

**Memorandum of Understanding**  
**between**  
**Gaston College**  
**and**  
**Appalachian State University**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is made on the 1st day of November 2020, by and between Appalachian State University ("Appalachian") and Gaston College ("Gaston") to establish the Aspire Appalachian Co-Admission Program.

Aspire Appalachian is a co-admission program between Appalachian and Gaston intended for successful community college students who plan to transfer to Appalachian after completing the Associate of Arts (AA), Associate of Science (AS), or Associate in Applied Science (AAS) degrees through an institutional or state-wide articulation agreement.

The Aspire Appalachian program creates predictable pathways from Gaston to Appalachian and is designed to provide North Carolinians affordable access to higher education. Aspire Appalachian also provides advising support for students during their education at Gaston and prepares them for a successful transition to Appalachian.

THEREFORE, the parties to this MOU mutually agree as follows:

1. Gaston students who are admitted to the Aspire Appalachian program must meet all Appalachian Admissions standards at the time of matriculation to Appalachian including but not limited to academic success and academic standing, including any criminal or disciplinary issues.
2. Gaston students have up to 3 years from date of acceptance into the Aspire Appalachian program to complete the Associate of Arts (AA), Associate of Science (AS), or Associate in Applied Science (AAS) degree through an institutional or state-wide articulation agreement and matriculate through this co-admission program.
3. Students admitted into the Aspire Appalachian program and who are enrolled at Gaston will receive:
  - a. Access to academic advising by designated Aspire Appalachian liaisons/advisors at Gaston and Appalachian to ensure co-admitted students select courses that minimize their time to baccalaureate degree completion and optimize academic achievement.
  - b. Access to financial aid advising and planning to aid students in maximizing their aid and minimizing student debt.
4. Gaston graduates with a 2.25 GPA or higher who earn an Associate of Arts (AA), Associate of Science (AS), or Associate in Applied Science (AAS) degree through an institutional or state-wide articulation agreement and will then matriculate to Appalachian and receive:

- a. Admission into an Appalachian undergraduate degree program. (*Note: students are not guaranteed admission into a particular major, as some high demand programs may have admission requirements beyond those for general admission to Appalachian.*)
  - b. Eligibility to apply for financial aid, subject to financial aid eligibility requirements.
  - c. Invitation to Aspire Appalachian program events designed to aid students with their transition to Appalachian and promote timely and successful completion of their baccalaureate degree.
  - d. Opportunities for students who indicate their intent to enroll by the recommended deadline to participate in the Transfer Pre-Orientation Program (T-POP) which provides enhanced orientation programming and early registration.
5. Appalachian agrees to provide to Gaston:
- a. Established admission procedures and criteria for the Aspire Appalachian program. Selection will be determined by Appalachian in consultation with the Aspire Appalachian liaison(s) on the Gaston campus(es).
  - b. Access to Appalachian advising tools for the Aspire Appalachian liaison(s) on Gaston campus(es).
  - c. Open sharing of data as it relates to Aspire Appalachian students and their performance at Appalachian. For purposes of this MOU, the parties are considered to be "school officials with legitimate educational interests" under FERPA and may share Aspire Appalachian student data between them.
  - d. Use of Appalachian logo on Aspire Appalachian recruitment, advertising, and reporting materials. Neither party shall identify the other in any promotional, marketing, advertising or other materials to be disseminated to the public or to use the name or trademark, service mark, symbol, nickname or logo of either party, without the prior written consent of the other party's authorized representative, except to identify the existence of the Agreement and the nature of the relationship or location of program.
6. Gaston agrees to provide to Appalachian:
- a. Designated Aspire Appalachian liaison(s) on the Gaston campus(es) to serve as a point of contact for Aspire Appalachian students on campus(es); to help identify, recruit, and select Aspire Appalachian students; to help facilitate visits and program activities of Aspire Appalachian staff or other campus representatives on the Gaston campus(es); and to serve on a Aspire Appalachian advisory board.
  - b. Use of Gaston logo on Aspire Appalachian recruitment, advertising, and reporting materials. Neither party shall identify the other in any promotional, marketing, advertising or other materials to be disseminated to the public or to use the name or trademark, service mark, symbol, nickname or logo of either party, without the prior written consent of the other party's authorized representative, except to identify the existence of the Agreement and the nature of the relationship or location of program.
  - c. Open sharing of data as it relates to Aspire Appalachian students. For purposes of this MOU, the parties are considered to be "school officials with legitimate educational interests" under FERPA and may share Aspire Appalachian student data between them.
7. Gaston and Appalachian agree to the objectives, benefits and requirements for the Aspire Appalachian Program as detailed in the attached Aspire Appalachian Co-Admission Program Agreement (Attachment A to this MOU).

