

Legislative Analysis



COMMUNITY COLLEGE BACCALAUREATE DEGREES

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House Bill 4148

Sponsor: Rep. Mike Shirkey

Committee: Education

Complete to 8-26-14

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 4148 AS INTRODUCED 1-30-13

House Bill 4148 would amend the Community College Act to allow community colleges to grant baccalaureate degrees in nursing, ski area management, wastewater treatment technology, allied health, information technology, and manufacturing technology.

However, the bill prohibits a community college from operating an educational program that grants a bachelor of science in nursing unless the program is approved by the Michigan Board of Nursing under Section 17241 of the Michigan Public Health Code.

Now under the law, a community college can grant baccalaureate degrees only in cement technology, maritime technology, energy production technology, and culinary arts. (These degrees were permitted by Public Act 495 of 2012.)

MCL 389.105 & 389.121

FISCAL IMPACT:

In general, the bill would serve to increase operating costs of state community colleges that elect to offer the select baccalaureate programs. A community college could incur costs for the salary and benefits of additional faculty (full-time and part-time) and support staff, as well as operating costs for administration, materials and supplies, travel, information technology, accreditation, and other support services. A college could also incur costs for capital expenses related to additional equipment and increased instructional space. Some expenses would be non-recurring, such as those related to equipment and facilities, while others would be recurring in nature (e.g. faculty salaries).

Funding for community colleges comes from three main sources: tuition and fees, property taxes, and state appropriations. The costs of adding a baccalaureate program would be borne by some combination of those sources, or supplemented by other outside sources (grants, contributions, etc.). In general, upper division courses have a higher cost than lower division courses. As such, costs could be partially offset through a stratified tuition plan that imposes higher tuition rates for upper division courses, as is the practice in many public universities. The costs of expanding an existing associate's degree program into a baccalaureate program would vary by college, depending on its current capacity and additional costs attendant on expanding the program.

According to the State Board of Nursing, all 28 community colleges offer an associate's degree in nursing, while 25 colleges and universities (12 public universities and 13 private colleges and universities) offer baccalaureate degrees in nursing.

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