

**STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES  
2022-26 System Strategic Plan Update**

**Background:**

The following two reports provide updates on two initiatives that advance goals, objectives, and strategies within the 2022–26 North Carolina Community College System Strategic Plan.

**NC Boost Program**

The first report focuses on the NC Boost Program, which is an accelerated, high-touch college-to-career model designed to improve completion and workforce outcomes for students in high-demand fields and transfer students. It advances Goal 3 and Goal 4 of the 2022-26 System Strategic Plan through structured advising, financial and non-financial student support, and alignment with Propel NC workforce sectors or transfer pathways.

**Jobs for the Future (JFF) AI.iNC Project**

The second report focuses on the AI.iNC Project, which prepares the System and colleges to respond to the growing impact of artificial intelligence on instruction, work, and operations. It advances Goal 1, Goal 4, and Goal 5 of the 2022-26 System Strategic Plan through system-level guidance, professional development, and scalable tools to help colleges integrate AI thoughtfully and consistently.

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## STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

2022-26 Strategic Plan Update

NC Boost Program

## Update Summary - January 2026

1. **Context:** What do SBCC members need to know about the program before they hear an update? Basic description of the initiative, its purpose, and why it matters for the mission.
  - The NC Boost Program (“Boost”) is an accelerated college-to-career program that supports community college students earning their degrees or diplomas in high-wage, high-demand workforce sectors.
  - Boost is a replication of the City University of New York’s Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (“CUNY ASAP”), which has doubled community college graduation rates in the CUNY system. The North Carolina replication differs from ASAP by a) focusing on career and technical degree and diploma programs that align with the Propel NC workforce sectors while also focusing on transfer degree programs that align with critical workforce needs, and b) including both single and consortium models. The consortium model allows smaller, rural campuses to participate in the program by pooling resources. Boost offers wrap-around student support through high-touch advising that aids students’ academic momentum and offers a range of financial support to alleviate financial barriers to completion.
  - **Student Eligibility:** Boost students must be eligible for in-state tuition, receive federal or state financial aid, have a high school diploma or equivalent, have no more than 24 program-applicable college credits, enroll in an eligible degree or diploma program at participating colleges, and plan to complete at least 24 credits per academic year. Eligible programs include career and technical degree and diploma programs aligned with the Propel NC workforce sectors as well as transfer degrees that align with critical workforce needs. Transfer degrees were included as an acknowledgement that many high-demand fields require bachelor’s degrees, e.g., teaching.
  - **Funding:** The Laura and John Arnold Foundation (“Arnold Ventures” or “AV”) funded Boost (\$35.6M). John M Belk Endowment provided additional funding (\$1M) to support Boost implementation. The project period for the AV grant runs from January 1, 2025 to July 31, 2031. The AV grant supports the ASAP replication at 15 community colleges in NC: 8 starting in Fall 2025 and 7 beginning in Fall 2026. Each single-college model institution will recruit 3 cohorts of 150 students; enrollment targets differ for consortia. Collectively, the colleges will enroll approximately 5,000 Boost students in 6 years.
  - The AV grant supports the first three cohorts of Boost students in both Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 colleges, with the goal of having state funding in place no later than year 4 (2028-2029). AV funding begins to taper in Year 3 (2027-2028), at which point colleges will begin to take on cost share (27-28’: 10%, 28-29’: 40%, 29-30’: 70%).
    - **Cohort 1:** Alamance, Cape Fear, Central Piedmont, Forsyth Tech, Johnston, Wake Tech; Consortium: Caldwell + Cleveland
    - **Cohort 2:** Central Carolina; Consortium 1: Bladen, Robeson, Sampson; Consortium 2: Isothermal, McDowell Tech, Western Piedmont

- Boost supports Goal 3 (student success) and Goal 4 (economic development and training) of the NCCCS 2022-26 Strategic Plan.
2. **Progress:** What is working well? What are tangible indicators of progress?
- **Enrollment:** Cohort 1 colleges have enrolled 927 students in Boost, 84% of Year 1 target.
  - **Program Refinement:** With the guidance of Cohort 1 Campus Leads (annual review meeting December 2025), Boost eligible programs will be expanded to include diploma programs in already identified Propel NC workforce sectors. A methodology is in place to consider any new or existing programs of study to be added to the eligible programs list.
  - **Onboarding Cohort 2:** The NCCCSO staff and replication team began the onboarding and technical assistance process for Boost Cohort 2. Colleges are beginning to hire staff in January to prepare for enrollment in Fall 2026.
  - **Outcome Measurement:**
    - NCCCSO developed the Boost ServiceNow data portal to track Boost student engagement and outcome data in real time. Staff continue to refine the system based on feedback from campus staff.
    - NCCCSO System Effectiveness is building new Power BI dashboards that display student outcomes, available to all 58 campuses. The new dashboards will allow Boost colleges to filter for outcomes specifically for Boost students.
    - ServiceNow and the Power BI dashboards will allow for the analysis of program outcomes.
3. **Challenges:** What is not working well – what challenges are you facing? What is being done to address this (on the part of System Office and, if applicable, partners involved)?
- **Program Enrollment**
    - Challenge: Boost was implemented quickly at Cohort 1 campuses, which impacted progress towards enrollment.
    - Solution: We provided flexibility to Boost campuses to reach the enrollment targets and offered technical assistance in sharing enrollment management strategies across institutions to increase enrollment.
  - **Data and Storytelling**
    - Challenge: The most significant student outcome data for the program (graduation rates, workforce outcomes) will not be available until after seed funding for the program begins to taper.
    - Solution: Secure funding that extends the program at all Boost colleges. This will provide robust data in time to make a strong case for sustained legislative support.

