

# Paving the Way for Transfer Pathways in Psychology and Sociology



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## Final Evaluation Report for Independent Transfer Pathways in North Carolina Project

Generously Supported by the Teagle Foundation

Two-year colleges are a gateway to higher education. Serving their local communities and offering flexible learning opportunities at low to no cost, these institutions draw a highly diverse student body. While many of these students aspire to transfer to a four-year institution and earn a baccalaureate degree, a large number struggle to achieve this goal. The complex transfer process places barriers in students' paths at both the sending institutions (community colleges) and the receiving institutions (four-year colleges and universities), so the promise of transfer is seldom fulfilled.

The Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) and North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities (NCICU) have long aimed to repair this broken promise. Serving independent, predominantly nondoctoral colleges and universities, our two organizations see great mutual benefit in supporting community college transfer into our institutions to increase enrollments, support local communities, and provide students with a transformative liberal arts education that culminates in a timely baccalaureate degree. With generous funding from the Teagle Foundation, CIC and NCICU set out in 2019 to increase transparency in the transfer process and build a framework for student support, beginning with enrollment at a community college through graduation from a four-year institution, with a focus on two degree pathways in sociology and psychology.

We are deeply proud of the work achieved in the last four years through a strong collaboration between our institutions and the North Carolina Community College System. Despite the onset of a global pandemic in its early months, the project not only generated the promised articulation agreements for these two pathways, but also built a stronger culture of transfer based on trust and a shared commitment to serving the students of North Carolina. We owe this success to the enthusiastic participation of faculty members and administrators at 14 community colleges, one independent two-year college, and 15 independent colleges and universities, as well as excellent leadership from staff at CIC and NCICU.

It is our hope that this project, and the accompanying report, will serve as a model for future initiatives to revitalize and improve transfer processes from community colleges to independent four-year colleges and universities, particularly those that aim to build longstanding, statewide agreements. As we highlight in the ensuing pages, forging relationships based on trust and mutual respect—within campuses, between similar institutions, and across sectors—benefits everyone, particularly the millions of students who enroll in a community college with the dream of eventually earning a baccalaureate degree.



President of North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities Hope Williams and former president of the North Carolina Community College System Thomas Stith sign the articulation agreement in psychology and sociology in April 2021.

*Marjorie Hass*

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# Project Summary

The Independent Transfer Pathways in North Carolina Project served as a catalyst in forging a culture of cooperation between community colleges and independent colleges and universities in North Carolina by creating a unique opportunity to bridge the gap between the two systems. The project focused on developing discipline-specific articulation agreements, exploring financial aid options, and identifying best practices for advising. By bringing together senior leaders, deans, faculty, and staff from many different departments and institutions, this innovative partnership project provided opportunities to enhance efforts to build new relationships and remove obstacles that reduce historical effectiveness with the transfer student population. The partner campuses worked together to create a "culture of transfer" to ensure that students receive the most comprehensive information and are carefully advised from their first year at a two-year college until graduation with a bachelor's degree and to provide transfer students additional opportunities to seamlessly pursue

**This project aimed to facilitate the transfer of students from community colleges to four-year, independent institutions in North Carolina.**

higher education at a small to mid-sized independent college or university.

For many undergraduate students, the path to a baccalaureate degree begins at a community college. Community college students account for nearly 40 percent of all U.S. undergraduates and 35 percent of first-time first-year students.<sup>1</sup> Despite their best efforts, many of these students will not achieve this goal; among entering, degree-seeking community college students, only 31 percent will transfer to a four-year institution and fewer than 15 percent will complete a bachelor's degree.<sup>2</sup> The failed promise of community college transfer is

particularly of concern for students from underrepresented groups in higher education. In 2020, over half (52 percent) of all Native American undergraduate students and nearly half of all Hispanic students (48 percent) were enrolled at community colleges. Similarly, 39 percent of Black or African American undergraduates were community college students. However, studies have shown that white community college students are twice as likely to transfer as Black or Hispanic students.<sup>3</sup>

Students face many barriers in the transfer process, but among the most damaging are challenges in advising and a lack of clearly articulated transfer pathways from community colleges to four-year institutions. When the paths to transfer are largely self-directed, community college students often do not choose their intended major early enough to complete major-specific requirements before transfer, or they take courses that baccalaureate institutions will not accept for credit toward their desired degree. The loss of credits during the transfer process can have severe consequences for

students: not only does taking extra classes cost more and add to student debt, but it can also increase students' time-to-degree or even lower their chances of graduating at all.

