

Illinois Community College Board

**MEMORANDUMS OF UNDERSTANDING**  
**NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY**  
**AND**  
**OAKTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

In the Winter of 2019, Northwestern University (Northwestern) and Oakton Community College (Oakton) established a collaboration to provide men incarcerated at Stateville Correctional Center who have been accepted into the Northwestern Prison Education Program (NPEP) with the opportunity to apply Northwestern credits towards an Associate Degree offered by Oakton. Students who successfully complete NPEP courses shall be able to transfer those credits towards Oakton's Associate of General Studies (AGS) degree.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

It is recommended that the following motion be adopted:

The Illinois Community College Board hereby approves the MOU agreement with Northwestern University and Oakton Community College and authorizes the Illinois Community College Board staff to enter into agreements.

## **Memorandum of Understanding**

### **Northwestern University / Oakton Community College**

In the Winter of 2019, Northwestern University (Northwestern) and Oakton Community College (Oakton) established a collaboration to provide men incarcerated at Stateville Correctional Center who have been accepted into the Northwestern Prison Education Program (NPEP) with the opportunity to apply Northwestern credits towards an Associate Degree offered by Oakton. Students who successfully complete NPEP courses shall be able to transfer those credits towards Oakton's Associate of General Studies (AGS) degree.

Northwestern and Oakton shall mutually agree on how these Northwestern credits meet the requirements of the AGS degree. It is presumed that some of the NPEP students may also submit additional transcripts to Oakton, noting credit at other colleges that preceded the onset of this collaboration.

To sustain the collaboration, it is necessary for Northwestern and Oakton to document the roles and responsibilities held by each. This document outlines our assumptions about this cooperative venture.

#### **It is our mutual belief and agreement that, as of February 2019:**

- 1) Northwestern assumes responsibility for selecting and admitting students into NPEP, with all relevant student information to be shared with Oakton in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). Northwestern shall collaborate with Oakton in helping admitted students also apply to Oakton, so that Oakton has a record of all students who are seeking its AGS degree.
- 2) Oakton shall review any official transcripts received from previous student work and document completion of credit hours within the Oakton transcript.
- 3) Northwestern assumes all responsibility for course instruction, disciplinary sanctions, and course evaluations for courses offered by Northwestern University, with students subject to the School of Professional Studies (SPS) policies pertaining to this program.
- 4) Northwestern shall coordinate with Oakton to determine the number of Oakton courses that shall be offered at the prison to meet Oakton residency requirements, which is 15 credits or around 5 courses. These courses may be taught by Oakton faculty or, in some cases, by Northwestern faculty, with the course content subject to Oakton review. In cases where Northwestern courses count toward Oakton residency requirements, these courses shall be subject to Northwestern policies.
- 5) Any course taught by Oakton faculty shall be subject to Oakton's curriculum standards and policies.
- 6) Northwestern shall provide Oakton with detailed course descriptions so that Oakton is able to determine how each course may be applied toward its degree. The two Parties shall collaborate on choosing courses that meet Oakton's general education requirements. If an Oakton course is the best choice for a requirement, the Parties shall seek to maintain the semester structure of that course, if the schedule permits.
- 7) Northwestern shall collaborate with the Illinois Department of Corrections to ensure that faculty and staff from both Parties gain appropriate access to the prison. Oakton shall inform its faculty of the policies and procedures of NPEP, including those specific to Stateville Correctional Center.

- 8) Northwestern shall share all transcripts from NPEP so that Oakton has a complete record of what each student has accomplished. For any course offered by Oakton, Northwestern shall assist in the gathering of all necessary student information so that students can be registered at Oakton, a process that shall be manual. The Parties agree to abide by applicable FERPA regulations in connection with sharing educational records.
- 9) If any placement exams are needed for certain general education course requirements, those exams shall be administered by Northwestern, with collaboration from Oakton.
- 10) Because courses at Northwestern constitute the majority of courses in NPEP, probation and dismissal policies shall conform to the standards pertaining to this program outlined in the Undergraduate Student Handbook for SPS.
- 11) Northwestern shall notify Oakton when students exit the program prior to completion.
- 12) Northwestern and Oakton shall review and approve the schedules for each term. Periodically, students shall receive an updated Oakton transcript or related document, showing their progress towards the AGS degree.
- 13) The two Parties agree that this program shall have no cost for its students. Northwestern shall waive tuition for the Northwestern classes and Oakton shall waive tuition for the Oakton classes. At its sole discretion, Northwestern shall pay modest stipends for both Northwestern and Oakton faculty who teach in this program, not to exceed the standard stipend amounts provided by SPS. Northwestern shall provide funds for books and other necessary course materials.
- 14) Both institutions shall make a good faith effort to participate in fundraising efforts for NPEP.
- 15) This Memorandum of Understanding shall not constitute a joint venture or formal business organization of any kind, and the rights and obligations of the Parties shall be only those expressly set forth herein, or in other agreements formally executed by the Parties.
- 16) The Parties shall act as independent contractors and the employees/faculty of one Party shall not be deemed to be the employees/faculty of the other Party. The Parties agree and understand that Northwestern and Oakton are not responsible in any way for the employment-related benefits for each other's employees/faculty including without limitation employment-related taxes and insurance.
- 17) This Memorandum of Understanding shall be reviewed periodically, and changes may be implemented in writing upon the agreement of both Parties.

This Memorandum of Understanding shall be effective upon the signature of authorized officials from Oakton and Northwestern. It shall be in force from February 2019 to December 2021. Oakton Community College and Northwestern University indicate agreement with this Memorandum of Understanding by their signatures.

Signatures and dates:

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Joianne Smith  
President  
Oakton Community College

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Date

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Jonathan Holloway  
Provost  
Northwestern University

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Date

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Ileo Lott  
Provost  
Oakton Community College

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Date

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Jennifer Lackey  
Director of NPEP  
Northwestern University

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Date