

STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES
Reallocation of State Board Reserve

Request: The State Board of Community Colleges is requested to approve the reallocation of up to \$75,000 of State Board Reserve to Vance Granville Community College to support the credentialing of Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Instructor Trainers. These funds were initially allocated in February 2020 to Surry Community College to support campus mental health and safety activities.

Background: At its February 2020 meeting, the State Board approved the allocation of up to \$75,000 to support two projects related to mental health and safety – an assessment of behavioral health service and increased training opportunities for campus safety officials – with Surry Community College as the fiscal agent. These two projects were delayed due to the pandemic, but the Office of State Budget and Management permitted the funds to be included in the System’s carryforward to FY 2020-21.

Given the continued pandemic, the variety of emotional challenges which the System’s students have historically faced, and the exacerbation of those challenges likely caused by the pandemic, it is recommended that these funds be reallocated to provide training for one employee at each college to be trained as a mental health first aid trainer.

The National Council for Behavioral Health (NCBH) created and provides train-the-trainer education to position instructors to provide the mental health first aid course, which trains individuals to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders ([Mental Health First Aid - National Council \(thenationalcouncil.org\)](http://thenationalcouncil.org)). Participants are trained in:

- Recognizing the symptoms of common mental illnesses and substance use disorders.
- De-escalating crisis situations safely.
- Initiating timely referral to mental health and substance use resources available in the community.

Rationale: Higher education research establishes the importance of a wholistic view of serving students including their mental health needs. On-going MHFA professional development for faculty and staff will enhance students’ college experience and classroom engagement. Further, workforce continuing education MHFA instructors will serve local business and industry improving employers’ customer service to and leadership of people with mental health concerns.

If approved, train-the-trainer classes conducted by NCBH will be available for one person from each community college. NCBH will conduct either two face-to-face courses or three virtual courses, contingent upon the Governor’s meeting restrictions. Each college’s trainer will be able to train instructors to provide professional development for faculty and staff. Further, the System Office will facilitate the creation of a workforce continuing education course so that colleges may provide the course to meet business and industry needs.

Fund Source and Availability: \$75,000 in State Board Reserve funds carried forward from FY 2019-20 would be reallocated from Surry Community College to Vance Granville Community College and available through June 30, 2021.

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