TOPIC: **ANALYSIS AND BACKGROUND ON COMMUNITY COLLEGE BACHELOR'S OF APPLIED SCIENCE BILL DRAFT**

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I. SUMMARY

At its November 2013 meeting, the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) requested a staff analysis related to draft legislation which would, *in part*, expand the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) role and mission to be able to offer Bachelor of Applied Science degrees (after meeting specific criteria).

This item provides the following general information for purposes of CCHE discussion.

Background:

- National Trends and Related Policy in Other States
- Recent Legislative History

Staff Analysis:

- Description of Current Draft bill
- Pros and Cons

II. BACKGROUND

A. National Trends and Other States

There are currently 22 states which have some variation of policy that allows traditionally public two-year institutions of higher education to offer some form of a baccalaureate program.

The evolution of this issue at the state policy level is very well documented and described in an October 2010 - Policy Brief -*Update on the Community College Baccalaureate: Evolving Trends and Issues* by the American Association of State College and Universities[1].

(To be directly referenced and referred to as the ***AASCU Policy Brief*** throughout.)

[1] Russell, A. (October 2010) *Update on the Community College Baccalaureate: Evolving Trends and Issues*, American Association of State College and Universities.
http://www.aascu.org/policy/publications/policymatters/2010/communitycollegebaccalaureate.pdf

This AASCU Policy Brief makes a number of observations on this evolving trend, some of which are bulleted here.

- "The numbers of states that have approved at least one community college to offer a baccalaureate program has grown steadily over the past decade, as have the number of institutions and degree programs approved." (p. 2)

- These changes have been occurring, "…in response to increased demands for baccalaureate degrees in particular geographic areas and fields of study – often in rural locations and high-demand fields such as education, nursing, and technical subjects." (p. 1)

- "This phenomenon is also fueled by the upgraded educational credentials now needed for certain applied and technical fields, occupations in which associate degrees once sufficed, but where employers now prefer or require workers to possess a four-year degree." (p. 1)

On the following page, Table One, provides a full list of those states that allow community colleges to offer a bachelor's degree.

This table also lists California as a state that is currently contemplating allowing this change to occur. Recent media reports note that "California's community colleges are considering whether to expand their educational mission and begin offering bachelor's degrees in high-demand technical and vocational fields."[2]

[2]Kucher, K. (November 9, 2013) *Earn a bachelor's at community college*. The San Diego Union-Tribune, LLC. http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2013/nov/09/community-college-study-bachelor-degrees/

Table One:
States that currently allow at least one community college to a baccalaureate program[3]

Number	State	Year First Approved
1	Arkansas <a>	1998
???	California	*Currently being debated*
2	Colorado	2010
3	Florida	2001
4	Georgia <a>	1997
5	Hawaii	2004
6	Idaho <b>	-
7	Illinois <b>	-
8	Indiana	2004
9	Louisiana <a>	2001
10	Michigan	2012
11	Minnesota	2003
12	Nevada	1998
13	New Mexico <a>	2004
14	New York	1996
15	North Dakota	2006
16	Oklahoma <a>	2004
17	Texas	2003
18	Utah	1992
19	Vermont	1993
20	Washington	2005
21	West Virginia	1989
22	Wisconsin <b>	-

<a> Note: These states have allowed community colleges to confer baccalaureate degrees but have required them to switch their institutional mission and name from a community college.

<b> Note: First Year Approved information was not readily available from source documents used in preparing this table.

[3] **Sources for this table include information from previously referenced [1]&[2]as well as:**

Public Community Colleges Conferring Baccalaureate Degrees (As of October 2013) Community College Baccalaureate Association.
http://www.accbd.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Conferring-Institutions-October-2013.pdf

Bradley, P. (June 12, 2012) – *Two Plus Two: Top Associate Degree Producers Also Offering Four-Year Degrees*. Community College Week.
http://www.ccweek.com/News/templates/pdfs/Top100/2012/Analysis%20Charts/Top100-2012-Ba-Map.pdf

Deborah L. Floyd & Kenneth P. Walker (2008)*The Community College Baccalaureate: Putting the Pieces Together*, Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 33:2, 90-124
http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10668920802564667

CDHE staff research into this issue echoes the themes expressed by the AASCU Policy Brief. There is in increasing number of states that have shifted to allowing at least one community college the ability to offer a baccalaureate program. Table Two below identifies this growth.

