

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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September 11, 2012

Belle S. Wheelan, Ph.D.
President
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
Commission on Colleges
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, GA 30033

Dear Dr. Wheelan:

As Chancellors of the State University System of Florida and The Florida College System, we want to make you aware of legislation that passed earlier this year that will have a major impact on higher education in Florida. House Bill 7135 (Chapter 2012-195, Laws of Florida) amended section 1007.25, Florida Statutes, to reduce the total number of required general education coursework from 36 semester hours to 30, and to create general education core course options, which will make up approximately 15 hours of the total 30 general education hours requirement for an associate in arts or baccalaureate degree. Institutions will have to offer and accept in transfer all general education core course options.

The remaining 15 hours to complete the general education requirement will be at the discretion of the institution. Students initially entering a Florida College System or State University System institution in 2014-2015 must meet these new general education requirements.

In order to facilitate implementation, the General Education Steering Committee (Steering Committee) was established and is comprised of five members each from the Florida College System and State University System. A list of members and a hyperlink to the legislation is available at <http://www.fldoe.org/articulation/hb7135gep.asp>. The Steering Committee will direct the work of faculty committees and the entire general education project.

Faculty committees will be created for each general education subject area through an institution nomination process and will consist of equal representation among the colleges and universities. Ultimately, each faculty committee will identify a maximum of five postsecondary courses in each of the general education subject areas of communication, mathematics, social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences to make up the general education core options. Discussion of competencies that students should learn within each discipline might also be included with the recommendations.

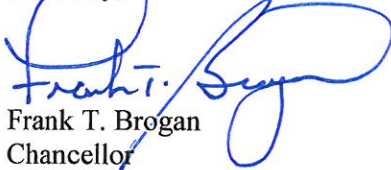
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The general education core course options will be adopted in State Board of Education rule and Board of Governors regulation. Once the general education core course options are adopted, institutions will review local general education requirements and incorporate these courses into their 30-hour general education program.

The Florida Department of Education and Office of the Board of Governors will assist with the logistics and record keeping for the work of the Steering Committee and faculty committees, with the expectation that the work will be driven by the faculty. Staff at both state agencies will help facilitate the process, but will not direct or interfere with any of the normal campus processes for handling curriculum matters. We are hopeful that the legislative requirements will result in a thoughtful redesign and refresh of each institution's general education curriculum that is grounded in a cohesive and common core while strengthening its overall integrity.

As Florida institutions begin to consider the reduction in required general education hours, we felt it necessary to touch base with you to determine whether we need to factor communications with SACSCOC into the implementation timeline. The Steering Committee will meet September 21, and guidance from you regarding necessary accreditation procedures would be very helpful to share at this meeting. Please feel free to contact Dr. Jan Ignash at jan.ignash@flboe.edu and Ms. Julie Alexander at julie.alexander@fldoe.org with questions or follow-up discussion.

Sincerely,



Frank T. Brogan
Chancellor
State University System of Florida



Sincerely,



Randy Hanna
Chancellor
The Florida College System



FB/RH/jac

Cc: Jan Ignash, Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, State University System Board of Governors
Julie Alexander, Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, Division of Florida Colleges