



NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

R. Scott Ralls, Ph.D.

President

February 17, 2014

MEMORANDUM

TO: College Presidents

FROM: Sharon Morrissey
Executive Vice President for Programs and Chief Academic Officer

Jennifer Haygood
Executive Vice President for Operations and Chief Financial Officer

RE: Reporting Hours for Hybrid Courses in State Correctional Facilities

The Division of Adult Correction (DAC) is now allowing internet access for selected groups of inmate students at selected prisons, to include the offering of hybrid curriculum courses in these prisons. This has created some new questions for participating colleges, particularly as it relates to counting student hours since such internet access has not traditionally been available in state prisons.

We are sure many new scenarios will emerge as internet access becomes available in state prisons. This memo, however, addresses one very specific situation: **how to account for the online portion of hybrid captive/prisons courses that are offered to inmate students in state correctional facilities** since state law mandates that all courses offered in a correctional setting must be counted on contact hours, yet (with the exception of literacy classes) these courses may not be offered on a multi-entry/multi-exit basis. [See G.S. 115D-5(c) excerpted at end of this memo for reference.]

The guidelines for this specific hybrid situation in correctional facilities follow (*please note that these courses are considered non-traditional instruction*):

- There must be a **scheduled class time** during which inmate students work on the online portion of the hybrid class or classes;
- The scheduled class time must be conducted under the **supervision of a designated college employee** (instructor or monitor);
- The designated college employee is responsible for ensuring that **accurate attendance records are maintained** for each student for each course taken (i.e., if any students are working on the online portion of more than one course during the scheduled computer class time, the designee must match each student's contact hours to the specific course(s) being worked on); and
- The college must **report contact hours based on these records**.

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Thank you for your attention to this matter. We anticipate that internet access will expand to other prisons over time, so we ask that participating colleges advise us of new situations that may emerge and may require further clarification.

The NC Community College System has a longstanding partnership with the state's prison system to provide Basic Skills, Occupational Extension, and/or Curriculum courses in all state prison facilities (there are currently 66). Our state is a leader in the nation in correctional education, and it is due to your support of this important endeavor. We thank you and your staff for your continued local partnerships that are making the difference in the lives of inmate students across the state.

If you have questions, please contact: Tracy McPherson at mcphersont@ncccommunitycolleges.edu or 919-807-7117.

CC: Chief Academic Officers, NCCCS
Continuing Education Administrators, NCCCS
Basic Skills Directors, NCCCS
Prison Education Program (PEP) Contacts, NCCCS
Distance Learning Administrators, NCCCS
Audit Services, NCCCS
Education Services, Division of Adult Correction, NCDPS
Nicole Sullivan, NCDPS

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Relevant General Statutes

G.S. 115D-5

(c) No course of instruction shall be offered by any community college at State expense or partial State expense to any captive or co-opted group of students, as defined by the State Board of Community Colleges, without prior approval of the State Board of Community Colleges ... A course taught without such approval will not yield any full-time equivalent students, as defined by the State Board of Community Colleges.

(c1) Community colleges shall report full-time equivalent (FTE) student hours for correction education programs on the basis of contact hours rather than student membership hours. No community college shall operate a multi-entry/multi-exit class or program in a prison facility, except for a literacy class or program.