



# NORTHWEST FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE

## Memo

To: Board of Trustees

From: Dr. Devin Stephenson, President

Date: June 20, 2023

Re: Program Closures – Transit Technician Levels I, II, and III

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In accordance with Board Policy GP 3.00 Service Area and Interagency Relationships, the Northwest Florida State College Board of Trustees has primary responsibility for determining which programs and services are needed to serve the educational needs of the District and for determining the effectiveness and efficiency of the programs and services in meeting those needs.

Concurrent with awarding of the College's Florida Job Growth Grant from the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, the College established a Transit Technician program. Despite ongoing, significant marketing and recruitment efforts, program enrollment has been zero. The primary threat to enrollment was the disparity between local demand and regional demand; while employability of transit technicians is high in other regions of Florida, the data for Okaloosa and Walton Counties does not meet these levels. Local employers reported willingness to provide on-the-job training.

After identifying an opportunity to partner with a local automotive business, the College explored a shift in scope which would meet the general purpose of the grant funds and provide a way for the College to reach grant deliverable targets. A partnership with Step One Automotive to expand the Florida Job Growth Grant scope to include additional noncredit programs in Fort Walton Beach led to the development of a new scope of work. As Step One Automotive had concurrent construction to establish a Training Center of Excellence near NWFSC's Fort Walton Beach Campus, a redesign of the grant project allowed the College to shift planned renovation costs for Niceville Transit Technician labs to scholarship dollars for students. Funds would then remain for renovation of classroom facilities at the Fort Walton Beach Campus to support lecture-based instruction for these programs with hands-on program activities delivered at the Training Center of Excellence's facility equipped with 35 bays. Program equipment already purchased would be repurposed or returned to the vendor, as relevant to new needs, and marketing funding would shift to support the expanded scope. The faculty originally hired for the Transit Technician program would be retained to teach automotive courses, as the revised scope of the project is also an area in which he specializes. The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity has responded with support of this change in scope, and the College is now pursuing work in this new direction to pursue completion of grant activities and fulfillment of grant deliverables.

At this time, in preparation for fall term, Academic Affairs recommends closure of the Transit Technician programs (Levels I, II, and III) beginning Fall 2023. This closure allows the College to remove the programs from the 2023-2024 Academic Catalog and cease offering program-specific courses for the upcoming academic year. Your review and approval allows the College to complete the necessary next steps to notify SACSCOC of program closure. This recommendation to close the programs is in response to its continued viability of this program as determined by review of several program-specific data points, including enrollment and workforce demand. Faculty and staff will be notified through direct communication with them by College leadership. Faculty affected will be reassigned to support our workforce education efforts in the areas of automotive, diesel, and electric vehicle technician. There are no students currently enrolled in this program; therefore, no teach-out plan is necessary to provide, per SACSCOC.

The closure of the Transit Technician Program provides the College with an opportunity to direct efforts toward automotive, diesel, and electric vehicle technician training and certification in partnership with local industry to meet regional demands.

#### RECOMMENDATION:

The Board of Trustees approves the closure of the Transit Technician programs (Levels I, II, and III), effective for the 2023-2024 Academic Catalog, as presented.