

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2019**

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SENATE BILL 853

Short Title: UNC Study/Accelerated Degree Completion. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Bryan, Ballard, and Johnson (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

May 27, 2020

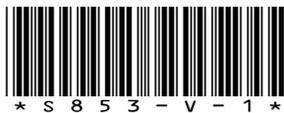
A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO DIRECT THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA TO STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF OFFERING ACCELERATED UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS AT CONSTITUENT INSTITUTIONS AND TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR THE STUDY.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. The Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina shall study the feasibility of offering accelerated undergraduate degree programs at constituent institutions that are effective and efficient for students while remaining consistent with the access and affordability goals of the Strategic Plan for The University of North Carolina adopted by the Board of Governors. In conducting the study, the Board of Governors shall consider at least the following factors:

- (1) The use of online education for certain courses to shorten time to degree completion, particularly for general education requirements.
- (2) The feasibility of increasing summer term options or flexible calendar scheduling to accelerate degree completion.
- (3) The potential for piloting specific accelerated degree program models, such as three-year degree programs, combined bachelor's and master's degree programs, and competency-based programs. In reviewing potential pilot programs, the Board of Governors shall determine (i) whether a pilot program would be required or optional for constituent institutions, (ii) the type of flexibility that would be allowed during a pilot program, and (iii) whether incentive funding through the funding formula should be tied to constituent institutions relative to such a program.
- (4) Any obstacles or needed changes to State financial aid programs or the university funding model to incentivize accelerated paths to a degree.
- (5) The potential cost savings to students who enroll in accelerated degree programs, including any reduction to tuition and fees.
- (6) Any possible shifts in curriculum design to focus on specialized skills earlier in the degree program.
- (7) Issues related to student support to facilitate successful completion of requirements, selection of majors early in programs, and the management of increased student coursework loads in accelerated degree programs.
- (8) The importance of credit transfers from college level high school courses, community college courses, or courses from other institutions to maximize accelerated degree program efficiency.



1 (9) The level of student interest and demand for accelerated degree programs.

2 **SECTION 2.** By March 1, 2021, the Board of Governors shall report on the results
3 of the study and any recommendations to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee.

4 **SECTION 3.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Board of Governors
5 of The University of North Carolina the sum of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) in nonrecurring
6 funds for the 2020-2021 fiscal year for the purpose of conducting the study required by Section
7 1 of this act. The Board of Governors may use these funds to contract with an independent
8 research organization to conduct the study.

9 **SECTION 4.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2020.