



Academic Affairs News

Volume 5: July 2016

Greetings,

We are a bit late in getting the July newsletter out to you, as summer vacations and holidays have taken their toll on our productivity. Better late than never!

This issue includes information on Senate Bill 997, which Gov. Jay Nixon signed into law on June 16. The legislation is an omnibus higher education bill and includes several sections related to Academic Affairs initiatives. Also in this issue is an overview of the Missouri Higher Education System Review, which is currently underway as a collaborative effort with the Coordinating Board for Higher Education (CBHE) and presidents and chancellors from Missouri public institutions.

With best regards,

Rusty

If you have comments or questions, or you would like to subscribe to this newsletter, please contact the newsletter's editor Greta Westerwald, greta.westerwald@dhe.mo.gov.

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Provisions of Senate Bill 997 Related to Academic Affairs

Senate Bill 997 was signed by Gov. Nixon on June 16, 2016; the law becomes effective on August 28. Academic Affairs has responsibilities—in whole or in part—for several sections of the legislation.

- **Student Web Portal (RSMo 173.035)**

The MDHE is to develop a website containing information about Missouri public and independent institutions of higher education. This information shall include, but is not limited to: academic programs, financial aid and how academic course credit may be transferred from one institution to another. The information shall be made available on computers, tablet and other mobile devices. The legislature appropriated \$500,000 for the portal, but the funding has been withheld by the governor.

The department's work on this initiative will continue, but will be constrained by the loss of funding.

- **Dual Credit Certification (RSMo 173.2500)**

“Dual-credit courses” are defined in the legislation as “college level coursework delivered by a postsecondary education institution and taught in the high school by instructors with appropriate academic credentials to high school students who are earning high school and college credit simultaneously.”

Each institution of higher education desiring to become or remain an approved dual-credit provider in this state shall annually make written application to the Coordinating Board for Higher Education (CBHE) on forms provided by the board. This application will include at a minimum the following information: all locations where the institutions will offer dual-credit courses, the dual-credit courses the institution plans to offer and the fee the institutions will charge students per credit hour. MDHE staff may investigate the applicant to ensure compliance with the rules and regulations under RSMo 173.2500. The CBHE may create administrative rules to implement section 173.2500, including parameters for the approval dual-credit providers and establishing appropriate fees as needed to generate funding sufficient to cover the entirety of costs associated with operation of the dual-credit provider certification process established in section 173.2500. There is now a “Dual-Credit Certification Fund” in the state treasury which will consist of monies collected under section 173.2500. A course may not be advertised or represented as being delivered by an approved dual-credit provider in the absence of approval of the application by the Coordinating Board for Higher Education.

MDHE will work primarily through the Early College Advisory Board and the Council of Chief Academic Officers to implement these provisions.

- **15 to Finish Act (RSMo 173. 2510)**

The CBHE, in cooperation with public institutions of higher education, shall now develop policies that promote the on-time completion of degree programs by students. The policies shall include, but will not be limited to the following: 1) defining on-time completion for specific levels of postsecondary credentials; 2) providing financial incentives to students during their senior year of undergraduate study who are working at a pace to graduate in no more than eight semesters; and 3) reducing, when feasible and permitted by accreditation or occupational licensure, the number of credit hours required to earn a degree. By December 2017, MDHE shall provide a report to the governor and the General Assembly describing the actions taken to implement these provisions.

- **Guided Pathways to Success Act (RSMo 173.2515)**

The CBHE, in cooperation with Missouri institutions shall develop a Guided Pathways to Success pilot program. Guided Pathways to Success shall include at least two of the following components: 1) majors organized into semester-by-semester sets of courses that lead to on-time completion, which shall have the same meaning as described pursuant to section 173.2510; 2) degree-based transfer pathways between participating institutions to assist students who enroll in multiple institutions to complete their degree; 3) available meta-majors to minimize the loss of credit due to changes by students in their degree majors; 4) student commitment to a structured schedule of courses and electives; and 5) clear degree maps, proactive advising and guarantees that required courses are available when needed by students.

MDHE will maintain materials that describe Missouri's Guided Pathways project and assist students in understanding each component. By Jan. 1, 2020, the CBHE will report to the governor and the Missouri General Assembly on the outcomes of the pilot project. Based on the outcomes of the pilot project, the CBHE may request funding to provide competitive grants to higher education institutions to assist in defraying the costs incurred to implement Guided Pathways to Success in Missouri.

