

STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES
Proposed Federal Legislation Facilitating Reverse Transfer

Request: The American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) is requesting support of federal legislation to create an exception under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) that would allow for the sharing of student information between community colleges and four-year institutions to simplify the “reverse transfer” process.

Background: Reverse Transfer program allows the awarding for an associate degree to students who previously attended a community college but did not obtain an associate degree prior to transferring to a four-year college or university.

In North Carolina, the Reverse Transfer Program is a collaborative effort between North Carolina Community Colleges and The University of North Carolina to combine community college credits and university credits to earn an associate degree. Students who transfer to a North Carolina university from a North Carolina community college are given the opportunity to combine the credits earned at the university with credit already earned at the community college to determine if the community college’s associate degree requirements have been met. Students must have earned at least 16 college-level credit hours at one community college that will apply toward the associate degree. From spring 2014 – spring 2016, **2,278 students have been awarded associate degrees through the Reverse Transfer Program.**

CURRENT LAW & PROPOSED FEDERAL LEGISLATION.

Current Law – FERPA currently prohibits universities from sharing student information with community colleges in situations that don’t involve the student seeking or intending enrollment without written consent from the student. Therefore, universities must notify students that they may be eligible to participate in the Reverse Transfer Program, and the student must “opt in” to the Program by agreeing to have their university transcripts released to the community college. If the student opts in, the university sends the student’s records to the community college, and the community college evaluates both the student’s credits from the university and the community college to determine if the combined credits meet the degree and graduation requirements at the community college.

Proposed Legislation – Under the proposed federal legislation, there would be an exception that would allow the university to send student records to the community college to determine if the student meets the requirements for an associate degree without first obtaining the student’s written consent. The student would still be required to provide written consent to receive the degree.

Requested Action: That the Legislative Affairs Committee recommend that the State Board of Community Colleges support the proposed federal legislation by notifying the AACRAO, the bill sponsors, and the North Carolina congressional delegation of their support.