

Legislative Analysis



ALLOW COMMUNITY COLLEGES TO GRANT BACCALAUREATE DEGREES IN CERTAIN FIELDS

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House Bill 4496

Sponsor: Rep. John Walsh

Committee: Education

Complete to 6-7-11

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 4496 AS INTRODUCED 3-24-11

House Bill 4496 would amend the Community College Act (MCL 389.105 and 389.121) to allow community colleges to grant baccalaureate degrees in nursing, cement technology, maritime technology, energy production technology, and culinary arts.

Under current law, the definition of "community college" prohibits a community college from offering baccalaureate degrees. Instead, the law says that a community college is "an educational institution providing collegiate and non-collegiate level education primarily to individuals above 12th grade age level within commuting distance. The term includes an area vocational-technical education program that may result in the granting of an associate degree or other diploma or certificate, but not an educational institution or program granting baccalaureate or higher degrees."

House Bill 4496 would eliminate the prohibition that community colleges offer baccalaureate degrees by revising the definition of community college to allow *the granting of a bachelor of science in nursing degree, or any baccalaureate degree in cement technology, maritime technology, energy production technology, or culinary arts.*

FISCAL IMPACT:

In general, the bill would serve to increase operating costs of state community colleges that elect to offer the select baccalaureate programs. A community college could incur costs for the salary and benefits of additional faculty (full-time and part-time) and support staff, as well as operating costs for administration, materials and supplies, travel, information technology, accreditation, and other support services. A college could also incur costs for capital expenses related to equipment and facilities (increased capacity). Some expenses would be non-recurring in nature, such as those related to equipment and facilities, while others would be recurring in nature (e.g. faculty salaries).

Funding for community colleges comes from three main funding sources: property tax revenue, tuition, and state appropriations. The costs of adding a baccalaureate program would be borne by some combination of those sources, or supplemented by other outside sources (grants, contributions, etc). In general, upper division courses have a higher cost than lower division courses. As such, costs could be partially offset through a stratified tuition plan that imposes higher tuition rates for upper division courses, as is the practice

in many public universities. The costs of expanding an existing associate's degree program into a baccalaureate program would vary by college, depending on its current capacity and the additional requirements (costs) imposed by expanding its program.

According to the State Board of Nursing, all 28 community colleges offer an associate's degree in nursing, while 20 colleges and universities (12 public universities and 8 private colleges and universities) offer baccalaureate degrees in nursing.

Additionally, there are nine community colleges that offer an associate's degree in culinary arts, including Mott, Grand Rapids, Henry Ford, Macomb, Mid-Michigan, Northwestern Michigan, Oakland, Schoolcraft, and Washtenaw, according to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). The concrete technology program is said to apply to Alpena Community College.

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.