

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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### **ACTION ITEM: Recommendations from the Joint Conference Committee of the Universities and Community Colleges**

**ISSUE:** The Board is asked to endorse two recommendations developed and approved by the Joint Conference Committee (JCC), which are intended to improve affordable access to the baccalaureate degree in Arizona. The Board approved four other JCC recommendations at the December 2005 meeting.

### **BACKGROUND**

In May 2005, the JCC set a goal of identifying a set of recommendations intended to improve access to baccalaureate degrees in Arizona and which would be jointly agreed to and implemented by the community colleges and universities. This effort was endorsed by the Regents at the ABOR retreat in June 2005.

The JCC members met several times during the summer and fall, 2005. At the September 2005 meeting, they approved a set of four recommendations that would:

- I: Increase transfer credits for select programs
- II: Increase the number and scope institutional partnerships
- III: Establish Joint Funding Models
- IV: Expand Arizona University System Campuses and Statewide Programs

These recommendations were endorsed by the Board at the December 2005 meeting. In addition, the Arizona Community College Association (ACCA), an organization of community college presidents and representatives from all of the district boards of trustees, approved these four recommendations at their November 17 meeting.

Two other recommendations were approved by the JCC on December 14, 2005, one creating a process for expanding four-year degrees at community colleges and another proposing a mechanism by which a community college could become a four-year college. These two recommendations (V and VI) have been under development for several months, and the final versions incorporate significant input from university and community presidents, community college trustees and members of the Board of Regents. The Regents are asked to review and endorse these two recommendations. They will also be presented to ACCA on January 26, 2006 for their endorsement and to the Governor's P-20 Council on February 16, 2006.

The complete set of the six recommendations is included in Attachment A.

## DISCUSSION

JCC Recommendations I-IV build on existing initiatives that have been proven successful and operate within existing higher education structures; the expansion of these efforts, as described in the recommendations, should have a significant impact on the availability of affordable educational options for students. Recommendations V and VI, however, have implications for changing the structure of higher education in Arizona, and, as such, should be viewed as a conceptual outline of how the universities and community colleges propose expanding educational options in the state. These concepts will require development of implementation plans and, in some cases, additional funding and legislative support. The full text of these two recommendations is provided in Section "B" below.

### A. OVERVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS V AND VI

#### **Recommendation V: Develop a Pathway for Baccalaureate Degrees at Community Colleges**

This recommendation defines a process for the delivery of baccalaureate degrees at community colleges with an option for that delivery outside of the current higher education structure, i.e., by a community college. Within the existing structure, the universities offer options for community college students to complete the baccalaureate degree. NAU offers undergraduate programs throughout the state and expects to expand those offerings in the future; in addition, NAU offers 15 undergraduate degree programs completely on-line through AZUN. UA and ASU both offer 2 + 2 programs and have established other partnerships with the community colleges. Notwithstanding these delivery models and program offerings, in the case where a community believes that available options are not meeting the local needs and immediate plans are not in place to address them, the process described in this recommendation would be provide an avenue to meet that need.

***Establishing Need.*** The first step in determining whether a program should be offered in a locale will be to systematically analyze the need for the program. The recommendation defines a collaborative community college-university process for conducting such a study, taking into consideration market demand, evidence of student interest and readiness to enroll, and analyzing existing baccalaureate programs that could be expanded.

- ***Universities will have the first option to offer the program.*** If the need is established through the study, the public universities will have the first option to propose offering the program. If none of the universities is able or interested in doing so, only then will the option be open to the community colleges to respond.
- ***Community college as baccalaureate degree provider.*** A community college that wishes to provide a program when a university has declined would be authorized to do so only with the approval of the governing board. The language in the recommendation prohibits the use of local funds for the upper division courses that would be necessary for a baccalaureate program, and also calls for start up funds.

**Recommendation VI: Exploring the Need and Creating a Pathway for a Regional Baccalaureate Degree- Granting College**

This recommendation establishes criteria and pre-conditions for a community college to transform from a 2-year institution to a 4-year institution. It is intended to define the issues that would need to be considered in changing the institution's status, such as the support of the local governing board and availability of adequate funding; it does not attempt to address governance issues but acknowledges that they would need to be resolved by the community college, the Board of Regents and the legislature.

**B. TEXT OF RECOMMENDATIONS V AND VI**

The text of the Recommendations V and VI was approved by the JCC on December 14, 2005. The complete text of all six recommendations will be found in Attachment A.

