



June 20, 2024

TO: THE DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF VALENCIA COLLEGE

FROM: DR. KATHLEEN PLINSKE
President

RE: AUTHORIZATION TO SUBMIT A LETTER OF INTENT –
SPECIALIZED ASSOCIATE IN ARTS TRANSFER DEGREES

Passed during the 2024 legislative session, HB1285 added language to Sec. 1007.25, F.S., that authorizes Florida College System (FCS) institutions to offer specialized associate in arts transfer degrees that are designed for FCS students who need supplemental lower-level coursework in preparation for transfer to another institution.

Prior to the passage of this bill, many FCS students pursuing a degree, particularly in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM), had no way of completing the lower-division courses that are required for admission into State University System (SUS) programs before exhausting their financial aid eligibility at their FCS institution. This inadvertently penalized FCS students, as this barrier did not exist for students who begin their studies at SUS institutions.

Many FCS students complete the requirements for an Associate in Arts before completing the coursework required for transfer; however, once students complete the requirements for an Associate in Arts degree, they are no longer eligible to receive federal financial aid at their FCS institution given federal regulations that outline that financial aid cannot be awarded for classes that do not count toward a student's degree, certificate, or other recognized credential.


Utilizing data from the Central Florida Education Ecosystem Database (CFEED), Valencia College and the University of Central Florida (UCF) examined the transfer pathways for students who intend to pursue a baccalaureate degree in a STEM field. We estimate that specialized transfer degrees would provide the opportunity for an additional 1,100 STEM majors annually to complete 1000- and 2000-level common program prerequisites at Valencia prior to transfer to UCF. Given historical differences in completion rates between students who have and have not completed program prerequisites prior to transfer, we estimate that this would increase the STEM baccalaureate graduation rate by 12 to 14 percentage points for these students.

Based on an analysis of baccalaureate programs at UCF into which students often intend to transfer without having complete their 1000- and 2000-level program prerequisites, the following Specialized Associate in Arts Transfer Degrees are recommended:

- Business
- Biomedical Sciences/Biology
- Computer Science
- Engineering
- Health Sciences

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The President recommends that the District Board of Trustees of Valencia College approve the College's intent to develop, in partnership with the University of Central Florida, proposals for Specialized Associate of Arts Transfer Degrees to be submitted to the State Board of Education for approval, and to offer the Specialized Associate of Arts Transfer Degrees, as presented.



President