This MOU shall be effective from the date last signed below until it is cancelled by either Appalachian or Gaston

by submitting a written notification to the other party at one year prior to the effective date of termination to allow students that have been admitted to complete their respective programs. This MOU will be reviewed every five years. Both parties will renew their commitment to continue at that time in writing, signed by authorized representatives of each party. The MOU may be revised at any time when mutually acceptable and as necessary, by adding an addendum to this MOU.

The undersigned support the MOU between Gaston and Appalachian.

Signed:

Appalachian State University

Gaston College

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Sheri Everts  
Chancellor

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Dr. John Hauser  
President

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Dr. Heather Hulburt Norris  
Interim Provost & Exec. Vice Chancellor

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Dr. Dewey Dellinger  
Vice President for Academic Affairs

## **Attachment A:**

### **Aspire Appalachian Co-Admission Program Agreement**

November 1, 2020

The Aspire Appalachian Co-Admission Agreement between Appalachian State University ("Appalachian") and Gaston College ("Gaston") is intended to promote seamless transfer, access to baccalaureate degree completion and to enhance transfer student success.

#### **Objectives of Aspire Appalachian**

- Improve student access to undergraduate education;
- Expand educational choices that best meet each student's academic, social, career, and financial needs;
- Improve associate and baccalaureate degree graduation rates;
- Ease student transition between both institutions;
- Provide ready access to support services for student success, regardless of student location;
- Coordinate seamless administration of admission, financial aid and other student support services;
- Improve accessibility of information for student success;
- Co-Admission to Appalachian guarantees general admission to the University; and (Note: students are not guaranteed admission into a particular major, as some high demand programs may have admission requirements beyond those for general admission to Appalachian.)
- Students who indicate their intent to enroll by the recommended deadline will have priority enrollment in the Transfer Pre-Orientation Program (T-POP), which provides enhanced orientation programming and early registration.

#### **Benefits for Students**

This partnership provides the following benefits for Gaston students:

- Coordinated federal and state financial aid;
- Coordinated degree completion so students who maintain established academic standards move seamlessly to Appalachian to complete upper-division coursework;
- On-site admissions and academic advising; and
- Access to a Gaston liaison on the Gaston campus(es) who serves as a point of contact for the co-admission program, helps identify and recruit eligible students, facilitates visits, and serves as a liaison to the Division of Enrollment Management at Appalachian.

#### **Requirements for Participation**

Students interested in the Aspire Appalachian Co-Admission Program must submit a formal application to the program and meet the following requirements for admission:

- Students must submit official high school transcript or GED scores.
- Students must be willing to commit to full-time status (minimum of 12 credit hours per semester). Students are strongly encouraged to maintain an average of 15 credits per semester (Fall & Spring) to promote timely degree completion.
- Students must have at least 2 semesters of coursework remaining to complete their associate degree.

- Students must complete ACA 122 with a grade of C/2.0 or higher for acceptance into the program.
- Upon completion of Associate Degree, students must provide a final Gaston transcript documenting the conferred degree.
- Prior to enrolling at Appalachian (priority admission by February 15 for Summer/Fall and October 15 for Spring), co-admitted students need to complete the transfer application to ensure all demographic and academic records are up-to-date.
- Students who are co-admitted must meet all Appalachian Admissions standards including but not limited to academic success and academic standing, including any criminal or disciplinary issues.

**Requirements for Matriculation to Appalachian**

Students must meet the following progression requirements to complete the Aspire Appalachian Program and enroll at Appalachian:

- Complete a minimum of 12 credit hours of coursework per term (recommend 15-17) with a minimum GPA of 2.25;
- Complete the requirements for the Associate in Science, Associate in Arts or Associate in Applied Science through an institutional or state-wide articulation agreement; and
- Gaston College verifies with Appalachian that the students are meeting all program requirements at Gaston.

Both institutions will work together to reach the above agreed upon goals to benefit the students we serve.

Signed,

Appalachian State University

Gaston College

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Dr. Sheri Everts  
 Chancellor

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Dr. John Hauser  
 President

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 Dr. Heather Hulburt Norris  
 Interim Provost & Exec. Vice Chancellor

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 Dr. Dewey Dellinger  
 Vice President for Instruction