Table Two:
Number of States with Community Colleges Offering Baccalaureate Programs by Decade

By Decade	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010-present
Percent of States	2.0%	14.0%	34.0%	44.0%
Number of States	1	7	17	22

Additionally, the up-credentialing of certain occupations is a current trend that would likely impact the population that would potentially benefit from a BAS. Table Three below displays a selection of various occupations for which employers have been increasing the requirement for a Bachelor's degree in job postings in recent years. Table Three also shows occupations that may benefit from a Bachelor's of Applied Sciences in light of Colorado's (and/or national based on available data) job market.

Table Three[4]:
Projections of up-credentialing by occupation

Occupation	On list of top up-credentialed job postings	Annual growth rate for occupation	10 year growth rate
Dental laboratory technician	X	.8%	8.37% 2011-2021 CO 14% from 2008-2018 N
Dental hygienist	X	2.8%	32% 2011-2021 CO 36% from 2008-2018 N
Registered Nurse		3.4%	35% 2011-2021 CO 22% from 2008-2018 N
Medical equipment preparers	X	2.4%	27% 2011-2021 CO
Claims adjusters, examiners and investigators	X	.4%	5% growth 2011-2021 CO 7% growth 2008-2018 N
Network and Computer Systems Administrator	X		23% growth 2008-2018 N
Environmental engineering technicians		3.1%	35% growth 2011-2021 CO 30% growth 2008-2018 N

* Average annual growth rate for all occupations in CO is 1.6% per BLS data.

[4] Source: Burning Glass http://www.burning-glass.com/
Direct link:
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/pub?key=0AmGiCh4DhV8AdHNDeHV2OFE0S0VBdjNfekpHRFByWXc&single=true&gid=0&output=html

While there has been an increase in the number of states providing this type of authority, the scope and shape of that authority is often unique to the state. A few general models exist and those are cited below (directly from the ASSCU Policy Brief.)

Morphing into baccalaureate institutions:

> "Several states have authorized just one or two isolated community colleges to offer baccalaureate degrees, with no intention of expanding this practice to other two-year colleges in the state. Over time, such colleges have typically added more baccalaureate programs—including arts and sciences—and subsequently evolved into baccalaureate colleges, often as part of a state university system" (p. 4).

(Examples: Arkansas, Louisiana, Utah, West Virginia, and New Mexico)

Multiple institutions maintaining traditional functions:

> "A second pattern is to expand, more generally, the mission of a state's community colleges, albeit with a commitment that these institutions must maintain their traditional functions. Typically, these states view the community college as critical in meeting the state's baccalaureate needs, especially in high-demand workforce fields; the move is designed to aid place-bound adults who would otherwise have limited access to the baccalaureate. Frequently, states proceed in stages, beginning with a small number of institutions and programs, reviewing progress after some period of time, and making a further determination about continuation and expansion at a later date" (p. 4).

(Examples: Washington, Florida, and Georgia)

Limited technical degrees:

> "A third pattern is to limit approval to applied and technical baccalaureate degrees, such as the Bachelor of Applied Science (B.A.S.), Bachelor of Applied Technology (B.A.T.) and Bachelor of Technology (B.T.) degrees. The rationale is that these represent an extension of technical programs already offered at community colleges and are designed to allow Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) graduates to further their education; four-year institutions have a shorter (or no) history with such programs." (p. 5)

(Examples: Texas, Oklahoma, and North Dakota)

Additionally, other states have structures which do not clearly fit into one of these model descriptions. Often there are unique state circumstances which necessitate a specifically tailored approach to a community college offering a baccalaureate program.

B. Recent Legislative History

2010 Session:

Colorado Mountain College (CMC), one of the two Local District Junior Colleges outside of the Colorado Community College System (CCCS), received statutory authority to offer up to five baccalaureate programs (from Senate Bill 10-101). This legislation did not draw significant opposition from the higher education community when it proceeded through the legislative process as it centered on the geographic isolation of the CMC campuses. Additionally, it did not include an avenue for the CMC to receive state funding for these new programs.

