

# WCC Tuition-Free Guarantee Memorandum of Agreement

This Memorandum of Agreement sets the parameters for the implementation of the **WCC Tuition-Free Guarantee** initiative, an innovative program developed through a unique partnership between **Wilkes Community College, Alleghany County Schools** and the **Alleghany County Educational Foundation**. The purpose of this program is to guarantee all students in Alleghany County Schools access to an Associate Degree from Wilkes Community College tuition-free. The following provisions will guide the formation and implementation of this educational program.

This Memorandum of Agreement (the "Agreement") is made and is effective as of February 1, 2016 ("Effective Date") by and between the Trustees of Wilkes Community College ("WCC"), the Alleghany County Board of Education ("ACS") and the Alleghany County Educational Foundation (ACEF). Collectively, WCC, ACS and ACEF are referred to in this agreement as "the Parties" to operate the **WCC Tuition-Free Guarantee** program for students in Alleghany County Schools.

## **WCC Tuition-Free Guarantee Steering Committee**

This initiative will be guided by a steering committee comprised of the following individuals or their designees:

- WCC President
- ACS Superintendent
- ACEF President
- ACEF Treasurer
- AHS Principal
- AHS Guidance Counselor
- WCC Alleghany Center CCP Counselor/Liaison
- WCC Alleghany Center Director
- WCC Vice President with Oversight of Alleghany Center

The final decisions about students' eligibility for participation in this program will be made by this steering committee. This committee will also be responsible for meeting periodically to monitor implementation of this program and to make recommendations for adjustments to this agreement or other matters related to its implementation. In order to take any official action, the steering committee must have a quorum (simple majority) of the members present and then have a majority vote of those present.

Any changes to this agreement must be officially approved by all three governing bodies: the WCC Board of Trustees, the ACS Board of Education and the ACEF Board of Directors.



## Student Eligibility for Participation

In order for students to be eligible for participation in the WCC Tuition-Free Guarantee program, they must do the following:

1. Maintain continuous enrollment in Alleghany High School and/or Wilkes Community College as a full-time student (at least 12 credit hours/semester for WCC) in good standing, in terms of **academic performance, disciplinary record** and **school attendance**. If a student loses eligibility to apply for Pell Grant funds due to academic performance, then that student will also not be eligible for an ACEF scholarship. Students whose grades or performance on placement tests make them ineligible to take certain college classes may lose their eligibility to take advantage of the WCC Tuition-Free Guarantee. Students whose disciplinary records (repeated out-of-school suspensions, long-term suspensions, etc.) interfere excessively with their ability to complete the program may be excluded. Finally, students whose attendance leads them to losing credit in high school or college classes may lose their eligibility to continue in this program.

1. **College Grades**--WCC registration and records department will provide grade reports at the end of each academic semester. Student grades shall be entered on the high school transcript exactly as they are reported.

2. **College Attendance**—College instructors determine the attendance policy for the courses they teach, depending largely upon the total number of sessions the classes meet and the total number of instructional hours. Students missing the maximum numbers of classes/hours can be dropped from the course(s). In the event a student is suspended or expelled from ACS, WCC instructors will apply the attendance policy of their courses for days missed due to suspension, possibly resulting in a course grade of F or W for the suspended student.

2. Students must follow one of the **available Career & College Promise Pathways** developed jointly between Alleghany County Schools and Wilkes Community College. The intent will be to encourage students to take as many community college courses as possible while they are still in high school. The more college credit students obtain in high school, the greater the likelihood they will go on to complete a college degree. Taking these courses in high school is also more economical for the student and for ACEF, as there are no tuition expenses and the costs of books is minimal.

Students may enroll in the college transfer pathway, with the intention of transferring to a university to complete a bachelor's degree upon completion of the associate degree at WCC. Students may also choose a technical pathway leading to degree, certificate or diploma in an area of interest. The goal of this program is not to have every student choose the same path but to provide an individually customized pathway for every student that will lead to a good job and an improved quality of life.



Students should take at least four WCC classes while enrolled in Alleghany High School and are encouraged to take more if their schedule permits and they can maintain a successful academic record taking more two college classes per year. Students who do not take full advantage of college courses offered during their high school years may lose their eligibility to participate in the WCC Tuition-Free Guarantee program.

Students must complete their Associate Degree at WCC within 24 months of graduating from high school. ACEF will not continue to guarantee funding for tuition beyond two academic years. Students may apply to ACEF for additional scholarship support beyond the scope of this agreement if they choose to pursue additional degrees or do not complete their Associate Degree within two academic years. Funding beyond the first 24 months is at the discretion of the ACEF board.

3. Students who faculty/staff of ACS or WCC have determined need extra support, tutoring, etc., must participate in these supplemental programs to ensure their success. Students who need additional support but who do not accept that support may lose their eligibility for this program. We cannot invest limited resources in students who are not willing to do whatever is necessary to ensure their academic success.

### **Location of College Courses**

Students participating in this program may be asked to enroll in college classes that are offered at the **Alleghany High School campus**, the **Alleghany Center of WCC**, or **online**. Other optional courses will be available on WCC's main campus, at WCC's Ashe Campus, and/or at various other offsite locations of WCC. Students who wish to take courses at these locations must have written approval of the ACS administration before they sign up for any courses and they may be responsible for their own transportation.