Addressing these barriers was one of the central goals of the Independent Transfer Pathways in North Carolina Project, led by the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) in partnership with North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities (NCICU). Supported by a 2019 grant from the Teagle Foundation, this project aimed to facilitate the transfer of students from community colleges to four-year, independent institutions in North Carolina. By building pathways to degrees in sociology and psychology and enriching advising expertise and knowledge at both the community college and the four-year institution level, this project aimed not only to increase the number of students who transferred into four-year institutions, but also to ensure these students thrived at their new institutions and achieved their goal of a baccalaureate degree.

CIC, a national association of over 650 small to mid-sized independent colleges and universities, has a longstanding commitment to strengthening the pipeline from community colleges to its member institutions. Through this partnership with NCICU, it aimed to design a tried-and-tested model that could be implemented by other state councils and regional consortia of independent colleges and universities across the United States. As the statewide voice of independent, nonprofit education in North Carolina, NCICU was a natural partner for this work. NCICU and the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS), have developed strong partnerships, building a critical foundation for community college transfer into 30 NCICU institutions through a statewide, comprehensive articulation agreement guaranteeing the transfer of general education requirements and discipline-specific transfer pathways in nursing, fine arts, theater, and music programs.

## Advancing Goals

Over five years, a cohort of 15 four year independent colleges and universities partnered with 14 NCCCS campuses and Louisburg College, a private two year institution that is part of NCICU, to design these pathways and formalize articulation agreements that could be adopted by all NCCCS campuses and any independent four year institution in the state (see Table 1 for a list of participating institutions). Teams of faculty members and administrators for academic affairs and transfer from each institution collaborated to advance the following goals:

Table 1. Participating North Carolina Institutions

▶ Four Year Partners	▶ Two Year Partners
▶ Barton College: <i>psychology</i>	▶ Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College
▶ Brevard College: <i>psychology</i>	▶ Blue Ridge Community College
▶ Campbell University: <i>psychology</i>	▶ Central Piedmont Community College
▶ Catawba College: <i>psychology and sociology</i>	▶ Durham Technical Community College
▶ Chowan University: <i>psychology</i>	▶ Forsyth Technical Community College
▶ Gardner-Webb University: <i>psychology and sociology</i>	▶ Guilford Technical Community College
▶ Guilford College: <i>psychology and sociology</i>	▶ Isothermal Community College
▶ Johnson C. Smith University: <i>psychology</i>	▶ Johnston Community College
▶ Mars Hill University: <i>psychology and sociology</i>	▶ Louisburg College
▶ Meredith College: <i>psychology and sociology</i>	▶ Roanoke-Chowan Community College
▶ Pfeiffer University: <i>psychology</i>	▶ Rowan-Cabarrus Community College
▶ Salem College: <i>psychology and sociology</i>	▶ South Piedmont Community College
▶ Shaw University: <i>psychology and sociology</i>	▶ Stanly Community College
▶ William Peace University: <i>psychology</i>	▶ Wake Technical Community College
▶ Wingate University: <i>psychology</i>	▶ Wilson Community College

**1** Increase the number of students who transfer from community colleges as juniors to four year private colleges and successfully complete their bachelor's degrees;

**2** Ensure that community college students are well informed about their transfer options, that the pathways for their chosen majors are clear, and that advising systems are in place to make sure they take the appropriate courses;

**3** Use the models already established in North Carolina for discipline specific transfer pathways (in nursing, the fine arts, theater, and music) to develop similar articulation pathways for majors in psychology and sociology;

**4** Build stronger connections between faculty members in psychology and sociology at four year institutions and community colleges; and

**5** Further strengthen the culture of inter institutional cooperation between community colleges and independent four year colleges that has been fostered in North Carolina.

