla Boundary, Western North Carolina, the State of North Carolina and beyond.

## **III. CATAMOUNT COMPASS PROGRAM**

WCU and SCC will create and administer a program on each Party’s campus called the Catamount Compass Program: A Direct-Entry Admission Program (the “Program”). The Program name may be changed upon the mutual written consent of both Parties. (NOTE: The Direct-Entry Admission Program discussed within this MOU pertains to admission to the University and not to a specific degree program. Some WCU programs of study have their own programmatic admission criteria, standards, policies, processes and deadlines.)

Building on the North Carolina Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (CAA), the Program will allow currently enrolled SCC students a direct-entry pathway to WCU available upon graduation from SCC. Students in the Program who satisfy the following conditions are guaranteed admission to Western Carolina University as outlined in the agreement (i.e., assures admission to the university but not to a specific program of study; some programs have their own programmatic application processes and/or admission criteria):

- Be a currently enrolled student at SCC in a degree-seeking capacity;
- Submit WCU application for admission and records by WCU deadlines;
- Submit application fee or waiver and fulfill all commitment actions steps;
- Be in good standing at SCC and other institutions attended;
- Demonstrate good citizenship and conduct;
- Earn and maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.50 at SCC and a minimum GPA of 2.20 in their most recent term; and
- Earn an Associate's Degree from SCC in a college transfer program or in an applied program for which an articulation agreement exists.
- Enroll at WCU within one academic year (within the next two regular terms (fall/spring semesters) of completion of the Associate's Degree).

While enrolled at SCC, students will identify their interest in the Program by completing a brief, online form provided by the WCU Transfer Counselor. There is no Program participation fee (Program participants must complete an application for admission and submit the nonrefundable application fee. Go to [applicationfeewaiver.wcu.edu](http://applicationfeewaiver.wcu.edu) for details about application fee waiver policies and procedures). Students who discontinue their participation and choose to enroll at WCU will be expected to transition to WCU through regular admission channels. Students who enroll at another college or university after their SCC enrollment and later choose to enroll at WCU also will be expected to transition to WCU through regular admission channels.

The Program affords SCC students access to information about academic programs, faculty, and staff at the WCU campus who will facilitate their transition to WCU. This Program prioritizes the ability to receive admission, financial aid, and orientation communications early in the transition process, which sets SCC students up for maximum success at both institutions. Full access to WCU activities, services, and facilities occurs at the point of acceptance, commitment, and enrollment at WCU.

The Program requires completion of the Associate's Degree from SCC in a college transfer program or an articulated applied program. In cases where Program participants matriculate prior to completing the Associate's Degree, a Reverse Transfer Process provides the opportunity for students to complete their Associate's Degree after transferring to WCU.

Additional benefits that serve both campuses may be added to the Program structure by mutual written consent of both Parties. Examples may include, but are not limited to, consortium agreements for cross-campus enrollment in individual courses and invitations to selective events or programs.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF BOTH PARTIES

- Disseminating information about the Program to Jackson County, Macon County, Swain County, the Qualla Boundary, Western North Carolina communities and statewide;
- Raising awareness of the Program with relevant members of the SCC and WCU campus communities;
- The Coordinator, University Transfer Advising Center at SCC, will work in concert with the identified Primary Point of Contact at WCU in the development and maintenance of the program. The SCC Coordinator, University Transfer Advising Center, serves as the point person for WCU representatives while they are on campus;
- Developing and providing an online registration form for SCC students to express interest in the Program;
- Providing representatives to serve on the Program Committee;
- Ensuring that both parties honor the NCCCS/UNC Articulation Agreement;
- Providing real-time resource and information to SCC students, on the SCC campus, for students who express interest in the Program;
- Developing and maintaining a list of students who register to participate in the Program;
- Communicating with students who register to participate in the Program; and
- Providing guest-speaker access to SCC students for services and opportunities that will be available after transitioning to the WCU campus. Some examples of guests that could be made available to SCC students include, but are not limited to, academic program chairs and faculty, academic advisors, admissions and financial aid counselors, student life staff, and student success representatives. This provision does not imply that instructional time will be provided for guest-speaker access.

### **SCC Responsibilities**

SCC will be responsible for:

- Aiding SCC students pursuing the benefits of the Program to fulfill the requirements for university-level admission to WCU;
- Educating participants as to program-level admission opportunities and requirements;
- Complying with all applicable federal and state laws and SCC policies, including but not limited to those related to financial aid; and
- Working collaboratively with WCU staff assigned to serve on the Program Committee.

### **WCU Responsibilities**

WCU will be responsible for:

- Advising and assisting SCC students pursuing the benefits of the Program in fulfilling the requirements for university-level admission to WCU;
- Educating participants as to program-level admission opportunities and requirements;
- Complying with all applicable federal and state laws, UNC System regulations and WCU policies, including but not limited to those related to financial aid;

- Disseminating information about the Program to members of the WCU campus community;
- Providing representatives assigned to administer the Program; and
- Disseminating information about the Program to candidates for admission who are not offered admission directly to WCU about the possibility to participate in the Program as a student at SCC.

#### **IV. NOTICE**

The Parties designate the following individual(s) to administer and oversee the Program on behalf of his or her Party.

- A. For SCC:  
Coordinator, University Transfer Advising Center
- B. For WCU:  
Director, Undergraduate Admissions

#### **V. TERM AND TERMINATION**

The term of this MOU shall be for a period of two (2) years beginning on the date that it is fully executed by all parties ("Term"). The MOU may be renewed for additional two (2) year terms upon the mutual written consent of the Parties.

Either Party may, for any reason, terminate this MOU with sixty (60) days prior written notice to the other Party. If the MOU is terminated, SCC students who had submitted a transfer application prior to the termination date will still be eligible to participate in the Program.

#### **VI. MODIFICATION**

This MOU may be amended or modified at any time upon mutual written consent by the Parties.

#### **VII. GOVERNING LAW**

This MOU is subject to applicable Federal and North Carolina State law. It is also subject to the University of North Carolina Board of Governors' policies and regulations, the University of North Carolina System Office policies and regulations, and the policies and regulations of the North Carolina Community College System.

#### **VIII. RELATIONSHIP OF THE PARTIES**

It is expressly acknowledged by the Parties that they are independent contractors and nothing in this MOU is intended or shall be construed to create an employer/employee relationship, partnership or a joint venture relationship so as to allow one Party to exercise control or direction over the manner or method by which the other Parties perform the services which are the subject matter of this MOU. Neither Party is authorized or empowered to act as agent for the other for any purpose and shall not on behalf of the other enter into any contract, warranty,

