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Points of Interest

- Higher Learning Commission releases revisions to Assumed Practice policy.
- Division seeking candidates for several positions.
- CTE Task Force adopts final draft of recommendations.
- Equity review process to be overhauled.

A Message from Department Director Ryan Wise

Iowa's community colleges play a critical role in growing our state's economy by providing knowledge- and skill-building opportunities. As I begin my service as Director of the Department of Education, I look forward to working in partnership with the community colleges toward our shared goal of preparing Iowans to be successful in a rapidly changing world.

I am an educator because I believe that all students should have a rich, rewarding educational experience. And while my teaching background is at the high school level, I know this belief is shared by

educators in our community colleges.

This view was affirmed when I met with the community college presidents this spring. While they each serve different communities in very different contexts, they share a passion and commitment to meeting both local needs and the future demands of the state as a whole through providing excellent educational experiences to their students.

I look forward to learning even more over the coming year about the unique learning opportunities each of the state's community

colleges provide. While I learn about the work each of you do, I'd like to take this opportunity to share a little about me.

I am a South Dakota native and came to Iowa in 2012 to facilitate a state task force whose work laid the foundation for Iowa's Teacher Leadership and Compensation System, the centerpiece of an education reform package adopted by legislators in 2013.

Before being appointed by Governor Branstad as Director of the Iowa Department of Education, I served as Deputy Director. In this role I managed the

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Interactive Data Visualization Tools Released

In an effort to make community college data more accessible, the Division of Community Colleges is developing interactive data visualization tools to supplement its portfolio of static reports.

This service is available on the division's [website](#), through a partnership with the Iowa Association of Community College Trustees.

Currently available datasets include credit enrollment for

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HLC Adopts Changes to Faculty Qualifications Policy

In May 2015, the Iowa Department of Education, on behalf of the Faculty Standards Task Force (FSTF) representing faculty, staff, and administrators at Iowa's 15 community colleges, submitted a letter to the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) with feedback and three requests pertaining to their *"Assumed Practices – Policy Changes Proposed on First Reading."*

The proposed change that raised concerns was the elevation of their faculty qualification guideline to an assumed practice. Where before it was best practice, HLC expects arts and sciences faculty to possess a master's degree and 18 graduate credit hours in the subject area, or a degree in the discipline at least one level higher than the degree they are instructing - except for terminal degrees in which case the expectation is for instructors to possess the same level of degree.

Iowa's first request was for leniency with the proposed December 31, 2015 compliance deadline. The second request was for additional narrative to clarify "other factors" that their proposed policy stated "may be considered in addition to degrees earned" when "determining whether a faculty member is qualified." The department's letter suggested that "... other factors may include recent and relevant tested field experience, third party credentials, and professional development activities..."

The final request was for the addition of language to allow instructors in career and technical education (CTE) programs to either "possess the same level of degree at which they teach or to document equivalent experience or third party credentials." This caveat recognizes that CTE programs tend to be terminal in nature and should be treated as such for purposes of instructor qualifications.

Based on feedback received from numerous stakeholders, HLC staff revised the proposal slightly before submitting it to the HLC Board for a second reading in June 2015. The revised proposal contained three changes that seem to address the gist of Iowa's concerns.

First, HLC extended the compliance deadline from December 31, 2015 to September 1, 2017. Second, while the adopted policy did not add the suggested clarification regarding "other factors" proposed by the department, the HLC did add "equivalent experience" and deleted "in addition to the degrees earned" which implies that experience may be used in lieu of academic degrees. Lastly, the adopted policy did not include the additional language pertaining to level of degree required of the instructor, but they revised the proposed criteria by stating that instructors who teach general education and other "non-occupational courses"

must meet the graduate degree requirement (e.g., MA + 18 graduate hours). The addition of this "non-occupational" provision seems to indicate that occupational course instructors – i.e., CTE instructors – do not need to possess a master's degree.

The department, in collaboration with the FSTF and community college CAOs, have attempted to address these concerns and issues through comments regarding the revision of HLC's *Determining Qualified Faculty: Guidelines for Institutions and Peer Reviewers*. The department will: press for the need for further clarification of "other factors" that can be considered when assessing faculty qualifications; the ability to use recent and relevant work experience and third-party credentials in lieu of advanced degrees for CTE instructors; guidance regarding disciplines and subfields as they relate to graduate coursework that may be used to assess faculty transcripts; and clarification of some terminology within the policy.