**Recommendation V: Develop a Pathway for Baccalaureate Degrees at Community Colleges**

The JCC recommends establishing a pathway for the expansion of baccalaureate opportunities in the state of Arizona. Expanding baccalaureate opportunities beyond the current higher education structure would require a systematic review process based on established criteria. Requests for consideration of a new baccalaureate program or delivery option outside of the university structure would follow a 3-step process:

**A. Determining need**

The local community college boards in cooperation with the Arizona Community College Association (ACCA) and the three Arizona Regents universities in cooperation with the Arizona Board of Regents would conduct a study that would determine the statewide need for additional baccalaureate programs or delivery options. This study would document:

- Market (employer/workforce) demand for additional or expanded baccalaureate degree programs
- Student interest in enrolling in these additional or expanded baccalaureate degree programs
- Accessibility of existing baccalaureate degree programs in terms of capacity and delivery options

**B. Determining the University Program Provider**

Once a need is determined, one or more of the universities, through the Arizona Board of Regents, may submit a proposal to address the new or expanded baccalaureate program.

**C. Determining the Non-University Program Provider**

If one or more of the universities is unable to respond to the need for new or expanded baccalaureate programs, a community college may offer the degree provided the following criteria are met:

- Local community college board grants approval to offer a baccalaureate program in a specialized area.
- Local county tax would not be used for upper division course costs.
- Additional funding is provided for program development and start-up.
- Funding is weighted for 300 for 400 level courses and state aid.

#### D. Program Criteria

Whether the new or expanded degree is addressed by a university or a community college, the proposal must include the following:

- **Program Quality:** Will the proposed program be of sufficient academic quality? Are appropriate faculty members available?
- **Impact:** will the program significantly reduce the identified need?
- **Implementation/Timing:** Can the proposed program be implemented in a timely and effective manner? What is the expected length of time before the program will be offered?
- **Cost Effectiveness:** Will the proposed program provide the most cost effective use of the state's total education resources (including state and local taxes) to meet the identified workforce needs? Are the incremental costs (including capital outlay) to the state less than other options?
- **Funding:** Is appropriate additional funding provided to support the degree program?

**Rationale:** Many communities and local community college boards have expressed concern that access to baccalaureate degrees is limited. In some cases, the universities have or will be able to bring the appropriate program into the area; however, in some cases it may be more appropriate for the community college to deliver the full baccalaureate program. This system-wide approach will provide statewide accountability to changes in higher education system.

#### **Recommendation VI: Exploring the Need and Creating a Pathway for a Regional Baccalaureate Degree-Granting College**

If there is an identified need for additional baccalaureate programs that are not met by the universities, the JCC recommends a pathway to create a regional baccalaureate degree granting college by changing the mission of an existing community college. Need should be determined by the same process as outlined in V.A. In addition, the following preconditions would need to be addressed:

- Local community college board has indicated both the need and willingness to support expansion of the respective community college mission.
- There is limited university access for students in the region.
- Appropriate accreditation is available and could be obtained.
- Sufficient infrastructure exists to support a baccalaureate degree granting college.
- An implementation plan is developed and submitted to JCC, the legislature, Office of the Governor, and the Arizona Board of Regents.
- Governance issues are addressed between the community college board, ABOR, the legislature and the appropriate accrediting agencies.

**Rationale:** In 2004-05, the Arizona Board of Regents commissioned a study of the structure of the university system to determine whether a different structure was warranted in the face of an exploding population and a low percentage of residents with college degrees. Although the study was specifically focused on the university system, it did note the state's lack of 4-year undergraduate regional colleges. Simultaneously, community colleges also launched a study of higher education within Arizona and their recommendations pinpointed the need for additional baccalaureate opportunities. As Arizona begins to address education through a P-20 focus, a statewide study would provide the type of information and data to make strategic decisions about the future of higher education.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Board endorse JCC Recommendations V and VI.**

**ATTACHMENT A**



Joint Conference Committee  
of the Community Colleges and Universities

**IMPROVING AFFORDABLE ACCESS TO  
BACCALAUREATE DEGREES:  
  
SIX RECOMMENDATIONS**

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**Joint Conference Committee**

