



Higher Education

During the 2022 legislative session, the General Assembly considered measures related to higher education. Specifically, bills related to scholarships, grants, and financial assistance; pathways to student success; degrees and workforce development; and administration and governance.

Scholarships, Grants, and Financial Assistance

The General Assembly passed six bills concerning scholarships, grants, and financial assistance for students and institutions.

Under current law, institutions of higher education must classify students who attended high school in Colorado for a minimum of three years before graduating or completing a high school equivalency exam as an in-state student if the student is enrolled in college within 12 months. *House Bill 22-1155* changes the requirement so that a student only needs to be physically present in Colorado for one year prior to graduation from high school or passing a high school equivalency exam, and removes the requirement that a student enroll in college within 12 months of graduation.

Senate Bill 22-008 provides financial assistance to foster students to cover the full cost of attendance at state institutions of higher education. *House Bill 22-1192* codifies the Displaced Worker's Grant Program currently offered under the Colorado Opportunity

Scholarship Initiative into law, while *House Bill 22-1350* creates the Regional Talent Development Initiative Grant Program to develop or expand talent development initiatives in regions across the state to meet labor market needs and bolster workforce development programs. Finally, *House Bill 22-1107* creates the Inclusive Higher Education Grant Program to assist institutions of higher education in creating or expanding grant programs for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

House Bill 22-1393 creates the "Displaced Aurarian Scholarship", which covers the cost of tuition at Metropolitan State University of Denver, the University of Colorado Denver, or the Community College of Denver for students whose family members were displaced by the development of the Auraria Higher Education Complex in 1976.

Pathways to Student Success

The General Assembly passed three bills directing the Department of Higher Education to take steps to bolster pathways to student success.

House Bill 22-1349 requires the department to develop measures of student success and a publicly-accessible postsecondary student success data system featuring institution-specific interfaces. *Senate Bill 22-192* requires the department and institutions to

Higher Education (cont'd)

work together to create stackable credential pathways by evaluating access to credentials, identifying alignment between credentials and work-based learning, and identifying additional opportunities for credential stacking. [House Bill 22-1255](#) requires the department and institutions to collect specific data about students with disabilities in order to improve access to higher education and ensure successful outcomes for these students.

Degrees and Workforce Development

During the 2022 legislative session, the General Assembly passed three bills impacting degree programs and workforce development.

Currently, community colleges can only offer a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing as a completion degree to students who already have or are pursuing an associate degree in nursing. [Senate Bill 22-003](#) allows community colleges to also offer a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing to students who are pursuing a certificate in nursing. Additionally, under current law, the University of Colorado System has exclusive authority to offer degrees in osteopathic medicine. [Senate Bill 22-056](#) allows the University of Northern Colorado to also offer specialized degree programs in osteopathic medicine.

In an effort to bolster the healthcare workforce in Colorado's rural communities, [Senate Bill 22-172](#) establishes the Colorado Rural Health Care Workforce Initiative, aimed at expanding the number of health-care professionals practicing in rural and frontier communities.

Administration and Governance

The General Assembly passed bills pertaining to the administration and governance of institutions of higher education.

Under current law, an institution of higher education or a group of institutions may be designated as an enterprise by the entity's governing board. [House Bill 22-1400](#) clarifies that an institution that was previously designated as an enterprise is not required to receive voter approval in order to requalify as an enterprise under Proposition 117, which was passed by voters in 2020.

[House Bill 22-1049](#) allows an institution of higher education to refuse to provide a transcript or diploma to a current or former student if the student owes a debt, unless it is needed for a job application, financial aid, or other postsecondary opportunities. The bill also prohibits schools from charging a higher fee for a transcript or diploma for an indebted student or withholding a transcript or diploma as a debt collection tool.

Under current law, governing boards of institutions of higher education are permitted to pledge 10 percent of tuition revenue when issuing revenue bonds for capital construction. [Senate Bill 22-121](#) increases the amount to 100 percent of tuition revenue.

[House Bill 22-1280](#) changes the name of Pikes Peak Community College to Pikes Peak State College.