<sup>1</sup> "Fast Facts 2023," American Association of Community Colleges. March 2018. Accessed September 9, 2023. [https://www.aacc.nche.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/AACC2023\\_FastFacts.pdf](https://www.aacc.nche.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/AACC2023_FastFacts.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> "Community College Transfer: Policy Fact Sheet," Community College Research Center. July 2021. Accessed September 9, 2023. <https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/community-college-transfer.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

# North Carolina's Transfer Context

NCICU's independent colleges have a history since the 1960s of collaborating with NCCCS and local community colleges to strengthen transfer access to the liberal arts and to provide transfer programs in locations across the state. In the mid-1990s, NCICU signed a statewide articulation agreement with NCCCS that commits its 30 signatory institutions to accept the general education credits completed by students from any of the 58 community colleges in the state as fulfilling their own general education requirements.

The Independent Transfer Pathways in North Carolina Project between NCICU, NCCCS, and CIC builds on that first step toward better alignment by launching statewide transfer pathways in sociology and psychology, two high-enrollment liberal arts disciplines, that enable transfer students to enter independent colleges with junior status.

Transfer is an important part of the fabric of North Carolina's higher education system and attainment goal. In 2019, the state of North Carolina adopted one of the most ambitious goals in the nation to close the educational attainment gap in the state—to ensure that two million North Carolinians aged 25–44 have an industry-valued credential or postsecondary degree by 2030. Named myFutureNC, this initiative passed in the General Assembly with bipartisan support and a signature from the governor. Additional information about myFutureNC and the statewide attainment goal is available at [myfuturenc.org](https://myfuturenc.org). Building effective pathways from community college enrollment to graduation with a baccalaureate degree is vital for achieving this educational goal, as community colleges play a critical role in successfully engaging low-income students, adults, and students of color in the education-to-workforce pipeline.

A research team at UNC Charlotte has been studying community college transfer student experiences in North Carolina including transfers to independent colleges and universities.<sup>4</sup> The research questions focused on understanding how students experienced the transfer process (including transfer decisions, information, resources, and advising) and how students' social identities informed their transfer journeys. Between April 2021 and July 2022, the research team conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with a total of 103 students.

**Transfer is an important part of the fabric of North Carolina's higher education system and attainment goal.**



Findings from that comprehensive, longitudinal statewide study are relevant to understanding the transfer ecosystem in North Carolina. The system is complicated, and students are navigating choices about majors and institutions that have serious consequences when it comes to credit mobility. Students are collecting information in varied and unpredictable ways, navigating the process independently without leveraging the transfer resources and resources available to them. Just over half (55 percent) of transfer intending students surveyed saw a transfer advisor, and about two thirds (68 percent) had a transfer plan by the end of the first year at a community college.

Some findings from the study speak directly to the experience of students transferring from North Carolina community colleges to independent colleges and universities.

- The roles of faculty members and department/program heads were pronounced for some post transfer students at independent colleges and universities who made transfer decisions based on faculty recommendations.
- Many participants' experiences across sectors were positive, but most notably some post transfer participants who enrolled at independent colleges and universities described seamless transitions due to a clear direction toward a particular institution while attending the community college.
- Some NCICU transfer students described a supportive and welcoming environment as evidenced by advisors who "walked them through step by step," and simplified the process for them. This comment speaks directly to the importance of institutional agents at destinations who provide guidance through the point of transition.
- Finally, the primary recommendation emerging from the study is that transfer in North Carolina needs to be more uniform and more transparent.

The study highlights the Independent Transfer Pathways Project as a model for creating more uniform pathways and focusing on advising and policy development for financial aid to nontraditional students.

<sup>4</sup>"North Carolina Transfer Student Voices: A Pilot Study Report." UNC Charlotte Transfer Research Project. July 2021. Accessed October 6, 2023. <https://edld.charlotte.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/307/2023/05/CLTRR-2022-1-1.pdf>

# Project Activities

## Building Relationships across Campuses and Strengthening Student Advising

### September 2019 Convening

The kick-off meeting for the Independent Transfer Pathways Project took place at Salem College on September 26 and 27, 2019. There were 80 attendees representing ten public community colleges and 15 independent colleges and universities. Deans of the individual institutions selected the appropriate chief academic officers, faculty members, and advisors to represent their psychology and sociology departments.

At this initial meeting, attendees reviewed a first draft of discipline-specific articulation agreements in psychology and sociology, using a template developed during NCICU's creation of articulation agreements in fine arts and in nursing that is designed to simplify

**A highlight of the meeting was the opportunity for faculty members and administrators at partner institutions to gather and collaborate with one another.**

were very enthusiastic about meeting their colleagues at partner institutions. One of the major outcomes from the meeting was the list of resources from the four-year institutions that would be most helpful for advisors at community colleges to keep their students well-informed about their transfer options: information on

the agreement for use by students and faculty advisors. The input received at the conference informed another draft of the agreement. The participants also had the opportunity to hear presentations on academic advising and the impact of institutional policies and practices on transfer from leaders at the John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education and from the executive director of the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA).

