

COMMUNITY COLLEGE COUNCIL (CCC) MEETING NOTES

November 14, 2023 – 9:00 – 10:30 am

Iowa Department of Education – Zoom

Council members in attendance included:

- ❑ Cassandra Halls, CCC and State Board of Education Member (In Person)
- ❑ Cindy Dietz, CCC and State Board of Education Member (In Person)
- ❑ John Robbins, CCC and State Board of Education Member (via conf. call)
- ❑ Dr. Matt Thompson, CCC Member and Community College President, Indian Hills Community College (via conf. call)
- ❑ Moudy Nabulsi, CCC Member and Trustee, Southeastern Community College (via conf. call)

Iowa Department of Education staff and others in attendance included:

- ❑ McKenzie Snow, Director, Iowa Department of Education
- ❑ Jeremy Varner, Bureau of Community Colleges and Postsecondary Readiness (In Person)
- ❑ Amy Gieseke, Bureau of Community Colleges and Postsecondary Readiness (In Person)
- ❑ Dennis Harden, Bureau of Community Colleges and Postsecondary Readiness (In Person)
- ❑ Paula Nissen, Bureau of Community Colleges and Postsecondary Readiness (In Person)
- ❑ Vlad Bassis, Bureau of Community Colleges and Postsecondary Readiness (via conf. call)
- ❑ Lora Vargason Bureau of Community Colleges and Postsecondary Readiness (In Person)
- ❑ Heather Meissen, Bureau of Community Colleges and Postsecondary Readiness (In Person)
- ❑ Thomas Mayes, General Counsel, Iowa Department of Education (In Person)
- ❑ Kelly Friesleben, Bureau of Community Colleges and Postsecondary Readiness (In Person)
- ❑ Emily Shields, Community Colleges for Iowa (via conf. call)
- ❑ Kat Callahan, Community Colleges for Iowa (via conf. call)

I. Call to Order and Introductions – Cassandra Halls

- The meeting was called to order at 3:32 PM.

II. Approval of September 13, 2023 Meeting Notes (Action Required – Attachment 1)

Motion: Robbins moved to approve, seconded by Dietz.

Vote: Motion carried unanimously.

III. Updates – Bureau of Community Colleges and Postsecondary Readiness, Community Colleges for Iowa

- Bureau of Community Colleges and Postsecondary Readiness – Jeremy Varner
 - Iowa Department of Education (Department) Director McKenzie Snow will be attending today's meeting.
 - Fall community college enrollment is up 3.8 percent year-over-year.
 - Enrollment is still not up to pre-pandemic levels.
 - Traditionally, enrollment runs counter-cyclical to the labor market; it goes up when unemployment is high, and down when it is low.
 - Chief academic officers (CAOs) attribute growth to expansion of the college and career transition counselor (CCTC) program, regional centers and concurrent enrollment.

- Friday is the deadline to apply for Career Academy Incentive Fund (CAIF) grant funding. There are currently 29 such centers statewide, and eight more are planned. There will be up to five grants awarded, up to \$1 million each. In addition to the fall round, there will be a spring round.
- December 16 is the deadline to apply for CCTC grants.
- The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) is changing its policy regarding faculty qualifications.
 - In 2018, HLC increased teacher requirements from a master's degree plus 12 credit hours to a master's degree plus 18 hours.
 - The Department responded by updating administrative rules.
 - HLC is now removing the requirement for a master's degree plus 18 credits, deferring the decision around an appropriate number of qualifying credits to the institution.
 - The Department will be proposing a change to align administrative rules with Iowa Code that would revert to the 12 credit hour requirement currently listed in Iowa Code. This proposal will come before the Community College Council (CCC) at a later date.
- Community Colleges for Iowa (CC4IA)– Kat Callahan
 - CC4IA finalized its priorities for the 2024 Iowa Legislative Session, including funding formula changes and \$10 million in additional appropriations.
 - CC4IA has met with legislative leadership to discuss the proposals.
 - Individual community colleges are continuing grassroots efforts.
 - CC4IA is preparing for its first convention/tradeshow. Registration, vendor applications and sponsorships are above expectations.
 - Planning for February events is underway.
 - The student legislative seminar and Community College Day on the Hill will be rebranded as “Leadership in Action Week.”
 - The theme for the 2024 Day on the Hill will be “Last Dollar Scholarships,” and will highlight these programs and their successes.
- **Questions/Comments:**
 - Nabulsi asked how many grants are available, and who received them. Varner said up to five CCTC grants were available to community colleges and school districts. The CAIF application period is still open until Friday, and applications are being evaluated.

IV. Welcome Dir. Snow

- Director Snow said she was excited to join the conversation, and thanked members for their service. She also noted the critical role the council plays in advising the Iowa State Board of Education (State Board).

