

**TOPIC: CHANGE IN VOCATIONAL AUTHORITY FOR PUEBLO  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

**PREPARED BY: VICKI A. LEAL**

**I. SUMMARY**

The purpose of this agenda item is to request formal Commission approval for a change in vocational authority and to grant Pueblo Community College (PCC) expanded vocational service areas (additional counties) for certain allied health programs currently offered by PCC. Per their two-year mission and role PCC currently serves Pueblo, Fremont, Custer, Dolores, Montezuma, La Plata, San Juan, and Archuleta counties; the college's service area for vocational programs includes Pueblo, Fremont, and Custer counties.

PCC has requested that the Commission grant their request for vocational authority in the delivery of existing allied health programs and to expand their vocational service area for these programs to the following counties: Dolores, Montezuma, La Plata, San Juan and Archuleta. Granting PCC's request will bring their vocational service area into alignment with the eight-county area currently serviced through their two-year role and mission in the region and through the college's institutionalized Southwest Center while also strengthening their regional accreditation requirements.

**II. BACKGROUND**

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education is charged by statute to define geographic and programmatic service areas for Colorado public institutions of higher education [23-1-109 (2)]. In 1985 consultations with governing board representatives were conducted and, at its meeting in January 1986, the Commission approved specific geographic service areas for each institution and recognized several programmatic distinctions. Revisions were made in May 1987; March 1988; December 1992; September 1994; May 1995; and June 1995.

Community college and area vocational schools' service areas are the geographic areas in which these institutions may offer their regular programs. In some cases an area vocational school is part of a community college and the service areas generally are the same.

Pueblo Community College serves Pueblo, Fremont, Custer, Dolores, Montezuma, La Plata, San Juan, and Archuleta counties. Its service area for vocational programs includes Pueblo, Fremont, and Custer counties.

In response to Southwestern Colorado educational needs, the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) assigned to Pueblo Community College, in 1988, a five-county service area that

included the counties of Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma, and San Juan. Also serving these counties were Fort Lewis College (FLC), a liberal arts baccalaureate institution and San Juan Basin Technical School (SJBTS), a provider of vocational training at the certificate level. At the time, Pueblo Community College entered into an agreement with SJBTS and SBCCOE: "... *“to develop and deliver the necessary academic support courses and the ADN [Associate Degree in Nursing] and electronic programs.”*

When the Southwest Center was started in 1988, Pueblo Community College received a 100 FTE per year funding allocation for two years of development of the Southwest Center. The fiscal allocation was funneled through SJBTS for budgeting and disbursement. All individuals employed to work in the PCC Southwest Center programs and services were employees of SJBTS, and the two entities were co-located in the SJBTS building located ten miles east of Cortez. The joint agreement with the San Juan Basin Technical School was terminated in October of 1992; and at that time, all personnel devoted to the efforts of the PCC course and program offerings became PCC employees. Also, all PCC programs and course offerings were placed under the direct administration of PCC.

PCC currently works with San Juan Basin Technical College (SJBTC)<sub>1</sub> in the area of Nursing; SJBTC offers the first year of the Nursing Program (LPN), and PCC offers the second year of the Nursing Program, which leads to the Applied Associates of Science (AAS) in Nursing. In the area of Emergency Medical Services (EMS); SJBTC offers the EMS Basic and Intermediate certificates, while PCC offers the EMS Advanced Paramedic certificate. PCC seeks to continue this articulation and partnership during the 2007-2008 academic year; SJBTC enrollment should not decline as a result of this continued partnership.

This agenda item recommends granting PCC expanded vocational authority in the following counties: Dolores, Montezuma, La Plata, San Juan, and Archuleta to offer the following programs in the allied health fields:

- Respiratory Therapy
- Emergency Medical Services Advanced Paramedic Certification
- Nursing (specifically the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the Applied Degree in Nursing Program [ADN]).

In the future, and pending final Department of Higher Education (DHE) approval, PCC plans to move forward with offering, at the Southwest Campus, Associate of Applied Science Degrees in health-related programs that *cannot* be articulated with a non-degree granting institution (such as SJBTC) and that are not part of the current SJBTC/PCC partnership. An example of this would be the AAS Degree in Respiratory Care already offered by PCC and Radiologic Technology, an applied degree program that has yet to be delivered.