This meeting provided valuable opportunities for participants to learn about the project and how they could support their institution in implementing its goals. In addition, participants

transfer-related admissions requirements and processes, options for tuition assistance for community college transfer students, and degree requirements for the two degree pathways at each of the participating institutions. These resources are vital for students to make a better-informed decision about which four-year institution to attend and how to prepare for their time at the four-year institution.

### Facilitated Working Meetings and Peer-to-Peer Program

The most successful initiatives to overcome transfer barriers usually involve the cultivation of strong partnerships between community colleges and four-year institutions. Thus, a key component of the Independent Transfer Pathways Project was a peer-to-peer program to bring together faculty members in psychology and sociology and transfer administrators from the participating community colleges and independent four-year institutions. The 15 independent colleges and universities were each paired with a community college in their region, and project participants were expected to make at least one visit to their partner campus. The original plan was to conduct these visits in person, with travel support from the grant; faculty members would spend a day with their disciplinary peers, observe classes, and talk with students and faculty members, while staff members responsible for transfer would learn as much as possible about how processes for students work at the other institution.

While visits started as planned in Fall 2019, the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic in Spring 2020 necessitated a major shift from in-person to online meetings. Despite this significant shift and the huge demands on faculty members and administrators at college and university campuses as institutions first pivoted to remote learning and then grappled with how to reopen safely, the project participants continued to make time to meet with one another and enrich their knowledge about their peers' campuses, courses, and students.

In addition to these small meetings, NCICU leadership

facilitated virtual meetings between multiple faculty and administrators from partnering institutions to design the articulation agreements in psychology and sociology. The goal of these meetings was not only to generate buy-in on participating campuses for the two new agreements, but also to determine the courses at the community college level that would best meet requirements for psychology and sociology majors and allow students to transfer into the four-year institutions as juniors with the appropriate background to complete their degree in the desired field within two years.

### March 2022 Convening

The second plenary convening for participating campuses for the Independent Transfer Pathways Project took place at Graylyn International Conference Center in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, on March 21 and 22, 2022. There were 48 attendees representing eight public community colleges and eleven independent colleges and universities. Deans of the individual institutions selected the appropriate chief academic officers, faculty members, and advisors to represent their psychology and sociology departments.

At this meeting, NCICU leaders reflected on the accomplishments of the project including increased awareness across the systems about strategies to improve advising for transfer students; strengthened collegial faculty collaborations across two- and four-year institutions; development of both individual institution-level and comprehensive articulation agreements by major; and expansion of financial aid opportunities for transfer students.

The participants also had the opportunity to hear presentations on best practices in advising and creating conditions of excellence for transfer students from experts at the John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education. Once again, a highlight of the meeting was the opportunity for faculty members and administrators at partner institutions to gather and collaborate with one another.



Andrew (Drew) Koch, chief executive officer at the Gardner Institute, presents to project participants at the March 2022 Convening.



Deninne Pritchett, faculty director of the Truist Honors Program and Juliet A. Laughlin, chair of the psychology department at Central Piedmont Community College, collaborate on enhancing and streamlining transfer during the March 2022 Convening

# Project Outcomes

Faculty members and administrators at participating institutions identified several specific near-term outcomes that will result in long-term benefits to students and faculty at individual campuses and across their systems. At the heart of the project was the creation of two new transfer pathways in psychology and sociology, which will continue to serve students in years to come. However, these agreements are only a small part of the project's achievements to create a "culture of transfer" that will continue to develop and support students from enrollment in a community college to graduation from an independent four-year college or university. Institutions enriched their advising frameworks to provide more tailored support for transfer students and more resources to shed light on the transfer process, while also creating more dedicated financial aid support for this group of students. They also strengthened relationships both with their partner institutions and with peers on their own campuses, creating opportunities for community college students to engage with the four-year experience before transfer. Through these outcomes, institutions created a foundation to strengthen transfer across their entire institutions as well as paving the way to more and more transfer agreements between community colleges and four-year institutions.

