

Legislative Concept on the Applied Baccalaureate
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Draft Date: 2.2.09

Purpose

The main purpose of this legislative concept is to charge the Joint Boards of Higher Education with developing four types of applied baccalaureate degrees. Oregon is one of only 11 states that does not currently offer one or more applied baccalaureate options. Among other things, these options have the potential to encourage more Oregonians to pursue lifelong learning, to help citizens maximize their earning potential and to accelerate the state's attainment of its 40-40-20 goal for educational achievement.

In the context of this legislative concept, the applied baccalaureate degree is defined as a bachelor's degree designed to incorporate applied associate courses and degrees once considered as "terminal" or non-baccalaureate level while providing students with the higher-order thinking skills and advanced technical knowledge and skills so desired in today's job market. Applied baccalaureate programs treat lower-division technical courses as valid courses that can count as part of the major field of study. Additionally, the upper-division courses required for completion of the applied baccalaureate typically include a high number of general education courses, which in the traditional baccalaureate degree are considered lower-division course work. The degree may be offered by traditional baccalaureate degree-granting institutions or by associate degree-granting colleges, including public, private, and proprietary institutions. Often this degree is titled Bachelor of Applied Science, but it may have other titles, including but not limited to, Bachelor of Science Technology, Bachelor of Technology or Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences.

What

This legislative concept will charge the Joint Boards of Higher Education with developing a plan for accrediting community college and Oregon University System schools for the purpose of offering the four types of applied baccalaureate degrees (described below). The Joint Boards should be prepared to present its plan to the 76th Legislative Assembly for review and approval; more specifically, during the interim (that is, from the close of the 2009 session until the start of the 2011 session) the relevant education policy committees in the House and Senate should receive progress reports on the plan as desired by those committees. The final draft of the plan should be presented to the leadership of both chambers as well as the aforementioned policy committees no later than Dec. 1, 2010.

The plan should detail the following: how the applied baccalaureate options will be created, including the necessary accreditation process; the criteria for approving the options offered by state and private institutions; the articulation agreements necessary to ensure the applied baccalaureate options are available as broadly as possible; the resources required to implement them; and a timeline for implementation.

The four applied baccalaureate options the Joint Boards of Higher Education must provide for consist of the following:

- Career ladder -- The career ladder program requires a substantial number of upper-level courses in the technical major of the applied associate degree. For example, Great Basin College in

Nevada awards the Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) in several emphasis areas, including instrumentation technology. The degree is designed to provide students "with stronger technical skills from upper-division study in instrumentation and process control." Similarly, the institution's BAS in land surveying/geomatics enables the degree recipient to sit for a state licensure exam that is only open to those with a baccalaureate degree.

- Inverse or upside-down – This degree is typically titled a Bachelor's of General Studies (BGS), Bachelor of Professional Studies (BPS), or Bachelor of Applied Studies (BAS). This degree does not follow the course-taking pattern of the traditional baccalaureate, a pattern in which general education courses are taken in the first two years of study and courses in the major or area of specialization are taken in the last two years. Rather, this degree reverses or turns the traditional curriculum sequence upside down by accepting courses taken in an associate degree program as satisfying much of the baccalaureate requirements for a major. Additional general education courses sufficient to meet a traditional baccalaureate's general education requirements are then taken in the student's junior and senior years. When the BGS is designed to articulate only with applied associate degree or courses, it is considered a form of applied baccalaureate. For example, New Mexico State University offers through its College of Extended Learning a Bachelor of Applied Studies for students already possessing an AAS degree. The degree program "provides students with broader experiences and increased opportunities in areas."
- Management ladder – This degree is designed to provide the degree recipient with applied management skills sufficient to prepare for a managerial position. For example, Peru State College in Nebraska offers the BAS in Business Administration – Management. According to Peru State's Web site, this degree is "for individuals interested in developing management skills to complement their technical background." Entry into the program requires "completion of a technical associate degree or the equivalent in prior course work and life experience." Similarly, the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith offers a BAS to accommodate students with an AAS or AAT degree. No additional coursework in the student's technical field is required; rather, the program provides management courses to enable the students to become managers in their technical area. Also, the University at West Oahu in Hawaii has recently received permission to award a BAS in Respiratory Therapy. This degree functions as a management top to an associate degree in respiratory therapy.
- Work experience – This degree consists of a combination of general education and/or technical coursework along with direct, supervised work experience in a relevant field. The latter should leverage a strong relationship between the degree granting institution and an employer and/or consortium of employers in a particular field. The terms and conditions of the work experience should be agreed upon by both the degree granting institution and the employer(s).