

CHAPTER 124

EDUCATION - POSTSECONDARY

SENATE BILL 12-045

BY SENATOR(S) Hudak and King K., Bacon, Aguilar, Boyd, Cadman, Carroll, Foster, Giron, Grantham, Guzman, Heath, Hodge, Jahn, Johnston, Lambert, Lundberg, Morse, Neville, Newell, Roberts, Scheffel, Schwartz, Spence, Steadman, Tochtrop, White, Williams S., Shaffer B.;

also REPRESENTATIVE(S) Massey and Fields, Holbert, Beezley, Casso, Conti, Fischer, Hamner, Kefalas, Kerr A., Kerr J., Labuda, Murray, Nikkel, Pabon, Pace, Peniston, Priola, Ramirez, Ryden, Schafer S., Scott, Singer, Solano, Summers, Todd, Tyler, Williams A., Wilson, Young.

AN ACT**CONCERNING GRANTING ASSOCIATE DEGREES TO STUDENTS WHO TRANSFER FROM A TWO-YEAR INSTITUTION.**

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

SECTION 1. In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** 23-1-131 as follows:

23-1-131. Commission directive - associate degree completion program - legislative declaration - definitions. (1) (a) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FINDS AND DECLARES THAT, DUE TO THE DEMANDS OF A GLOBAL ECONOMY, THE STATE AND THE NATION HAVE AN INCREASING NEED FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH A POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL OR DEGREE. MANY STUDENTS BEGIN THEIR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION IN A TWO-YEAR INSTITUTION AND TRANSFER TO A FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION PRIOR TO RECEIVING AN ASSOCIATE DEGREE. SOME STUDENTS WHO SUBSEQUENTLY ACCUMULATE THE CREDIT HOURS NECESSARY FOR AN ASSOCIATE DEGREE WHILE AT THE FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION, OR WHO LEAVE THE FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION PRIOR TO COMPLETING A BACHELOR'S DEGREE, WOULD BENEFIT FROM THE AWARD OF AN ASSOCIATE DEGREE. THE AWARD OF AN ASSOCIATE DEGREE NOT ONLY REWARDS THE STUDENT'S EFFORTS IN ATTAINING POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, BUT ALSO RECOGNIZES THE INVESTMENT OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION BY BOTH THE STUDENT AND THE STATE.

(b) THEREFORE, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DECLARES THAT THE STATE'S TWO-YEAR AND FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS SHOULD WORK IN COLLABORATION WITH THE COMMISSION TO DEVELOP A PROCESS THAT REDUCES A POTENTIAL BARRIER TO

Capital letters indicate new material added to existing statutes; dashes through words indicate deletions from existing statutes and such material not part of act.

DEGREE COMPLETION BY PROVIDING STUDENTS WITH INFORMATION ABOUT THE STUDENT'S ELIGIBILITY FOR AN ASSOCIATE DEGREE.

(2) AS USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

(a) "ASSOCIATE DEGREE" MEANS AN ASSOCIATE OF ARTS OR ASSOCIATE OF SCIENCE DEGREE.

(b) "FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION" MEANS A STATE-SUPPORTED INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION THAT IS AUTHORIZED TO GRANT BACCALAUREATE DEGREES.

(c) "TWO-YEAR INSTITUTION" MEANS A STATE-SUPPORTED INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION, OR A LOCAL DISTRICT COLLEGE, THAT IS AUTHORIZED TO GRANT ASSOCIATE DEGREES.

(3)(a) THE COMMISSION SHALL COLLABORATE WITH THE GOVERNING BOARDS OF THE TWO-YEAR AND FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS TO DEVELOP AND COORDINATE A PROCESS TO NOTIFY STUDENTS CONCERNING ELIGIBILITY FOR THE AWARD OF AN ASSOCIATE DEGREE. THE NOTIFICATION PROCESS SHALL APPLY TO STUDENTS AT A FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION WHO HAVE ACCUMULATED SEVENTY CREDIT HOURS AT A FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION AND WHO TRANSFERRED TO THE INSTITUTION AFTER COMPLETING THE RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS FOR AN ASSOCIATE DEGREE AT A TWO-YEAR INSTITUTION. THE NOTIFICATION PROCESS DEVELOPED PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION SHALL SPECIFY THE ROLE OF THE STUDENT, THE DEPARTMENT, AND THE TWO-YEAR AND FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS IN THE PROCESS, WITH THE ROLE OF THE FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS LIMITED TO PROVIDING CONTACT INFORMATION FOR ELIGIBLE STUDENTS. THE NOTIFICATION PROCESS SHALL BE IMPLEMENTED NO LATER THAN THE BEGINNING OF THE 2013-14 ACADEMIC YEAR.

(b) THE TWO-YEAR AND FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS SHALL AGREE UPON THE CONTENTS OF THE NOTIFICATION TO ELIGIBLE STUDENTS. AT A MINIMUM, THE NOTIFICATION SHALL INCLUDE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE AUDIT BY THE TWO-YEAR INSTITUTION AND INFORMATION CONCERNING THE PROCESS FOR A STUDENT TO BE AWARDED AN ASSOCIATE DEGREE IN THE FUTURE IF THE DEGREE REQUIREMENTS ARE NOT MET OR THE STUDENT DECLINES THE ASSOCIATE DEGREE AT THE TIME OF THE NOTIFICATION.

(c) NOTHING IN THIS SECTION LIMITS THE ABILITY OF THE GOVERNING BOARDS OF TWO-YEAR AND FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS TO DEVELOP REVERSE TRANSFER AGREEMENTS THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE INTENT OF THIS SECTION.

(4) EACH TWO-YEAR AND FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION SHALL PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH INFORMATION CONCERNING THE PROCESS DEVELOPED PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION.

SECTION 2. Safety clause. The general assembly hereby finds, determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, and safety.

Approved: April 18, 2012