

South Carolina Commission on Higher Education

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Interim Executive Director

CHE
5/5/2016
Agenda Item 9.02.H

May 5, 2016

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chair Terrye Seckinger, and Members, Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing

FROM: John Lane, DMA, Director of Academic Affairs

Revisions to the *Policies and Procedures for New Academic Programs, Program Modifications, Program Notifications, Program Terminations, and New Centers for SC Public Colleges and Universities* Regarding the Approval of Programs Offered by the Technical Colleges

From fall 2015 to spring 2016, Commission members and staff met with legislators and other stakeholders to clarify CHE statutory authority. During these meetings, questions arose about the approval of specific degree programs offered by the technical colleges, particularly those programs that are occupational and not designed for transfer to a four-year college or university. As a result, CHE staff met with officials from the State Technical College System Office and reviewed existing CHE policy documents including: 1) the Commission's *Policies and Procedures for New Academic Programs, Program Modifications, Program Notifications, Program Terminations, and New Centers for SC Public Colleges and Universities* and 2) the Agreement between the Commission and the SC State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education (SBTCE) signed on May 15, 2015. Staff further worked with the System office to propose the enclosed revisions to the *Policies and Procedures* to address the concerns and maintain the approval process within current statutory provisions.

The proposed revisions to the CHE *Policies and Procedures* result from collaborations between Commission staff and Technical College System staff, and allow for the Commission and SBTCE to determine whether a new program proposed by a technical college is an occupational, nontransferable program, and provides means by which SBTCE could consider the program while maintaining CHE authority for program approval. If approved by the SBTCE, the Commission members will be notified of this review and approval as an information item on the agenda of the next scheduled Commission meeting. Programs that do not meet the definition of an occupational program or that have potential for transfer to a four-year degree program will follow the Commission's standard program approval process. The revised *Policies and Procedures* also state that both Commission and SC Technical College System staff will define what constitutes an occupational program. The revisions to the *Policies and Procedures* address the process established by the Agreement between the Commission and the SBTCE by sustaining the timely review of proposed programs and by adhering to the approval process identified in the Agreement

for applicable associate degree programs that are new to the SBTCE Program Inventory and that are not college-parallel programs.

Recommendation

The Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing recommends to the Commission approval of the revisions to the *Policies and Procedures for New Academic Programs, Program Modifications, Program Notifications, Program Terminations, and New Centers for SC Public Colleges and Universities* regarding the approval of occupational associate degree programs offered by the technical colleges.

Enclosures

- Attachment I: Current Policy Section regarding Technical College program proposal approval
- Attachment II: Current Policy Section with Embedded Revisions
- Attachment III: Revised Policy
- Attachment IV: Agreement between the Commission and the SC State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education

C. Policy for Program Proposals Submitted by Colleges in the South Carolina Technical College System

New program proposals submitted by colleges in the South Carolina Technical College System (SCTCS) must first be evaluated by the SCTCS System Office.

1. Programs that are new to the SCTCS must adhere to the Commission's program approval process.
- 2.1 Programs that are already offered by one or more institutions within the SCTCS but are new to the proposing institution will be evaluated by SCTCS System Office staff to determine:
 - i. if the proposed program is substantially the same as the existing program and conforms to the SCTCS template for that program;
 - ii. if the proposed program meets applicable accreditation requirements;
 - iii. if the proposing institution has the capacity to support the program; and
 - iv. if there is sufficient demand for the program.
- 2.2 If SCTCS System Office staff determine that the previously stated conditions are met, they will so certify to the Commission. The SCTCS System Office staff certification must include a brief program description and request for inclusion in the Commission's *Inventory of Approved Programs*.
- 2.3 Commission staff will review the SCTCS System Office request to determine if there are substantive questions that remain unanswered.
 - a) If there are no substantive questions, Commission staff will notify SCTCS System Office staff and the proposing institution that the program has been added to the *Inventory*.
 - b) If there are substantive questions, Commission staff will transmit them in writing in a timely manner to SCTCS staff for review and written response. When the questions are addressed satisfactorily, Commission staff will notify the proposing institution and SCTCS System Office staff that the program has been added to the *Inventory*.
- 2.4 In the event that substantive questions remain unanswered, the SCTCS System Office staff will have the option to either:
 - i. withdraw the program from consideration;
 - ii. defer consideration of the program until the questions can be answered and the program resubmitted; or
 - iii. request that the program proposal be submitted for consideration under the Commission's program approval process.
3. Diploma and certificate programs offered by the state's technical colleges which require fewer than two years to complete **do not** require Commission approval.
4. Programs approved for delivery by the technical colleges do not require approval for delivery at additional sites within the institution's Commission-approved service area. Programs offered outside the service area must comply with Commission policies for approval of off-site programs.

