

TO: Florida College System Council of Presidents

FROM: Council on Instructional Affairs, Council on Student Affairs, and Council on Workforce Education

DATE: October 19, 2021

RE: Impact of HB 1507 and SB 1108

Background:

A number of bills passed by the 2021 Florida Legislature significantly impacted FCS institutions. We wish to address the long-term impact of two of these statutes.

HB 1507 mandates that AS degrees offer general education core courses in all five areas of general education beginning in 2022. For many AS programs this means that a math or science will need to be added to fill all five areas.

In addition, **SB 1108** requires AA, AS and baccalaureate students to take AMH X020 or POS X041 and pass a civics literacy test as a graduation requirement beginning in 2022. For many AS programs this means that the existing social/behavioral science (often PSY or SYG) will need to be exchanged for AMH or POS.

In accommodating these changes, the number of total credits in each degree program cannot increase. The general education core courses must come from the state list of options found in 6A-14.03303 General Education Core Course Options.

Concerns:

- For many programs, the additional math or science will result in the removal of courses such as Speech and Interpersonal Communication from the program. These courses teach important communication and employability skills needed in the workplace.
- The changes may contradict the recommendations of advisory boards comprised of industry leaders. It is commonly requested that graduates be trained in oral communication, for example.
- Limiting the natural science options available will hinder some AS programs from offering courses more relevant to targeted and in-demand occupations.
- AS and AAS programs are meant to prepare students for jobs. Adding these requirements will reduce the time available to teach program specific content that aids in the students' workforce preparation.

- The changes may contradict the requirements of accreditation bodies. For example, some health sciences programs require PSY, DEP or SYG.
- Rule 6A-14.0303, FAC, is up for revision to reflect the statutory change. The rule is scheduled to be considered by the State Board of Education on October 20th.

Recommendations:

- The Council recommends that changes to options for general education be based on input from faculty committees as defined in 6A-14.03303 General Education Core Course Options.
- The Council recommends that the impact to accreditation be considered as part of this process.
- The Council recommends that COP request an extension of the timeline to implement the changes to allow for better planning and consideration of expanded options in general education, more flexibility on program length, and consideration of the impact on accrediting bodies.