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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COUNCIL FOR LIFELONG LEARNING
ANALYSIS

BILL #: CS/HB 401
RELATING TO: Community College Required Instruction
SPONSOR(S): Committee on Colleges & Universities and Representative(s) Argenziano
TIED BILL(S): None

ORIGINATING COMMITTEE(S)/COUNCIL(S)/COMMITTEE(S) OF REFERENCE:

- (1) COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES YEAS 12 NAYS 1
 - (2) EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS YEAS 9 NAYS 1
 - (3) COUNCIL FOR LIFELONG LEARNING
 - (4)
 - (5)
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I. SUMMARY:

THIS DOCUMENT IS NOT INTENDED TO BE USED FOR THE PURPOSE OF CONSTRUING STATUTES, OR TO BE CONSTRUED AS AFFECTING, DEFINING, LIMITING, CONTROLLING, SPECIFYING, CLARIFYING, OR MODIFYING ANY LEGISLATION OR STATUTE.

Current law limits an associate in arts degree to 60 semester credit hours of college credit of which 36 semester credit hours must be in general education courses in the subject areas of communication, mathematics, social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences.

CS/HB 401 requires that within the 36 semester credit hours a community college requires in general education courses, at least one of the courses a student takes to satisfy the social sciences requirement must include civics instruction which focuses on American national government.

Department of Education (DOE) staff note that the section of law being amended only applies to general education requirements in the community colleges. The 36-hour general education requirement for an associate degree is common to both community colleges and state universities.

The cost of restructuring the curriculum to meet the requirement of this bill is indeterminate.

On February 22, 2002 the Committee on Education Appropriations adopted an amendment without objection, which is traveling with the bill. The amendment provides that the required civics instruction applies to students entering the community college for the first time in the fall semester of 2002.

The effective date of the bill is July 1, 2002.

SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS:

A. DOES THE BILL SUPPORT THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|--|---|
| 1. <u>Less Government</u> | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. <u>Lower Taxes</u> | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. <u>Individual Freedom</u> | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. <u>Personal Responsibility</u> | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. <u>Family Empowerment</u> | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

For any principle that received a “no” above, please explain:

Current law directs community colleges to require no more than 36 semester credit hours in general education courses in the broad subject areas of communication, mathematics, social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences. Each community college decides which courses and how many hours it will require of its students to satisfy these general requirements. CS/HB 401 mandates civics instruction within the 36 hour general education requirements for all community colleges.

The options available to a student for meeting the general education course requirements may be reduced if specific courses are required by law.

B. PRESENT SITUATION:

Section 240.115(3), F.S., requires universities and boards of trustees of the community colleges to identify their core curricula which must include courses required by the State Board of Education (SBOE). Core curricula in associate in arts programs must be adopted in rule by the SBOE and must include 36 semester hours of general education courses in the subject areas of communication, mathematics, social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences. The statutes do not prescribe any specific courses. Section 240.115(6), F.S., limits an associate in arts degree to no more than 60 semester hours of college credit, including 36 semester hours of general education coursework.

SBOE rule references credit in “liberal arts and science” rather than the five subject areas specified in statute. The rule does not require credit in any specific course. Rule 6A-10.024, F.A.C., requires each state university and community college to establish a general education core curriculum which must require at least 36 semester hours of college credit in the liberal arts and sciences for students working toward a baccalaureate degree. After a state university or community college has published its general core curriculum, the integrity of that curriculum must be recognized by the other public universities and community colleges. The rule further requires that the associate in arts degree must be awarded upon completion of at least 60 semester hours of college credit courses exclusive of courses not accepted by a state university and including a general education core curriculum of at least 36 semester hours of college credit in the liberal arts and sciences.

Section 240.325, F.S., directs the SBOE to prescribe minimum standards, definitions, and guidelines for community colleges which will assure the quality of education and systemwide coordination for achieving the community college mission. This includes adopting rules that address graduation requirements. These rules must require no more than 36 semester credit hours

in general education courses in the subjects of communication, mathematics, social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences.