Overall, the changes provide a good basis for the FSTF as they progress toward the development of a statewide implementation plan to align Iowa's faculty credential requirements with HLC policy.

Contact Barbara Burrows at barbara.burrows@iowa.gov or 515-725-2247 with comments or questions.

Division Working to Fill Vacancies

The Division of Community Colleges is working to fill eight vacant positions in both the Bureau of Community Colleges and Bureau of Career and Technical Education.

The division will soon seek candidates for chief of the Bureau of Community Colleges position as well as staff positions related to communications, finance, and data/reporting.

The division expects to begin interviewing for four vacant education program consultant (EPC) positions in the areas of adult education and literacy (AEL) and career and technical education (CTE). Together, these eight positions account for

nearly a quarter of total positions, so the division is eager to have talented professionals join our team.

Each EPC position provides the opportunity to provide state level leadership and includes a salary range up to \$83,000 and attractive benefits.

When open, positions are posted on TeachIowa.gov complete with full description of each position and application information.

For more information on any of the positions, please do not hesitate to contact Jeremy Varner at jeremy.varner@iowa.gov or 515-281-8260.

Three Departed the Division in August

Del Hoover, Education Program Consultant for Family and Consumer Sciences, retired on August 27. Del has had a long career in public service, serving in numerous positions within the department and several school district teaching and administrative positions.

Geoff Jones, Information Technology Specialist for the division, retired after 16 years with the division and department. His last day was August 13.

Kent Farver, Bureau Chief for Community Colleges, left the division August 28 ([see page 9](#)).



FSTF Subgroups to Finalize Work in Early September

Subgroups of the Faculty Standards Task Force (FSTF) reconvened on September 1 to finalize numerous projects prior to the full FSTF meeting on September 29.

The subgroups have been working since their inaugural May meeting on the following deliverables:

- a template/spreadsheet for consistent evaluation and recording of faculty qualifications, including professional development plans for individuals to reach compliance;
- a manual with a table of community college course disciplines to guide colleges in their assessment of faculty

qualifications, including a working definition of 'disciplines' and 'subfields', and other factors that may be considered for qualifying Arts & Sciences, as well as CTE instructors;

- a statewide implementation plan to establish steps and timelines for colleges to move toward compliance.

At the September 29 meeting, the subgroups will present their work, the plan will be reviewed and improved accordingly, legislative language will be drafted, and a vetting schedule will be established to get community college administrative and faculty

input regarding the components of the plan. The task force also intends to share the plan with HLC staff to ensure that reviewers will understand and respect Iowa's statewide approach to achieve consistency in methodology and documentation.

The task force plans to vet the documents in October and November to meet a December 15th deadline for a final comprehensive plan. This plan will then be distributed to all community colleges in January 2016.

Contact Barbara Burrows at barbara.burrows@iowa.gov or 515-725-2247 with comments or questions.

Cont'd: Director Wise article

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development and delivery of the teacher leadership system and oversaw policy, communications and a statewide expansion of Iowa Learning Online, a state-run program that provides high-quality classes taught by Iowa-licensed teachers.

I began my career as a high school history teacher in Mississippi and Nebraska before moving to South Dakota to launch and lead Teach for America on the Rosebud and Pine Ridge Reservations. I also spent two years working internationally with Teach for All, a global network of entrepreneurs committed to ending educational inequity.

My education includes a doctorate in education leadership from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, a master's

degree in public administration from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, and a bachelor's degree in history from Creighton University.

I'm looking forward to the challenges and opportunities ahead of us in creating excellence in education in Iowa. Some of my key priorities include: elevating the teaching profession through the further development and implementation of the Teacher Leadership and Compensation System; annually reviewing a portion of Iowa's academic standards; providing high-quality, student-centered learning opportunities through Iowa Learning Online; supporting competency-based education; and working toward the goal of ensuring all students are reading

proficiently by the end of third grade.