## Articulation Agreements

Through the work of the faculty members and administrators at the 15 four-year institutions and their 15 two-year college partners, discipline-specific pathways to bachelor of arts and bachelor of science programs in psychology and sociology were designed and finalized.

In April 2021, the NCCCS president and NCICU president, Hope Williams, signed articulation agreements stating that students studying psychology or sociology at North Carolina's community colleges could seamlessly transfer to independent colleges and universities in the state to complete a bachelor's degree in one of these disciplines. This agreement provides a progression degree plan that includes required general education and prerequisite courses that are acceptable to all signatory programs. The NCICU Board approved the agreements on April 14, 2021, and the State Board of Community Colleges approved them on April 16, 2021. The agreements went into effect with the Fall 2021 semester. The agreement applies to all 58 community colleges in North Carolina, while independent colleges and universities can individually sign on; as of September 2022, 15 NCICU institutions have officially signed on to the articulation agreements in sociology and psychology.

In addition to psychology and sociology, NCICU and NCCCS currently have articulation agreements in music, theater, fine arts, teacher education, nursing, and early childhood programs.<sup>5</sup>

## Strengthened Collaboration Within and Between Institutions

Through the convenings and the facilitated meetings between partner institutions, faculty and staff participants in the Independent Transfer Pathways Project built stronger relationships with peers at partner institutions or deepened connections to include individual faculty members and administrators, setting up a foundation of trust and further avenues for communication and collaboration. As one participant shared, "while our institutions had an existing relationship, the grant supported the expansion of fellowship and professional collaboration across campuses. These connections directly support our students by providing a dynamic, ongoing path for transfer that is built upon deep connections and

professional respect amongst colleagues in our community."

Participants enthusiastically embraced the opportunity to work with one another to support students. At the conclusion of the project, another participant wrote that "there is now a stronger sense of 'we are better together' permeating the higher education landscape in North Carolina, and the collaboration happening between community colleges and independent colleges is a great example. We're coming to the table, saying 'What do we have to offer? What can we do together? What can we build that will offer a whole new world of opportunity for students?'"

By facilitating conversations across offices and departments as well as different campuses, the project also helped create better communications and processes to support transfer, which requires expertise from many different parts of the institution. One participant agreed that, "bringing together the offices of the registrar, financial aid, instructional technology, academic advising, and admissions, along with program leaders and faculty, gave us great insight into producing more effective strategies for transfer student success." Another frankly shared that the project had helped foster communication on their campus between different departments, as "the executive director of admissions, associate director of transfer admissions, associate director for graduate and professional studies, and the vice president for academic affairs now meet regularly to identify hurdles preventing a smooth transition of transfer students." At Johnson C. Smith University, this project led to a more formal partnership with Central Piedmont Community College, thanks in no small part to the JCSU president's commitment to supporting transfer.

The collaboration between partner institutions has also created more opportunities for community college students to explore life at an independent four-year institution before they decide to transfer. For instance, Barton College provides students at Wilson Community College with a college ID and access to their campus and library through the Bulldog Advantage program. As part of this initiative, faculty members at Barton plan to revive the Psychology Club and to invite Wilson Community College students to participate, with the goal of fostering a sense of belonging and encouraging future transfers.

The discussion among NCICU presidents about the project led other institutions to become more involved, too. Lenoir-Rhyne

University started a program called "Bear Bound," which caps the cost of transfer students through their bachelor's degree at the university. Some students even live in the residence halls of the university while they are still enrolled at the community college.

## Holistic Advising and Student Support

Through the Independent Transfer Pathways Project, students received additional support to help them seamlessly transfer from community colleges into four-year, independent colleges and universities and to thrive in their new environments. Students will benefit from a more extensive and holistic advising process at the community college and four-year institution level. Several institutions mentioned posting transfer guides on their website along with curriculum sheets and transfer equivalency guides, creating a more transparent process for students. One institution also reported that they had expanded their advising staff and operations to provide more tailored support to community college transfer students. Advising at both types of institutions has also been enriched and made more current through the relationships that faculty members and administrators have built with their counterparts at partner institutions. For example, Guilford College faculty and advisors regularly share updates about degree programs, student services, and scholarship opportunities with the Student Success Center at Guilford Technical Community College (GTCC), and a member of Guilford College sits on the Transfer Advisory Board at GTCC and shares relevant updates at biannual meetings.

