TOPIC: WAIVERS FROM gtPATHWAYS FOR BACCALAUREATE

PROGRAMS THAT HAVE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

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I. <u>SUMMARY</u>

This action item requests the commission's approval to waive certain baccalaureate programs from having to include the entire thirty-one credit gtPathways curriculum in their general education cores. These degree programs have additional state and national accreditation requirements and the faculty at some institutions created their own general education cores for these degrees that do not "map" well with the structure of the gtPathways curriculum. If approved, this action would not change current practice but would simply clarify that institutions are operating within statute and commission policy. It should be noted that this waiver is separate from Addendum B of the 2013 Performance Contracts, which gives institutions flexibility from having to include the gtPathways curriculum in the general education core of their Liberal Arts & Sciences baccalaureate degrees, as long as the institution continues to offer a full gtPathways curriculum for those Liberal Arts & Sciences to students who choose it.

II. <u>BACKGROUND</u>

The gtPathways curriculum is described in §23-1-125(3), C.R.S. The main principles are that the curriculum should be designed to ensure students demonstrate certain competencies, shall consist of at least thirty-one credits, and shall apply to all public institutions of higher education. The original intent of gtPathways, when it was created by statute in 2001, was to ease transfer between institutions and preserve credit for courses taken to the extent feasible. Faculty agree that the original intent has been met, that gtPathways benefits students, and department staff confirm that complaints regarding transfer of credit are rare. The few complaints the department receives are most often the result of misunderstandings that are easily rectified and are not indicative of any widespread problems with student transfer.

The reason for this agenda item is that gtPathways statute [23-1-108.5(2)(c)] defines the gtPathways curriculum as "the group of courses... that every student enrolled in the institution must successfully complete...," which implies every degree program should contain the gtPathways curriculum. It was recognized by the department early on, however, that the gtPathways curriculum "mapped" best to the general education cores of Liberal Arts & Sciences degrees and was difficult to apply to some degrees that have very different general education cores and additional accreditation requirements, like nursing and engineering. While faculty at some institutions were able to fit the entire 31-credit gtPathways curriculum in the general education core of every degree, faculty at other institutions created their own general education

cores for their degrees that have additional requirements. It should be noted that although these general education cores do not contain the gtPathways curriculum, they are still in line with the gtPathways competency requirement that they be "...designed to ensure that students demonstrate competency in reading, critical thinking, written communication, mathematics, and technology" [§23-1-125(3), C.R.S.]. It is also important to note that institutions are still required to accept gtPathways courses in transfer when these degrees contain gtPathways courses in their general education cores. In fact, institutions often accept more gtPathways and other courses in transfer than they are required to under statute and Commission policy.

Clarifying Standard Practice

While it has been standard practice for the commission to approve these degrees for the last ten years or so, the department believes it would be helpful to clarify that these degree programs meet state requirements, even though they do not contain the entire gtPathways curriculum. To accomplish this, H.B. 12-1155 amended C.R.S. §23-1-125(3) to include the language, "In creating and adopting the guidelines, the department and the commission, in collaboration with the public institutions of higher education, may make allowances for baccalaureate programs that have additional degree requirements recognized by the commission." The purpose of this action item is for the Commission to clarify that the degrees listed in the table below, which have already been approved and are currently being offered, have additional requirements and are waived from having to include the gtPathways curriculum.

It is important to note that many of these degrees previously received commission waivers from the 120-credit cap [per C.R.S. 23-1-125(1)(a)], also because of state and national accreditation additional requirements (see April 1, 2004 commission meeting minutes). To assist the department and the commission in tracking degrees that have received gtPathways and 120 credit cap waivers in the future, department staff has added this information to the new degree proposal submission website at http://highered.colorado.gov/Academics/DegreePrograms/default.html.

III. STAFF ANALYSIS

Department staff requested the public institutions of higher education submit lists of their degrees for which they seek waivers from having to include the gtPathways curriculum in the degrees' general education cores. Table 1 (below) contains a list of institutions and the degrees for which the institutions request this waiver.