In addition, I'm also energized by the priorities that will have direct ties to Iowa's community colleges, such as fostering greater alignment between the education system and Iowa's workforce needs and helping to turn the recommendations that come from the Secondary Career and Technical Education Task Force into actionable policy that provides more and better CTE opportunities to Iowa's students.

There is much work ahead of us. I look forward to getting into the community colleges and meeting in person with many of you. Thank you for all you do each day and the contributions you make to Iowa's education system.

Cont'd: Interactive Data Tables and Charts

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the past 15 years and employment outcomes. Data sets will continue to be added over the course of the academic year.

Using the tools, users can manipulate and re-arrange the data in a variety of ways.

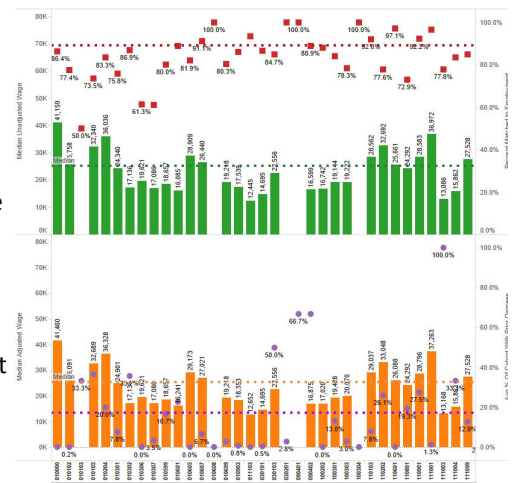
The user has the ability to download both resulting charts and data tables for further display, presentation, or processing.

The tools permit mapping and, in some cases, animations which are useful

in viewing longitudinal trends and peer comparisons.

The tools are based on aggregate data and present no risk to student privacy.

The division is interested in feedback on the tools and data of interest to stakeholders.



Contact Vlad Bassis at
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 515-281-3671.

Secondary CTE Task Force Developing Recommendations

The Secondary Career and Technical Education (CTE) Task Force has reached consensus on recommendations which outline a vision for all students to have the opportunity to pursue rewarding careers through access to high-quality, 21st century CTE programming.

The recommendations focus on five crucial reforms – career guidance, career pathways, work-based learning, instructor training and professional development, and regional planning and centers.

The two facets of career guidance proposed by the task force include career exploration and academic planning. Beginning in middle school, students must learn of the career and college landscape in order to establish goals and create pathways through high school to accomplish those goals.

Career pathways structure secondary and postsecondary academic and technical coursework into a coherent, aligned, and sequenced framework which allows students to explore and gradually become immersed in a career field. This combination of academic and technical coursework will appropriately prepare students for success in career and college. Selection and formation of a pathway will be based on the student's career and college goals.

As part of the conversation

around career pathways, the task force recognized a need to update the six CTE service areas to reflect the national [Career Clusters](#)® framework. This will facilitate alignment between secondary and postsecondary programs, as well as provide greater flexibility for school districts in offering coursework to students aligned with today's in-demand occupations.

Supplementing both career guidance and career pathways is meaningful work-based learning. Greater access to such opportunities can be realized through increased support of the state's [Intermediary Networks](#) and collaboration among organizations providing similar services.

Though presented as separate recommendations, career guidance, career pathways, and work-based learning must operate as a cohesive system; career guidance informs the formation of a student's career pathway, while both are influenced and informed through exposure to the world of work through work-based learning opportunities.

The last two recommendations – instructor supports, training, and professional development, and regional planning and regional centers – aim to provide a strong foundation for the practices discussed above.

Recognizing that strong CTE programs require strong CTE

instructors, the task force adopted several measures which aim to support and increase the pool of qualified instructors. Among others, such measures include the removal of barriers into the profession and targeted professional development opportunities.

Strong CTE programs also require collaboration. The last recommendation put forward by the task force promotes collaboration by emphasizing regional partnerships and planning. Stemming from these partnerships, the task force envisions a statewide system of regional centers. Regional centers are the key to ensuring consistent and equitable access to high-quality technical programming for all students across the state.

The task force will adopt recommendations prior to November 1. A final report will be submitted to the Governor, the State Board of Education, and the General Assembly.

Following release of the report, the department is planning a series of listening sessions across the state to discuss the recommendations and gather feedback. Work on a legislative proposal for consideration next session is underway.

