

DATE: July 28, 2011

SUBJECT: TBR system-wide General Education Core Academic Certificate (41 credit hours) for the Associate of Arts and the Associate of Science

ACTION RECOMMENDED: Approval

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The purpose of the certificate is to improve community college student success as measured through the completion of the 41-hour General Education Core common to all public colleges and universities. The 41-hour General Education Core certificate will be delivered by all community colleges through a variety of delivery methods, including cohort-based and block-scheduled programming, online, hybrid, and on-ground instruction. These strategies promote student success by compressing the time required for completion and maximizing the convenience for the student.

PROPOSED START-UP DATE: Fall 2011

1.1.20A MISSION: The certificate is in accord with the student success and transfer mission of all thirteen community colleges.

1.1.20B CURRICULUM: The certificate requires completion of the 41-hour General Education Core common to all community colleges and state universities. This common Core is fully transferrable to all TBR and UT universities. Courses designated to fulfill the Core are published in each community college's catalog. A complete listing of the courses fulfilling the Core requirements for all TBR institutions is posted on the TBR website. The creation of new courses is not required.

Students will be given a program completion plan including total program costs and date of completion prior to beginning their coursework in General Education. Through cohort-delivery, students should be able to complete the 41-hour core within three semesters.

1.1.20C PROGRAM PRODUCTIVITY: The community colleges collectively project that close to 500 students will complete the certificate in the third year of implementation. Each community college has projected completion numbers based on its specific cohort size and delivery modes.

1.1.20D FACULTY: No additional faculty are required.

1.1.20E LIBRARY RESOURCES: No additional library resources are required.

1.1.20F ADMINISTRATION/ORGANIZATION will vary by community college.

1.1.20G SUPPORT RESOURCES: No additional resources required.

1.1.20H FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT: No additional expenditures required.

1.1.20I NEED AND DEMAND: Increasing completion rates is a primary goal of the Complete College Tennessee Act, and the TBR community colleges are addressing this goal through efforts to establish the certificate as a recognized milestone toward associate degree completion or efficient transfer. This strategy is designed to yield more completers of a credential. The THEC 2010 Annual Report on Articulation and Transfer shows that, of the 5,271 community college students who transferred, about a third transferred with 35 or fewer hours and 19.4 percent transferred to a university with the AA/AS.

1.1.20J NO UNNECESSARY DUPLICATION: The commonality of the Core with its universal transfer gives coherence to the 41-hour requirement of the 60-hour AA/AS degrees.

1.1.20K COOPERATING INSTITUTIONS: All thirteen TBR community colleges will award the certificate. Certificate completion makes AA/AS completion more intentional and transfer more systematic.

1.1.20L DIVERSITY AND ACCESS: The program as proposed is in accord with the common mission of community colleges to provide access, including ease of transfer to a four-year institution.

1.1.20M ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION: All TBR institutions hold institutional accreditation through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. There is no specialized program accreditation for the certificate. The number of certificate completers will be collected annually and reported in the aggregate and by institution. Additionally, the number of completers in two subpopulations (adults and low-income) will be isolated, as these populations have particular significance in the THEC funding formula. From this database, TBR will track changes over time in completion numbers. Furthermore, each community college will report to the TBR annually on evaluation of student outcomes in reading, speech, math, and critical thinking. From this analysis, institutions will identify areas for improvement.

1.1.20O EXTERNAL JUDGMENT: N/A

1.1.20P COST/BENEFIT: No new costs will be incurred.

1.1.30 POST APPROVAL MONITORING: An annual performance review of the proposed program will be conducted for the first five years following approval. The review will be based on benchmarks established in the approved program proposal. At the end of this period, campus, governing board, and Commission staff will perform a summative evaluation. The benchmarks include, but are not limited to, enrollment and graduation, program cost, progress toward accreditation, library acquisitions, student performance, and others set by the institution and agreed upon by governing

board and Commission staff. As a result of this evaluation, if benchmarks are not met during the monitoring period, the Commission may recommend that the governing board terminate the program. The Commission may choose to extend the period, if additional time is needed and requested by the governing board.