



2+2 Program

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF ONLINE STRATEGY

Background

- ▶ Two-Year College Transfer Grant Program
 - ▶ 'Estd. by SCHEV in 2007
 - ▶ Associate's degree first at a Virginia public two-year/community college
 - ▶ Then transfer to a participating Virginia four-year college/university to reduce costs in earning a bachelor's degree
- ▶ Role of Office of Online Strategy
 - ▶ Enhance JMU's online capacity & presence
 - ▶ Build OL-centered external partnerships (e.g., OVN)
 - ▶ Help JMU maintain its core commitments to high-quality programs & meaningful faculty-student interaction in online spaces
 - ▶ Support from state leadership & our founding partners GMU, ODU & VCCS
 - ▶ Work to simplify process & help more people finish their degree OL in Virginia

- Established by SCHEV in 2007, the Two-Year College Transfer Grant Program provides an incentive for students to first complete an associate's degree at a Virginia public two-year/community college and then transfer to a participating Virginia four-year college/university to reduce costs in earning a bachelor's degree (<https://www.schev.edu/financial-aid/financial-aid/federal-state-financial-aid/two-year-college-transfer-grant>).
- The Office of Online Strategy (for which I am associate director) is focused on enhancing JMU's online capacity and presence, building online-centered external partnerships (e.g., OVN), and helping JMU maintain its core commitments to high-quality programs and meaningful faculty-student interaction in online spaces.
 - More specifically, with support from state leadership and our founding partners George Mason, Old Dominion, and Virginia's Community Colleges, OVN is working to simplify the process and help more people finish their degree online in Virginia.



<https://youtu.be/Yn3sx754NjU>

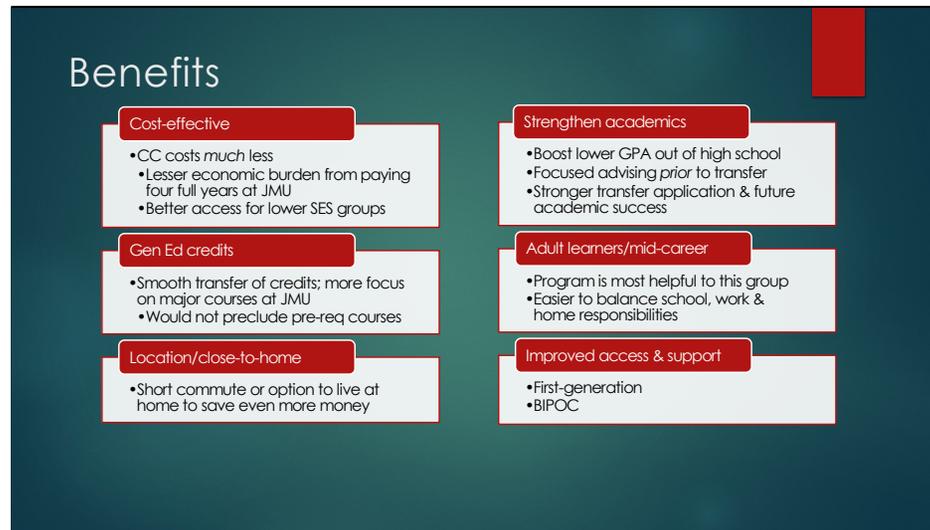
- VIDEO: NOVA CC serves as an example of the Guaranteed Admission Program available across the state of Virginia (many other state CC systems offer this program as well). The VCCS Transfer Gateway webpage provides more info, including a list of colleges/universities with transfer agreements:
<https://www.schev.edu/financial-aid/financial-aid/federal-state-financial-aid/two-year-college-transfer-grant>
- I appreciate this video because it not only overviews the program with a real-life, Virginia-based example, but a college graduate explains her experience in the program, which particularly highlights the benefits to first-gen and BIPOC (Black and Indigenous people of color) students.
- Please NOTE: "Guaranteed" admission is a misnomer: There are still parameters that a student must meet (e.g., GPA requirements, 'C' or better in degree plan courses, etc.), as specified by the college/university to which the student intends to transfer.

Purpose: Buy-in

- ▶ Student attends community college (e.g., BRCC)
 - ▶ Courses are solely online
- ▶ "Transfers" to college/university (i.e., JMU)
- ▶ Earns both an associate's & bachelor's
 - ▶ Both segments = fully online pathway
- ▶ Caveat: JMU degree would be earned *solely online*
 - ▶ Commitment from JMU & Health Sciences



- Let's say a student begins their college career by attending a community college (e.g., Blue Ridge Community College) and earns their associate's degree. Said student then transfers to a four-year institution (e.g., JMU). The combination of their transfer and newly earned credits allows them to earn both associate's and bachelor's degrees.
- The one (important) caveat is that the JMU degree would *also* be earned solely online (just as the associate's). Therefore, there *must* be a strong commitment from both JMU and the Department of Health Sciences to ensure that the student's entire health sciences degree experience/curriculum is administered strictly online.



- Several benefits of the 2 + 2 program include:
 - Much less of a financial burden on students by not having to pay for all four years at JMU, which may also open the pool to more diverse students from a variety of SES backgrounds.
 - Most (if not all) Gen Ed credits would be fulfilled, so the student can focus more on their major courses while at JMU (of course, would not preclude the student from taking elective courses).
 - A shorter commute or being able to live at home can also save a significant amount of money.
 - Allows for bolstering the student's GPA, encourages more focused advising prior to transfer, and increases the likelihood for a stronger transfer application.
 - Adult learners/mid-career are benefited the most in terms of balancing their various responsibilities. However, interestingly, current research

indicates that the online student profile is becoming younger (~24 y/o), so programs can become more competitive by offering the 2+2 program option.

- Obviously, more accessible courses and degree programs in general will benefit first-generation students and those from the BIPOC community, who may would otherwise struggle earning a college degree due to finances, distance/location, etc.
- Adapted from <https://www.collegeraptor.com/find-colleges/articles/questions-answers/22-college-program/>

Conclusion

- ▶ More accessible & affordable than traditional approach
 - ▶ Expand diversity of student body & more financially manageable
- ▶ Great way to get a quality education at an affordable price
 - ▶ If done right, meaningful OL faculty-student interactions
- ▶ Offers more flexible schedule & ability to hone OL pedagogy
 - ▶ For both students & faculty
 - ▶ Allows faculty to offer select overload classes online
- ▶ JMU's programs will become more competitive w/2+2 option
 - ▶ Streamlined program & completion in timely manner
- ▶ Strategic partnership between VCCS & JMU is essential
 - ▶ CC courses can be prescriptive to suit health sciences curriculum



- The 2+2 program allows for greater accessibility, which is important to expand the diversity of our student body, as well as being more financially manageable overall.
- A program comprised of a “dual degree” approach provides a quality education.
- Online programming at a four-year institution allows for greater flexibility for both students and faculty (particularly those interested in teaching an overload and/or honing their online pedagogy skills).
- A strategic partnership between Virginia’s community college system and JMU is essential in making the 2 + 2 program seamless and streamlined. It is important to note that the courses taken at a VCCS campus can be prescriptive to meet the existing requirements of the JMU health sciences curriculum, which will ensure a smoother transition to JMU *and* assist the student with completing the BS in a timely manner. In other words, health sciences can recommend the associate’s-level courses that the student takes *prior to* transitioning to JMU. Think about what our current transfers are coming into health sciences with in terms of associate’s coursework...