***Community College Members***

Ms Jan Guy, Co-Chair, Trustee, Cochise College  
Dr. Brenda Even, Trustee, Pima Community  
College  
Dr. Terry Calaway, President, Central Arizona  
College  
Dr. Larry Christiansen, President, Mesa  
Community College  
Ms. Kathy Boyle, Executive Director, Arizona  
Community College Association

***University Members***

Ernest Calderón, Esq., Co-Chair, Regent  
Ms. Christina Palacios, Regent/President  
Mr. Benjamin Graff, Regent  
Dr. John Haeger, President, Northern Arizona  
University  
Mr. Joel Sideman, Executive Director, Arizona Board  
of Regents

**December 2005**

**JOINT CONFERENCE COMMITTEE OF THE  
UNIVERSITIES AND COMMUNITY COLLEGES OF ARIZONA**

**IMPROVING AFFORDABLE ACCESS TO BACCALAUREATE DEGREES:  
SIX RECOMMENDATIONS  
Executive Summary**

The Joint Conference Committee of the Universities and Community Colleges (JCC) is responsible for the oversight of academic articulation agreements between the public community colleges and universities in Arizona for the purpose of improving and enhancing statewide student access to four-year degrees. Established in 1981, the JCC has equal membership from both sectors. Today, the membership is comprised of representatives from the Arizona Board of Regents, university presidents, community college presidents and community college trustees.

***JCC: Collaborating toward Solutions***

As a uniquely constituted body, with community college and university members collaboratively focused on transfer articulation, the JCC endeavors to participate in developing solutions for improving access to baccalaureate degrees for Arizona's citizens.

- The JCC recognizes that with expected growth and increasing demands for an educated work force, additional improvements could be made to our transfer system, especially to the availability of baccalaureate degrees in more locations throughout Arizona.
- Therefore, the JCC members have spent the summer and fall 2005 developing six recommendations for initiatives intended to improve affordable access to the baccalaureate degree.
- Recommendations I-IV, summarized below, have received the approval of university and community college presidents, the Arizona Board of Regents, and community college trustees; Recommendations V & VI were approved at the December 14, 2005 JCC meeting and will be presented to presidents, regents and trustees in the near future. The recommendations are presented, in full, in this report.
- Adequate funding is "mission critical" to expanding baccalaureate options and, therefore, these recommendations presuppose adequate state funding will be available, prior to implementation.

**Six Recommendations for Improving Affordable Access to the Baccalaureate Degree**

- I. Increase transfer credits for select programs**
- II. Increase the number and scope of community college-university partnerships**
- III. Establish joint funding models**
- IV. Expand Arizona University System campuses and statewide programs**
- V. Develop a pathway for baccalaureate degrees at community colleges**
- VI. Explore the need and create a pathway for a 4-year regional degree granting college.**

## **IMPROVING AFFORDABLE ACCESS TO BACCALAUREATE DEGREES Six Recommendations**

### **Introduction**

The Joint conference Committee has provided oversight to transfer articulation between Arizona's community colleges and universities since 1981, and nationally Arizona is viewed as having one of the best systems in the country. In spite of the success for which Arizona is rightly proud, the members of the JCC recognize that with expected growth and increasing demands for an educated work force, additional improvements could be made to our transfer system. Of special concern is the need for affordable options and availability of baccalaureate degrees in more locations throughout Arizona.

Between May and October 2005, the JCC expanded its regular schedule to hold a series of additional meetings and work group sessions to consider recommendations for addressing this critical need. The outcome of these discussions is the six recommendations, outlined below.

Although the focus of the JCC is to oversee statewide transfer articulation, the members agreed that, as a uniquely constituted group of community college and university representatives, these recommendations need not be limited specifically to transfer articulation. As a result, some of the recommendations go beyond the scope of the JCC. However, the community college and university presidents, the Arizona Board of Regents and trustees from the Arizona community colleges have provided input into these recommendations, and support this effort.

These recommendations are intended to be complimentary to and an enhancement of Arizona's current transfer system. Keeping this system intact is a key component to insuring the success of any new initiatives.

### **Background: Current Transfer Articulation Model**

In 1996, under the leadership of the JCC, the public universities and community colleges developed a new model of transfer articulation. The goal of this model was to improve the existing system and insure that students could transfer to the universities without loss of credit. The model sought to address two issues: to provide an even playing field for students at all of the community colleges, whether urban or rural and to remove barriers to community college students who may not know either the major or the university to which they plan to transfer.

