

STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES
Legislative Report for the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement

Request: At the request of staff, the State Board of Community Colleges is asked to review and approve for submission to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee the annual legislative report on the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement.

Strategic Plan Reference: Goal 2: Enrollment

Increase access and enrollment at North Carolina community colleges to meet the state's educational attainment goal and expand postsecondary opportunities.

Strategy: 2.3.2

Background: S.L. 2013-72 (HB 903) North Carolina General Statute 116-11(10c) requires the University of North Carolina System and the North Carolina Community College System to conduct biannual joint reviews of the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement to ensure that the agreement is fair, current, and relevant for all students and institutions and to report their findings to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee, including all revisions to the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement and reports of noncompliance by November 1 of each year.

Rationale: This report summarizes ongoing efforts to implement and fulfill the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement.

Contact(s):

Dr. Torry Reynolds
AVP, Student Services

**REVIEW OF THE *COMPREHENSIVE ARTICULATION AGREEMENT* THAT EXISTS BETWEEN
CONSTITUENT INSTITUTIONS OF
THE NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM
AND CONSTITUENT INSTITUTIONS OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA SYSTEM**

A Report to
The Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee,
The Senate Appropriations Committee on Education/Higher Education, and
The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Education

Submitted by
The State Board of Community Colleges and
The Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina

November 1, 2026

As Required by
Session Law 2013-72 (HB 903)

**ANNUAL REPORT ON THE *COMPREHENSIVE ARTICULATION AGREEMENT* TO
THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
NOVEMBER 1, 2026**

S.L. 2013-72 (HB 903) North Carolina General Statute 116-11(10c) requires the University of North Carolina System and the North Carolina Community College System to conduct biannual joint reviews of the *Comprehensive Articulation Agreement* to ensure that the agreement is fair, current, and relevant for all students and institutions and to report their findings to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee, including all revisions to the *Comprehensive Articulation Agreement* and reports of noncompliance by November 1 of each year. The statute also requires the University of North Carolina System and the North Carolina Community College System to jointly develop an articulation agreement advising tool for students, parents, and faculty to simplify the course transfer and admissions process.

SUMMARY

The revised *Comprehensive Articulation Agreement* (CAA) was signed by the UNC Board of Governors and the State Board of Community Colleges on February 21, 2014. The revised CAA was implemented in the fall 2014 semester and underwent significant revisions in October 2025.

The University of North Carolina (UNC) System and the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) continue to work to enhance educational opportunities for NCCCS students by improving transfer administration, utilizing data to assess transfer effectiveness, and facilitating communication between respective constituent institutions. Both public higher education systems in North Carolina continue to work together to develop and support degree-mapping tools, improve policies, and encourage professional development opportunities to facilitate informed and efficient transfer.

This report summarizes ongoing efforts to implement and fulfill the CAA. The CAA Transfer Advisory Committee (TAC) is committed to providing students and institutions with information and strategies to support both associate degree and baccalaureate degree completion.

The most recent version of the CAA, complete with appendices, is available here:
<https://wordpress.nccommunitycolleges.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/2025-CAA-Final-Oct-2025.pdf>

CAA PROGRESS: 2025-26**Transfer Enrollment and Performance Data**

The UNC System data dashboard provides essential data on transfer students including enrollment trends, credit hours and degree transfers, graduation rates, grade point average, and performance in disciplines after transfer. Within the dashboard, data for individual community colleges and universities are available for deeper analysis. The UNC System data dashboard continues to be a vital resource in determining whether the CAA is having the desired impact on transfer student success and whether the changes in policy and practice put in place because of the CAA and the associated compliance site reviews are achieving the desired positive outcomes. This information is critical to the decision-making process for individual community colleges and universities and for the two systems. Similarly, the NCCCS provides data dashboards to report on community college transfer performance, in addition to enrollment and graduation data. Both data dashboards provide comprehensive and timely information on transfer student access, success, and transitions between institutions.