C. Policy for Program Proposals Submitted by Colleges in the South Carolina Technical College System

New program proposals submitted by colleges in the South Carolina Technical College System (SCTCS) must first be evaluated by the SCTCS ~~System Office~~ staff.

1. Programs that are new to the SCTCS and are designed for transfer to a four-year institution must adhere to the Commission's program approval process.
2. ~~2.1 Programs~~ For programs that are new to the SCTCS and proposed as occupational, nontransferable (i.e., not college parallel) programs:
 - a. The program will be evaluated by Commission staff and the Advisory Committee on Academic Programs (ACAP), via electronic review to guarantee a timely response, to determine:
 - i. if the proposed program is an occupational program as defined by Commission and SCTCS staff; or
 - ii. if there is potential for transfer to a four-year degree program (i.e., potential for a pathway to or articulation agreement with a four-year degree program); and
 - iii. if there are any substantive questions.
 - b. If Commission staff and ACAP concur with SCTCS that the program is an occupational program that is not designed for transfer:
 - i. Commission staff will notify the SCTCS staff that the program is to be considered by the SC State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education. Commission staff will also transmit any substantive questions in writing to SCTCS staff.
 - ii. Commission staff will include an information item on the agenda of the next scheduled Commission meeting stating that a new program has been reviewed by staff and ACAP, has been determined to qualify for approval as an occupational, nontransferable program, and is pending approval by the SC State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education.
 - iii. If the program is approved by the SC State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education, the SCTCS staff will send a request for inclusion in the Commission's *Inventory of Approved Programs*. Commission staff will notify SCTCS staff and the proposing institution that the program has been added to the Inventory.
 - c. If Commission staff determine that the program does not meet the definition of an occupational program or there is potential for transfer to a four-year degree program, the technical college must adhere to the Commission's standard program approval process.
 - i. If requested by the technical college, Commission staff will establish an approval process schedule that guarantees a timely response to business and industry needs.
3. For programs that are already offered by one or more institutions within the SCTCS but are new to the proposing institution ~~will be evaluated by SCTCS System Office staff to determine:~~
 - a. The program will be evaluated by SCTCS staff to determine:

Attachment II: Current Policy Section with Embedded Revisions

- i. if the proposed program is substantially the same as the existing program and conforms to the SCTCS template for that program;
- ii. if the proposed program meets applicable accreditation requirements;
- iii. if the proposing institution has the capacity to support the program; and
- iv. if there is sufficient demand for the program.

b. 2.2 If SCTCS ~~System Office~~ staff determine that the previously stated conditions are met, they will so certify to the Commission. The SCTCS ~~System Office~~ staff certification must include a brief program description and request for inclusion in the Commission's *Inventory of Approved Programs*.

c. 2.3 Commission staff will review the SCTCS ~~System Office~~ request to determine if there are substantive questions that remain unanswered.

a)i. If there are no substantive questions, Commission staff will notify SCTCS ~~System Office~~ staff and the proposing institution that the program has been added to the *Inventory*.