Contact Pradeep Kotamraju at pradeep.kotamraju@iowa.gov or 515-281-4716 with comments or questions.





AEL Launches Marketing Campaign

A new campaign to increase awareness of the adult education and literacy programs throughout Iowa was unveiled at the 2015 Iowa Adult Education and Literacy Regional Conference in Ames on July 15-17.

The “*Your Future Starts Here*” campaign connects Iowans with resources and information to pursue achieving their High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED), increase their basic skills, and participate in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.

In order to connect Iowans with information to get started, the *Your Future Starts Here* campaign has created a [website](http://www.yourfuturestartshere.iowa.org) (www.yourfuturestartshere.iowa.org) and a hotline (800-316-6850). The website will connect students to their local program and provide access to resources ranging from career exploration and interactive lessons to details on the required testing. Resources are also available in Spanish. When students call the hotline they will be connected to local programs based on their zip code.

The showcase of the website is the story of four Iowans as they share how achieving their HSED has impacted their life. It is hoped these stories will inspire others who are questioning whether to start the journey toward obtaining their HSED. These videos were produced in collaboration with Educational Testing Services, a provider of several testing and academic measurement services including the HiSET exam.

The department recognizes that today's workplace presents numerous challenges for those without a high school diploma. The division launched this marketing campaign to showcase how Iowa's Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) programs provide adults with the opportunity to acquire and improve the functional skills necessary to compete in today's economy and enhance the quality of their lives.

Contact Alex Harris at alex.harris@iowa.gov or 515-281-3640 with comments or questions.

Adult Education Conference Receives Positive Feedback

Participants provided glowing reviews of the Iowa Adult Education and Literacy Regional Conference titled “A Kaleidoscope of Collaboration”. The conference was held on July 15-17 at the Scheman Center, Iowa State University Campus in Ames, Iowa.

The conference was well attended by 349 participants representing agencies from across the community college, adult education, and workforce development spectrum. Participants traveled from Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Wisconsin, and South Dakota.

Over 50 breakout sessions were offered ranging in topics from the Workforce and Innovation Opportunity Act to English as a Second Language and Career Pathways.

The conference coordinating council would like to thank the Commission on Adult Basic Education, Dollar General, Burlington English, sponsors, and exhibitors for their generous support of this year's conference, and all attendees for their participation.

Contact Alex Harris at alex.harris@iowa.gov or 515-281-3640 with comments or questions.

“Getting your diploma is really a big deal. Its something that will help in life to come. Now its like I know I can do anything I set my mind to. “

- Kayla Johnson

Deadline Approaching to Submit HBI Data Reports

The deadline to submit all required Home Base Iowa (HBI) data elements to the Department of Education is October 1.

Prior to December 15, a report will be submitted to the Governor and the General Assembly by the Iowa Coordinating Council for Post-High School Education (ICCPHSE). This report will contain information and statistics for each of the previous five academic years on the number of students who are veterans that received education credit for military education, training, and service. Data reported will encompass the percentage of veterans known to be enrolled at the college, the

average number of credits received by veteran students, and the average number of credits applied towards the award of a certificate, competency-based credential, postsecondary diploma, or associate degree.

As reported in the [Summer 2015 edition](#) of the Community College Leader Bulletin, a broader definition of “veteran” for purposes of determining residency was adopted by the legislature. The HBI Education Working Group recommended this broader definition, which now includes members of the Reserve Forces or National Guard who have served at least one year of their commitment and are

eligible for or have exhausted federal veterans education benefits.

The HBI initiative is intended to help veterans make a smooth transition to civilian life in Iowa. The data reporting requirements support the effort to ensure veterans receive appropriate credit for prior military training or experience. The reporting process was developed by the accountability subgroup of the Home Base Iowa Education Working Group and included representation from community colleges and public universities.

Contact Paula Nissen at paula.nissen2@iowa.gov or 515-281-3550 with comments or questions.



Draft WIOA Unified State Plan Expected in October

The Division of Community Colleges, Iowa Workforce Development (IWD), and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (IVRS) expect to release a draft of Iowa’s unified state plan for comment and feedback in October.

The unified plan is a requirement of the federal [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#) (WIOA) reauthorized last summer.

