NUMBERED MEMO CC26-015

TO: Student Development Administrators

FROM: Dr. Brian S. Merritt
            Senior Vice President and Chief Academic Officer

SUBJECT: NC College Connect Phase 3

DATE: March 23, 2026

The NC College Connect program launched in October 2024 to increase access to higher education by providing North Carolina public high school seniors with a minimum GPA of 2.8 with the opportunity to be admitted to North Carolina community colleges and select UNC System institutions. As the initiative continues to grow in scope and impact, this memo outlines the requirements and procedures for implementing Phase 3 during the fall 2027 and spring 2028 admissions cycle. The guidelines below are provided to ensure alignment with *1D SBCCC 400.2 Admission to Colleges* and to support consistent communication with students and stakeholders.

1. Understanding which students will participate in the NC College Connect program.

- **Students who will be eligible:** All NC public and charter high school seniors attending NC public high schools.
    - NC public high school seniors who have a weighted GPA of 2.8 or greater and who have registered for a fourth-level math will receive an NC College Connect Letter indicating direct admissions to select UNCS and NCICU institutions, as well as their local community college.
    - NC public high school seniors who have less than a 2.8 weighted GPA and/or who have not registered for a 4th-level HS math course will get an NC College Connect Letter indicating direct admissions to their local community college.
- Eligible students will receive the NC College Connect letter regardless of citizenship status.
- **Non-eligible students**: The program does not currently include private school, home-schooled, and high school equivalent students.

2. The Phase 3 NC College Connect Application:

- Eligible students will be notified in September 2026 of their offer to apply to participating colleges through a mailed offer letter that includes a QR code directing them to more information on CFNC.org. There, they will be prompted to log in to their CFNC.org account and claim their spot at their selected colleges.
- The Phase 3 NC College Connect Application:

- Contains twenty-six standardized items in alignment with the CFNC community college undergraduate application template.
- Will request the student's Social Security number (SSN) and Residency Certification Number (RCN)**.** SSN and RCN are not required to submit the NC College Connect application.
- Will be opened by CFNC in September 2026 and will be closed by CFNC in January 2026.
- College staff should **not** discourage students from applying through the NC College Connect Portal in favor of the traditional undergraduate application.

3. Importing of Application in Colleague & Admissions Processes

- Like the traditional CFNC application, the Phase 3 NC College Connect application will import into Colleague if the student provides their SSN.
- Prior to September 2026, colleges should complete the first catalog copy in Colleague for the 2027-2028 catalog year.
- CFNC will provide detailed import instructions before the NC College Connect application goes live.
- Colleges should develop a plan to contact NC College Connect applicants who do not provide an RCN.
- Colleges will then follow their local process to engage with applied students.

4. Program Promotion:

- Please collaborate with your public information officers to promote the program locally to help inform your community about the new program. Phase 3 assets will be published this summer at: https://www.cfnc.org/education-professionals/nc-college-connect-ed/

Phase 3 of NC College Connect further expands access to higher education opportunities in North Carolina, especially for students who may not have envisioned college in their future. This is a great opportunity to increase community college visibility and enrollment throughout the state.

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