b)ii. If there are substantive questions, Commission staff will transmit them in writing in a timely manner to SCTCS staff for review and written response. When the questions are addressed satisfactorily, Commission staff will notify the proposing institution and SCTCS ~~System Office~~ staff that the program has been added to the *Inventory*.

d. 2.4 In the event that substantive questions remain unanswered, the SCTCS ~~System Office~~ staff will have the option to either:

a)i. withdraw the program from consideration;

b)ii. defer consideration of the program until the questions can be answered and the program resubmitted; or

e)iii. request that the program proposal be submitted for consideration under the Commission's program approval process.

3.4. Diploma and certificate programs offered by the state's technical colleges which require fewer than two years to complete **do not** require Commission approval.

5. Programs approved for delivery by the technical colleges do not require approval for delivery at additional sites within the institution's Commission-approved service area. Programs offered outside the service area must comply with Commission policies for approval of off-site programs.

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 - iii. if there are any substantive questions.
 - b. If Commission staff and ACAP concur with SCTCS that the program is an occupational program that is not designed for transfer:
 - i. Commission staff will notify the SCTCS staff that the program is to be considered by the SC State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education. Commission staff will also transmit any substantive questions in writing to SCTCS staff.
 - ii. Commission staff will include an information item on the agenda of the next scheduled Commission meeting stating that a new program has been reviewed by staff and ACAP, has been determined to qualify for approval as an occupational, nontransferable program, and is pending approval by the SC State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education.
 - iii. If the program is approved by the SC State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education, the SCTCS staff will send a request for inclusion in the Commission's *Inventory of Approved Programs*. Commission staff will notify SCTCS staff and the proposing institution that the program has been added to the Inventory.
 - c. If Commission staff determine that the program does not meet the definition of an occupational program or there is potential for transfer to a four-year degree program, the technical college must adhere to the Commission's standard program approval process.
 - i. If requested by the technical college, Commission staff will establish an approval process schedule that guarantees a timely response to business and industry needs.
3. For programs that are already offered by one or more institutions within the SCTCS but are new to the proposing institution:
 - a. The program will be evaluated by SCTCS staff to determine:
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 - b. If SCTCS staff determine that the previously stated conditions are met, they will so certify to the Commission. The SCTCS staff certification must include a brief program description and request for inclusion in the Commission's *Inventory of Approved Programs*.
 - c. Commission staff will review the SCTCS request to determine if there are substantive questions that remain unanswered.
 - i. If there are no substantive questions, Commission staff will notify SCTCS staff and the proposing institution that the program has been added to the *Inventory*.
 - ii. If there are substantive questions, Commission staff will transmit them in writing in a timely manner to SCTCS staff for review and written response. When the questions are addressed satisfactorily, Commission staff will notify the proposing institution and SCTCS staff that the program has been added to the *Inventory*.
 - d. In the event that substantive questions remain unanswered, the SCTCS staff will have the option to either:
 - i. withdraw the program from consideration;
 - ii. defer consideration of the program until the questions can be answered and the program resubmitted; or
 - iii. request that the program proposal be submitted for consideration under the Commission's program approval process.
- 4. Diploma and certificate programs offered by the state's technical colleges which require fewer than two years to complete **do not** require Commission approval.
- 5. Programs approved for delivery by the technical colleges do not require approval for delivery at additional sites within the institution's Commission-approved service area. Programs offered outside the service area must comply with Commission policies for approval of off-site programs.

**AGREEMENT BETWEEN
THE SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION
AND
THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD FOR TECHNICAL & COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION**

This Agreement is entered into as of [insert date] between the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE) and the South Carolina State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education (SBTCE).

