

April 9, 2026

President Jeff Cox
NC Community College System
200 W. Jones Street
Raleigh, NC 27603

President Cox:

We are writing regarding recent news that the UNC System is exploring a three-year bachelor's degree. Based on comments from UNC President Hans, the objective is to address affordability and accessibility and target non-traditional, adult learners.

Given these goals, the mission of the community college system, and our long and important transfer partnership with the UNC System, we are interested if the UNC System has been in discussion with the NC Community College System regarding this approach.

If they have not, we would urge the System Office and the State Board to communicate the importance of collaboration across the systems to address these goals of affordability and accessibility. This collaborative work should necessarily happen before proposals are finalized and planning grants awarded.

As part of that collaboration, we would further recommend two areas of discussion:

1. Working with community colleges to ensure our two-year associate aligns with and allows our students the opportunity to complete a bachelor's degree in three years from a UNC system school.
2. The opportunity for community colleges to offer three-year bachelor's degrees.

We share the goals of access, affordability, and a focus on non-traditional and adult learners with President Hans and the UNC System. In fact, those are the pillars upon which the community college system has been built for the entirety of its existence.

We also believe that that the adaptability, flexibility, and accessibility that characterizes the NC Community College System with its 58 colleges make us especially well-suited to successfully implement three-year bachelor's degrees both in partnership with the UNC System or on our own.

We urge you and the Board to enter into immediate discussions with President Hans and the UNC System to address shared goals for educational attainment to ensure the prosperity of the people and communities of our great state – and to work to achieve those goals together.

Sincerely,


Amanda Lee, President

NC Association of Community College Presidents


JB Buxton, Vice President