Participating colleges reported improved and expanded advising staff and operations specifically to better accommodate the specific needs of community college transfer students where all transfer students flow through a single office, to ensure a seamless transition to the four-year institution. Most institutions revisited or revised their online resources, including curriculum sheets and transfer equivalency guides. Administrators from one participating NCICU institution reported that the project led to greater communication and collaboration both internally and with community college partners, as well as provided prospective students with a great resource for accurate information related to admissions, scholarships, and academic advising.

## New Financial Aid Resources for Community College Transfer Students

A major achievement of the project was the creation of new financial aid opportunities designed for community college transfer students. For example, Wingate University built a new program with several community college partners, Gateway to Wingate, which includes a guarantee that annual out-of-pocket costs will not exceed \$2,500 for any associate degree earner from these institutions. Other institutions also designed new scholarships for transfer students, especially for students whose time-to-degree takes longer than anticipated. In a similar vein, institutions also integrated financial planning into the advising process. As part of its new Bulldog Advantage program, Barton College included financial advising as well as academic advising in its partnership with local community colleges including Wilson Community College. As a result of this project, institutional leaders acknowledged the needs of many transfer students, and financial scholarship support was also added to the agreement.

## Increase in Transfer Enrollment and Creation of New Transfer Pathways

While the Independent Transfer Pathways Project has greatly enriched the resources and support available to transfer students at both community colleges and independent four-year institutions in North Carolina, the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on transfer enrollment cannot be ignored. The National Student Clearinghouse *Transfer and Progress Report* has tracked a steady decline in "upward transfer" from community colleges to four-year institutions since the onset of the pandemic, with a total decrease in enrollment of nearly 15 percent since 2020.<sup>6</sup> In this context, it is unsurprising that 12 of the 15 participating independent colleges and universities saw declines in community college transfer enrollment between Fall 2019 and Fall 2022.

However, it is important to highlight that some participating institutions in the project have shown increased transfer enrollment, due in some measure to the outstanding work done by their faculty and staff members on this project. Wingate University, which implemented an ambitious new financial aid program for transfer students during the project, had an increase in transfer student enrollment of 26 percent from Fall 2021 to Fall 2022, and another 31 percent from Spring 2022 to Spring 2023. Shaw University also saw an increase in transfer enrollment from 23 community college transfers in Fall 2019 to 34 in Fall 2022, an increase of nearly 50 percent. Some institutions have also seen increases in transfer enrollment specifically from their partner institutions. At Catawba College, the collaboration with Rowan-Cabarrus Community College built through the Independent Transfer Pathways Project spurred a new "Learn Local, Grow Local" transfer agreement and an increase in transfer enrollment between the two institutions. Since the agreement was signed in early 2020, transfer enrollment at Catawba from Rowan-Cabarrus increased from under 40 students in Fall 2019 to nearly 100 students in Fall 2021.

The Independent Transfer Pathways Project has also laid a foundation to increase transfer in the coming years through the creation of more transfer pathways beyond those in sociology and psychology. Building on their relationships with their partner institutions and using the sociology and psychology articulation agreements as a template, many of the participating institutions have forged their own agreements with their partners that allow for the transfer of credits towards majors in other disciplines. For example, Brevard College and Blue Ridge Community College have created several bilateral agreements as a result of this project, while Catawba College and Rowan-Cabarrus Community College have launched over 50 pathways as part of their "Learn Local, Grow Local" agreement, including pathways in accounting, business, digital media, and technology. Gardner-Webb University, which has a long history of transfer and in significant numbers, established "Bulldog Bound," a co-admission agreement with multiple community colleges, including Isothermal Community College and Blue Ridge Community College. Meredith College and Salem College, two of NCICU's colleges for women, have long offered college completion programs for women and kept this focus in their transfer initiatives launched through the Independent Transfer Pathways Project.

<sup>5</sup> All articulation agreements between NCICU and NCCCS are posted on the NCICU website: <https://ncicu.org/articulation-agreements/>

<sup>6</sup> Causey, J., Cohen, J., Gardner, A., Karamarkovich, S., Kim, H., Lee, S., Randolph, B., Ryu, M., and Shapiro, D. (March 2023), *Transfer and Progress Fall 2022*, Herndon, VA: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, p. 5-6.

