

**STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES**  
**Allocation for North Carolina Competency-Based Education Incubator**

**Request:** The State Board is asked to approve an allocation of \$125,760 to Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) to support 1) the development of a Strategic Work Plan to build a scalable, Competency-Based Education (CBE) learning model and Policy Framework for North Carolina, and 2) the launch of a CBE Associate of Applied Science degree in the career pathway of Information Technology. This project, with the endorsement of the NC Association of Community College Presidents, is an extension of the Fayetteville Technical Community College (FTCC) Credit for Prior-Learning Assessments (PLA) and Competency Based Education (CBE) Research and Planning project funded with unanimous support from the State Board in fall 2014.

**Background:** Institutions of higher education in North Carolina, and across the nation, are under pressure to reduce costs, increase completion rates, maintain open access, and ensure that all graduates have the skills industry partners' demand all at a time when public funding for colleges and universities is declining. These pressures created a considerable and growing interest in new and creative approaches that can reduce costs, increase accessibility, and improve student success while ensuring quality of instruction. CBE is an innovative educational delivery model in higher education that has shown great promise.

The CBE model uses the application of learning, not time, as the sole means of determining student success. Students can accelerate through their programs of study and into the workplace by demonstrating mastery of specific knowledge and skills (i.e. competencies). This model increases access for learners with life and work experience such as veterans, incumbent workers, and career transitioners. CBE also fosters consensus between educators and employers ensuring that curriculum equips students with the information they need to succeed in the workplace.

At this time, CBE programming on NCCCS campuses is limited and inconsistent across degree programs. There is currently no standardized process for colleges to implement CBE programming to fill students' knowledge and training gaps toward certification/licensure or continued education and advanced degrees.

**Rationale:** The Strategic Work Plan, Policy Framework, and CBE pathway will be collaboratively developed under the leadership of CPCC with full support from the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) and three leadership colleges, Wake Technical Community College, Forsyth Technical Community College and Stanly Community College, which are committed to the project. This group, the North Carolina Competency-Based Education Incubator (NC-CBE Incubator), will work to address the challenges inherent to the development and implementation of a model CBE program, for example, quality of program design, rigor of learning assessments, business processes and systems, sustainable financial models, policy revisions, accreditation, among others.

A team of national CBE subject matter experts including several state community college leaders will support and facilitate this engagement.

The resulting CBE career pathway will serve as a model program reflecting regional industry needs, as well as the goals, direction, and competencies established through previous statewide collaborations, such as the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement, Developmental Education Initiative, Math Curriculum Improvement, Code Green Curriculum Improvement Project, and Information Technology Alignment Project.

**Method of Allocation:** In the summer of 2013, CPCC began informal research into pioneer institutions of successful CBE models, with the guidance of NCCCS leadership. Over the last year, CPCC has visited and developed relationships with leaders of the Kentucky Technical and Community College System (KTCCS) and Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU). These institutions and their CBE programs are considered to be the most innovative models in the nation. CPCC has also developed supportive relationships with national partners including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Jobs for the Future, and several federal agencies. These partners have proven to be enthusiastic supporters of North Carolina's exploration and research, and will serve as invaluable guides as the North Carolina moves forward.

It was recommended that the North Carolina Community College System Curriculum Leadership Team allocate funds to Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) in the form of a direct grant to support this project. Given CPCC's meaningful involvement in researching exemplary, national competency-based education (CBE) models, it is the only NC institution with the commitment, capacity and expertise to lead this effort for the State.

**Fund Source and Availability:** Funding is contingent upon award from the Carl D. Perkins, Career and Technical Education, State Leadership funds.

**Allocation Amount and Time Period:** The \$125,760 allocation is for the period of July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016.

**Contact:**

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