

HB 1876 -- DEGREES AT PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

SPONSOR: Lichtenegger

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Higher Education by a vote of 12 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Rules- Administrative Oversight Committee by a vote of 14 to 0.

This bill provides that community colleges may grant baccalaureate degrees if authorized by the Coordinating Board for Higher Education. The West Plains Campus of Missouri State University and the State Technical College of Missouri may also offer baccalaureate degrees if authorized by the Coordinating Board. The University of Missouri is the only state college or university authorized to offer doctor of philosophy degrees or first professional degrees.

The Coordinating Board may approve, not approve, or provisionally approve proposed new degree programs offered by state institutions of higher education. The Coordinating Board may authorize a degree program outside of an institution's coordinating board-approved mission only when certain requirements are met as described in the bill.

The board of regents of each state college and each state teachers college have authority to confer additional degrees when authorized by the Coordinating Board, in circumstances as described in the bill. An institution may be authorized to offer nonresearch doctoral degrees in allied health professions independently if collaboration with another institution would not increase the quality of the program. The boards of state colleges and state teachers colleges have the power and authority to confer degrees in engineering only in collaboration with the University of Missouri if the collaborative agreement is approved by the governing board of each institution, in which case the University of Missouri will be the degree-granting institution. If the University of Missouri declines to collaborate, institutions may seek approval of the program from the Coordinating Board through the board's review process.

No state college or university may seek the land grant designation held by Lincoln University and the University of Missouri or the research designation currently held by the University of Missouri. This bill repeals provisions relating to Missouri State University's ability to offer specific programs and degrees in collaboration with the University of Missouri and provisions granting authority to Missouri Southern State University and Missouri Western State University to offer master's level degree programs in accountancy.

This bill is the same as HB 1465 (2018), HB 758 and SB 328 (2017).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that institutions need flexibility to offer degrees to meet local needs. The bill enables collaboration between institutions to make degrees available to students. The bill enables community colleges to offer degrees necessary for workforce development.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Lichtenegger; Missouri State University; Leroy Wade, Missouri Department of Higher Education; and St. Louis Community College.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.