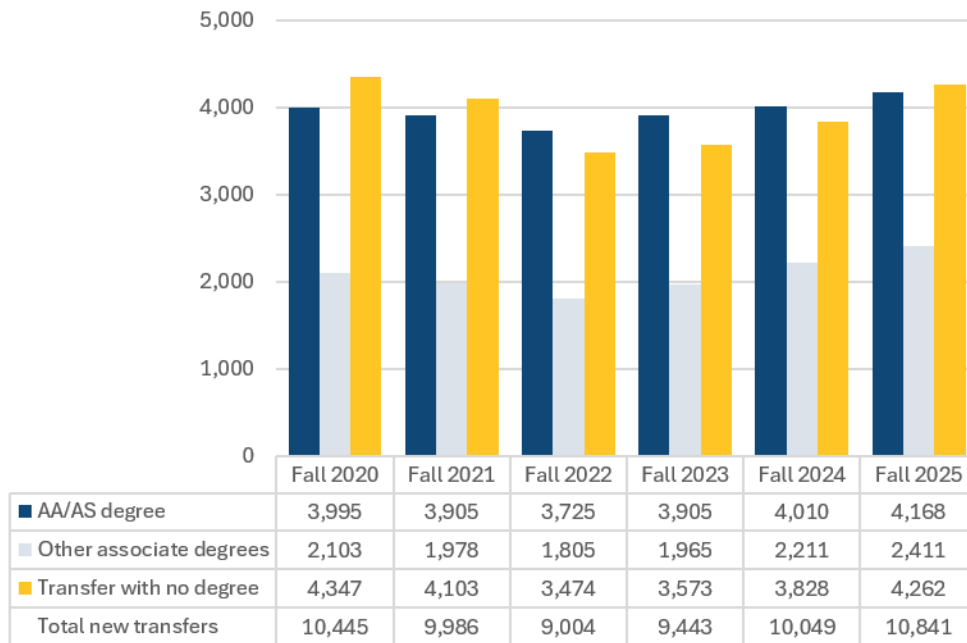
Students who entered the NCCCS in Fall 2014 and later are under the protections of the CAA, and a significant number continue to transfer to the UNC System as of the Fall 2025 semester. This large number of transfer students who possess the protections of the CAA and their successful transfer to the UNC system institutions gives a clear indication of the value of the CAA to students.

Transfer Student Enrollment

Data illustrate an increase in the number of NCCCS students transferring to the UNC System (see Table 1), up from 10,049 in the Fall 2024 semester to 10,841 in the Fall 2025 semester. This marks the largest number of total NCCCS transfer students since 2018. The number of NCCCS students transferring with a completed associate degree (of any kind) increased (see Table 2) in Fall 2025. During the Fall 2025 semester, the total number of NCCCS students transferring with a completed degree (AA/AS or any other associate degree) was 6,579 compared with 6,221 in the Fall 2024 semester.