Table A-1.  
Change in Number of Transfers for Participating  
NCICU Campuses between Fall 2019 and Fall 2022

Institution Name	Fall 2019	Fall 2022	Change
Barton College	70	45	-25
Brevard College	27	30	3
Campbell University	199	157	-42
Catawba College	71	65	-6
Chowan University	20	7	-13
Gardner-Webb University	170	159	-11
Guilford College	54	32	-22
Johnson C. Smith University	80	42	-38
Mars Hill University	48	52	4
Meredith College	43	29	-14
Pfeiffer University	55	37	-18
Salem College	39	19	-20
Shaw University	23	34	11
William Peace University	79	55	-24
Wingate University	25	64	39

Table A-2.  
Number of Psychology (Psyc) and Sociology (Soc) Transfer Completers for Participating NCICU Campuses for 2018–2019 and 2021–2022 Academic Years

Institution Name	2018–2019				2021–2022							
	Total Psyc Completers	Transfer Psyc Completers	Total Soc Completers	Transfer Soc Completers	Total Psyc Completers	Transfer Psyc Completers	Total Soc Completers	Transfer Soc Completers				
Barton College	10	2	n/a	n/a	215	98	11	0	n/a	n/a	220	83
Brevard College	6	2	2	0	107	28	4	0	0	0	145	25
Campbell University	69	38	0	0	1040	458	67	40	0	0	913	363
Catawba College	9	n/a	5	n/a	283	n/a	5	n/a	5	n/a	255	n/a
Chowan University	33	6	n/a	n/a	33	6	26	5	n/a	n/a	26	5
Gardner-Webb University	19	3	3	0	473	23	23	7	4	1	535	29
Guilford College	27	0	8	0	283	0	20	0	4	0	221	0
Johnson C. Smith University	9	2	0	0	243	61	7	1	0	0	260	60
Mars Hill University	11	1	11	1	22	2	11	3	9	1	20	4
Meredith College	51	12	15	1	386	70	42	8	10	2	360	63
Pfeiffer University	8	4	0	0	8	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Salem College	18	1	6	0	184	23	7	2	0	0	101	27
Shaw University	8	4	4	3	198	93	13	7	7	3	190	81
William Peace University	24	7	0	0	24	7	14	8	0	0	14	8
Wingate University	36	4	3	0	39	4	52	4	6	1	58	5

# Conclusion

The Independent Transfer Pathways Project highlights the value and effectiveness of collaboration across departments and across sectors to support community college transfer students in enrolling at and earning a bachelor's degree from four-year institutions. By bringing together and forging relationships among an enthusiastic and dedicated community of senior leaders, deans, faculty, and staff from community colleges and independent four-year institutions across North Carolina, the Independent Transfer Pathways Project greatly enhanced efforts to remove obstacles that reduce historical effectiveness with the transfer student population. Through convenings and meetings dedicated to supporting transfer student success, the grant created a unique opportunity to bridge the gap between the two types of institutions, with objectives focused on developing discipline-specific articulation agreements, exploring financial aid options, and identifying best practices for advising.

The project served as a catalyst in building a culture of cooperation between community colleges and independent colleges in North Carolina, but it has also emerged as a national model for building scalable, consistent transfer pathways between consortia of independent colleges and universities and community colleges in their region. Since this project launched in Fall 2019, the Teagle Foundation, now in partnership with Arthur Vining Davis Foundations, have launched over 20 more statewide initiatives to expand and improve transfer between community colleges and independent colleges and universities, and NCICU President Hope Williams has consulted with state councils of independent colleges and universities across the country as they build their own transfer initiatives. Thanks to its longstanding success in building effective transfer pathways from community colleges to independent four-year institutions, NCICU was also featured as a case study in *The Transfer Experience: A Handbook for Creating a More Equitable and Successful Postsecondary System* in 2021.

CIC and NCICU are proud of the incredible work that was done for this project by the community of faculty, administrators, and staff members at the 30 participating institutions, particularly amidst the tumult on campuses and communities during a global pandemic. As one participant highlighted in the final survey for this project, "our collaborative work has made North Carolina a national leader in the area of transfer to independent colleges and universities."

## Acknowledgements

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Finally, we would like to honor the contributions of Barbara Hetrick, CIC senior advisor, who played an integral role in designing and launching the project. Hetrick sadly passed away in June 2023.



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