

**Memorandum of Understanding**  
**Western Governors University**  
**and**  
**North Dakota Community Colleges**

Western Governors University (WGU) and the North Dakota Community Colleges seek to provide a streamlined approach to higher education access through WGU's online college courses. WGU is delighted to provide continuing education options to the graduates of North Dakota community colleges.

WGU is a private, non-profit institution offering bachelor's and master's degrees in business, information technology, K-12 teacher education, and health professions, including nursing. The competency-based program measures learning rather than time, allowing students to progress through courses as soon as they can prove they have mastered the material. WGU's online, competency-based and mentor-supported programs fit into busy work and home schedules, providing access to opportunity for non-traditional and rural students to continue their educations. WGU values the important role community colleges play in upskilling the workforce and is pleased to provide pathways to higher education and career advancement, which will lead to security for North Dakota families.

**Purpose**

- This MOU formally recognizes that North Dakota Community College presidents recognize WGU's interest in partnering with North Dakota Community Colleges in order to provide greater educational opportunities to students transferring between the two organizations.
- This MOU focuses on developing strong transfer of credits from each North Dakota Community College to WGU programs with equal or natural transfer into one of four colleges: Business, Information Technology, Health Professions and Teacher Education.
- Under the terms and conditions of this MOU, participating graduates will maximize as much of their community college coursework and credits as outlined by the transfer articulation pathways.
- Students transferring to WGU without an associate degree will be encouraged to participate in a reverse transfer process enabled by data sharing through the National Student Clearinghouse.
- If individual member institutions seek a deeper or more robust partnership with WGU, customized addendums can be created to address the strategic goals of the individual institutions.

**WGU Community College Partner Scholarship**

Graduates and staff from the partnering North Dakota Community Colleges are eligible to apply for the WGU Community College Partner Scholarship in the amount of \$2,500 which is disbursed in \$625 increments for up to four terms based on satisfactory academic performance.

**Obligations of WGU**

- WGU will collaborate with each institution in the development, distribution, and accuracy of all transfer articulation pathways, which will be accessible through the [www.wgu.edu/ndcc](http://www.wgu.edu/ndcc) landing page.
- WGU will provide webinar training, print, and digital materials to faculty, staff to ensure understanding of the partnership and articulation pathways.
- WGU will retain sole discretion in admission decisions.
- WGU is solely responsible for the funding and award decisions for the Community College Partner Scholarship.
- WGU will facilitate a reverse transfer process for students who transferred prior to degree completion with a partnering institution.

### **Obligations of partnering institutions from North Dakota Community Colleges**

- Partnering institutions will establish a web link from their internal web sites to the WGU partner landing page [www.wgu.edu/ndcc](http://www.wgu.edu/ndcc), consistent with other partner institutions, as well as highlight the partnership and education benefits of WGU through standard internal communication channels with faculty, staff, students, and graduates.
- Partnering institutions will provide WGU with curriculum updates of all articulated associates degrees upon request.
- Partnering institutions will ensure graduates become aware of the articulation and scholarship opportunities by sharing information with graduates via institution student and alumni communication channels, such as transfer websites, newsletters, and social media channels.
- WGU will be invited by partnering institutions to participate in local education/benefit fairs, student, employee and leader information seminars or other presentations in a manner consistent with other partner institutions.

### **Joint Obligations**

- WGU and North Dakota Community Colleges will work together to ensure all member institutions are aware of the Memorandum of Understanding between the two organizations and are subject to the terms of this Agreement.
- WGU and partnering institutions agree to exchange data and documents as agreed, which will assist in the maintenance and improvement of the transfer arrangements identified in this MOU.
- All student records created, disclosed, or maintained pursuant to the terms of this MOU are confidential and shall be created, disclosed, and maintained pursuant to the provisions of Family Educational Right to Privacy Act (FERPA).
- Each party assures that it will not discriminate against any individual based on race, religion, creed, color, gender, age, disability, veteran status, national origin, or other protected status.
- Except as permitted by this MOU, neither party shall use the name or marks of the other institution in connection with any product, service, promotion, news release, or other publicity without the prior written consent of the other.
- WGU and partnering institutions will work together to address transfer obstacles that may present themselves throughout the partnership.

This MOU shall be effective upon the date of the last signature and serves as the basis of the WGU – North Dakota Community Colleges partnership. The MOU may be modified by mutual written consent or terminated by either party upon thirty (30) days prior written notice. In the unlikely event the partnership is terminated, WGU agrees that North Dakota Community Colleges partnering institutions' graduates and staff then receiving any educational benefit described in this MOU will receive the full value of that benefit towards their studies as long as they remain in continuous good academic standing at WGU.

WGU is committed to continuing to offer an affordable, flexible transfer option to students at the completion of their time within the North Dakota Community College system. Our goal remains to ensure a partnership between the North Dakota Community College institutions and WGU continues for years to come.

**WGU – Approval Signature(s)**

- (1) Angie Besendorfer  
Angie Besendorfer (Feb 11, 2022 20:25 CST)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Angie Besendorfer                      Feb 11, 2022                      Date  
Regional Vice President
- (2) Spencer Stewart  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Spencer Stewart                      Feb 11, 2022                      Date  
Vice President, Partnerships

**North Dakota Community College/NDUS Approval Signatures:**

- (1) Douglas J. Jensen  
Douglas J. Jensen (Feb 16, 2022 08:10 CST)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Douglas J. Jensen, President      Feb 16, 2022                      Date  
Bismarck State College
- (2) Jerry Migler  
Jerry Migler (Feb 15, 2022 20:01 CST)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Jerry Migler, Dean                      Feb 15, 2022                      Date  
Dakota College at Bottineau
- (3) Doug Darling  
Doug Darling (Feb 15, 2022 19:48 CST)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Doug Darling, President              Feb 15, 2022                      Date  
Lake Region State College
- (4) Harvey Link  
Harvey Link (Feb 16, 2022 07:16 CST)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Harvey Link, Interim President          Feb 16, 2022                      Date  
North Dakota State College of Science
- (5) Bernell Hirning  
Bernell Hirning (Feb 15, 2022 20:53 CST)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Bernell Hirning, President              Feb 15, 2022                      Date  
Williston State College
- (6) Mark A. Hagerott                      2/16/22  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Mark Hagerott, Chancellor              Date  
North Dakota University System

**Contact information – WGU**  
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**Contact Information – North Dakota University System**  
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Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs

[lisa.a.johnson@ndus.edu](mailto:lisa.a.johnson@ndus.edu)