The number of credit hours required by each community college to satisfy the social sciences component of the required general education courses varies from 6 to 12 total credits among the 28 community colleges. Students may satisfy the required social sciences credit by selecting courses from a variety of disciplines such as History, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, Economics, and Geography. Individual community colleges may require specific courses or number of credits within a given discipline. Within these course offerings, all of the community colleges provide, as options, courses that contain civics instruction such as American National Government or other American government or American history courses. Four of the 28 community colleges require the completion of a 3 semester credit hour course in American National Government or its equivalent for graduation.

C. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

HB 401 amends s. 240.325(4)(c), F.S., to provide that at least one of the courses which a student may take to satisfy the social sciences general education requirement for community colleges must include civics instruction which focuses on American national government. Requiring a specific course as part of the general education requirement in law may reduce the course options otherwise available to the student to satisfy the social sciences requirement.

DOE staff note that the section of law being amended only applies to general education requirements in the community colleges. There is no reference to state universities. The 36-hour general education requirement for an associate degree is common to both community colleges and state universities. DOE staff further note that consistency in general education requirements across sectors is necessary to ensure seamless articulation and transfer between and among community colleges and state universities.

D. SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS:

See Above.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT:

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

See Fiscal Comments.

2. Expenditures:

See Fiscal Comments.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

See Fiscal Comments.

2. Expenditures:

See Fiscal Comments.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

See Fiscal Comments.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

The fiscal impact of requiring community colleges to include civics instruction as part of the 36-hour general education requirement is composed of the impact on the curricula and composition of the faculty at community colleges and the impact on students. The curriculum issue involves revising existing courses, the degree to which the existing faculty are qualified to teach the course and the degree to which courses can be modified to meet this requirement without forcing the change in the Common Course Number assigned to the courses, which could affect transfers of students to particular universities or into particular degree programs. Depending on implementation, some students who are entering majors with extensive lower division requirements may have to add a course in order to meet the requirements of this bill and their degree requirements. Because of common course numbering and articulation agreements, the universities may also be forced to implement this requirement.

III. CONSEQUENCES OF ARTICLE VII, SECTION 18 OF THE FLORIDA CONSTITUTION:

A. APPLICABILITY OF THE MANDATES PROVISION:

This bill does not require counties or municipalities to spend funds or to take action which requires the expenditure of funds.

B. REDUCTION OF REVENUE RAISING AUTHORITY:

This bill does not reduce the authority that counties or municipalities have to raise revenues in the aggregate.

C. REDUCTION OF STATE TAX SHARED WITH COUNTIES AND MUNICIPALITIES:

This bill does not reduce the percentage of a state tax shared with counties or municipalities.

IV. COMMENTS:

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

This bill does not appear to violate any constitutional provisions.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

The rules of the State Board of Education regarding general education courses at community colleges must be changed to reflect that at least one course taken to satisfy the social sciences requirement must include civics instruction which focuses on American national government.

C. OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

V. AMENDMENTS OR COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES:

On February 5, 2002 the Committee on Colleges & Universities passed HB 401 as a committee substitute. CS/HB 401 modifies the civics instruction requirement of the original bill to clarify that at least one of the courses taken by a student at a state community college to satisfy the social sciences general education requirement must include civics instruction which focuses on American national government.

On February 22, 2002 the Committee on Education Appropriations adopted an amendment, which is traveling with the bill, to provide that the bill only affect students entering the community college after the fall of 2002.

VI. SIGNATURES:

COMMITTEE ON COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES:

Prepared by:

Steven Henderson

Staff Director:

Betty Tilton, Ph.D.

AS REVISED BY THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS:

Prepared by:

Bob Cox

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AS FURTHER REVISED BY THE COUNCIL FOR LIFELONG LEARNING:

Prepared by:

Steven Henderson

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Patricia Levesque