

CHAPTER 71

EDUCATION - POSTSECONDARY

HOUSE BILL 25-1221

BY REPRESENTATIVE(S) Hamrick and Garcia Sander, Bacon, Bird, Bradley, Brown, Carter, Clifford, Duran, English, Espenosa, Froelich, Jackson, Lieder, Lindsay, Lukens, Marshall, Phillips, Ricks, Rutinel, Sirota, Stewart K., Stewart R., Titone, Valdez, McCluskie;
 also SENATOR(S) Bridges and Lundeen, Bright, Exum, Frizell, Gonzales J., Jodeh, Kipp, Michaelson Jenet, Rodriguez, Weissman, Winter F., Coleman.

AN ACT**CONCERNING AUTHORIZING EMILY GRIFFITH TECHNICAL COLLEGE TO OFFER AN ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE.**

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:

SECTION 1. Legislative declaration. (1) The general assembly finds and declares that:

(a) Over the past decade, higher education in the United States has expanded its ability to meet the needs of students through adjustments to the role and mission of its institutions and through innovations in workforce training and education, including the expansion of apprenticeship opportunities;

(b) Colorado has been at the forefront of these innovations, and the state's institutions have played a critical role in developing programs that address the needs of today's learners;

(c) Emily Griffith technical college plays an integral role in Colorado's education system, providing career-relevant training and instruction that includes registered apprenticeships;

(d) Registered apprenticeships offer learners high-quality career pathways through paid hands-on work in a chosen field. Through registered apprenticeships, learners gain the skills and competencies to make informed choices about their futures while employers build their talent pipelines.

Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material added to existing law; dashes through words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law and such material is not part of the act.

(e) While registered apprenticeships can give students a valuable, nationally recognized credential, many Emily Griffith learners complete apprenticeship programs just a few general education credits shy of an applied associate degree;

(f) According to data from the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, students in many high-demand applied associate degree programs have higher earning potential than those with certificates or high school diplomas;

(g) According to a 50-state analysis conducted in 2021 by Advance CTE, over a quarter of responding states reported that their area technical colleges offered associate degrees; and

(h) Allowing Emily Griffith technical college to build on its apprenticeship programs by adding associate degrees to its offerings gives learners greater access to the job market and promotes lifelong learning. Programmatic growth at this vital institution is necessary to ensure that Colorado's higher education landscape continues to serve the needs of today's learners and employers.

SECTION 2. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 23-60-211, **add** (6) as follows:

23-60-211. Degrees. (6) PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-60-804, THE EMILY GRIFFITH TECHNICAL COLLEGE MAY OFFER AN ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE.

SECTION 3. In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** 23-60-804 as follows:

23-60-804. Emily Griffith technical college - associate of applied science degree program - definitions. (1) AS USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

(a) "BOARD" MEANS THE STATE BOARD FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION CREATED IN SECTION 23-60-104.

(b) "DEGREE PROGRAM" MEANS A DEGREE PROGRAM OFFERED BY THE EMILY GRIFFITH TECHNICAL COLLEGE PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (2) OF THIS SECTION THAT CONFERS AN ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE.

(2) THE EMILY GRIFFITH TECHNICAL COLLEGE MAY, WITH BOARD APPROVAL, OFFER AN ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE PROGRAM TO STUDENTS WHO ARE ENROLLED IN A REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM.

(3) THE DEGREE PROGRAM MUST:

(a) INCLUDE A REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM WITHIN ITS CURRICULAR DESIGN;

(b) INCLUDE SUFFICIENT TRANSFERABLE GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES TO COMPLETE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DESIGNATED DEGREE PROGRAM, AS APPLICABLE, AND PURSUANT TO THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAYS MATRIX DESCRIBED IN SECTION 23-1-108.5 OR A STATEWIDE DEGREE TRANSFER AGREEMENT;

(c) ALIGN WITH HIGH-NEED, HIGH-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS AS IDENTIFIED BY

STUDENT DEMAND AND THE MOST RECENT COLORADO TALENT REPORT CREATED PURSUANT TO SECTION 24-46.3-103 (3); AND

(d) BE SUBMITTED TO THE COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR INCLUSION IN STATEWIDE PUBLICATIONS OF ACADEMIC DEGREE PROGRAMS AND THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAYS MATRIX DESCRIBED IN SECTION 23-1-108.5, AS APPLICABLE.

(4) (a) BEFORE THE EMILY GRIFFITH TECHNICAL COLLEGE MAY OFFER AN ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (2) OF THIS SECTION, THE EMILY GRIFFITH TECHNICAL COLLEGE SHALL DETERMINE THE PROGRAM DESIGNATION FOR THE DEGREE.

(b) AFTER DETERMINING THE PROGRAM DESIGNATION FOR THE ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (4)(a) OF THIS SECTION, THE EMILY GRIFFITH TECHNICAL COLLEGE SHALL SUBMIT THE DEGREE PROGRAM TO THE BOARD FOR THE BOARD'S REVIEW AND APPROVAL. THE EMILY GRIFFITH TECHNICAL COLLEGE MAY OFFER THE DEGREE PROGRAM ONLY AFTER THE DEGREE PROGRAM HAS BEEN APPROVED BY THE BOARD.

(5) (a) IN DECIDING WHETHER TO APPROVE A REQUEST BY THE EMILY GRIFFITH TECHNICAL COLLEGE TO OFFER A DEGREE PROGRAM PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (4)(b) OF THIS SECTION, THE BOARD SHALL CONSIDER ONLY THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

(I) STUDENT AND WORKFORCE DEMAND;

(II) ALIGNMENT OF THE DEGREE PROGRAM WITH OTHER REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS OFFERED BY THE EMILY GRIFFITH TECHNICAL COLLEGE;

(III) COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF THE DEGREE PROGRAM FOR THE STUDENTS AND THE STATE; AND

(IV) ACCREDITATION AND LICENSING REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE PROGRAM.

(b) THE BOARD SHALL NOTIFY THE COLORADO COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION OF EACH DEGREE PROGRAM THAT THE BOARD APPROVES PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION.

(6) CONSISTENT WITH THE STATEWIDE MASTER PLAN CREATED PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-1-108 (1.5), A DEGREE PROGRAM ESTABLISHED PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION IS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE FUNDS THROUGH THE FEDERAL "CARL D. PERKINS CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2006", 20 U.S.C. SEC. 2301 ET SEQ.

SECTION 4. Act subject to petition - effective date. This act takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day following the expiration of the ninety-day period after final adjournment of the general assembly; except that, if a referendum petition is filed pursuant to section 1 (3) of article V of the state constitution against this act or an item, section, or part of this act within such period, then the act, item, section, or

part will not take effect unless approved by the people at the general election to be held in November 2026 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.

Approved: April 10, 2025