V. Associate of Professional Studies Degree (APS) Outcomes Report (Attachment 2)

- Bureau of Community Colleges and Postsecondary Readiness – Heather Meissen

- In 2013, the Iowa Legislature added the Associate of Professional Studies (APS) award to Iowa Code Chapter 21 as a pilot award. The chapter also calls for an evaluation of the award's feasibility.
- APS is a hybrid award for students who want to transfer to a four-year institution, or enter employment immediately.
- APS requires 62-68 credits, with 32 for a technical core (16 applying to the major, 16 electives), and 30 general education credits.
- Four colleges participated in the pilot, and one dropped out.
- APS awards account for a very small percentage of enrollment. Overall enrollment in APS programs has declined over the past five years.
- Meissen and Gieseke met with Chief Academic Officers (CAOs), and found many were unaware of the program. CAOs expressed interest in exploring the award.
- The Department recommends removing the pilot language from Iowa Code, making APS a permanent award option. It would be on an approval basis.
- Varner said a report is required per Iowa Code, which the Department is working on now. The Department will also post notice of intended action.
- **Questions/Comments:**
 - Nabulsi asked why other colleges weren't involved in the program. Gieseke said many CAOs weren't aware of it. Friesleben said since the program was a pilot, the Department wanted to start with a smaller group to determine if the award would be a viable option. Meissen said the transfer major has also become an easier option for community colleges, alleviating some of the need.
 - Nabulsi asked if colleges would continue to offer APS. Meissen said they are beneficial, and the Department would like to see them continue.
 - Nabulsi asked what the cost of APS was to institutions. Varner said there were no costs to colleges.
 - Robbins asked for confirmation that the Department would return to the council with amended rules to approve. Varner said it would likely be part of a packet of rule changes created in response to Executive Order 10.
 - Robbins asked how many colleges were interested in APS. Varner said the Department has not yet received any formal proposals, and didn't expect any for the next academic year.
 - Robbins asked why the Department wasn't expecting any proposals. Varner said demand will likely be low, because requirements are stringent, and private institutions may not be aware of the program. He said APS is well-aligned with certain four-year programs, however, lending value to the program.
 - Dietz asked if APS was necessary for pre-veterinary programs. Friesleben said Perkins funding and course codes/offering are the big issue with agricultural transfer majors, often making APS the better option.
 - Nabulsi asked if Southeastern Community College's engineering program might be a good fit for APS. Meissen said she would need to look to see if they had a transfer major. Otherwise, the community college likely has specific articulation agreements with Iowa State University.

- Dietz said given the prior lack of awareness around APS, and declining enrollment in the program, it's difficult to assess its ongoing value. She asked if that means there needs to be a timeframe during which it would be available for all colleges, before determining whether to keep it.
- Thompson said if it creates a pathway for students, he's in favor. He said it's important to ensure that APS work actually transfers to other institutions, however.

VI. Rules: Chapters 25, 27, 32, 48, 49, 80 (Action Required – Attachments 3-14)

○ General Counsel – Thomas Mayes

Bureau of Community Colleges and Postsecondary Readiness – Lora Vargason

- Iowa Administrative Code changes for chapters 21 and 24 will come before CCC in January.
- The rule chapter CCC considered in September will be on the State Board's upcoming agenda (chapter 95 addressing equal employment opportunity).
- Rule changes before the State Board include 13 Iowa Administrative Code chapters, and 11 notices of intended action. Five items before the State Board have a community colleges nexus. Most changes clear out repetitive language.
- Mayes walked the council through new proposed IAC changes.
 - Chapter 25 – PACE/Gap Tuition Assistance Program – No substantive changes.
 - Chapter 27 – Workforce Training and Economic Development Funds – No policy changes.
 - Chapter 32 – HiSET—Currently, students in the juvenile justice system can take HiSET preparatory courses, but must wait until they are 18 years old to take the exam. The Department proposes allowing these students to take the HiSET exam upon completion of coursework.
 - Chapter 48—Transitional/Iowa Workforce Development (IWD)—The realignment bill moved four of the five rules in this chapter to IWD. Mayes recommended moving this rule to chapter 46, but it's still going through the Executive Order 10 transition. Once that transition is completed, the rule can be moved administratively.
 - Chapter 49 – Individual Career and Academic Plans – No substantive changes. It will be decoupled from chapter 48 once chapter 46 comes online.
 - Chapter 80 – Paraeducator Preparation Standards – Many requirements are more appropriate for teacher prep. The Department proposes relaxing paraeducator requirements, to give programs more flexibility.
- **Questions/Comments:**
 - Nabulsi asked if the changes removed “shalls” from chapter 27. Mayes said some were removed.
 - Robbins said the chapter 27 changes were logical, and the chapter 32 revisions looked fine.

