

§ 115D-5. Administration of institutions by State Board of Community Colleges; personnel exempt from North Carolina Human Resources Act; extension courses; tuition waiver; in-plant training; contracting, etc., for establishment and operation of extension units of the community college system; use of existing public school facilities.

(a) The State Board of Community Colleges may adopt and execute such policies, regulations and standards concerning the establishment, administration, and operation of institutions as the State Board may deem necessary to insure the quality of educational programs, to promote the systematic meeting of educational needs of the State, and to provide for the equitable distribution of State and federal funds to the several institutions.

The State Board of Community Colleges shall establish standards and scales for salaries and allotments paid from funds administered by the State Board, and all employees of the institutions shall be exempt from the provisions of the North Carolina Human Resources Act. Any and all salary caps set by the State Board for community college presidents shall apply only to the State-paid portion of the salary. Except as otherwise provided by law, the employer contribution rate on the local-paid portion of the salary, to be paid from local funds, shall be set by the State Treasurer based on actuarial recommendations. The State Board shall have authority with respect to individual institutions: to approve sites, capital improvement projects, budgets; to approve the selection of the chief administrative officer; to establish and administer standards for professional personnel, curricula, admissions, and graduation; to regulate the awarding of degrees, diplomas, and certificates; to establish and regulate student tuition and fees within policies for tuition and fees established by the General Assembly; and to establish and regulate financial accounting procedures.

The State Board of Community Colleges shall require each community college to meet the faculty credential requirements of its accrediting agency for all community college programs.

(a1) Notwithstanding G.S. 66-58(c)(3) or any other provisions of law, the State Board of Community Colleges may adopt rules governing the expenditure of funds derived from bookstore sales by community colleges. These expenditures shall be consistent with the mission and purpose of the Community College System. Profits may be used in the support and enhancement of the bookstores, for student aid or scholarships, for expenditures of direct benefit to students, and for other similar expenditures authorized by the board of trustees, subject to rules adopted by the State Board. These funds shall not be used to supplement salaries of any personnel.

(a2) The State Board of Community Colleges shall comply with the provisions of G.S. 116-11(10a) to plan and implement an exchange of information between the public schools and the institutions of higher education in the State.

(a3) The State Board of Community Colleges shall adopt the following rules to assist community colleges in their administration of procedures necessary to implement G.S. 20-11 and G.S. 20-13.2:

- (1) To establish the procedures a person who is or was enrolled in a community college must follow and the requirements that person must meet to obtain a driving eligibility certificate.
- (2) To require the person who is required under G.S. 20-11(n) to sign the driving eligibility certificate to provide the certificate if he or she determines that one of the following requirements is met:
 - a. The person seeking the certificate is eligible for the certificate under G.S. 20-11(n)(1) and is not subject to G.S. 20-11(n1).
 - b. The person seeking the certificate is eligible for the certificate under G.S. 20-11(n)(1) and G.S. 20-11(n1).

- (3) To provide for an appeal through the grievance procedures established by the board of trustees of each community college by a person who is denied a driving eligibility certificate.
- (4) To define exemplary student behavior and to define what constitutes the successful completion of a drug or alcohol treatment counseling program.

The State Board also shall develop policies as to when it is appropriate to notify the Division of Motor Vehicles that a person who is or was enrolled in a community college no longer meets the requirements for a driving eligibility certificate. The State Board also shall adopt guidelines to assist the presidents of community colleges in their designation of representatives to sign driving eligibility certificates.

The State Board shall develop a form for the appropriate individuals to provide their written, irrevocable consent for a community college to disclose to the Division of Motor Vehicles that the student no longer meets the conditions for a driving eligibility certificate under G.S. 20-11(n)(1) or G.S. 20-11(n1), if applicable, in the event that this disclosure is necessary to comply with G.S. 20-11 or G.S. 20-13.2. Other than identifying under which statutory subsection the student is no longer eligible, no other details or information concerning the student's school record shall be released pursuant to this consent.

