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Media Inquiries:

Lauren Bauml  
Reach University  
(512) 923-6136

[LBauml@Reach.Edu](mailto:LBauml@Reach.Edu)



**A.A. TO B.A. PATHWAY OFFERS SISKIYOU GRADS OF ALL MAJORS 100% TRANSFER OF CREDITS INTO A DEBT-FREE, ON-THE-JOB BACHELOR'S DEGREE & CAREER**

*Reach University & Siskiyou County's program removes barriers for A.A. holders to complete a paid B.A. and pursue a career in teaching, while transforming the workplace into a learning place.*

(YREKA, California) – March 21, 2023 – Today, Oakland-based Reach University, Siskiyou County Office of Education, and College of the Siskiyous (Siskiyous) announced a partnership to provide every Siskiyous graduate a transparent, job-embedded, and paid pathway to a bachelor's degree and professional career.

In a first of its kind articulation agreement between a two-year and four-year degree granting institution, over 35 Siskiyous degrees – nearly *all* available majors – will transfer into Reach University's job-embedded Liberal Studies B.A. program. Rather than a traditional college campus, Reach will utilize local schools as the university learning place through its accredited and leading on-the-job degree program. All degree-seekers will work as an employee in a Siskiyou County education provider while completing their B.A., and have the option to pursue a teaching credential at the end of their degree experience.

According to the [Community College Research Center](#), although roughly 80% of community college students indicate their desire to earn a B.A. or higher, only 32% transfer to a four-year degree granting institution within six years of enrolling. This A.A. to B.A. Transfer Pathway is focused on heavily increasing the number of matriculating students into a bachelor's program, providing a new level of post-secondary and professional opportunity within the local community, and sparking a new pipeline of qualified teachers.

"Siskiyous has a rich history of effectively aligning our graduates' newly-gained skills and career readiness with the hiring needs of our regional employers. In this partnership, we are solidifying the quality and preparedness of our career and technical programs, while building a clearly defined, barrier-free bridge from an associate's to bachelor's degree to meet the mission-critical workforce needs of one of our most important local employers - our K-12 schools. This is an exciting opportunity for our employees. It provides a pipeline that can directly meet the needs of our surrounding K-12 schools and gives our employees the opportunity to further their education at a minimal cost," said Dr. Char Perlas, Superintendent & President, College of the Siskiyous.

In the partnership's A.A. to B.A. Transfer Pathway, an A.A. holder will typically fill a critical job (e.g., as a classroom aide or other classified employee) while securing their debt-free Liberal

Studies degree in two years or less. Half of the learning towards the degree comes from the degree seeker's paid, on-the-job work, while the other half comes from rigorous and synchronous online Oxford-style seminars held after work hours and on the weekend, led by Reach's nationally-recognized teacher practitioner faculty.

Upon graduation, a candidate that accepts a role as a teacher in a K-12 school will have the option, in partnership with the Siskiyou County Office of Education, to enroll in an additional one-year alternative teacher certification program, working during the day and taking synchronous graduate-level coursework one evening per week.

"Our partnership with both College of the Siskiyous and Reach University has provided an unprecedented means to tap into local talent as part of addressing our talent shortages. With this program, our schools are eager to expand current "grow-your-own" efforts in welcoming every Associate of Arts holder into our classrooms to fill a critical paraprofessional role, while they pursue Reach's rigorous, immersive, and STEM-focused teacher training program. Whether a paraprofessional completes their Bachelors degree or pursues a full-time teaching position, this program offers our schools and students a tremendous win. Our hope is that this initiative and collaboration can be replicated in other rural counties," said Allan Carver, Superintendent, Siskiyou County Office of Education.

To be eligible for the program, A.A. holders must be employed by a local Siskiyou County school or education provider in any role, and have access to an instructional work setting (i.e., a place where the candidate can observe or participate in mentoring, teaching, tutoring, coaching, etc.) for approximately 15 hours a week. Degree seekers will be paid throughout the duration of their degree program, taking on zero student loan debt. Although after B.A. completion, the learner may matriculate into a one-year Teacher Credential program, there is no obligation to do so.

The job-embedded B.A. program will also be available to Siskiyous employees.

"Community colleges are the backbone of our communities, providing foundational skills and career-focused education for millions of Americans. Yet, we've made it increasingly difficult for A.A. holders to progress into a four-year degree granting institution and balance the demands between a job and a degree. Today, that changes in northern California. Regardless of the full-time role - bus driver, classroom aide, janitor - every learner can leverage their job into a debt-free B.A. and potentially carry on to become a qualified teacher - all in three years or less. This is how higher ed can and should work, to serve all Americans efficiently, affordably, and inclusively," said Joe E. Ross, President, Reach University.

## **ABOUT REACH UNIVERSITY**

[Reach University](#) is a regionally accredited, non-profit university that pioneers job-embedded degrees and credentials. Reach is actively solving America's teacher shortage by creating fully-embedded pathways for high-potential individuals to earn degrees, credentials and jobs as teachers within their own communities. By focusing on low-income, urban and rural regions,

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offering online tutorials and classes, and rendering academic credit for on-the-job experience, Reach University is eliminating barriers to entry in high-need professions, and building grow-your-own pipelines of locally representative talent.

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