Coordinated by IWD, the unified plan will set a holistic [vision](#) for an integrated and effective workforce development system.

Interagency teams have worked closely on development of the plan,

identification of implementation issues and preparation of guidance to sub-recipients, local program staff, and local workforce investment boards. IWD has hired three contractors to assist with WIOA implementation.

To assist in finalizing the plan, IWD invited consultant Greg Newton to Iowa for two days of training sessions which will focus on transitioning to the new unified plan. The training will be held September 9-10. The session on September 9 will target state leadership and the September 10 session will target local leadership.

Impacted core WIOA program staff and partners

will be invited to these training sessions to participate in the discussion.

In July, Newton presented on WIOA at the Iowa Adult Education and Literacy Regional COABE Conference held in Ames. His sessions covered several aspects of WIOA implementation such as collaboration, the workforce system and its components, and benchmarks and promising practices.

IWD maintains a [website](#) to keep stakeholders updated on WIOA implementation issues.

Contact Jeremy Varner at jeremy.varner@iowa.gov or 515-281-8260 with comments or questions.





There is great potential for both the division and community colleges to realize numerous benefits as a result of recoupling the accreditation and equity reviews.

Equity Review Process Changes to be Implemented Fall 2016

An overhauled equity review process will be implemented in fall 2016, following a pilot in spring 2016.

On August 4, the Community College Accreditation Advisory Committee (AAC) supported a division proposal to overhaul the community college equity review process.

A team within the Division of Community Colleges has spent the past several months reviewing the current equity review processes to determine the feasibility of recoupling the equity review with the state accreditation process for community colleges. This review, as well as conversations with the Bureau of School Improvement and the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (OCR), has resulted in a series of process improvements.

The division expects to merge the equity review with the community college state accreditation review, as many aspects of the equity review process are able to be addressed through components of the state accreditation review. Merging the processes will allow the division to leverage these components of the state accreditation review in an effort to streamline and gain efficiencies in the equity review. The division also expects to utilize the state accreditation review schedule as the basis for the

equity review schedule.

Though considerable progress has been made toward recoupling the two processes, several aspects of the proposed process remain unsettled. Much of this is attributed to ensuring all expectations and requirements of OCR are addressed under the proposed process.

The division and AAC expect numerous benefits from the equity process overhaul including reducing regulatory uncertainty and the invasiveness of visits, while increasing frequency, effectiveness, and consistency of reviews. Many of the proposed changes are analogous to changes made to the accreditation process in recent years.

An equity review guide will be developed this academic year to clearly explain the process and expectations.

The current parameters and expectations established for both K-12 and community college equity reviews outlined in the department's Methods of Administration (MOA) agreement with OCR will remain unchanged. The Bureau of School Improvement will remain the lead coordinator for all department equity reviews, while responsibility for conducting community college equity reviews will transfer to the division.

During the implementation, the division expects to continue to work closely with OCR, which must formally approve any change to the established secondary and community college equity review process.

Contact Barbara Burrows at barbara.burrows@iowa.gov or 515-725-2247 with comments or questions.

Instructors Receive ASK Certifications

Forty-four high school teachers and community college instructors earned ASK certification through a pilot sponsored by the Department of Education. Four certification exams were available - Business Concepts, Marketing Concepts, Concepts of Finance, and Entrepreneurship/Management.

The goal was to increase instructor familiarity with certifications. In turn, instructors may make

informed decisions as to whether to offer such opportunities to their students.

The ASK Business Institute certification pilot took place between August 7 through 14 at six community colleges and was funded through Northeast Iowa Community College's Strengthening Marketing Programs of Study Grant.

Contact Kelli Diemer at kelli.diemer@iowa.gov or 515-281-3615 with comments or questions.

Green Light for Sector Partnership & Career Pathways Definitions

Strong support for the draft definitions of sector partnerships and career pathways was expressed at the April meeting of the Sector Partnership and Career Pathways Advisory Council, a group convened by the Division of Community Colleges.

Broad definitions of sector partnerships and career pathways were reviewed, and several modifications were proposed. As part of the discussion on these broad definitions, participants provided feedback on the entities which should be a part of the sector partnership and career pathways development processes, as well as definitions which attempt to classify sector partnerships based on their stage of development.