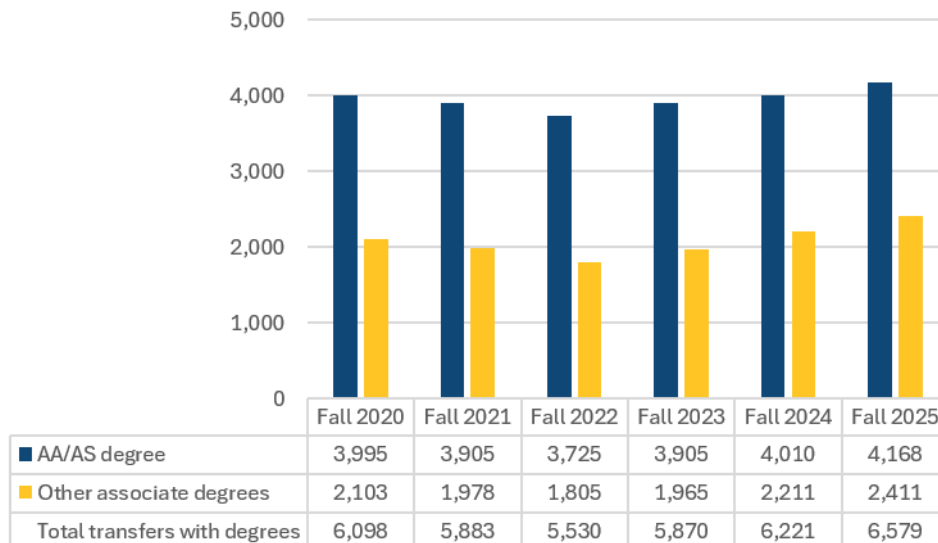
The number of NCCCS students who transfer to UNC System institutions with transfer credit, but no degree increased from Fall 2024 (3,828) to Fall 2025 (4,262). In addition to the provisions of the CAA that require the completion of an associate degree, the Transfer Guide project and increased efforts focused on transfer coordination, detailed later in this report, are opportunities to encourage community college students to complete their two-year degrees prior to transferring to UNC System institutions.

Table 1
New NCCCS Student Enrollment in UNC System Institutions



Note: Data within Table 1 include the most current information posted on the UNC public dashboards and may differ slightly from previously reported information.

Table 2
NCCCS Student Transfers with Completed Associate Degrees



Note: Data within Table 2 include the most current information posted on the UNC public dashboards and may differ slightly from previously reported information.

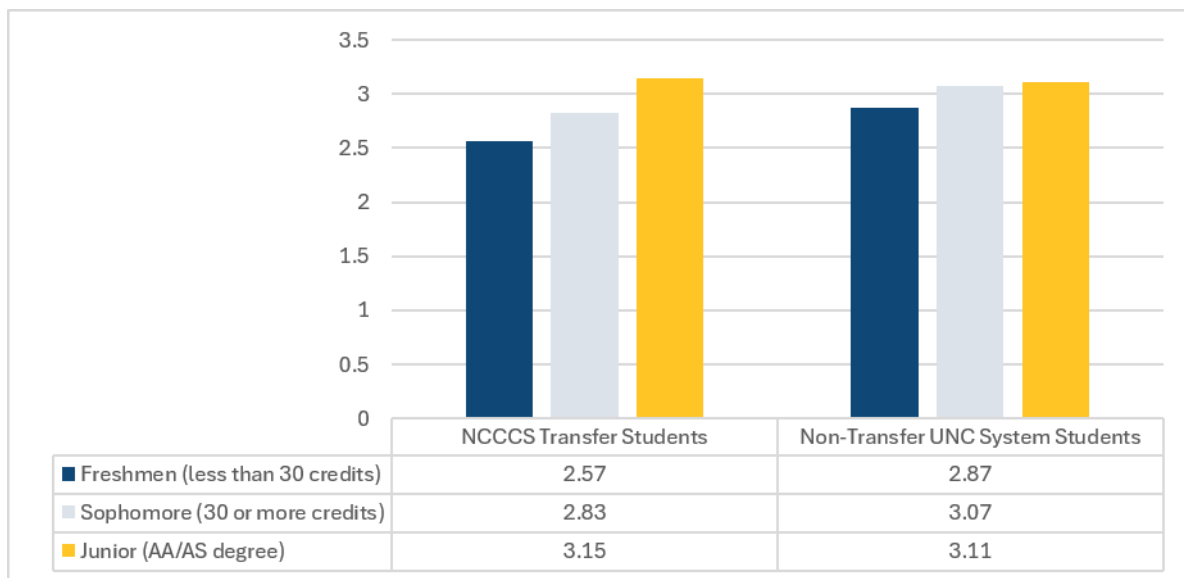
Transfer Performance Data

The most recent data on transfer student performance (2025-2026 data for students who transferred in the Fall 2024 semester) continue to indicate a strong correlation between degree and credit-hour completion prior to transfer and academic performance at the university (see Table 3). Students who transferred in the Fall 2024 semester from an NCCCS institution into a UNC System institution with fewer than 30 completed credit hours have a lower GPA than those who started at a university as freshmen. This is also true of students who transfer before completing an associate degree but have more than 30 credit hours of transferable coursework: GPA of non-degree-earning transfer students with more than 30 completed hours is lower compared to their UNC System sophomore counterparts who began at the university.