(b) In order to make instruction as accessible as possible to all citizens, the teaching of curricular courses and of noncurricular extension courses at convenient locations away from institution campuses as well as on campuses is authorized and shall be encouraged. A pro rata portion of the established regular tuition rate charged a full-time student shall be charged a part-time student taking any curriculum course. In lieu of any tuition charge, the State Board of Community Colleges shall establish a uniform registration fee, or a schedule of uniform registration fees, to be charged students enrolling in extension courses for which instruction is financed primarily from State funds. The State Board of Community Colleges may provide by general and uniform regulations for waiver of tuition and registration fees for the following:

- (1) Persons not enrolled in elementary or secondary schools taking courses leading to a high school diploma or equivalent certificate.
- (2) Courses requested by the following entities that support the organizations' training needs and are on a specialized course list approved by the State Board of Community Colleges:
 - a. Volunteer fire departments.
 - b. Municipal, county, or State fire departments.
 - c. Volunteer EMS or rescue and lifesaving departments.
 - d. Municipal, county, or State EMS or rescue and lifesaving departments.
 - d1. Law enforcement, fire, EMS or rescue and lifesaving entities serving a lake authority that was created by a county board of commissioners prior to July 1, 2012.
 - e. Radio Emergency Associated Communications Teams (REACT) under contract to a county as an emergency response agency.
 - f. Municipal, county, or State law enforcement agencies.
 - fl. Campus police agencies of private institutions of higher education certified by the Attorney General pursuant to Chapter 74G of the General Statutes.
 - g. The Division of Prisons of the Department of Adult Correction and the Division of Juvenile Justice of the Department of Public Safety for the training of full-time custodial employees and employees of the

- Divisions required to be certified under Article 1 of Chapter 17C of the General Statutes and the rules of the Criminal Justice and Training Standards Commission.
- h. Repealed by Session Laws 2017-186, s. 2(hhhhh), effective December 1, 2017.
 - i. The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians law enforcement, fire, EMS or rescue and lifesaving tribal government departments or programs.
 - j. The Criminal Justice Standards Division of the Department of Justice for the training of criminal justice professionals, as defined in G.S. 17C-20(6), who are required to be certified under (i) Article 1 of Chapter 17C of the General Statutes and the rules of the North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission or (ii) Chapter 17E of the General Statutes and the rules of the North Carolina Sheriffs' Education and Training Standards Commission. The waivers provided for in this sub-subdivision apply to participants and recent graduates of the North Carolina Criminal Justice Fellows Program to obtain certifications for eligible criminal justice professions as defined in G.S. 17C-20(6).
- (2a) Firefighters, EMS personnel, and rescue and lifesaving personnel whose duty station is located on a military installation within North Carolina for courses that support their organizations' training needs and are approved for this purpose by the State Board of Community Colleges.
 - (3) Repealed by Session Laws 2011-145, s. 8.12(a), effective July 1, 2011.
 - (4) Trainees enrolled in courses conducted under the Customized Training Program.
 - (5) through (9) Repealed by Session Laws 2011-145, s. 8.12(a), effective July 1, 2011.
 - (10) Elementary and secondary school employees enrolled in courses in first aid or cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
 - (11) Repealed by Session Laws 2013-360, s. 10.6, effective July 1, 2013.
 - (12) All courses taken by high school students at community colleges, in accordance with G.S. 115D-20(4) and this section.
 - (13) Human resources development courses for any individual who (i) is unemployed; (ii) has received notification of a pending layoff; (iii) is working and is eligible for the Federal Earned Income Tax Credit (FEITC); or (iv) is working and earning wages at or below two hundred percent (200%) of the federal poverty guidelines.
 - (14) Repealed by Session Laws 2011-145, s. 8.12(a), effective July 1, 2011.
 - (15) Courses providing employability skills, job-specific occupational or technical skills, or developmental education instruction to certain students who are concurrently enrolled in an eligible community college literacy course, in accordance with rules adopted by the State Board of Community Colleges.
 - (16) Courses provided to students who are participating in a pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship program that meets all of the following criteria:
 - a. Meets one of the following:
 - 1. Is a registered apprenticeship program recognized by the United States Department of Labor.
 - 2. Is a pre-apprenticeship program recognized and approved by the State agency administering the statewide apprenticeship program.

- b. Has a documented plan of study with courses relating to a job-specific occupational or technical skill.
- c. Requires the participants in the program to be North Carolina high school students when entering the program.

The State Board of Community Colleges shall not waive tuition and registration fees for other individuals.

(b1) The State Board of Community Colleges shall not waive tuition and registration fees for community college faculty or staff members. Community colleges may, however, use State or local funds to pay tuition and registration fees for one course per semester for full-time community college faculty or staff members employed for a nine-, ten-, eleven-, or twelve-month term. Community colleges may also use State and local funds to pay tuition and registration fees for professional development courses and for other courses consistent with the academic assistance program authorized by the State Human Resources Commission.