Key provisions of Arizona's transfer system include the following:

- ***Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGEC).***

The AGECE is a common set of requirements which may be completed at any of the community colleges and will satisfy the lower division general education requirements at all of the universities. In 2003, more than 3000 completed an AGECE, a 37% increase over the previous year, and by 2004, the number increased to 4000.

- ***Common courses.***

More than 40 disciplines in majors offered at the universities have identified at least 2 courses (6 credits) which may be completed at the community college that are guaranteed to apply to that major at any of the public universities. Many majors have identified more. Business, for example, has identified 27 community college credits applicable to the degree.

▪ **Transfer Pathways.**

Clearer transfer pathways, including statewide associate degrees, have been developed to assist students and academic advisor in planning for transfer, based on the student's "decidedness". Has the student decided on a university? Has the student decided on a major? The student who has decided on a major at a specific university will be advised to follow very specific guidelines; the student who has chosen neither a major nor an institution may complete an associate degree with more general requirements.

▪ **Arizona's Course Applicability System.**

This system, developed jointly in Arizona and Ohio, is the recognized leader nationally in technology for supporting transfer articulation. A web-based system, CAS provides critical information to students, faculty and academic advisors for planning and transferring, including an online course equivalency guide (how courses from a community college will transfer to any of the universities) and an interactive planning tool to determine how courses completed or planned will meet the requirements for a desired major at a university. CAS receive 140,000 – 400,000 hits per week.

**SIX RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The JCC members consulted with key stakeholders, including the Arizona Board of Regents, community college trustees, community college and university presidents, and the Governor's P-20 Council, as these recommendations were developed.
- Recommendations I-IV, approved by the JCC in September, have now received the approval of university and community college presidents, the Arizona Board of Regents, and community college trustees; recommendations V & VI were approved at the December 14 JCC meeting and will be presented to presidents, regents, trustees and the P-20 Council in the near future.
- Underlying these recommendations is the recognition that quality programs and a substantial expansion of baccalaureate programs will require additional resources. Adequate funding is "mission critical" and, therefore, these recommendations presuppose adequate state funding will be available, prior to implementation.

**I: INCREASE TRANSFER CREDITS FOR SELECT PROGRAMS**

The JCC recommends expanding the numbers of baccalaureate programs for which 65-90 hours of transfer credit is possible and applicable from community colleges to designated unique programs.

**Rationale:** Arizona's transfer model allows for one-half plus one course, or 64 hours, of community college credit to apply to the baccalaureate degree. Extending the numbers of credits students could complete at the community college would improve access and affordability. This structure is most appropriate for technical/professional programs. However, some programs that are less sequential and more flexible in their course options may also be appropriate for increasing transfer credits.

- Example: NAU-Gateway CC      Major: Medical Imaging      75 transfer credits

Accountability Measure: During the next academic year, each university will identify programs for which students may transfer more than 64 additional credits from the community college. Some agreements may be specific to a partner community college; others may apply to any community college that offers the appropriate lower division courses.

## **II: INCREASE THE NUMBER AND SCOPE INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS**

The JCC recommends the increase in the number of university-community college institutional partnerships and expansion of the scope of these partnerships to include these critical infrastructure elements:

- Joint appointment of faculty with both university and community college responsibilities
- Joint admission of qualified students
- Shared/joint advising services
- Shared facilities and dedicated space

***Rationale:*** Institutional partnerships would support the statewide articulation agreements, as well as provide an improved structure for expanding programs on-site at a specific community college (could be 2+2 and 3+1 programs.) Expanded partnerships would remove administrative barriers and allow new programs to be established more quickly. This recommendation would include the following:

1. Dual enrollment for students into the community college and university systems at the time of first enrollment.
  2. Development of joint advising staffs equally expert in the programmatic requirements at both the community college and the university.
  3. Shared facilities on the community college campuses for the offering of baccalaureate degrees.
  4. Appointment of faculty who teach both community college and university courses and hold dual appointments in both institutions.
- Example: NAU-AWC (NAU Yuma)

Accountability Measures: An annual review by the JCC to determine that this recommendation is being implemented.

## **III: ESTABLISH JOINT FUNDING MODELS**

The JCC recommends that collaboratively, the community colleges and universities should focus on joint funding models to assure that necessary dollars are available for both sides of the partnership.