### **College Course Offerings/Registration**

WCC and ACS staff will determine course offerings annually in January for the new academic year prior to ACS registration period in late January, early February. Courses will be entered into Power Scheduler for students to select WCC program courses during registration period. Once registration is complete, the CCP high school liaison along with high school counselors will gather appropriate paperwork for students enrolling in college courses. Students who complete registration forms for college courses will need to commit to course selection. Once registration forms have been processed and textbooks have been ordered by WCC, schedule changes are highly discouraged.

Students wishing to change schedules after registration is complete should see the principal to obtain special permission to change course selection. Once permission is gained, the principal will notify the high school liaison for Career and College Promise of course addition/deletion. Students taking courses on the Alleghany County Schools high school campuses will be given three days at the beginning of each high school semester to add college courses to their schedule.



## **Summer Classes**

Tuition for summer courses for college students would only be covered by the ACEF if they are required by the Program of Study and after all other financial aid and WCC scholarship funding has been applied. The cap for the scholarship funding available in a given academic year will still be the equivalent of tuition and fees for fall and spring semesters.

## **Textbooks/Materials Fee**

WCC will invoice the Alleghany County Educational Foundation (ACEF) each semester for the materials/textbook rental fees (\$20.00 per course) to assist with material costs associated with programs and textbooks for high school students taking Career & College Promise courses. If at any time the ACEF decides to no longer pay the textbook rental fees on behalf of the ACS students, then ACS will be responsible for these fees. WCC will invoice ACEF for these fees in October for fall semester enrollment and in March for spring semester enrollment. Summer billing will be invoiced by the end of June. Books for program participants will be charged to the Career and College Promise program in the WCC Bookstore.

Textbooks will be delivered to the Alleghany Center for students who are participating in programs held on high school campus and students who are taking online classes. Textbooks for students enrolling in WCC campus classes will be delivered to the WCC Pardue Library. Additional fees for certain programs may be charged to the student for certain consumable goods based on program requirements.

WCC will work collaboratively with the ACS Superintendent, AHS Principal, and the Career and Technical Education Director as needed to plan and budget for expenditures for other supplies and materials. Textbooks and reusable materials remain the property of WCC and will be collected from students at the end of each semester.

Textbook/Materials fees for summer courses will only be covered for Juniors heading into their senior year at the \$20/course CCP fee. Graduating seniors should complete the FAFSA to determine if Pell funds could cover their summer class expenses, including the cost of textbooks.

## **Withdrawal**

Students who withdraw from college courses after the grace period may lose their eligibility for this program, particularly if they are full-time college students and dropping a course leaves them with fewer than 12 credit hours of classes in their schedule. In the event a student decides to drop a course after the ACS ten-day grace period, an automatic "F" will be given on the high school transcript.



## Limitations of Agreement

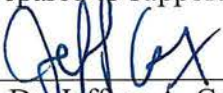
This agreement is effective for students entering ninth grade during the 2015-2016 school year and graduating from high school in the Spring of 2019. The ACEF Board of Directors reserves the right to limit or terminate this agreement if they determine the ACEF does not have adequate resources to fund this initiative for all students in Alleghany County Schools. The program will be renewed on an annual basis. During this time, this Agreement may be amended or supplemented by mutual written consent of WCC, ACS and ACEF. Each of the Parties reserves the right to terminate this agreement upon service of written notice to the other parties at least ninety (90) calendar days prior to the date of termination. In this event, the date of termination will be either ninety (90) calendar days from the notice date or the day after the end of the semester during which the ninety (90) calendar days expires, whichever is later; however, such ninety (90) calendar day notice provision shall not be construed to require the parties begin an additional semester of this program.

This is a "last dollar" scholarship, meaning that it is meant to cover the balance of money owed for tuition and fees after students have received all Pell Grant funds and other scholarship funds they are eligible to receive. The ACEF board may elect to provide additional funding to students who have all of their tuition and fees covered by Pell Grant and/or other scholarships, but the only guarantee is that tuition and fees will be covered.

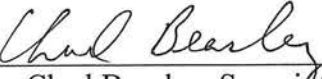
The *WCC Tuition-Free Guarantee* is meant to cover the expense of In-State tuition and fees not covered by Pell Grant or other sources. In order to be eligible for the WCC Tuition-Free Guarantee program, students must complete a FAFSA application to determine their eligibility for the federal Pell Grant program and other scholarship opportunities. Students who are not eligible for In-State tuition rates may have to pay the balance between In-State and Out-of-State tuition.

## Affirmation of Support

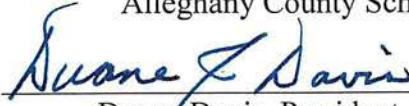
We affirm that we have read and approved this Memorandum of Agreement to offer the WCC Tuition-Free Guarantee program to all students in Alleghany County Schools and are prepared to support all assurances and program commitments made in this agreement.

  
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Dr. Jeffrey A. Cox, President  
Wilkes Community College

10-19-17  
Date

  
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Chad Beasley, Superintendent  
Alleghany County Schools

10-19-17  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Duane Davis, President  
Alleghany County Educational Foundation

10-19-17  
Date