

BOARD OF REGENTS
BRIEFING PAPER

1. AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Handbook Revision, Process for Approving Community College Baccalaureate Degree Proposals

MEETING DATE: December 1, 2016 (ARSA)

2. BACKGROUND & POLICY CONTEXT OF ISSUE:

Existing Board policy authorizes the community colleges to offer select “niche baccalaureate degrees” to satisfy the needs of a wide range of Nevada students while promoting the goals of the NSHE Master Plan (*Title 4, Chapter 14, Section 9*). Under the process for development, review, and approval of such degrees, a community college wishing to offer a baccalaureate degree must discuss the proposal with the Chancellor who is required to review the initial proposal with the Council of Presidents. At that time, the university presidents and the State College president must consider whether one of the four-year institutions wishes to offer the program. If a university or the State College decides to offer the baccalaureate degree to meet the identified need, it shall have one year to bring a proposal forward.

Currently, all community colleges offer at least one bachelor of applied science (BAS) degree, which is a four-year occupationally specific degree that is intended to respond to the needs of the workforce (BAS degrees with various emphases: CSN – 3; GBC – 5; TMCC – 2; WNC – 1). Only CSN and GBC currently offer a bachelor of science (BS) or bachelor of arts (BA) degrees: CSN offers a BS in dental hygiene; and GBC offers BA’s in Elementary Education, English, Integrative Studies, Natural Resources, Secondary Education, and Social Science, as well as a BS in Biological Sciences and a BSN (Nursing).

Responding to the unique needs and demands of the population in primarily rural Nevada, GBC has recently increased – with the approval of the NSHE Academic Affairs Council and the Board – the number of baccalaureate degrees offered. Currently, the process for development and approval of a new baccalaureate degree at a community college is extensive. Prior to reaching the Chancellor, the program must also satisfy the requirements of *Chapter 6, Section 9* under the *NSHE Procedures and Guidelines Manual* which includes detailed criteria for proposals: demonstrating the need and demand; institutional readiness; budget requirements and impacts; any resource issues; impact; compliance; and implementation. A feasibility evaluation of the program proposal is also required, which must include its relationship to current student and employer demand, and should be done by someone from outside the institution who is a member of the field being proposed.

Based on the extensive review process, as well as the requirement under existing Board policy for such a proposal to be reviewed first by the Chancellor with the Council of Presidents before it is submitted to the NSHE Academic Affairs Council and the Board for consideration, the current provision allowing university presidents and the state college president the opportunity for a “right of first refusal” may appear as an unnecessary barrier to the need for community colleges to be flexible and responsive to the demands of students they serve.

3. SPECIFIC ACTIONS BEING RECOMMENDED OR REQUESTED:

Amend *Title 4, Chapter 14, Section 9* to delete the requirement that the two university presidents and the State College president consider whether one of the four-year institutions wishes to offer the baccalaureate program proposed by a community college, and providing that if a university or the State College decides to offer this baccalaureate degree to meet the identified need, it shall have one year to bring a proposal forward. Require that proposal be included in the NSHE Planning Report required pursuant to *Nevada Revised Statutes 396.505* and *Title 4, Chapter 14, Section 3* of the *Handbook* before proceeding to the Council of Presidents.

(See attached policy proposal.)

4. IMPETUS (WHY NOW?):

The Chair of the Board’s Academic, Research and Student Affairs Committee requested this proposal for the consideration by the Board.

5. BULLET POINTS TO SUPPORT REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

- The review process for a community college to offer a baccalaureate degree is very detailed and comprehensive. If there are concerns by the presidents of the universities or the community college with regard to the community college offering such a degree, they can be raised within the Council of Presidents before the proposal proceeds to the NSHE Academic Affairs Council or the Board for consideration.
- The NSHE Planning Report is presented in December of even number of years to the Board's ARSA Committee. Requiring that the proposal be included in this report will ensure that the community colleges are planning ahead for the proposal, and more importantly, will give the Board and the other institutions notice that the community college is considering such a program and an early opportunity to express concerns.

6. POTENTIAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

The roles of NSHE teaching institutions – universities, state college and community colleges – are distinctive and set forth in Board policy. The policy governing proposed baccalaureate degrees at community colleges specifically states that it is not the intention of the NSHE for community colleges to abandon their community college mission to transform into State Colleges. Eliminating the “right of first refusal” as a necessary step in the approval process may open a door for unintended duplication of effort and programs that creates inefficiencies in the NSHE.

7. ALTERNATIVE(S) TO WHAT IS BEING REQUESTED/RECOMMENDED:

Retain existing policy language.

8. COMPLIANCE WITH BOARD POLICY:

- Consistent With Current Board Policy: Title #____ Chapter #____ Section #____
- X Amends Current Board Policy: *Title 4, Chapter 14, Section 9*
- Amends Current Procedures & Guidelines Manual: Chapter #____ Section #____
- Other:_____
- X Fiscal Impact: Yes____ No X____
Explain:_____

POLICY PROPOSAL
TITLE 4, CHAPTER 14, SECTION 9
Community College Baccalaureate Degree Proposals

Additions appear in *boldface italics*; deletions are [~~stricken~~ and bracketed]

Section 9. Community College Baccalaureate Degree Proposal Development and Review Process

1. The NSHE Master Plan provides for “selected niche baccalaureate degrees” at community colleges in order to satisfy the needs of a wide range of Nevada students while promoting the goals of the Master Plan. However, it is not the intention of the NSHE for community colleges to abandon their community college mission to transform into State Colleges. Each proposal must address this issue in both a cultural and organizational context.
2. At an early stage of development, a community college wishing to offer a baccalaureate degree shall discuss the proposal with the Chancellor, primarily in terms of the program’s relationship to the NSHE Master Plan and other institutional planning that may be occurring. ***The proposal must be included in the NSHE Planning Report required pursuant to Nevada Revised Statutes 396.505 and Title 4, Chapter 14, Section 3 of the Handbook before proceeding to the Council of Presidents.***
3. The Chancellor shall review the initial proposal with the Council of Presidents. [~~At this time or shortly thereafter, the two university presidents and the State College president shall consider whether one of the four year institutions wishes to offer the program. If a university or the State College decides to offer this baccalaureate degree to meet the identified need, it shall have one year to bring a proposal forward.~~]
4. After the review and approval has been completed by the Council of Presidents, the sponsoring institution shall prepare a formal written program proposal with supporting data and evidence that responds to criteria established by the Office of the Chancellor. The review of the proposal will follow established NSHE procedures for new program proposals.