(b2) Beginning February 1, 2018, and annually thereafter, the Community Colleges System Office shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the number and type of waivers granted pursuant to subsection (b) of this section.

(c) No course of instruction shall be offered by any community college at State expense or partial State expense to any captive or co-opted group of students, as defined by the State Board of Community Colleges, without prior approval of the State Board of Community Colleges. All course offerings approved for State prison inmates or prisoners in local jails must be tied to clearly identified job skills, transition needs, or both. Approval by the State Board of Community Colleges shall be presumed to constitute approval of both the course and the group served by that institution. The State Board of Community Colleges may delegate to the President the power to make an initial approval, with final approval to be made by the State Board of Community Colleges. A course taught without such approval will not yield any full-time equivalent students, as defined by the State Board of Community Colleges.

(c1) Community colleges shall report full-time equivalent (FTE) student hours for correction education programs on the basis of student membership hours. No community college shall operate a multi-entry/multi-exit class or program in a prison facility, except for a literacy class or program.

The State Board shall work with the Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice of the Department of Public Safety on offering classes and programs that match the average length of stay of an inmate in a prison facility.

(c2) Courses in federal prisons shall not earn regular budget full-time equivalents, but may be offered on a self-supporting basis.

(c3) Funds appropriated for community college courses for prison inmates shall be used only for inmates in State prisons. The first priority for the use of these funds shall be to restore the FTE for basic skills courses to the FY 2008-2009 level. Funds not needed for this purpose may be used for continuing education and curriculum courses related to job skills training.

(d) Recodified as G.S. 115D-5.1(a) by Session Laws 2005-276, s. 8.4(a), effective July 1, 2005.

(e) Repealed by Session Laws 1999-84, s. 3, effective May 21, 1999.

(f) A community college may not offer a new program without the approval of the State Board of Community Colleges except that approval shall not be required if the tuition for the program will fully cover the cost of the program. If at any time tuition fails to fully cover the cost of a program that falls under the exception, the program shall be discontinued unless approved by the State Board of Community Colleges. If a proposed new program would serve more than one community college, the State Board of Community Colleges shall perform a feasibility study prior to acting on the proposal. The State Board of Community Colleges shall consider whether a

regional approach can be used when developing new programs and, to the extent possible, shall initiate new programs on a regional basis.

The State Board of Community Colleges shall collect data on an annual basis on all new programs and program terminations it approved and any regionalization of programs during the year, including the specific reasons for which each program was terminated or approved.

(f1) The State Board shall adopt a policy requiring community colleges to be accredited in accordance with G.S. 115D-6.2.

(g) Funds appropriated to the Community Colleges System Office as operating expenses for allocation to the institutions comprising the North Carolina Community College System shall not be used to support recreation extension courses. The financing of these courses by any institution shall be on a self-supporting basis, and membership hours produced from these activities shall not be counted when computing full-time equivalent students (FTE) for use in budget-funding formulas at the State level.

(h) Whenever a community college offers real estate continuing education courses pursuant to G.S. 93A-4.1, the courses shall be offered on a self-supporting basis.

(i) Recodified as G.S. 115D-5.1(c) by Session Laws 2005-276, s. 8.4(a), effective July 1, 2005.

(j) The State Board of Community Colleges shall use its Board Reserve Fund for feasibility studies, pilot projects, start-up of new programs, and innovative ideas.

(k) Recodified as G.S. 115D-5.1(b) by Session Laws 2005-276, s. 8.4(a), effective July 1, 2005.

(l) The State Board shall review and approve lease purchase and installment purchase contracts as provided under G.S. 115D-58.15(b). The State Board shall adopt policies and procedures governing the review and approval process.

(m) The State Board of Community Colleges shall maintain an accountability function that conducts periodic reviews of each community college operating under the provisions of this Chapter. The purpose of the compliance review shall be to ensure that (i) data used to allocate State funds among community colleges is reported accurately to the System Office and (ii) community colleges are charging and waiving tuition and registration fees consistent with law. The State Board of Community Colleges shall require the use of a statistically valid sample size in performing compliance reviews of community colleges. All compliance review findings that are determined to be material shall be forwarded to the college president, local college board of trustees, the State Board of Community Colleges, and the State Auditor. The State Board of Community Colleges shall adopt rules governing the frequency, scope, and standard of materiality for compliance reviews.

