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## **News Release**

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### **NMCC and UMFK officials sign articulation agreements to facilitate student transition in multiple programs**

**Aroostook County** – With the stroke of a pen, officials with Northern Maine Community College and the University of Maine at Fort Kent today signed the most comprehensive articulation agreement between the two northernmost institutions of higher education in the state.

Citing the moment as significant to further advancing access to quality, affordable higher education opportunities for residents of the region, the agreement signed by NMCC President Timothy Crowley and UMFK President Richard W. Cost, provides seamless transition for students who successfully complete NMCC's Associate in Arts degree in liberal studies to any of the academic programs offered at UMFK. Specifically, it stipulates that NMCC liberal studies graduates will have completed all general education course equivalency requirements at UMFK.

“Students are the true beneficiaries of this agreement. This opens wider the door of opportunity for NMCC students looking to transfer from the College to continue their education and earn a baccalaureate degree,” said Crowley. “We are pleased to join with our colleagues and friends at UMFK – as we have so many times in the past – to work collaboratively to encourage more residents of Aroostook County to take advantage of the wonderful higher education opportunities available in our own backyard.”

Representatives of both institutions have been working for months to align the respective course requirements and set the framework for the agreement.

“Education benefits both the individual and society. Economic policy studies are unanimous in indicating it is increasingly important that more citizens of Maine complete a bachelor's degree. These agreements we sign today will make it easier for students to begin that transition the day they begin classes at NMCC,” said Dr. Cost.

The liberal studies transfer agreement is one of four developed and signed by the College and University leaders. Others focus on NMCC student entry into the UMFK baccalaureate elementary education, business and nursing programs.

“UMFK wants to further enhance the student transferability into a variety of majors. Articulation agreements and good advising will facilitate ease in the transition process, help to clarify expectations, and remove barriers for students wishing to further their education. It clearly spells out for community college students how they can earn credits at a four-year institution,” said Dr. Rachel E. Albert, UMFK vice president for academic affairs and academic dean. “Over the years, we’ve enjoyed a strong and successful relationship with NMCC with student transition into the nursing major and now students will be afforded the same opportunity in other majors as well,” Dr. Albert added.

In the first of three program specific agreements, Dr. Albert and her counterpart Alan Panches, NMCC vice president and academic dean, working with faculty at their respective campuses, crafted the initial transfer protocol between the two institutions focused on elementary education. Under it, students successfully completing the associate of arts in liberal studies and three sophomore-level education courses will be accepted as juniors at UMFK.

Moving forward, graduates of NMCC’s Associate in Applied Science in business administration will be assured that courses successfully completed as part of their required curriculum will be articulated into the Bachelor of Science in Business Management degree program at UMFK. The new agreement allows a seamless transition for NMCC students into their choice of the specialized and focused offerings available in business management at the University.

The final agreement signed by the higher education officials re-visited one forged a decade ago between the Associate in Science degree nursing program at NMCC and the Bachelor of Science in nursing degree at UMFK. Since that initial agreement, registered nurses completing their associate degree through the Presque Isle College have been able to transfer with ease to the Bachelor of Science in nursing degree program offered through the Fort Kent campus.

“As NMCC prepares to offer our nursing program in the St. John Valley this coming fall, Dr. Albert and I felt it would be appropriate to revisit our existing agreement to assure that those students completing our program who wish to continue the BSN program at UMFK could do so seamlessly. As some curricular changes had occurred in both programs since the last agreement, we worked with faculty from both institutions to identify the changes, and to incorporate these into the agreement to smooth the transition for our shared students,” said Dr. Panches. “All of the transfer agreements we have signed here this morning evince the long-standing commitment of our two institutions to collaborate to place the needs of our students and the needs of the region in the forefront. As the cost of higher education continues to rise, students can ill afford missteps that may prolong their time in school. These agreements help remove many of those curricular, administrative hurdles.”

All four agreements require NMCC students to earn a minimum grade of “C” to be eligible for automatic course transfer. In addition to facilitating the academic transition from NMCC to UMFK, the agreements also provide a financial incentive as the UMFK application fees for NMCC transfer students will be waived.

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*Northern Maine Community College and University of Maine at Fort Kent leaders recently signed four articulation agreements to ease student transfer between the two institutions. Joining in the signing ceremony at NMCC were (left to right) Alan Punches, NMCC vice president; Timothy Crowley, NMCC President; Richard Cost, UMFK president; and Rachel Albert, UMFK vice president for academic affairs.*