
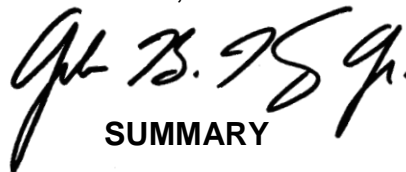




TO: Higher Education Committee
FROM: John L. D'Agati 
SUBJECT: Higher Education Program Approval and Registration
DATE: November 10, 2014

AUTHORIZATION(S):


SUMMARY

Issue for Discussion

The Department will provide an overview of the higher education program approval and registration standards in Commissioner's Regulations. The presentation will include data regarding the number of program proposals and other applications submitted to the Office of College and University Evaluation since January 2014. We will also discuss some of the challenges that colleges and universities in New York State are facing and how those challenges, and the changing landscape in which colleges and universities are operating, affect their ability to meet the current program registration standards.

Background Information

Part 52 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education delineates the Board of Regents standards for registration of programs of study at colleges and universities in New York State. These standards help to ensure that, when a student enrolls in a program of study at a college or university, he/she is receiving a high quality education that prepares him/her for a career in their field of study. The standards include requirements concerning financial resources, facilities, faculty qualifications and access to academic materials, equipment and library resources.

This presentation will also include a look at some of the challenges that colleges in New York are facing in the changing higher education landscape, and how that affects the types of proposals they are submitting for approval and how those proposals may not clearly align with the program registration standards.

Many colleges struggle to meet the program registration standards which were developed at a time when higher education was being delivered in a traditional, in-classroom format. In recent years, many new models for the delivery of a degree program have been developed to attract more students, particularly non-traditional students seeking specific skills. In addition, colleges seek to limit costs by entering into partnerships with for-profit and not-for-profit organizations for the delivery of programs, avoiding hiring full-time faculty and limiting capital investments. These more unique program proposals often necessitate several conversations or meetings between the colleges and Department staff to clarify details and determine if/how the college will meet the academic standards established in regulation. While this kind of detailed review may lengthen the program approval and registration process, it helps to ensure that students who enroll in these programs are still receiving the quality education that the Board of Regents standards envision for all New York State college students.