

TOPIC: COLORADO COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM ACADEMIC DEGREE DESIGNATIONS

PREPARED BY: DR. CHERYL LOVELL AND MARGOT PLOTZ

I. SUMMARY

The Colorado Community College System (CCCS) has submitted ten new academic designations for approval. Legislation passed in the 2010 session has allowed CCCS to create degree designations for already existing two year degrees. These designations allow students at the two-year level to pursue focused, uniform academic programs connected to specific academic majors at four-year institutions. For example, a student at a community college could enroll in an Associate of Art program with a designation in History, which would allow the student to signify his or her intention and readiness to enroll in a Bachelor of Arts program in History at a four-year college. Without designations, students' intentions within Associate of Art and Associate or Science degree programs are not distinguishable.

II. BACKGROUND

Senate Bill 10-088 was passed to authorize the CCCS to offer academic degree designations. The goal of these designations is to allow students to declare an academic program preference at the associate's degree level, thereby promoting retention and completion. The CCCS agreed to only have degree designations for the programs in which valid statewide articulation agreements exist.

Importantly, successful completion of an associate of arts or associate of science degree with academic designation does not guarantee the degree holder admission to a four-year state-supported institution of higher education; nor does it guarantee the degree holder automatic transfer of credits unless the degree holder has fulfilled the requirements of an existing statewide transfer agreement

More than 41% of students that access higher education in the state of Colorado do it first through a community college. This is a primary point of entry for students and creating the degree designations in line with the articulation agreements that exist will ease transfer for these students. These designations fall in line with the CCHE's strategic plan to develop seamless transfer standards for movement from two-year to four-year institutions and will help students stay focused with a specific track for their degree.

III. STAFF ANALYSIS

CCCS has submitted the following degree designations for approval:

- Associate of Art with Degree Designation in Economics
- Associate of Science with Degree Designation in Engineering
- Associate of Art with Degree Designation in History
- Associate of Science with Degree Designation in Mathematics
- Associate of Science with Degree Designation in Psychology
- Associate of Art with Degree Designation in Psychology
- Associate of Art with Degree Designation in Spanish
- Associate of Art with Degree Designation in Business
- Associate of Science Degree – No designation
- Associate of Art Degree – No designation

The option for a student to get an Associate of Art or Associate of Science degree without a designation will continue.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Pursuant to C.R.S. §23-60-211, Department staff finds that the academic degree designations submitted by CCCS fit the system's statutory role and mission to create two year transfer educational program to qualify students for admission to the junior year at other colleges and universities in the state of Colorado.

V. SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Copies of all relevant materials are on file in the Academic Affairs office and are available upon request.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

C.R.S. §23-60-211

(1) Before a community college offers a two-year degree program with academic designation, as authorized by section 23-60-201, the community college shall determine the program designation for the degree. A two-year degree program with academic designation shall only be for a degree program that has a valid student transfer agreement pursuant to section 23-1-108(7). The community college shall then submit the degree program designation to the board for its review and approval. The community college may offer the degree program only after it has been approved by the board and by the Colorado commission on higher education. The community college shall exclusively use the degree program designation name in official publications, course catalogs, diplomas, and official transcripts. (2) Successful completion of an associate of arts or associate of science degree with academic designation does not guarantee the degree holder admission to a four-year state-supported institution of higher education; nor does it

guarantee the degree holder automatic transfer of credits unless the degree holder has fulfilled the requirements of an existing statewide transfer agreement.