The bill made a statutory change to the CMC role and mission allowing up to five baccalaureate programs to be offered subject the CCHE's approval of such programs. The CCHE's role and responsibility in the review of new baccalaureate programs at Colorado Mountain College is defined in Section 23-71-133(1), C.R.S. (2013) which states that the Commission shall make its determination based on the following criteria:

(a) Whether Colorado Mountain College can demonstrate workforce and student demand for the baccalaureate degree program by providing data;

(b) Whether Colorado Mountain College can demonstrate regional and professional accreditation requirements, when applicable, and compliance with those requirements as deemed appropriate at both the institutional and program levels;

(c) Whether Colorado Mountain College can demonstrate that its provision of the baccalaureate degree program is the most cost-effective method of providing the baccalaureate degree program in its service area; and

(d) Whether Colorado Mountain College can provide a cost-benefit analysis showing that the additional baccalaureate degree program will not create a negative impact for the college or require additional state-appropriated moneys to operate.

2013 Session:

In the 2013 Session, Senate Bill 13-165 (Sen. Todd / Rep. Wilson) included statutory changes to the CCCS role and mission to offer limited baccalaureate programs following CCHE approval. The re-engrossed version of Senate Bill 13-165, allowed for the CCCS to offer up to 7 baccalaureate programs which would have been limited for technical or career and work force development. The legislation explicitly stated that the CCCS could not offer bachelor of arts degree programs, but could approve a bachelor of fine arts degree. Senate Bill 13-165 provided the following criteria for CCHE to consider in whether or not to approve a new program:

(a) Whether the state board provides data demonstrating workforce and student demand for the degree program;

(b) The regional and professional accreditation requirements for the degree program, if applicable, and compliance with those requirements, as appropriate, at both the institutions and program levels;

(c) Whether the state board can demonstrate that provisions of the degree program within the community college system is cost-effective; and

(d) Whether the state board can demonstrate that the degree program is sufficiently distinguishable from a degree at a public four-year institution of higher education in the community college geographic service area, or that the degree program is one that has previously offered successfully in conjunction with another four-year institution of higher education.

In addition to these criteria above the bill stipulated the following:

> (2) In determining whether to approve a baccalaureate degree program, the commission may consult with any public four-year institution of higher education that shares the same geographic service area as the state board's proposed degree program to inform the commission of any anticipated systemwide effects of the new degree program.

Senate Bill 13-165 was opposed by many higher education governing boards while some remained neutral on the bill. The CDHE and CCHE did not take a position on this bill in the 2013 Session. Senate Bill 13-165 made it through the Senate and then was postponed indefinitely in House Education on a close vote.

III. STAFF ANALYSIS

A. Background and Description of November 14, 2013 Bill Draft Summary

The bill sponsors of Senate Bill 13-165 and CCCS leadership have engaged in public discussions with the higher education community (starting in late August 2013) with the goal of moving forward with another bill in the 2014 Session. This process has included monthly meetings and taking feedback and suggestions from institutions of higher educations that have resulted in the current bill draft (which is different from last year's legislation). While some suggested legislative changes have not, or were not agreed to by the bill sponsors and CCCS leadership, a number of items have been agreed to and included in the bill.

(*Note: Additional suggestions from stakeholders are being discussed and considered at the time of this write-up. As such, further changes may occur to this bill draft.)*

On account of these changes over the past few months, the November 14, 2013 bill draft includes:

(1) Colorado Community College system role and mission change to be able to offer bachelors of applied science degrees after meeting and demonstrating specific criteria to the CCHE for its consideration in degree program approval.

(2) Aims Community College role and mission change to be able to offer bachelors or applied science degrees after meeting and demonstrating specific criteria to the CCHE for its consideration in degree program approval.

(3) Western State Colorado University role and mission change to be allowed to provide state funded basic skills education in Gunnison and Chaffee counties.

Specific details on these changes are noted on the following pages.

(1) Colorado Community College System & (2) Aims Community College

(Note: In section below, *state board* refers to the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education, which is the CCCS governing board. The requirement for Aims Community College is identical to that of the state board.)

