

STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES
State Board Reserve Allocations

Request: The State Board is asked to approve \$40,000 from the State Board Reserve: \$35,000 to support Open Education North Carolina (OENC), an initiative to promote the use of open educational resources in lieu of traditional textbooks, and \$5,000 to support the Reverse Transfer initiative with the NC Independent Colleges and Universities (NCICU).

Strategic Plan Reference:

Theme: Student Interest and Access

Goal: Increase the percentage of North Carolinians, particularly within underserved populations, pursuing and easily accessing education or training through North Carolina community colleges.

- Objective 1.3 Identify and reduce access barriers for all prospective students, particularly among underserved populations.
 - Strategy 1.3.1. Improve and augment existing financial assistance programs and services to better assist students with educational costs, particularly costs beyond tuition and fees (e.g., books, transportation, child care, etc.).

Theme: Clear & Supported Pathways for Student Progress and Success

Goal 2: Provide a continuum of education, training, advising, and support to help learners make informed decisions that lead to credentials and careers.

- Objective 2.3: Increase completion of credentials for successful transition to careers and/or further education.

Background:

Open Education North Carolina: OENC is an initiative that aims to reduce the cost of higher education for North Carolina students by providing free, open textbooks for the most frequently taught courses across NC's 2- and 4-year colleges and universities. The initiative is led by NC LIVE, North Carolina's statewide library cooperative, and is a partnership involving NC Community Colleges, the UNC System, and NC Independent Colleges & Universities. OENC offers open education workshops across the state and provides adoption grants to faculty and instructors who choose to adopt an open textbook. In the first year of implementation, textbooks for 22 courses were curated and made available via the OENC repository, 118 faculty grants were awarded (81 to community college, 15 to UNC, and 22 to NCICU faculty), and 341 faculty and librarians participated in training. Based on enrollments in courses using the free, open textbooks, over 54,000 students saved an estimated \$7.5 million dollars.

NCICU Reverse Transfer Initiative: The goal of the Reverse Transfer Initiative is to provide an incentive for a specific segment of community college transfer students to stay in college and achieve their baccalaureate degree. Under the Independent Comprehensive Articulation Agreement, students with associate degrees may transfer to participating NCICU campuses as

juniors. However, there are a significant number of community college students who transfer before they receive their associate degree. The Reverse Transfer program will allow credits earned at the senior institutions to seamlessly transfer back to the community colleges and enable students to document they have completed the requirements to earn the associate degree. Students will earn a post-secondary credential, have a sense of achievement, and increased incentive from knowing they are halfway to their baccalaureate degree.

Rationale:

Open Education North Carolina: As a OENC partner, the State Board Reserve funds will provide our System's portion of the required match (\$12,500) for NC LIVE to access grant funds used to support OENC. Grant funds support the initiative's program manager, the OENC repository, regional training events, and faculty adoption grants. Community college faculty have submitted more applications for adoption grants than the current initiative budget provides. The remaining State Board reserve funds (\$20,000) would supplement the existing adoption grant budget, allowing NCLIVE to fund additional grant applications from community college faculty. The adoption grants provide \$1,000 for each approved application from an individual faculty and \$2,000 for each approved application from a team of faculty.

NCICU Reverse Transfer Initiative: NCICU received a \$30,000 grant from the Council of Independent Colleges for the Reverse Transfer Initiative. This grant required a local match of \$30,000, of which \$25,000 has been received from the Lumina Foundation. The \$5,000 in SBCC Reserve Funds would support the balance of the grant match requirement.

The majority of funds for the project will be used to make software modifications to student information systems to identify students who transferred from a community college who would be eligible for reverse transfer and provide training to staff at NCICU institutions to process the sending of students' coursework to the National Student Clearinghouse, who will in turn send the data to community colleges for degree evaluation. Once those changes have been made, the Reverse Transfer Initiative will be operational and participating NCICU institutions will begin sending student data to the Clearinghouse at the end of each semester.

Fund Source and Availability: FY 2019-20 funding is available from the State Board Reserve from July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020.

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