***Rationale:*** Recognizing that fully subscribed integration at the outset of a these partnerships is an unreasonable expectation, particularly in rural sections of the state, one important strategy toward successful implementation will be determining the mechanism used to jointly fund and manage activities. Another might be to have the state provide incentive funding for joint projects, programs, and collaborations. Regardless, it is essential that state leadership recognize the need to explore and implement new and unique funding strategies that foster the growth of college/university partnerships and expand access and affordability to citizens.

A determination of which partner provides classes, and at what level, should be based on capability and quality of the learning experience for students rather than on the cost to the state. The entity providing service to students should be invisible to students and should receive a common and consistent funding allocation from the state. As funding issues are taken out of the equation, quality academic decisions can be made on the basis of capacity to meet student needs.

#### **IV: EXPAND ARIZONA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM CAMPUSES AND STATEWIDE PROGRAMS**

The JCC supports the Arizona University System's expansion of the branch campuses and statewide offerings:

- NAU to open branch or regional campuses where there is an identified need.
- ASU in expanding their branch campuses (West, Polytechnic and Downtown)
- UA in developing UA South

**Rationale:** Under the 2003 Changing Directions initiative, the three state universities defined their distinct missions, moving away from a "one size fits all" model. The University Redesign study, completed in 2005, expanded that concept by differentiation within each of the three institutions. The features of this differentiation include clear delineation of two distinct types: 1) Differentiation by services provided, and, 2) differentiation in the way these serves are funded in order to lower tuition rates. NAU, UA South and the West, Polytechnic, and Downtown campuses of ASU will focus on undergraduate education and will implement cost models for these campuses and for the NAU statewide programs. NAU will offer a program, face to face anywhere 25 people are qualified and able to enroll in a program NAU offers.

The JCC supports the efforts of the universities to implement these plans.

#### **V: DEVELOP A PATHWAY FOR BACCALAUREATE DEGREES AT COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

The JCC recommends establishing a pathway for the expansion of baccalaureate opportunities in the state of Arizona. Expanding baccalaureate opportunities beyond the current higher education structure would require a systematic review process based on established criteria. Requests for consideration of a new baccalaureate program or delivery option outside of the university structure would follow a 3-step process:

##### **A. Determining need**

The local community college boards in cooperation with the Arizona Community College Association (ACCA) and the three Arizona Regents universities in cooperation with the Arizona Board of Regents would conduct a study that would determine the statewide need for additional baccalaureate programs or delivery options. This study would document:

- Market (employer/workforce) demand for additional or expanded baccalaureate degree programs
- Student interest in enrolling in these additional or expanded baccalaureate degree programs
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## **B. Determining the University Program Provider**

Once a need is determined, one or more of the universities, through the Arizona Board of Regents, may submit a proposal to address the new or expanded baccalaureate program.

## **C. Determining the Non-University Program Provider**

If one or more of the universities is unable to respond to the need for new or expanded baccalaureate programs, a community college may offer the degree provided the following criteria are met:

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## **VI: EXPLORING THE NEED AND CREATING A PATHWAY FOR A REGIONAL BACCALAUREATE DEGREE GRANTING COLLEGE**

If there is an identified need for additional baccalaureate programs that are not met by the universities, the JCC recommends a pathway to create a regional baccalaureate degree granting college by changing the mission of an existing community college. Need should be determined by the same process as outlined in V.A. In addition, the following preconditions would need to be addressed:

- Local community college board has indicated both the need and willingness to support expansion of the respective community college mission
- There is limited university access for students in the region
- Appropriate accreditation is available and could be obtained
- Sufficient infrastructure exists to support a baccalaureate degree granting college
- An implementation plan is developed and submitted to JCC, the legislature, Office of the Governor, and the Arizona Board of Regents
- Governance issues are addressed between the community college board, ABOR, the legislature and the appropriate accrediting agencies

***Rationale:*** In 2004-05, the Arizona Board of Regents commissioned a study of the structure of the university system to determine whether a different structure was warranted in the face of an exploding population and a low percentage of residents with college degrees. Although the study was specifically focused on the university system, it did note the state's lack of 4-year undergraduate regional colleges. Simultaneously, community colleges also launched a study of higher education within Arizona and their recommendations pinpointed the need for additional baccalaureate opportunities. As Arizona begins to address education through a P-20 focus, a statewide study would provide the type of information and data to make strategic decisions about the future of higher education.