

**Florida College System Task Force
Baccalaureate Degree Approval Process for The Florida College System**

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In order to ensure that new baccalaureate degree programs implemented by an institution in the Florida College system are of the highest quality, are aligned with the goals of the college and the State Board of Education, and meet the needs of the citizens of Florida, the following criteria and process for new baccalaureate program authorization are recommended by the workgroup.

Consensus supports one consistent program approval process and legal framework for all institutions under the umbrella of the Florida College System. The framework consists of two (2) components:

- I. Initial addition of baccalaureate program(s) to institutional mission
- II. Approval of subsequent baccalaureate proposals

I. Initial Addition to Institutional Mission

- The current process for initial addition of baccalaureate program(s) to institutional mission (adopted by the State Board of Education in August 2005), is widely considered rigorous and thorough and should be maintained, for colleges within the Florida College System that want to add baccalaureate degrees to their programmatic scope.

Rationale:

- It is based upon comprehensive criteria
- It is connected to, and engages stakeholders
- It is well-understood
- It is grounded in research-based justification supported by current data
- It has been “tested” over the past 5 years and “works”
- It is foundational to SACS Level II accreditation

The current components of the **Proposal Process adopted by the State Board of Education in August 2005** requires the following steps which would **not** be changed for initial baccalaureate program authorization:

- Approval by local *Board of Trustees* for College to initiate proposal development;
- Notification to DOE and other stakeholders (including, BOG, ICUF, CIE and Presidents of public and private colleges and universities in region) that new baccalaureate proposal is being considered;
- Evidence of collaborative communication regarding proposal with other postsecondary institutions within service region
- Submission to DOE/DCC of fully developed proposal
- Full review of proposal by DCC, ARM and Budget Office staff to determine that all State Board of Education and statutory criteria have been met

- Approval by the *State Board of Education*
- Accountability reporting
- SACS Level II accreditation required prior to program implementation
- DOE Program Approval also required prior to implementation of Teacher Education Programs

The current **Criteria for approval** include the following which would continue to be required for all new baccalaureate development:

- Description of planning process (incl. community/business and industry input) and timeline for implementation
- Analysis of need/demand for program (based upon guidelines developed by the Division of Accountability, Research and Measurement)
- Alignment with K20 Goals
- Academic Content and Curriculum
 - Credit hours; CIP code
 - Program length
 - General Education requirements/core courses, electives, etc.)
 - Common course prerequisites
 - Foreign Language requirements
 - Sequenced course of study by semester
 - Course descriptions for each course, including course numbers
 - Expected specific learning outcomes for the program
- Potential internships or clinical experience as applicable
- CLAST requirements
- Plans to preserve and/or enhance state-level 2 + 2 articulation agreements
- Plans to meet any additional state program approval requirements
- Admission requirements and if limited access status request provide rationale
- Graduation Requirements
- Assessment of Current and Anticipated Resources to Deliver the Program (including facilities, equipment, library holdings, etc.)
- Proposed Enrollment, Performance, and Budget Plans
- Faculty credentials and class size
- Student Support Services
- Accreditation Plan (including plans for seeking any specialized accreditation)
- Plan of Action in Case of Program Termination

*It is recommended that the Criteria above be required for **both** initial and subsequent approvals. The State Board of Education would continue to be responsible for approving **initial** addition to/expansion of mission for institutions within the Florida College System based upon these criteria. Local Boards of Trustees would be responsible for approving **subsequent** baccalaureate programs based upon these criteria, AND state-level compliance review would be guided by same.*

II. Approval of Subsequent Baccalaureate Proposals

- Subsequent to SACS Level II accreditation, the review and approval of baccalaureate proposals should be the responsibility of the local *Board of Trustees* using the same criteria (see above) adopted by the State Board for initial program approval.
- Upon approval by the Board of Trustees, and the President's certification that all criteria have been met, the degree proposal should be forwarded to the Division office for *compliance review* purposes.
- Upon acknowledgement by the Division that all criteria have been met AND receipt by the institution from SACS that substantive change documentation has been approved, the degree program may be implemented.
 - Summary of steps for additional program approval following initial approval by State Board of Education-
 1. Local Board of Trustees program approval based upon criteria established by State Board of Education;
 2. Compliance review of proposed program by Florida College System, Division of Community Colleges;
 3. Substantive change approval granted by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools for each new program.
 4. Division of Florida Colleges informs college that degree program may be implemented.