Students who completed the associate degree prior to transferring in the Fall 2024 semester, however, performed better than UNC System juniors who started at the university as freshmen (3.15 GPA vs. 3.11 GPA). These results confirm the foundational principle of the CAA that transfer students who complete the associate degree prior to transfer will perform as well as or better than students who began their higher education journeys at UNC System institutions.

Table 3

2024-25 Transfer Cohort Grade Point Average After First Year at UNC institution



Note: Data indicated are reflective of first-year performance at UNC institutions for transfer students. This measurement was taken during fall 2025 to spring 2026 for the cohort entering in fall 2024.

Campus Compliance Reviews

In January 2016, the CAA Transfer Advisory Committee (TAC) established a process for reviewing the institutional transfer credit policies and procedures of UNC System institutions once every two years to ensure compliance with the CAA. As of the last round of compliance visits, the UNC School of the Arts has not been included because it had few transfer students. Since 2016, the CAA TAC has completed four rounds of reviews with each UNC System institution using a combination of virtual and in-person visits. With the 2025 updates to the CAA, the 2025-26 academic year was used for planning and sharing CAA revision updates with university and community college stakeholders. According to the 2025 revision to the CAA, TAC will expand CAA compliance reviews to include both UNC institutions as well as NC community colleges. Beginning in the 2026-27 academic year, the CAA TAC will conduct CAA compliance reviews of all universities (including the UNC School of the Arts) and NC community colleges over a period of four years. CAA compliance review schedule information will be publicly posted on the CAA TAC website hosted by the NCCCS. It can be accessed at <https://www.ncccommunitycolleges.edu/transfer-advisory-committees/>. During the 2026 NCCCS Conference, the CAA TAC hosted a pre-conference CAA Compliance Review self-study workshop that was open to all NC community colleges.

Transfer Guides

The CAA requires tools to support student transfer. One such requirement ensures that UNC System institutions develop and maintain transfer guides to outline community college programs with university courses that lead to timely baccalaureate degree completion for each major plan of study that the university offers.

In 2024, a centralized, student-facing resource was rebranded as Transfer Guides and made available to the public on a platform hosted by our close collaborators, College For North Carolina (CFNC). All Transfer Guides can be accessed at: www.cfnc.org/transferguides.

Transfer Guides have been so well received to support transfer students that the project has expanded. While outside the official purview of the CAA TAC, the addition of Transfer Guides for the AFA in Music, AFA in Theatre (2 tracks), AFA in Visual Arts, and AA in Teacher Prep and AS in Teacher Prep were highly supported by the CAA TAC. It is the hope of the CAA TAC that additional high-transfer community college degree programs will continue to be included in the Transfer Guide project to best support students across the state as they pursue transfer into baccalaureate programs.

Below are the summaries for Transfer Guide publication and access, by year:

2024-2025 (Year 1)

- 1,385 published
- 91,000 unique views (July 2024-May 2025)

2025-2026 (Year 2)

- 1,504 published
- 438,262 unique views
- Universities were provided data on regularly accessed guides, institutional views, etc.
- Internal efforts to review common CC course recommendations across similar majors began

2026-2027 (Year 3/Current)

- 1,516 published
- 43,789 unique views between 6/1/26 – 7/23/26
- Some Education major Transfer Guides were revised in the month of August and re-published by September to reflect legislative updates
- Two Universities are currently working with UNC System developers to embed Transfer Guide search feature on their institutional site

CAA Revisions

Following more than a year of review by the CAA Transfer Advisory Committee (TAC), the 2025 CAA was approved by the UNC Board of Governors and the State Board of Community Colleges. This is the most significant update to the agreement in a decade, focused on increasing clarity and simplicity to better help students and families understand the agreement and its protections. The revised CAA went into effect in Spring 2026.

