

By: Representative M. Gray

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

TO ENCOURAGE COLLABORATION AMONG THE DIVISION OF HIGHER EDUCATION, THE HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD, AND STATE-SUPPORTED TWO-YEAR AND FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO STUDY THE NEED FOR NEW POLICIES AND REVIEW CURRENT POLICIES RELATED TO EXPANDING ACCESS TO APPLIED BACCALAUREATE AND WORKFORCE DEGREES IN HIGH-DEMAND CAREER FIELDS THROUGHOUT THE STATE.

Subtitle

TO ENCOURAGE COLLABORATION AMONG THE RELEVANT ENTITIES TO STUDY AND REVIEW POLICIES RELATED TO EXPANDING ACCESS TO APPLIED BACCALAUREATE AND WORKFORCE DEGREES IN HIGH-DEMAND CAREER FIELDS THROUGHOUT THE STATE.

WHEREAS, calls for increasing college completion and degree production both at the state and federal levels have led many states to explore increasing access to applied baccalaureate and workforce degrees in high-demand career fields in order to provide a pathway for more students to earn a four-year degree; and

WHEREAS, Arkansas is well-positioned to explore increasing access to baccalaureate and workforce degrees targeted to high-demand career fields, such as the Bachelor of Science in Nursing, while also increasing collaboration among two-year and four-year institutions of higher education through establishing a formal partnership among colleges and universities;



and

WHEREAS, the Division of Higher Education and the Higher Education Coordinating Board are responsible for coordinating the state's system of higher education, including identifying the need for new degree programs and reviewing the continuing viability of existing degree programs; and

WHEREAS, external accrediting bodies are responsible for reviewing academic and organizational structures of colleges and universities, as well as for reviewing the quality and integrity of individual degree programs; and

WHEREAS, the Higher Education Coordinating Board is specifically authorized under Arkansas Code § 6-61-204 to work with the presidents and chancellors of this state's two-year and four-year institutions of higher education to "establish advisory committees and councils as may be deemed necessary for the effective development and coordination of higher education in this state", including on subjects such as institutional accountability and workforce development; and

WHEREAS, the Higher Education Coordinating Board is further charged under Arkansas Code § 6-61-208 with the responsibility to evaluate and approve proposals for new units of instruction to determine, based upon established policies, and consistent with Arkansas Code § 6-61-207, whether new units of instruction are of appropriate rigor and sufficiently in demand,

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS, THE SENATE CONCURRING THEREIN:

THAT, consistent with Arkansas law and rules and policies of the Division of Higher Education and the Higher Education Coordinating Board, the Arkansas General Assembly encourage the Division of Higher Education to study the need for new policies and review current policies related to expanding applied baccalaureate and workforce degrees in high-demand career fields in collaboration with the state's two-year and four-year college and university presidents and chancellors, including direct involvement from both system-

affiliated and independent institutions that are representative of this state's geography.