(n) The North Carolina Community Colleges System Office shall provide the Department of Revenue with a list of all community colleges, including name, address, and other identifying information requested by the Department of Revenue. The North Carolina Community Colleges System Office shall update this list whenever there is a change.

(o) All multicampus centers approved by the State Board of Community Colleges shall receive funding under the same formula. The State Board of Community Colleges shall not approve any additional multicampus centers without identified recurring sources of funding. A community college facility shall be considered a multicampus center if it meets all of the following criteria:

(1) Is at least 4 miles away from the main campus of the community college and other multicampus center locations.

(2) Any other criteria established by the State Board.

(p) The North Carolina Community College System may offer courses, in accordance with Article 17D of Subchapter V of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes, to individuals who choose to enter the teaching profession through residency licensure.

(q) Repealed by Session Laws 2009-451, s. 8.9, effective July 1, 2009.

(r) The State Board of Community Colleges shall develop curriculum and continuing education standards for courses of instruction in American Sign Language and shall encourage community colleges to offer courses in American Sign Language as a modern foreign language.

(s) The State Board of Community Colleges may establish, retain and budget fees charged to students taking an adult high school equivalency diploma test, including fees for retesting. Fees collected for this purpose shall be used only to (i) offset the costs of the test, including the cost of scoring the test, (ii) offset the costs of printing adult high school equivalency diplomas, and (iii) meet federal and State reporting requirements related to the test.

(t) The purpose of the first semester of the Gateway to College Program is to address additional support to successfully complete the program. Students may need to take developmental courses necessary for the transition to more challenging courses; therefore, the State Board of Community Colleges shall (i) permit high school students who are enrolled in Gateway to College Programs to enroll in developmental courses based on an assessment of their individual student needs by a high school and community college staff team and (ii) include this coursework in computing the budget FTE for the colleges.

(u) The State Board of Community Colleges shall direct each community college to adopt a policy that authorizes a minimum of two excused absences each academic year for religious observances required by the faith of a student. The policy may require that the student provide written notice of the request for an excused absence a reasonable time prior to the religious observance. The policy shall also provide that the student shall be given the opportunity to make up any tests or other work missed due to an excused absence for a religious observance.

(v) Community colleges may teach curriculum courses at any time during the year, including the summer term. Student membership hours from these courses shall be counted when computing full-time equivalent students (FTE) for use in budget funding formulas at the State level.

(w) The State Board of Community Colleges shall review, at least every five years, service areas that include counties assigned to more than one community college to determine the feasibility of continuing to assign those counties to more than one community college. The State Board shall revise service areas as needed to ensure that counties are served effectively. The first review and any revisions shall be completed no later than March 1, 2016, and the State Board shall report its findings and any revisions to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee no later than March 1, 2016. All subsequent reviews and revisions shall also be submitted to the Committee.

(x) In addition to the evaluation of cooperative innovative high schools by the State Board of Education pursuant to G.S. 115C-238.55, the State Board of Community Colleges, in conjunction with the State Board of Education and the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina, shall evaluate the success of students participating in the Career and College Promise Program, including the College Transfer pathway and the Career and Technical Education pathway. Success shall be measured by high school retention rates, high school completion rates, high school dropout rates, certification and associate degree completion, admission to four-year institutions, postgraduation employment in career or study-related fields, and employer satisfaction of employees who participated in the programs. The evaluation shall also include an analysis of the cost of students participating in each of the programs within the Career and College Promise Program, including at least the following:

- (1) Total enrollment funding, the number of budgeted full-time equivalent students, and the number of students enrolled in courses through cooperative innovative high schools, the College Transfer pathway, and the Career and Technical Education pathway.

- (2) The cost and number of waivers of tuition and registration fees provided for students enrolled in courses through cooperative innovative high schools, the College Transfer pathway, and the Career and Technical Education pathway.
- (3) Any additional costs of a student attending courses on campus if a student is not attending public school in a local school administrative unit for the majority of the student's instructional time.

The Boards shall jointly report by March 15 of each year to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee, the Senate Appropriations Committee on Education/Higher Education, the House Appropriations Committee on Education, and the Fiscal Research Division of the General Assembly. The report shall be combined with the evaluation of cooperative innovative high schools required by G.S. 115C-238.55, and the Community Colleges System Office shall be responsible for submitting the combined report.