Key updates to the CAA include:

- Clearly defined student protections such as the General Education Waiver, Acceptance of CAA coursework with grades of C- or higher, and the Transfer Assured Admissions Policy.
- New details on the creation and use of Transfer Guides
- A new online Transfer Student and Credit Appeals portal for students to submit appeals.
- Expansion of CAA compliance reviews to include both UNC institutions and NCCC institutions to ensure all participants are upholding the pillars of this important agreement.
- An emphasis on the value of the ACA 122: Transfer and Career Success course, and the benefits it affords to community college students when completed in their first semester.

Data Sharing and Student Access

The CAA TAC has approached both system offices regarding the possibility of implementing seamless data sharing between the two systems. This technology solution could interact with student records in both systems and assign university credit automatically without the need for regular human interaction and manual evaluation of transcripts. Such a system will require a substantial initial investment, but it would position colleges to repurpose personnel from data-processing to coaching transfer students, would facilitate curriculum alignment, and would maximize the common numbering systems now present within both systems.

Both system offices are supportive of this type of program, and a pilot project is currently underway. The CAA TAC supports the expansion of the pilot project to promote stronger data sharing across systems to best facilitate transfer.

Additionally, the CAA TAC supports more detailed information be included on the UNC System data dashboard, so that tracking student transfers from community college to university may be easier than ever and provide information at the programmatic and department level.

Funding for TAC

Since its inception, the CAA TAC has relied upon the home institutions of its members to fund member participation in CAA TAC meetings, compliance site visits, and presentations at professional conferences or workshops. The CAA TAC is intentionally comprised of members from across the state from both urban and rural areas and represents both large and small institutions. Unfortunately, the travel costs associated with the duties and responsibilities of membership place an additional financial obligation on institutions that have already existing significant constraints and limitations on their spending. The lack of such supporting funds may prohibit some institutions from allowing their employees to participate in this important work.

The NCCCS and the UNC System Offices both strongly advise that funding be allocated to provide for travel to TAC meetings, site visits, and professional presentations – all of which support the mission of increased transfer efficiency and effectiveness – for each of the members of the CAA TAC. An initial budget request would be approximately \$7,500 to reduce the costs for the individual CAA TAC members and their institutions.

Conclusion and TAC Recommendations

For more than a decade, NCCCS and UNC System institutions have made steady progress toward seamless transfer. They continue to improve their partnerships to provide more effective advising, clear and consistent communication, and ongoing support to transfer students. As awareness and execution of the *Comprehensive Articulation Agreement* increases in North Carolina, more students are completing associate degrees at community colleges and transferring to UNC System institutions. Upon transfer, these degree-completers are performing comparably with, if not stronger than, students who started as freshmen at those same universities. The data provided in this report demonstrate that UNC System institutions are not only meeting the expectations set out in the CAA, but they are finding creative ways to enhance the transfer process and to champion transfer student success. Considering this positive momentum, the CAA TAC recommends the following efforts to continue to provide and improve support for transfer across the state:

- Technological and operational solutions that create greater continuity, clarity, accessibility, and transparency for advising and the processing of transfer students and informing course, program, and institution selection among the NCCCS and UNC System

institutions, particularly through the implementation of statewide data sharing between the two systems.

- A website and/or mobile application that allows students to see how credit earned at one institution would be counted at another – a true degree audit for transfer credit.
- Additional training for community college and university employees on the benefits and guarantees of the CAA.
- Continuing collaborations with other key partners (e.g., NCSU's Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research, myFutureNC, North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities, etc.) in the work of transfer success.