The commission shall consider the following criteria in determining whether to approve a bachelor of applied science degree program:

(I) Whether the state board provides data demonstrating workforce and student demand for the degree program;

(II) The regional and professional accreditation requirements for the degree program, if applicable, and whether the college can satisfy those requirements, as appropriate, at both the institutional and program levels;

(III) Whether the state board can demonstrate that providing the degree program within the community college system is cost-effective;

(IV) Whether the state board can demonstrate that the degree program is sufficiently distinguishable from:

(A) An existing degree program at a state four-year institution of higher education in the community college's geographic service area, as defined by the commission in its Rule I , part N; or

(B) A degree program that has been successfully offered previously in conjunction with a state four-year institution of higher education, which degree program will be reinstated sooner than the degree program could be offered by the community college;

(V) Whether the bachelor of applied science degree program could be provided through a statewide transfer agreement pursuant to section 23-1-108 (7) with an accredited state four-year institution in the community college's geographic service area or with an accredited state four-year institution of higher education that has a statewide service area, as defined by the commission in Rule I, Part N, that will deliver an existing bachelor of applied science program in the community college's geographic service area sooner than the degree program could be offered by the community college; and

(VI) Whether the state board has consulted with state four-year institutions of higher education in the community college's geographic service area or with a statewide service area, as defined by the commission in Rule I, Part N, concerning whether the collaboration described in subparagraph (V) of this paragraph (a) is feasible.

In determining whether to approve a bachelor of applied science degree program, the commission shall consider whether the state board has met the criteria set forth in subparagraphs (I) through (IV) of paragraph (a) of this subsection (1) and whether the proposed bachelor of applied science degree program is in the best interests of the state of Colorado.

- The CDHE believes this draft legislation provides a process that builds upon and relies on the CCHE as the primary statewide coordinating board for higher education in Colorado. The draft legislation's current form ultimately tasks the CCHE with approving or denying proposed baccalaureate degree programs at CCCS and Aims community college (based on a specific set of criteria). These criteria also provide guardrails to avoid programmatic duplication of degrees being offered throughout the public higher education system.

- The CDHE supports the notion of delegating final authority to the CCHE and avoiding programmatic offerings and degree duplication in this legislation.

(3) Western State Colorado University Role and Mission Change

The underlined and capitalized text below is the role and mission change for WSCU included in the current bill draft.

There is hereby established a university at Gunnison, which shall be known as Western state Colorado university. Western state Colorado university shall be a general baccalaureate institution with moderately selective admission standards. Western state Colorado university shall offer undergraduate liberal arts and sciences, teacher preparation, and business degree programs, BASIC SKILLS COURSES RECEIVING RESIDENT CREDIT PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-1-113.3, and a limited number of graduate programs. Western state Colorado university shall also serve as a regional education provider.

- The statutory change to Western State Colorado University's role and mission provides it the ability to offer remedial (basic skills) instruction and receive COF stipend funding for those students. WSCU is located in a geographic region where there is not a two-year service provider to offer state subsidized remedial education course offerings. This

change addresses this gap in programmatic offerings which allows a student that qualifies for the COF stipend to obtain the subsidy for remedial coursework at WSCU.

Statewide degree transfer agreements:

One additional provision in the draft legislation is the addition of Associates of Applied Science degrees as a possible vehicle for a statewide degree transfer agreement (Section 23-1-108 (7), C.R.S (2013)). This relates to criteria "V" at the bottom of page 9.

Discussions of what this section means for a student as well as the expectation or requirements of a receiving four-year institution are occurring at the time of this write-up.

The CDHE views the draft language as providing an opportunity for the GE Council to agree upon a statewide degree transfer in instances where an AAS degree could transfer to a four-year institution to complete as a BAS. The CDHE further understands that some institutions of higher education may want further clarity over this potential legislative change.

B. Pros and Cons

Part of this discussion item will include comments from proponents of this bill as well as a discussion of concerns that have been brought up regarding this legislation.

In an effort to provide more background and context for this legislation, below is a list of pros and cons which is cited directly from the ASSCU Policy Brief. These bulleted items are general and some may not be applicable to the specific circumstances for Colorado or this legislation.

