



ARIZONA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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First Regular Session

House: ED DP 9-0-1-0

HB 2523: four-year degrees; community colleges
Sponsor: Representative Nutt, LD 14
Caucus & COW

Overview

Allows community colleges to offer accredited four-year baccalaureate degrees.

History

Currently, statute defines *community college* to mean an educational institution that is operated by a district board and that provides a program not exceeding two years. Community college district boards set standards for the establishment, development, administration, operation and accreditation of community colleges in a district. District boards fix tuition and fees, as well as determine curricula and budgetary needs ([A.R.S. § 15-1445](#)). These district boards also have the power to award degrees, certificates and diplomas upon the completion of courses and curricula ([A.R.S. § 15-1444](#)).

Statute also allows counties to establish a provisional community college district. These provisional districts are required to contract with an existing community college district to provide instructional and student services within the community college tuition financing district. Provisional community college districts cannot award degrees, certificates or diplomas ([A.R.S. §§ 15-1401, 15-1409](#)).

Provisions

1. Allows a community college district board, in a county with a population of 750,000 or less, to offer accredited four-year baccalaureate degrees. (Sec. 2)
2. Allows a community college district board, in a county with a population of more than 750,000, to offer accredited four-year baccalaureate degrees as follows:
 - a) For the first four years, not more than 10% of its total number of degrees and certification offerings for four-year baccalaureate degrees; and
 - b) For the fifth and subsequent years, not more than 15% of its total number of degrees and certification offerings for four-year baccalaureate degrees. (Sec. 2)
3. Stipulates that, for four-year baccalaureate programs in a county with a population of more than 750,000, tuition per credit hour for the third and fourth years cannot exceed 150% of any other district program. (Sec. 2)
4. Mandates each community college that offers a baccalaureate program to meet all applicable regional accreditation and state licensure requirements. (Sec. 3)
5. Directs a community college district board, when approving a baccalaureate program, to make its determination based on:
 - a) Whether the community college can demonstrate workforce need and student demand for the program;

- b) A financial analysis showing the short-term and long-term impacts to initiate and sustain the program, including the sources of money, facilities requirements, faculty, personnel and administrative costs;
 - c) Whether the program would unnecessarily duplicate programs offered by other Arizona higher education institutions; and
 - d) The ability of the community college to support the program with student enrollment and the adequacy of facilities, faculty, administration, libraries and other resources. (Sec. 3)
6. Requires community colleges, before being authorized to offer a baccalaureate program, to submit a report to the community college district board detailing:
 - a) The name of the proposed academic program;
 - b) The academic department offering the program;
 - c) Whether the instructional modality would be immersion, online or both;
 - d) The total necessary credit hours;
 - e) The proposed inception term;
 - f) A brief program description;
 - g) A learning outcomes and assessment plan;
 - h) The projected enrollment by year for the first three years;
 - i) Evidence of market demand for the degree;
 - j) Similar programs offered at other Arizona higher education institutions; and
 - k) The new resources required. (Sec. 3)
 7. Directs community colleges offering a baccalaureate program to submit a report to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, by October 1 of the fifth year of the program, that contains:
 - a) The number of programs, applicants, admissions, enrollment and awarded degrees;
 - b) Costs of each program;
 - c) Current trends in workforce demands;
 - d) Current completion and continuation rates;
 - e) Information on the impact of each program on underserved and underprepared students;
 - f) The extent to which programs fulfill identified workforce needs;
 - g) Information on the places of employment of students and graduates;
 - h) The costs to students of each program;
 - i) Financial aid and student debt levels of graduates; and
 - j) Time-to-degree rates and completion rates. (Sec. 3)
 8. Requires a community college district offering a baccalaureate program to include in its annual report:
 - a) The total number of students pursuing a baccalaureate degree;
 - b) The total number of complete baccalaureate degrees;
 - c) Workforce data showing demand of the program; and
 - d) The average cost of tuition per credit hour for baccalaureate degrees. (Sec. 3)
 9. Alters the definition of *community college* to mean an educational institution that provides a program of not more than four years. (Sec. 1)
 10. Modifies the definition of *provisional community college district* to mean a community college district that began operations before January 1, 2015. (Sec. 1)
 11. Contains a legislative intent clause. (Sec. 4)
 12. Makes technical changes. (Sec. 1, 2)

<input type="checkbox"/> Prop 105 (45 votes)	<input type="checkbox"/> Prop 108 (40 votes)	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency (40 votes)	<input type="checkbox"/> Fiscal Note
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