(y) The State Board of Community Colleges shall adopt a policy to be applied uniformly throughout the Community College System to provide that any student enrolled in a community college who is a National Guard service member placed onto State active duty status during an academic term shall be given an excused absence for the period of time the student is on active duty. The policy shall further provide all of the following:

- (1) The student shall be given the opportunity to make up any test or other work missed during the excused absence.
- (2) The student shall be given the option, when feasible, to continue classes and coursework during the academic term through online participation for the period of time the student is placed on active duty.
- (3) The student shall be given the option of receiving a temporary grade of "incomplete (IN)" or "absent from the final exam (AB)" for any course that the student was unable to complete as a result of being placed on State active duty status; however, the student must complete the course requirements within the period of time specified by the community college to avoid receiving a failing grade for the course.
- (4) The student shall be permitted to drop, with no penalty, any course that the student was unable to complete as a result of being placed on State active duty status.

(z) The State Board of Community Colleges shall monitor community colleges for compliance with Article 38 of Chapter 116 of the General Statutes. If the State Board determines that a community college is in violation of Article 38, it shall report the identity of the community college to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee. (1963, c. 488, s. 23; 1967, c. 652; 1969, c. 1294; 1973, c. 768; 1975, c. 882; 1977, c. 1065; 1979, c. 462, s. 2; c. 896, ss. 5-7; 1979, 2nd Sess., c. 1130, s. 1; 1981, c. 609; c. 859, s. 35.1; c. 897; c. 1127, s. 43; 1983, c. 717, s. 28; 1983 (Reg. Sess., 1984), c. 1034, ss. 45, 46; 1985, c. 479, s. 67; 1985 (Reg. Sess., 1986), c. 955, s. 22; 1987, c. 282, s. 34; c. 564, ss. 8-10, 12, 33; c. 763, s. 1; 1989, c. 162; 1989 (Reg. Sess., 1990), c. 915, s. 1; c. 1066, s. 91; 1991, c. 689, ss. 44, 48; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 880, s. 4; 1993, c. 170, s. 2; c. 321, ss. 111, 117(e); c. 492, s. 2; 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 769, s. 18.4; 1995, c. 288, s. 2; c. 324, s. 16.4; 1996, 2nd Ex. Sess., c. 18, ss. 17.4, 17.7(a); 1997-443, ss. 9.5, 9.6(a), 11A.118(a); 1997-507, s. 4; 1998-111, s. 3; 1998-202, s. 4(q); 1999-84, ss. 3, 9; 1999-243, s. 9; 2000-137, s. 4(t); 2001-111, s. 1; 2001-427, s. 9(b); 2001-487, s. 47(e); 2004-124, s. 8.4; 2005-193, s. 1; 2005-198, s. 3; 2005-247, s. 3; 2005-276, ss. 8.4(a), 8.6; 2005-395, s. 25; 2006-203, s. 37; 2007-154, s. 2(a); 2007-484, ss. 29(a), 35; 2008-107, ss. 8.11, 8.17, 8.18; 2009-208, s. 1; 2009-451, ss. 8.8, 8.9, 8.11(d), (e); 2009-570, s. 42; 2009-575, s. 5; 2010-31, ss. 8.3(b), (d), 8.4(a), 8.11; 2010-112, s. 2; 2010-113, s. 1; 2011-145, ss. 8.2(b), 8.12(a), (b), 8.13, 19.1(h), (k), (l), 31.2; 2011-391, s. 18(a), (b); 2012-83, s. 41; 2012-142, ss. 8.3(a), 8.8; 2013-360, ss. 10.4(b), 10.6, 10.12, 10.15(a); 2013-382, s. 9.1(c); 2014-115, s. 28(e); 2015-167, s. 2.5;

2015-241, ss. 8.41(k), 10.2(a), 10.5(a), 10.6(a), (b); 2016-94, ss. 10.3(a), 10.4(a); 2017-57, ss. 7.22(g), 9.8(a), 9.10(a), (c); 2017-155, s. 2(a); 2017-186, ss. 2(hhhhh), 3(a); 2017-189, s. 6(g); 2017-212, s. 2.1; 2018-5, s. 17.1(c); 2018-97, s. 5.1; 2019-165, ss. 1.5(a), 3.3(b), 3.4; 2019-235, ss. 3.2(a), 3.4(a), (b); 2020-54, s. 1; 2021-180, ss. 6.3(a), 19C.9(*III*); 2023-109, s. 2(a); 2023-132, ss. 3.2(a), 3.4(h); 2023-134, s. 6.12.)