The following is directly cited from the ASSCU Policy Brief:

PROS

There are a variety of compelling arguments in favor of the community college baccalaureate. These include:

- **Improved access to the baccalaureate.** Supporters argue that baccalaureate programs offered by community colleges increase educational opportunities for place-bound, adult workers, particularly in rural areas where there is no access to four-year institutions. Some argue that for first-generation college-goers and underserved groups, the opportunity to continue one's education in the familiar community college environment makes it more likely that these students will persist in college and earn a four-year degree.

- **Greater affordability for students.** Though more expensive than lower division courses, tuition for upper division classes at community colleges is typically lower than tuition for similar courses at four-year institutions. Also, the absence of a public four-year option might

lead some workers seeking baccalaureate degrees to turn to the for-profit sector, which is significantly more expensive.

• **Reduced taxpayer costs.** Supporters argue that it is cheaper to offer upper division classes at community colleges than at four-year institutions, largely because faculty are paid less and teach more, resulting in limited state dollars going further.

• **Ability to meet local workforce demands.** Community colleges traditionally work with local employers and develop degree and certificate programs that respond to specified workforce needs. Offering specific baccalaureate degrees in certain high-demand fields is a logical extension of this practice.

• **Expertise in applied and technical degrees.** Traditionally, applied associate degrees offered by community colleges, such as Associate of Applied Science degrees, have been the industry standard for employment in certain technical fields. However, some high-skill occupations increasingly require a baccalaureate for job entry or promotion. Supporters argue that it makes sense to develop these degree programs where two-year programs already exist, since many four-year institutions have no history or expertise in these areas.

• **Overcrowding at four-year colleges.** In some states, demand currently exceeds capacity at four-year institutions. Offering selected baccalaureate programs at two-year colleges can help reduce overcrowding and meet regional and state workforce needs.

CONS

There are equally compelling arguments opposing the community college baccalaureate. As a general rule, opponents share the underlying contention that adding one more mission to community colleges is unnecessary, time-consuming, expensive and fraught with unintended negative consequences. Instead, they support expansion of the various models of collaboration between two-year and four-year institutions to address baccalaureate needs of the state (including university centers, shared facilities, joint programs, online education and articulation agreements). Specifically, they argue:

• **Mission creep.** Opponents express concern that offering baccalaureate programs at community colleges weakens the traditional community college mission and leaves behind those students it is designed to serve; this option may shift resources, raise tuition for all students, challenge open-door policies and divert attention away from developmental education. As a worst-case scenario, the community college might morph into a four-year institution and, as a result, totally abandon the access mission.

• **Program duplication.** Many believe this approach produces a less efficient state system overall, with duplication of programs offered at four-year institutions and creation of competition instead of cooperation. For example, due to limited availability of nursing faculty and clinical sites, increasing the number of institutions with baccalaureate nursing 8 / October programs may exacerbate problems rather than solve them.

- **Accreditation obstacles.** Attaining regional accreditation for four-year programs is both expensive and time-consuming. It is far more efficient, many argue, to develop partnerships with four-year institutions that bring programs to the community college campus, thus not necessitating new accreditation.

- **High costs/need for additional state dollars.** In order to add upper division coursework, community colleges need to upgrade faculty, libraries and laboratories. In addition to high start-up costs, there are also high ongoing costs in terms of the employment of new categories of faculty.

- **Faculty issues.** Baccalaureate programs may require faculty with higher degrees who demand more pay. They may be harder to recruit and may be less focused on teaching. Rifts among the different faculty classes may develop.

- **Too burdensome on overtaxed community colleges.** Community colleges around the nation are increasingly being asked to do more with less. Some are already over capacity and do not have the luxury of taking on more responsibilities. Some community college presidents themselves have expressed these concerns, and not all are seeking mission expansion.

- **Concerns about quality.** Some critics believe that a baccalaureate degree earned at a community college is inferior to one earned at a four-year institution. The belief is that courses may not be as rigorous, and faculty and resources may be substandard. Some employers may share these concerns.

- **Availability of online education.** Given the widespread availability of online degree programs, students are no longer limited by where they live. Adding community college baccalaureate programs may be unwarranted, especially for programs that can be effectively delivered online.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

None. The Department staff prepared this discussion item at the request of the Commission to better inform it on this issue.