- Dietz asked how the paraeducator prep changes could affect these workers if they decided to become teachers in the future. Mayes said their educator training would fall under chapters 77 and 79, which address teacher prep.
- Friesleben said there is a tentative council meeting set for Monday, December 4 from 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM. Only chapter 95 would be addressed during this meeting. Mayes said the notice for chapters 21 and 24 will be addressed during the January CCC meeting.

Motion: Nabulsi moved to approve; seconded by Dietz.

Vote: Motion carried unanimously.

VII. Gap Expansion (Attachment 15)

- Bureau of Community Colleges and Postsecondary Readiness – Paula Nissen
 - Nissen walked through the history and eligibility requirements of the Gap Tuition Assistance (Gap) program.
 - She discussed how the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER II) Fund helped ease eligibility requirements and expand Gap access.
 - Nissen discussed Gap enrollment trends. Highlights included:
 - High-demand program enrollment increased by 145 percent in academic year 2022.
 - More young students could access funding for noncredit programs.
 - Thirty-eight percent of GEER II Gap students served were racial/ethnic minority students. Overall minority student community college enrollment ranges from 17 percent to 20 percent.
 - In 2023 the Iowa Legislature approved a change to Gap reflecting the GEER II expansion. The annual appropriation remains \$2 million.
 - An interactive dashboard on the Student Outcomes webpage is in development.
 - The Department will provide give the report to colleges their feedback before submitting it to the legislature.
- **Questions/Comments:**
 - Dietz asked why there was such a difference between minority student enrollment and Gap participation. Nissen said she didn’t know, but lifting the eligibility criteria seemed to help. She said PACE and Gap navigators told her applicants may not be eligible due to family size or part-time employment.
 - Nabulsi asked if legislators would receive the statistical information presented by Nissen in the report submitted by the Department. Nissen confirmed.
 - Robbins asked if the program would continue to be funded at the current level, including the GEER II expansion. Varner said federal funding had been totally expended. Iowa has always funded the program through a \$2 million appropriation from the Iowa Skilled Worker and Job Creation Fund. Robbins said given the program’s success, it may be worth requesting additional funding.

- Dietz noted Gap funding is often combined with other funding. She asked if any of those other funds had moved to IWD. Nissen said major streams are still with the Department.

VIII. Fall Enrollment Report (Attachment 16)

- Bureau of Community Colleges and Postsecondary Readiness – Vladimir Bassis
 - Bassis presented fall 2023 enrollment data, comparing it to the fall of 2022. Highlights included:
 - A 3.8 percent increase in enrollment, for a total of 85,362 students.
 - This is the second enrollment increase since it first declined in 2011.
 - Concurrent enrollment is contributing to the increase, with 40,037 total students (7.9 percent increase). These students now comprise 46.9 percent of community college enrollment.
 - Career and technical education enrollment increased by 3.1 percent.
 - Transfer majors increased by 9.6 percent.
 - New student enrollment was up 21.2 percent, a one percent increase.
 - When the Department receives data, it immediately publishes the information online, so that community colleges can take advantage of it.
 - Questions/Comments:
 - Robbins asked how the information is used to make decisions or form strategies. Bassis said the data helps the Department and colleges make informed decisions on whether to expand, cut or alter programs. It also allows the Department determine if Iowa is competitive with other states, and is retaining its skilled workforce.
 - Nabulsi asked if the increased enrollment is driven by concurrent enrollment. Bassis confirmed. He said concurrently-enrolled students have higher rates of community college enrollment immediately following graduation. Bassis said the Department tracked these students over eight years, and found they enrolled and completed their secondary education faster, and at higher rates, than other students.
 - Dietz asked if dual enrollment increases can be traced to career academies. Varner said that data hasn't been broken out, yet. Anecdotally, CAOs have said fall enrollment is driven by a few different things, including CCTCs, and regional centers play a role in CTE enrollment. Last Dollar scholarships are also a factor.
 - Dietz asked how many times the Bureau of Community Colleges and Postsecondary Readiness is presenting at the CC4IA convention. Friesleben said the bureau will have three presenters, and Dietz expressed approval.
 - Dietz asked how this data can be used to advocate for additional Gap appropriations, given the upcoming 2025 funding cliff. She asked if the Department could run projections. Bassis said it was a complex issue, but a general projection may be possible.
 - Friesleben said as demographics shift, more minority students will likely enroll. Community colleges are discussing how to ensure these students will consider attaining, and have access to, postsecondary training. Dietz said there needs to

be more conversation on the board level about how to elevate these conversations to a system-wide level. Varner said the Department can return to the council with some ideas on how to frame the conversation.

- Nabulsi said every college has legislative visits scheduled. Those are good times to bring up such issues on a smaller scale.

IX. For the Good of the Order – Cassandra Halls

- Done and adjourned 5:06 p.m.
- Next meeting: Monday, December 4, 2023, 9:00-10:30 A.M. – Grimes Building, 400 E. 14th Street, Des Moines, IA 50319