- **Concurrent Enrollment (RSMo 173.2520)**

Concurrent postsecondary enrollment is defined as "coordinated enrollment in coursework at both a four-year and a two-year postsecondary institution at the same time and for which the coursework is officially recorded by both institutions." The CBHE shall establish a concurrent enrollment pilot program for the purpose of providing students with a broader range of academic and student support services while streamlining the path to degree completion. The pilot project will be implemented in one or more public four-year institutions and one or more public two-year institutions. The pilot program is intended to determine the feasibility of extending a concurrent enrollment option to other institutions in the state. By Jan. 1, 2020, the coordinating board will report to the governor and the Missouri General Assembly on the outcomes of the pilot program and provide a recommendation regarding the statewide expansion of the program.

- **Core Curriculum (RSMo 178.780) and Higher Education Core Curriculum Transfer Act (RSMo 178.785)**

A standard core curriculum and common course numbering equivalency matrix for lower-division courses shall be established. This curriculum and equivalency matrix will be used at community colleges and other public institutions of higher education to facilitate student transfer as provided under section 178.780.

According to the Higher Education Core Curriculum Transfer Act, "core curriculum" is defined as "the basic competencies to be met, which shall include communicating, higher-order thinking, managing information, valuing, and includes the knowledge areas of social and behavioral sciences, humanities and fine arts, mathematics, and life and physical sciences." "Faculty member" is defined as "a person who is employed full-time by a community college or other public institution of higher education as a member of the faculty whose primary duties include teaching, research, academic service, or administration." "Native student" is defined as "a student whose initial college enrollment was at an institution of higher education and who has not transferred to any other institution since that initial enrollment and who has completed no more than 11 credit hours at any other institution of higher education."

- **42-Block (RSMo 178.786)**

The CBHE, with the assistance of an advisory committee composed of representatives from each public community college and each public four-year institution of higher education in Missouri, shall develop a recommended lower division core curriculum of 42 semester credit hours, including a statement of content, component areas, and objectives of the core curriculum. A majority of the members of the advisory committee will be faculty members from Missouri public institutions of higher education.

The CBHE will approve a common course number equivalency matrix for the 42 credit hour block at all institutions of higher education in Missouri in order to facilitate the transfer of those courses among institutions of higher education. The CBHE will promote consistency in course designation and course identification. Each community college and four-year institution of higher education shall include in its course listings the applicable course number from the common course numbering equivalency matrix approved by the CBHE. The CBHE will complete the requirements of RSMo 178.786 prior to Jan. 1, 2018, for implementation of the core curriculum transfer recommendations for the 2018-2019 academic year for all public institutions of higher education.

MDHE has begun discussing how best to implement this provision of Senate Bill 997 and will provide specific information soon. Extensive faculty participation in this effort is essential, and the department will issue a call for volunteers very soon.

Please share information about Senate Bill 997 with your colleagues. The full text of the bill can be viewed at <http://www.senate.mo.gov/16info/pdf-bill/tat/SB997.pdf>. For more information, contact Dr. Rusty Monhollon, at Rusty.Monhollon@dhe.mo.gov.

Missouri Higher Education System Review

The recent completion of *Preparing Missourians to Succeed: A Blueprint for Higher Education* has enabled the CBHE to resume its responsibilities for mission review and address the rapidly changing landscape of higher education in Missouri.

The Coordinating Board's statutory authority includes multiple references to its responsibilities relating to system coordination and mission review. The specific powers enumerated in statute include:

- *“The coordinating board for higher education shall establish admission guidelines consistent with institutional missions;” (Section 173.005)*
- *“The coordinating board shall collect the necessary information and develop comparable data for all institutions of higher education in the state. The coordinating board shall use this information to delineate the areas of competence of each of these institutions and for any other purposes deemed appropriate by the coordinating board;” (Section 173.005)*
- *“The coordinating board shall have the responsibility within the provisions of the Constitution of the State of Missouri for: developing arrangements for more effective and more economical specialization among institutions in types of education programs offered and students served, and for more effective coordination and mutual support among institutions in the utilization of facilities, faculty and other resources;” (Section 173.020)*
- *“The coordinating board shall have responsibility, within the provisions of the constitution and the statutes of the state of Missouri, for: conducting, in consultation with each public four-year institution's governing board and the governing board of technical colleges and community colleges, a review every five years of the mission statements of the institutions comprising Missouri's system of public higher education.” (Section 173.030)*

Based on these responsibilities, it is clear the General Assembly expects the CBHE to take a leadership role in system coordination. In addition, during the process of gathering the information that provides the underpinning of the *Blueprint for Higher Education*, the steering committee received multiple comments about the need for the state to improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of its education system. Those comments led in part to the inclusion of Strategy 3.3 in the final document.

