

Strategic Pathways in 2-Year Higher Education: Housing, Partnerships, & Athletics

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Executive Summary

Modern junior & community colleges are evolving beyond traditional commuter-based models to provide comprehensive residential experiences, strategic university partnerships, & expanded athletic opportunities. A primary focus of recent initiatives, such as the Nassau-Adelphi Gateway Program Model, is streamlining the transition from associate to bachelor's degrees by integrating community college students into 4-year university campus life early in their academic careers.

Data consistently indicates that students who reside on campus achieve higher GPAs & graduation rates compared to their commuter counterparts. Consequently, institutions across the NJCAA (National Junior College Athletic Association) & California's 3C2A (California Community College Athletic Association) are increasingly prioritizing on-campus housing to foster community & academic focus. Furthermore, women's wrestling is identified as a rapidly growing sport at the 2-year level, with Iowa serving as the national epicenter & new programs emerging across more than 14 states. These developments offer student-athletes affordable developmental pathways to 4-year institutions while maintaining competitive athletic standards.

An Innovative Academic Partnership Model: The Nassau-Adelphi Gateway

The Nassau-Adelphi Gateway Program represents an innovative model designed to increase bachelor's degree completion rates by connecting Nassau Community College (NCC) students with Adelphi University.

Program Structure & Integration

Launched in Fall 2021, the program allows NCC students to fully integrate into the Adelphi University community while completing their associate degrees at NCC. Key features include:

- **Residential Integration:** NCC students may live in residence halls on Adelphi's Garden City campus, located only 3 miles from NCC.
- **Campus Facilities:** Gateway students have access to all Adelphi facilities, including the Ruth S. Harley University Center, libraries, bookstore, & dining halls.
- **Support Services:** Students receive academic & career advising from the Adelphi Transfer Student Success Team and are assigned mentors to ensure they meet transfer requirements without taking redundant courses.
- **Financial Benefits:** While paying Adelphi room & board rates, students benefit from lower NCC tuition. Additionally, application & deposit fees are waived upon their eventual transfer to Adelphi.

Strategic Objectives

- **Social Life & Retention:** Early involvement in university life is intended to make students feel comfortable on a 4-year campus, increasing the likelihood they will remain in school to earn a bachelor's degree.
- **Diversity & Enrollment:** The partnership aims to improve enrollment strategy for both institutions following pandemic-related declines.

Residential Life & Student Success

Research highlights a strong correlation between on-campus residency and improved student outcomes, including higher GPAs & increased graduation rates.

Benefits of On-Campus Housing

Institutions like Southeast Community College (SCC) & California Community Colleges emphasize several advantages:

- **Community & Connection:** Living on campus fosters lifelong connections and keeps students focused on their academic goals.
- **Economic Efficiency:** On-campus housing often includes utilities (Wi-Fi, cable, electricity, snow removal) & meal plans, making it more cost-effective than off-campus rentals.
- **Support Systems:** Many residential programs employ Resident Assistants (RAs) to provide leadership & navigate the challenges of college life.

Institutional Housing Profiles

Institution	Location	Housing Type/Capacity	Key Requirements
Lackawanna College	Scranton, PA	Three halls (McKinnie, Seeley, Tobin); 313 total beds.	Full-time non-commuters must live on campus.
Snow College	Richfield, UT	Two apartment-style buildings; 120 students.	Billed per semester; choice of shared or private rooms.
Carl Albert State College	Poteau, OK	Scholars Center & Residential Housing.	Residents must purchase a meal plan.
Southeast Community College	NE (3 campuses)	Various residence halls.	Mandatory for scholarship athletes.

The Landscape of Women's Wrestling

Women's wrestling is experiencing rapid expansion at the junior and community college levels, governed primarily by the NJCAA & California's 3C2A.

The 3 Operational Models

Analysis identifies 3 distinct models for women's wrestling programs:

1. **NJCAA Residential Model (Midwest/Rural):** Most prevalent in Iowa, Oklahoma, & Kansas. These schools function like small 4-year residential colleges with dorms & cafeterias.
2. **CCCAA/3C2A Commuter Model (California):** The majority are pure commuter schools where students live at home or find off-campus housing.

3. **Hybrid Model:** Primarily rural Northern California schools (e.g., Lassen College, College of the Redwoods) that offer on-campus residence halls despite being part of the California system.

Regional Centers of Competition

- **Iowa:** Recognized as the epicenter of NJCAA women's wrestling, featuring schools like Indian Hills, Iowa Central, & Iowa Western.
- **California:** Features 13 to 20 intercollegiate programs, including Bakersfield, Fresno City, & Mt. San Antonio College.
- **Emerging States:** New programs are launching in Arkansas, Georgia, Indiana, Michigan, & New York (SUNY Niagara).

Athletic Governance & Scholarships (NJCAA)

The NJCAA governs athletics for approximately 525 schools across 24 regions. Institutional aid is strictly tied to the division level:

- **Division I:** May offer full athletic scholarships (tuition, fees, room, board, books, & limited supplies).
- **Division II:** Limited to tuition, fees, books, & supplies (no room/board).
- **Division III:** No athletically related financial assistance is permitted.

Workforce Development & Advanced Degree Pathways

Community colleges are increasingly serving as hubs for specialized workforce training through university collaborations.

Umpqua Community College (UCC) Initiatives

UCC has established high-level pathways for medical & technical careers:

- **Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP):** A collaboration with Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) provides a direct-entry pathway to a doctorate.
- **Medical Laboratory Science (MLS):** A partnership with Idaho State University allows students to complete 2 years at UCC before transferring to earn a bachelor's degree.

- **Surgical Technologist Apprenticeship:** Oregon's first apprenticeship for this field was launched in partnership with the Southwestern Oregon Workforce Investment Board.
- **Healthcare Facilities:** UCC is constructing a \$21.5 million Welcome Center & Medical Careers Hub to strengthen the healthcare workforce in Douglas County.

Notable Program Highlights

- **Viticulture:** UCC's Southern Oregon Wine Institute (SOWI) offers award-winning student-crafted wine programs.
- **Honor Rolls:** UCC consistently recognizes high academic achievement, with significant numbers of students maintaining GPAs of 3.75 or higher (President's List).

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