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

Historically, the SBTCE and CHE have worked collaboratively to ensure that associate degree programs are approved in a timely manner to meet the needs of business, industry and students. In 2009, the agencies came together to streamline the process by agreeing that approval for existing associate degrees (i.e., those currently in the CHE State Inventory), applies to all colleges under the SBTCE. In that same spirit of collaboration, this Agreement outlines yet another step to ensure that higher education remains responsive to the current needs of today's fast-paced businesses and industries: a concurrent program approval by CHE and the SBTCE.

This Agreement is applicable to Associate of Applied Science program models that are not college-parallel programs (i.e., not designed for transfer to a senior institution), and are new to the SBTCE Program Inventory, and are not currently being offered at one of the 16 technical colleges.

APPROVAL PROCESS

SBTCE Responsibilities:

- Work with college(s) to identify if a newly proposed program model is specifically designed for transfer to a senior institution.
- For new program models at the associate degree level and not specifically designed for transfer:
 - Send notification to CHE that a new program model is being considered by SBTCE. Notification should provide the desired approval date and adequate time for CHE staff to review the proposal within the SBTCE staff process and to provide time to ask questions about the proposed model prior to SBTCE approval.
 - Establish a calendar/schedule that guarantees a timely response to business and industry needs.
 - Work with the college(s) to provide answers to any questions from CHE about the proposed model.
 - Inform CHE should any substantive changes in the new program model under consideration occur as a result of SBTCE review and prior to SBTCE final approval.
 - Send a copy of approved program proposals and the Notification of Change in Program Status Form to CHE following SBTCE approval.
 - Allow colleges to begin advertising upon approval of SBTCE.
 - Provide notification to CHE that any appropriate approvals of SACSCOC have been satisfied.

- Ensure that all new program models that are specifically designed for transfer follow the published CHE Approval Cycle Calendar/Process.
- Ensure that after any program is approved through this agreement, that program will be eligible for inclusion in CHE's academic program assessments, and that CHE is provided notification as required in CHE policy of change to these programs.

CHE Responsibilities:

- Work with SBTCE staff to ensure that new program models specifically designed for transfer follow the published CHE Approval Cycle Calendar/Process.
- For new program models at the associate degree level and not specifically designed for transfer:
 - Submit any questions to SBTCE staff about the proposed program model.
 - Work with SBTCE staff to develop a review and approval schedule that guarantees a CHE decision which meets the schedule deadline and provides a timely response to business and industry needs.
 - Provide notification to SBTCE of CHE's decision concerning the program request according to the schedule.
 - Add programs to the State Inventory of Academic Programs upon final approval by both CHE and SBTCE.

Both Parties

Upon approval of this Agreement, SBTCE and CHE will work together to establish procedures for implementation of this Agreement, including but not limited to, the development of efficient, responsive, and concurrent timelines to enable the expedited approval of the affected associate degree programs.

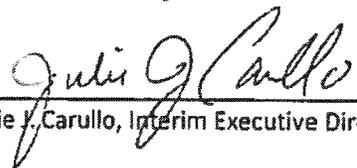
DURATION OF AGREEMENT

This Agreement shall take effect upon signatures of both parties. It shall remain in effect unless legislative changes prompt the need to amend this Agreement, or circumstances arise such that these procedures no longer are in the best interest of our students as determined by either party. Either party can notify the other of the need to review and consider amending the agreement.

SIGNATURES

The signatories hereunder warrant and declare that they are duly authorized to execute the Agreement by virtue of their position and title.

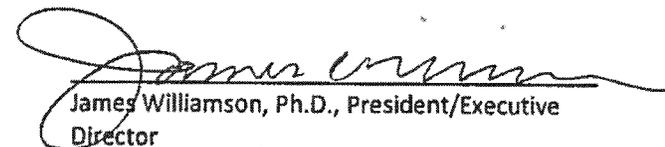
South Carolina
Commission on Higher Education


Julie J. Carullo, Interim Executive Director

Date

5/15/2015

State Board for Technical &
Comprehensive Education


James Williamson, Ph.D., President/Executive
Director

Date

5/15/15