- *Support the appointment of a blue-ribbon third-party panel to review Missouri's postsecondary education system – including governance and regulatory structures, efficiency, missions, adequacy of funding and selectivity policy – to assess how effectively the system is meeting the needs of stakeholders and made recommendations as appropriate.*

This call for a comprehensive review of the state's system of public higher education and recent legislative interest in revising degree parameters across all four-year institutions provide both the impetus and a basic framework for beginning this process. Admittedly, the task force and charge described below do not exactly match the language of the coordinated plan strategy. However, the current political environment and a growing call for system strengthening compel action to initiate the first phase of this conversation. While MDHE has the statutory responsibility for conducting the review, its success depends on collaboration and engagement of all parties. This makes essential the development of a mechanism and structure to ensure all voices are heard.

System Review Task Force

The CBHE approved the creation of a System Review Task Force to oversee this initiative. While advisory in nature, the task force will be responsible for overseeing a data-driven review of current and emerging higher education needs and opportunities, development of recommendations for a mission framework reflecting current and future system configuration, and suggesting changes to CBHE/MDHE policies relating to program review and approval to ensure program actions are made in a logical and fact-driven manner. As needed, this group will make recommendations to the CBHE for a legislative package that reflects a revised mission and program approval structure. Recommendations for membership on the task force, which is composed of 14 formal members, were solicited from each public education sector. The task force held its first meeting on July 14 in Jefferson City.

Scope of Work and Task Force Charge

According to Missouri revised statutes, the review of institutional missions should “be based upon the needs of the citizens of the state as well as the requirements of business, industry, the professions and government. The purpose of this review shall be to ensure that Missouri's system of higher education is responsive to the state's needs and is focused, balanced, cost-effective, and characterized by programs of high quality as demonstrated by student performance and program outcomes.” The Speaker of the House and Chair of the House Higher Education Committee requested the CBHE conduct a review of and develop recommendations about the “overall structure of public two- and four-year institutions, varying institutional missions, and degree review and approval processes.”

Based on these directives, this discussion cannot be limited to process issues related to the approval of academic programs by the CBHE. Instead, it must address the context and framework for CBHE decisions regarding new and revised programs at public institutions if it is to provide meaningful guidance for the future. Consequently, MDHE staff recommends the following charge for the task force.

1. Conduct a systematic and thorough review of the overall structure of Missouri's system of higher education, which will include but not be limited to institutional missions, admissions selectivity, academic program review and approval, and geographic service regions.
2. Conduct a review of the demand for and supply of postsecondary education including occupational, geographic and student perspectives.

3. Assess the relevance and functionality of the CBHE's current mission approval structure and recommend changes to or replacement of that model.
4. Recommend revisions to the CBHE policies both as they relate to future mission reviews and for program approval.
5. Recommend statutory changes as needed to enable the implementation of the revised system of institutional missions and program approval processes.

National Expertise

MDHE staff believes the inclusion of national expertise to provide additional perspective and knowledge on the higher education issues under review is essential to the success of this review process. The General Assembly had appropriated \$150,000 for this purpose, but the funding has been withheld. The department is currently seeking alternative funding sources.

Conclusion

The process described above is a major undertaking by the CBHE, MDHE staff and the higher education community in Missouri. Given the rapid changes in the higher education environment, both from a state and national perspective, it is essential that we begin this process now if we are to ensure the dynamic and responsive higher education system needed to ensure Missouri is a national leader in providing high quality postsecondary education that will equip Missourians with the personal and professional skills to succeed in the 21st century.

For questions about the Missouri Higher Education System Review, contact Dr. Rusty Monhollon, at Rusty.Monhollon@dhe.mo.gov.

Upcoming Dates of Note

August 2016

- August 2: Joint Meeting of State Board of Education/Coordinating Board for Higher Education, Columbia
- August 3: Coordinating Board for Higher Education Retreat and Forum in Columbia
- August 4: Coordinating Board for Higher Education Retreat and Forum in Columbia
- August 5: Committee on College and Career Readiness Meeting in Columbia

September 2016

- September 7-8: Coordinating Board for Higher Education Meeting (Location TBD)
- September 9: Multi-State Collaborative Initiative Fall Faculty Training in Jefferson City
- September 16: Math Pathways Taskforce Meeting in Jefferson City