PCC is accredited by Colorado's regional accrediting agency, The Higher Learning Commission, as a degree-granting institution. Additionally, all but one of PCC's health programs have national health agency accreditation at the associate-degree level (by 2008 all

nursing programs are *required* to have accreditation). PCC can continue to offer these areas of study, currently not offered by any other institution in the region.

## **II. STAFF ANALYSIS**

DHE staff have reviewed and considered PCC's request in conjunction with an overview and examination of the current delivery of educational programming in the four-corners region of the state. DHE staff have also extended consideration to the mission and role of other post-secondary institutions in the same geographical service region, (Fort Lewis College and San Juan Basin Technical College).

Additionally, DHE staff have reviewed the current institutional capacity of all institutions operating within the region, while focusing exclusively on the delivery of educational services, including certificate programs, vocational education, the delivery of Associate of Arts and Associate of Applied Science as well as Associate of Science degrees while also considering the mission and role that the region's four-year institution provides.

In sum, DHE staff have considered both current stakeholders and residents of the region and are recommending that the Commission grant increased vocational authority by expanding PCC's vocational service area to include the counties of Dolores, Montezuma, La Plata, San Juan, and Archuleta, *however* limit the educational programming to only specified allied health fields, including: Respiratory Therapy, the Emergency Medical Services Advanced Paramedic Certificate and the *second* year of the Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN). Expanding vocational authority in support of these allied health fields will enable PCC to continue its current delivery of educational programming in these specified fields while providing for continued collaboration between the institutions and on behalf of students. Further, granting PCC vocational authority in the allied health fields in these counties will ensure that both PCC and SJBTC continue to jointly serve students through program and certification partnerships while also supporting transfer opportunities for students in the region.

This expansion of vocational authority for PCC should not alter in any way the current delivery of educational programming currently offered by SJBTC, as SJBTC is not a degree-granting institution, and as such cannot grant applied degrees nor associate-level degrees. Neither should it affect the current delivery of PCC programs not in the area of allied health fields, as PCC is currently the sole provider, per statute and policy promulgated by the DHE, of both applied and associate degrees. Further, the granting of increased vocational authority by the DHE in the specified allied health areas will in no way alter the current delivery of vocational/technical education curriculum and programs in the following school districts: Montezuma-Cortez School District RE-1, Dolores District Re-4A, and Mancos School District RE-6, as the Colorado Vocational Act of 1970 provides for the delivery of vocational and technical education by the local school districts operating vocational education programs as approved by the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education (CRS 23-8-101 et. seq., as it may be amended from time to time).

#### **IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

That the Commission approve staff recommendation for an expansion of PCC's vocational service region for its existing allied health vocational programs specifically: Respiratory Therapy, Emergency Medical Services Advanced Paramedic Certification and Nursing (specifically the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the Applied Degree in Nursing Program [ADN]) in the following counties: Dolores, Montezuma, La Plata, San Juan, and Archuleta .

#### **STATUTORY AUTHORITY**

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education is charged by statute to define geographic and programmatic service areas for Colorado public institutions of higher education [23-1-109 (2)].

C.R.S. 23-1-109 (2) states that the Commission shall define, after consultation with the governing boards of institutions, the geographic and programmatic service areas for each state-supported institution of higher education. No such institution shall provide instruction off-campus in programs or geographic areas or at sites not approved by the commission, unless otherwise provided by law.

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1Article 60 of title 23, Colorado Revised Statutes, is amended BY THE ADDITION OF A NEW PART to read: PART 8, AREA VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS C.R.S. 23-60-801. Area vocational schools – name. THE SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION OR THE BOARD OF COOPERATIVE SERVICES, WHICHEVER IS APPLICABLE, THAT ACTS AS THE GOVERNING BOARD OF AN AREA VOCATIONAL SCHOOL MAY, BY RESOLUTION, RENAME THE AREA VOCATIONAL SCHOOL TO IDENTIFY IT AS A TECHNICAL COLLEGE. ***IDENTIFYING AN AREA VOCATIONAL SCHOOL AS A TECHNICAL COLLEGE SHALL NOT CHANGE ITS STATUS AS AN AREA VOCATIONAL SCHOOL NOR CHANGE THE GOVERNANCE OR OPERATION OF THE AREA VOCATIONAL SCHOOL.***[Emphasis added]