



Mapping Upward Project Emphasizes Removing Barriers to Credentialing

Over the past year, seven community colleges in North Carolina have been part of the [Mapping Upward](#) initiative, a national activity of the US Department of Education's Office of

Career, Technical, and Adult Education to support colleges

engaged in the design of stackable credentials. Among other outcomes, removing barriers for students to earn industry-recognized credentials has been a key focus. In this issue, two *Mapping Upward* colleges share recent experiences.



Test Fest Offers Free Certification Exams to Boost Test-taking and Credential Earning Rates

With an overwhelmed testing center unable to handle student demand for certification exams and a student population that couldn't afford exam fees, Rowan-Cabarrus Community College in Salisbury piloted *Test Fest*. The daylong event offered open lab time during which IT faculty members proctored certification tests for students who had completed the courses corresponding to the certification. For example, students who completed the entry-level Networking and Security course could sit for the Microsoft Technology Associate Exam in those areas. *Test Fest* allowed students to earn a credential—Microsoft's Technology Associate or Office Specialist—without paying exam or proctoring fees. Rowan-Cabarrus students

earned a total of 109 credentials during the pilot event. Going forward, the college plans to expand exam offerings and establish a fund under the college's foundation to support future *Test Fests* to ensure exam fees are not a barrier to credentialing. *To learn more, contact [Zack Hubbard](#), Chair, Information Technology.*

Bridge Program Provides Path to Degree for Certified Paramedics

In preparing to implement a new emergency medical services associate degree program, Mitchell Community College in Statesville recognized the need to serve students who were currently working in the field but needed a little more education to advance in their careers. The college created an emergency medical science bridge program, which provides a mechanism for certified but non-degreed paramedics to earn the emergency medical services associate degree by completing course requirements outside the paramedic subject area. The program began in August 2017 and anticipates recognizing its first graduates in December 2017. Most students will be able to complete the program in one year or less because of the articulation of earned certifications. *To learn more, contact [Camille Reese](#), Vice President of Instruction.*

MAPPING UPWARD RESOURCES:

A Podcast Series is [available](#) from the *Mapping Upward* project featuring conversations with experts on key topics of importance to colleges developing stackable credentials.

Don't Miss [Resources of the Month](#) on NC-NET.