

SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based only on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Date: April 7, 1998 Revised: _____

Subject: Community Colleges/Pilot Program (Bachelor's Degree)

	<u>Analyst</u>	<u>Staff Director</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Action</u>
1.	<u>White</u>	<u>O'Farrell</u>	<u>ED</u>	<u>Favorable/CS</u>
2.	_____	_____	<u>WM</u>	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____

I. Summary:

This legislation creates a pilot program in which three community colleges would conduct bachelor's degree programs in nursing, teacher training, and applied technology.

This bill creates a new section of law. The Division of Statutory Revision will decide whether it belongs in the Florida Statutes or the Laws of Florida.

II. Present Situation:

Community College Definition, Mission

Section 240.301, F.S., defines community colleges, states their mission, and lists their responsibilities. Their responsibilities include providing lower level undergraduate instruction and awarding associate degrees. They are authorized to grant associate in arts degrees, associate in science degrees, associate in applied science degrees, certificates, awards, and diplomas.

Section 228.041, F.S., defines community colleges as those institutions authorized to offer "courses and programs of general and academic education parallel to that of the first and second years of institutions in the State University System."

Degree Levels

The term "bachelor's degree" as it applies to public education is not defined in the Florida Statutes, but it is defined by major accrediting agencies. All 28 community colleges and the 10 state universities are accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), which requires certain minimum qualifications and standards for institutions that grant degrees at various levels. In institutions accredited by SACS, the

baccalaureate or bachelor's degree must consist of at least 4 years or 120 credit hours. Other standards are included for faculty credentials, facilities, and instructional materials.

Articulation of Courses Among Public Institutions

Florida law also requires courses in associate-in-arts degree programs to be transferrable to state universities (s. 240.115, F.S., the articulation agreement). To assure equivalency, transferrable courses are included in the Common Course Numbering System maintained by the Department of Education.

Both community colleges and state universities conduct programs to prepare people for employment as registered nurses. At state universities nurses earn a baccalaureate degree, and at community colleges they earn an associate-in-science degree, but they must take the same licensing examination. All 10 universities have programs to prepare people for employment as certified teachers. No public institution in Florida grants a Bachelor of Applied Technology degree, but that degree is conferred by public universities in several other states.

PEPC Recommendation

In the 1998 *Master Plan for Florida Postsecondary Education*, the Postsecondary Education Planning Commission recommended that public community colleges should not be authorized to conduct 4-year programs and grant baccalaureate degrees unless the programs were recommended by an objective third party. Starting up new baccalaureate degree programs will have implications for other public and independent institutions. The plan recommends that, by December 31, 1998, the State Board of Community Colleges develop a methodology for determining the need for and costs of offering limited baccalaureate programs at selected community colleges.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Under the proposed legislation, South Florida Community College, Miami-Dade Community College, and Florida Community College at Jacksonville will conduct a pilot program in which they will offer bachelor's degree programs in nursing, teacher training, and applied technology. The bachelor's degree programs are required to be "limited," so not all programs would be offered by each college, or the number of students allowed would be limited, or both.

Each of the colleges will be required to change their institutional accreditation, a process that will require a site-based review and vote by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The association meets twice a year, in July and December. The colleges also will need to apply to the Department of Education to have the new courses included in the Common Course Numbering System. This process takes about a year, so it is unlikely that any community college would enroll students in upper division courses until at least fall of 1999.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

Students in the geographic regions served by the three colleges in the pilot program would benefit from increased access to baccalaureate degree programs.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The three community colleges would incur the costs of program development. Depending upon existing resources, the costs would vary. Expenses could include employing faculty with higher credentials, purchasing instructional materials at the required level to teach upper division courses, and curriculum development.

The new courses required would need to be added to the Common Course Numbering System operated by the Department of Education. The department would incur the costs of convening faculty review teams, reviewing course content, and determining equivalencies.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

For both teachers and nurses, demand exceeds supply in Florida. Supply and demand data are not available for employment of people with bachelor's degrees in applied technology.

VIII. Amendments:

None.

This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's sponsor or the Florida Senate.