Rationale:

The addition of Associate in Science, Associate in Applied Science, and Certificate programs is currently a local Board of Trustees decision based upon the resources of the college, the population served, and, importantly, the level of SACS accreditation the institution holds. It is therefore consistent with state policy that colleges which have SACS Level II accreditation follow a similar operating procedure for the addition of subsequent baccalaureate proposals, utilizing the State Board criteria at the local level. (See criteria above in Section I)

At present, institutions within the State University System (SUS) add baccalaureate programs per the approval of their local Boards of Trustees and *without specific Board of Governors approval*. Compliance review by BOG staff follows local BOT approval.

At present, St. Petersburg College adds baccalaureate programs per the approval of their Board of Trustees and without State Board of Education approval. Regional collaboration to avoid “unnecessary duplication” is locally initiated.

The approval process summarized above would provide oversight for approval of baccalaureate degree programs using a *combination of measures* currently employed by the State Board of Education and the Board of Governors, as well as

the process legislatively authorized for St. Petersburg College under s. 1004.73 F.S.

Advantages: Provides for both state-level oversight and local control for upper division programmatic scope. Maximizes flexibility and responsiveness.

Disadvantages: Colleges must wait for state-level compliance review prior to implementation.

Approval Options:

1. No change from current baccalaureate approval process for community colleges, i.e., all proposals, both initial and subsequent require State Board of Education approval.

Advantages: Continuity of established process; maximizes state authority over upper division programmatic scope.

Disadvantages: Slows responsiveness to local/regional need and demand; minimizes local Board of Trustees responsibility for upper division programmatic scope; requires more regulatory approvals than required for new state or private university baccalaureate program implementation.

2. Total local Board of Trustees control for approval of initial and subsequent baccalaureate degree program proposals, without state-level oversight.

Advantages: Maximum responsiveness to community need and demand for upper division programs.

Disadvantages: Potential for duplication of upper division programs and cost inefficiencies.

**SUMMARY of RECOMMENDED PROGRAM APPROVAL CHANGES
(See attachment, “*Baccalaureate Program Proposal for the Florida College System-Criteria for Initial and Subsequent Degree Programs*” for complete detail)**

1. Elimination of specific “deadline” dates for development/submission of baccalaureate proposals.
 - a. Provides for better local/regional responsiveness;
 - b. Eliminates “backlog” and provides for more timely/efficient feedback from Department of Education.

2. Initial proposals go to Commissioner and Chancellor; Subsequent proposals routed to Chancellor.
 - a. Reflects streamlining after initial SBE approval
 - b. Provides for state-level compliance review for subsequent degree programs approved by local Board of Trustees
3. Broader scope: Proposals must identify “workforce, academic and/or geographic” needs that meet the employment demands of their service area and the state.
 - a. Acknowledges that economic/employment/educational needs and demand may be contingent upon multiple factors
 - b. Continues to require data which substantiates local/regional need and demand.
4. Focuses on service within local and *regional* geographic boundaries
5. Affirms costs to state and students which are less than that of the state universities
6. Authorizes local Boards of Trustees to review and approve requests for *subsequent* baccalaureate degrees
 - a. Similar to SUS baccalaureate approval process
 - b. Mirrors process for addition of new PSAV/AAS, AS degree programs at community colleges
7. Requires *subsequent* degree proposals be submitted to Florida College System for compliance review prior to implementation
 - a. Provides for continued state-level oversight to ensure that program criteria have been met
 - b. Ensures open line of communication between Florida College System/Dept. of Education and colleges regarding program growth
8. Requires College to present evidence of SACS substantive change approval prior to implementation.
9. Calls for colleges to undertake a strategic planning effort which includes dialogue with other regional postsecondary providers in planning baccalaureate needs and demands.
10. Eliminates need for colleges to sign “MOA” affirming commitment to primary mission of community colleges after *each* degree approval. Replaces with affirmation by President/BOT at time of initial baccalaureate proposal.