

THE FLORIDA SENATE  
2012 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED

## Committee on Higher Education

### **HB 7135 — Higher Education/Economic Security Report**

by Education Committee and Rep. Proctor and others (CS/CS/SB 1366 by Budget Subcommittee on Higher Education Appropriations; Education Pre-K-12 Committee; and Senators Gaetz and Lynn)

#### *Economic Security Report*

This bill requires changes in educational reporting to better inform students and their parents of the employment and economic outcomes for certificates and degrees earned at Florida College System institutions and state universities. The bill requires:

- The Department of Economic Opportunity to prepare an economic security report on the employment and earnings of graduates of a degree or certificate program at a public postsecondary educational institution;
- Secondary schools, Florida College System institutions, and state universities to provide students electronic access to the economic security report beginning in 2014-2015; and
- The State Board of Education, in consultation with the Board of Governors and the Department of Economic Opportunity to adopt a unified state plan for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) to improve K-20 STEM education and prepare students for high-skill, high-wage, and high-demand employment in STEM and STEM-related fields.

#### *Performance Funding for State Universities*

The bill authorizes performance funding for state universities that are most successful in educating students who earn degrees in, and become employed in, technology fields. Up to \$15 million is authorized, as appropriated for that purpose.

#### *New Requirements for State Universities and Florida College System Institutions*

The bill requires the State Board of Education and the Board of Governors to identify performance metrics for Florida College System institutions and state universities, respectively. The metrics must include student retention, graduation, employment, licensure passage, excess hours, student loan burden and default rates, faculty awards, and other measures.

The bill revises procedures for a Florida College System institution's provision of a baccalaureate degree program by requiring:

- A Florida College System institution to receive State Board of Education approval for new baccalaureate degree programs;
- The State Board of Education to clarify the mission statements of each institution and its role within the Florida College System as a whole and to establish criteria for service delivery areas of Florida College System institutions authorized to grant baccalaureate degrees; and

- Each Florida College System institution offering baccalaureate degree programs to report its status annually using specific performance and compliance indicators related to the institution's baccalaureate degree programs.

### ***General Education Requirements for an Associate or Baccalaureate Degree***

Regarding the general education requirements for an associate or baccalaureate degree, the bill:

- Reduces the general education course requirements from 36 semester credit hours to 30 semester credit hours, beginning with students initially entering a Florida College System institution in 2014-2015;
- Requires general education core course options to consist of a maximum of five courses within the subject areas of communication, mathematics, social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences, and requires a student to complete one course in each of those areas;
- Requires that associate in arts degree students demonstrate competency in a foreign language; and
- Requires the chairs of the State Board of Education and the Board of Governors to jointly convene faculty committees to identify statewide general education core course options.

The bill gives the Commissioner of Education the authority to investigate or review practices, procedures, or actions at a Florida College System institution which appear to be inconsistent with sound financial, management, or academic practices.

### ***Universities' Use of the Tuition Differential Fee***

The bill authorizes the Board of Governors to waive or modify the requirements for the use of the tuition differential fee under s. 1009.24(16), F.S. The requirements for spending 70 percent of the tuition differential fee on undergraduate education and the remaining 30 percent, or the equivalent amount of revenues from private sources, on financial aid could be waived.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.

*Vote: Senate 40-0; House 115-0*