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## Higher Education Committee

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### HB 2769

**Brief Description:** Creating a pilot program for community and technical colleges to offer bachelor degrees.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Senn, Zeiger, Bergquist, Haler, Reykdal, Frame, Rossetti, Kilduff and Goodman.

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates a pilot program for the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (State Board) to select up to five community or technical colleges to offer bachelor degrees in high-demand fields of study.
- Requires the State Board to select applicants for the pilot program based on a college's ability to demonstrate resource capacity, appropriate faculty, demand from students and employers, and that the program fills a local or state workforce skill gap.
- Requires the State Board to approve a degree program developed by a pilot college before allowing the college to enroll students in upper-division courses.
- Allows the colleges offering bachelor degrees to charge tuition fees above the associate degree level, but below the rates at the regional universities.

**Hearing Date:** 2/2/16

**Staff:** Megan Mulvihill (786-7304).

#### **Background:**

In 2005 the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (State Board) was given authority to select four community or technical colleges to develop and offer programs of study leading to applied baccalaureate degrees on a pilot basis. An applied baccalaureate degree is a baccalaureate degree awarded by a community or technical college, which expands on the curriculum from an associate of applied science degree, or its equivalent, and incorporates both theoretical and applied knowledge and skills in a specific technical field. In 2010 the pilot status

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and limitation on the number of colleges was removed. In order for a college to offer an applied baccalaureate degree, the college must receive approval from the State Board by:

- demonstrating resource capacity;
- that the college has the appropriate faculty;
- there is student and employer demand; and
- that the program would fulfill a gap in options available for students because the program is not offered by a public four-year institution of higher education in the college's geographic area.

All programs must be approved by the State Board. The community and technical colleges do not have authority to offer bachelor degrees.

In 2014-15 there were 15 colleges offering applied baccalaureate degrees, and 1,037 students enrolled in applied baccalaureate degree programs in the community and technical college system.

### **Summary of Bill:**

The State Board must select up to five community or technical colleges to develop and offer programs of study leading to bachelor degrees in high-demand fields of study. Interested colleges must submit an application, and the State Board must review the applications and select the pilot colleges using the following criteria:

- demonstrates the capacity to make a long-term commitment of resources to build and sustain a high-quality program;
- has, or can readily engage, qualified faculty to develop and deliver high-quality curriculum at the bachelor degree level;
- can demonstrate demand for the proposed program from a sufficient number of students within the college's service area to make the program cost-effective and feasible to operate;
- can demonstrate employer demand for the level of technical training proposed within the program, making it cost-effective for students to seek the degree; and
- the proposed program fills a skills gap in the local area or in the state's workforce.

Colleges selected for the pilot program may develop the curriculum for and design and deliver courses leading to a bachelor degree. However, degree programs developed under the pilot program are subject to approval by the State Board before a college may enroll students in upper-division courses. A selected pilot college may not enroll students in upper division courses before fall 2017.

Allows the colleges offering bachelor degree programs under the pilot program to charge tuition fees above the associate degree level, but not at rates that exceed the tuition fee rates at the regional universities. Also allows colleges selected to award baccalaureate degrees.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on 1/21/16.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.