Table 1: List of Degrees by Institution for which Waivers from the gtPathways Curriculum are Sought

Institution	Degree	Rationale
Adams State University	Nursing, BSN	Curriculum needs to follow standards mandated by CO State Board of Nursing and Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE).

Colorado Mesa University	No waivers requested.	
Colorado School of Mines	All degrees.	CSM's degrees have core course requirements that are very different than the traditional Liberal Arts & Sciences core of courses, after which gtPathways is modeled. CSM's core is tightly tied to the technical STEM degrees it offers and does not "map" well to the structure of the gtPathways curriculum.
Colorado State	No waivers	
University	requested.	
Colorado State	No waivers	
University - Pueblo	requested.	
Fort Lewis	Engineering, BS	Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET)
College	Engineering, D5	compels the major to have more requirements.
MSU Denver	No waivers	1 3
	requested.	
University of	Aerospace	These are all specialized professional degree programs requiring
Colorado Boulder	Engineering	completion of 128 credit hours; furthermore, the first ten programs are
	Sciences, BS	ABET-accredited and subject to accreditation criteria set by ABET
	Architectural	(www.abet.org).
	Engineering, BS	
	Chemical	
	Engineering, BS	
	Chemical &	
	Biological	
	Engineering, BS	
	Civil Engineering, BS	
	Computer Science,	
	BS	
	Electrical	
	Engineering, BS	
	Electrical &	
	Computer	
	Engineering, BS Environmental	
	Environmental Engineering, BS	
	Mechanical	
	Engineering, BS	
	Applied	
	Mathematics, BS	
	Engineering Physics,	
	BS	
	Bachelor of Music,	These are professional degrees and the required coursework conforms
	BM	to national accreditation standards established by the National
	Bachelor of Music	Association of Schools of Music, rather than the Arts & Sciences core
	Education, BME	curriculum.
	Business	Coursework must conform to international accreditation standards set
	Administration, BS	by AACSB.

	Environmental	Specialized curriculum to meet national accreditation standards for
	Design, B.Envd.	fields of architecture, landscape architecture, and urban planning.
	Journalism, BS	Specialized accreditation requirements.
University of	Business, BS	Faculty response to specialized accreditation requirements.
Colorado	Computer	Tuesty response to specialized decreation requirements.
Colorado Springs	Engineering, BS	
January 19	Computer Science	
	(CS), BI TM	
	Computer Science,	
	BS	
	Computer Science:	
	Security (CS S),	
	BITM	
	Electrical	
	Engineering, BITM	
	Electrical	
	Engineering, BS	
	Game Design and	
	Development	
	(GDD), BI TM	
	Health Sciences, BS	
	Mechanical	
	Engineering, BS	
	Nursing, BSN	
	RN-to-BSN	
University of	Nursing, BSN	Faculty response to specialized accreditation requirements.
Colorado Denver		
University of	No waivers	
Northern	requested.	
Colorado		
Western State	No waivers	
Colorado	requested.	
University		

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the commission approves waivers from having to include the gtPathways curriculum in the general education cores for the degrees listed above in Table 1.

V. <u>STATUTORY AUTHORITY</u>

C.R.S. §23-1-125

(3) Core courses. The department, in consultation with each Colorado public institution of higher education, is directed to outline a plan to implement a core course concept that defines the general education course guidelines for all public institutions of higher education. The core of

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courses shall be designed to ensure that students demonstrate competency in reading, critical thinking, written communication, mathematics, and technology. The core of courses shall consist of at least thirty credit hours but shall not exceed forty credit hours. Individual institutions of higher education shall conform their own core course requirements with the guidelines developed by the department and shall identify the specific courses that meet the general education course guidelines. Any such guidelines developed by the department shall be submitted to the commission for its approval. In creating and adopting the guidelines, the department and the commission, in collaboration with the public institutions of higher education, may make allowances for baccalaureate programs that have additional degree requirements recognized by the commission. If a statewide matrix of core courses is adopted by the commission, the courses identified by the individual institutions as meeting the general education course guidelines shall be included in the matrix. The commission shall adopt such policies to ensure that institutions develop the most effective way to implement the transferability of core course credits.