The goal is to agree on common definitions which

can be adopted and utilized by all agencies and organizations involved with sector partnerships and career pathway development.

Council participants also discussed professional development opportunities; creating a communication plan such as a statewide repository of sector partnerships and career pathways, data reporting processes, and metrics.

Sector partnerships and career pathways are crucial components of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the foremost means by which the federal government funds and supports workforce development and employment programs. With its emphasis on credential attainment, WIOA prompts states to establish sector partnerships and career pathways in order to

streamline processes and move individuals through training programs into rewarding occupations linked with in-demand occupations.

Membership of the council initially consisted of representatives from Iowa's community colleges. Recognizing that sector partnerships and career pathways are more than an educational endeavor, the group expanded to include representation from K-12, community organizations, business and industry, and other government organizations.

The council will reconvene September 22, at which time the group will be asked to formally approve a final set of definitions.

Contact Eric St Clair at eric.stclair@iowa.gov or 515-725-0127 with comments or questions.



Farver Leaves Department; Utman Returns as Interim Chief

Kent Farver has left his position as Chief of the Bureau of Community Colleges to accept the Director of Finance position for the Metro Waste Authority.

A true professional and public servant, Kent has been instrumental in most of the division's efforts, particularly over the past few years as bureau chief. His adroit and reliable management of operations and program implementation were a

prerequisite for the division's shift to a more proactive role in state policy. Iowa's community colleges are better because of his service.

His last day with the division was August 31 and the position will be advertised as soon as possible.

[Roger Utman](#) will provide leadership for the Bureau of Community Colleges on a temporary basis while the hiring process is conducted

to fill the position on a permanent basis.

Prior to his retirement, Dr. Utman served as administrator of the Division of Community Colleges for four years and, prior to that, as chief of the Bureau of Community Colleges and Career and Technical Education. He had 21 years of experience at Iowa Western in various roles.

Contact Jeremy Varner at jeremy.varner@iowa.gov or 515-281-8260 with comments or questions.



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The Community College Leader Update is a quarterly publication of the Iowa Department of Education, Division of Community Colleges.

Sign-up on the division's [website](#) to receive the Community College Leader Bulletin in your inbox.

VFA Pilot Project Completes Upload of First Cohort Dataset

The final deadline passed for community colleges to verify and publish their 2014 Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA) data sets in the online VFA system at the end of June.

These efforts were the culmination of the work of a pilot project partnership between 13 Iowa community colleges and the division. During the pilot year, a subcommittee of representatives from the community colleges and division data staff worked to identify how currently collected data could be used to meet VFA expectations, as well as any additional data the colleges would need to provide. The subcommittee also documented how to calculate VFA metrics. This process was tested to determine its efficacy and whether additional clarifications or changes were necessary.

At the end of the pilot project, nine of the 13 pilot colleges uploaded their



Voluntary
Framework of
Accountability

information to the national VFA website.

Attention now turns toward full statewide implementation of the two-year credit cohort. In the coming months, the VFA steering committee will finalize the timelines.

All 15 community colleges have expressed their commitment to the VFA process and are expected to publish their two-year credit cohort information by June 30, 2016. The six-year credit cohort will be piloted by WIT, NCC, and Hawkeye. Subgroups continue to work on career-technical (including noncredit) and adult education metrics.

The division has and will continue to fund the VFA membership costs for the

community colleges. The division and the VFA steering and implementation committees have made it a priority to improve communication with all stakeholders during the second year of the project.

The VFA is a comprehensive national accountability system created for community colleges, by community colleges. It contains measures which encompass and reflect the full breadth of the community college mission and the diversity of students' goals and educational experiences.

Contact Vlad Bassis at vladimir.bassis@iowa.gov or 515-281-3617 with comments or questions.

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If you have questions or grievances related to compliance with this policy by the Iowa Department of Education, please contact the legal counsel for the Iowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, IA 50319-0146, telephone number 515/281-5295; or the Director of the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, Citigroup Center, 500 W. Madison Street, Suite 1475, Chicago, IL 60661, telephone number 312/730-1560, fax 312/730-1576, email: OCR.Chicago@ed.gov.