4. **Future:** What are next steps with the program overall? Upcoming milestones for the next 30–90 days, and (where relevant) major long-term milestones. What decisions, actions or support are needed from the Board?
- February 2026 – First Power BI dashboards released to colleges with accompanying professional development webinars to support college use of the dashboards
  - March 2026 – Development and deployment of a Boost ServiceNow User Guide to support college data collection
  - Spring 2026 – Cohort 2 colleges begin enrolling students in Boost program
  - June 2026 – Second summer training conference to support cohort college implementation

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## STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

2022-26 Strategic Plan Update

Jobs for the Future AI.iNC (Artificial Intelligence in NC) Project

Update Summary - January 2026

1. **Context:** What do SBCC members need to know about the program before they hear an update? Basic description of the initiative, its purpose, and why it matters for the mission.

AI.iNC is a (\$200,000) investment awarded in July 2024 through a national partnership with Jobs For the Future (sponsored by Ascendium) to expand the infrastructure needed to prepare the NCCCS to address disruptive changes from AI technology. The tactical implementation plan focused on delivering concrete system assets that enable colleges to respond consistently to AI-driven changes in work, instruction, and operations. Additional expansion activities related to grant (but not funded/accounted) that occurred are marked with an asterisk (\*). The JFF grant ends March 31, 2026.

The tactic as created has three fundamental deliverables:

- Establish a NCCCS AI Leadership Council to provide governance, accountability, and coordinated decision-making.
- Publish Transformative Technology Strategy guidance to support college-level instructional and operational action.
- Embed AI skilling and instructional professional learning into existing faculty and staff development infrastructure for scale and sustainability.

2. **Progress:** What is working well? What are tangible indicators of progress?

- Existing Strategies and Investments align to national and new NC Executive Order Expectations
  - Established an NCCCS AI Leadership Council; multi-college, multi-role committee of 12 selected
  - Created AI Guidance Handbook for policy, implementation, and training for instruction
  - Establishing conditions for agency workflow automation projects
  - National and state level innovation leadership (Dr. Crowley, Dr. Freeman); [Executive Order on AI](#), NCCCS on the [statewide task force](#) (Dr. Crowley).
- [AI Guidance Handbook for North Carolina Community Colleges](#) Complete
  - Distributed to all colleges, posted on [OpenNCCC](#) (system open-source repository).
  - Tested with 10 colleges for specific policy implementation feedback prior to release.
  - In-person sessions: 43 colleges attended, 250 people; Virtual session in January for remaining colleges
- Professional Learning Offerings Extended
  - Created [Open resource](#) with 45 resources including the AI Guidance Handbook
  - Integrated AI instructional guidance into NC3MI (NCCC Master Instructor Certification) further defining faculty competence profile. Faculty adapting AI-supported instruction in discipline-specific applications and classrooms. \*
  - Awarded additional \$94k (Perkins), expanded AI professional learning to five (5) new in-person modules building interdisciplinary AI awareness and use in CTE programs \*
    - Contextualized AI-enhanced learning applications across three (3) career clusters (Advanced Manufacturing, Interdisciplinary, and Healthcare)
    - Three (3) contextualized, career-cluster modules (e) featuring classroom-ready, AI-enhanced learning experiences.
    - Preparing faculty as trainers to replicate and scale the training locally.

- Late spring collaboration on findings to synthesize outcomes, lessons learned and recommended next steps for statewide implementation.
- AI Community of Practice established and provides a collaborative network to explore AI in instruction, build shared resources, and test practical applications
- Innovators-in-Residence Program established to expand SME (Subject Matter Expert) to assist colleges in adopting agentic AI, prompting skills, and assessment innovation.
- Partnership with NC State Data Science and AI Center offers additional training to up to 57 Master Instructors to expand teaching/skilling portfolio with stipends. \*
- AI in CTE Conference (January 30–31, 2025)\*
  - Approximately sixty-five (65) CTE faculty attended the two-day convening focused on practical AI integration in CTE classrooms.
  - Post-conference survey results (n=thirty-eight (38)) indicate a strong increase in intent to adopt AI: average 2.63/5 before vs. 4.58/5 after, with thirty-three (33) of thirty-eight (38) reporting increased likelihood.
- Updating General Education Outcomes to align with Future of Work Competencies, promoting the adoption of college-wide Institutional Student Learning Outcomes. \*

**3. Challenges:** What is not working well – what challenges are you facing? What is being done to address this (on the part of System Office and, if applicable, partners involved)?

- Professional Learning offerings at SO slowed. AI productivity suite not available at SO, no enterprise “walled” environment, cannot train SO employees on AI tools and use.
- Longer-term disruption strategies not yet prioritized; no dedicated budget to sustain operations. and policy/practice updates to include limited project management support and staffing.
- Unclear formal connection/accountability to transformation and strategic planning committees.
- Challenges primarily affect sustainability and pace, not quality or relevance of work underway.

**4. Future:** What are next steps with the program overall? Upcoming milestones for the next 30–90 days, and (where relevant) major long-term milestones. What decisions, actions or support are needed from the Board?

- Finalize NCCCS AI Leadership Council and convene the first meeting.
- Integrate work streams as recommended by FIPSE grant application strategy.
- Begin design and pilot of a State Credentialed NCCCS “AI Student Scholar” Program for AI-enhanced courses and faculty credentials (through June 2026 and beyond).
- Encourage updates on system-coordinated pilots for workflow automation, AI integration into the operating systems, pilots on AI and data theming for predictive insights.
- Allocate dedicated project management (\$150k) and identify how operational budgets support AI innovation across the system and strategic goals.
- Support an operational efficiency project for our Agency for the state incubator directive.

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