

UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHERN COLORADO

BOARD OF TRUSTEES AGENDA ITEM

Meeting Date: November 11, 2022

Action Item Discussion Item Information Item

Name of Item:

Participation in the Colorado Re-Engaged (CORE) Initiative

Responsible Staff Member: Kirsten Fleming, Provost & EVP for Academic Affairs

Summary of Issue:

UNC plans to award AGS and AA degrees to eligible students under the CORE Initiative.

Recommended Action by BOT:

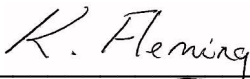
Approval No Action Needed

Change to Board Policy Manual:

Approval No Action Needed

If yes, Section:

Administrative Recommendation (Motion):



Signature of Vice President

10/21/2022

Date



Signature of President

10/25/2022

Date



UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHERN
COLORADO

Office of the Provost

Board of Trustees - Action Item

Awarding, but not offering, AGS and AA degrees through participation in the CORE Initiative

Summary of Item: UNC plans to award AGS and AA degrees to eligible students under the CORE Initiative

Background: The Colorado Re-Engaged (CORE) Initiative was part of HB21-1330 and enables four-year institutions in Colorado to *award* but *not offer* associate degrees to eligible students who have stopped-out from a baccalaureate program after earning at least 70 credit hours. Participation is optional, but highly encouraged at the state level, and UNC has signaled our intention to participate through membership on the state working group charged with implementing the initiative. Participation is consistent with our focus on serving traditionally underserved populations and ensuring they earn a degree; outreach to eligible students affords us with an opportunity to recruit students back to complete a bachelor's degree. More information about the CORE Initiative is available on the CDHE website: <https://cdhe.colorado.gov/students/attending-college/colorado-re-engaged-core-initiative>.

Because we cannot *offer* these degrees (only award them to students who are already eligible), they will not appear in the program area of our catalog and decision making about curriculum does not fall to any individual academic department, school or college. To ensure faculty control over curricular decisions, the Faculty Senate was consulted, and they referred the issue for feedback from the Academic Policies Committee and Undergraduate Council. The recommendation of the APC and UGC, which was accepted by the Faculty Senate at their October 10, 2022, meeting was that UNC participate by awarding:

- Associate of General Studies (AGS) degrees to students who meet the state's minimum requirements of 70 total credit hours, including at least 15 hours in general education courses (UNC's "Liberal Arts Curriculum"). The general education courses can be in any combination of state general education categories.
- Associate of Arts (AA) degrees to students who meet the state's minimum eligibility requirements of 70 total credit hours, including 31 credit hours distributed across the six state general education categories.

Rationale: The decision to award degrees based on the state minimum requirements was made on the grounds that the goal of the CORE initiative is to award college credentials to as many students as possible. The state's rationale is that a college credential significantly enhances students' employment opportunities and increases

their earnings potential. This rationale is also consistent with UNC's emphasis on career readiness and leadership in providing an education resulting in social mobility.

Under the CORE initiative, 4-year institutions have the option to award Associate of General Studies (AGS), Associate of Arts (AA) and Associate of Science (AS) degrees. The decision *not* to award Associate of Sciences degrees was made on the grounds that there is no discernible benefit of having an AA vs an AS degree in terms of transferability or career earnings (what matters is an associate-level credential). In addition, to determine whether the student would receive an AA or AS would require some mechanism for ascertaining whether each eligible student's non-LAC credits were more appropriately classified as 'Arts' vs. 'Sciences,' and even the simplest mechanism we could come up with would require a very manual and time-consuming process by registrar's staff. Awarding only AGS and AA degrees means we only need to check total credit hours (70 or more) and number of general education/LAC credits (15 for an AGS and 31 for AA), and this can be automated within Degree Works, our software for conducting degree audits.