



Ad Hoc Report:
Substantive Change Proposal Follow-Up
Applied Bachelor's Degrees

Submitted to the
Northwest Commission on
Colleges and Universities

September 15, 2016

Introduction

The faculty, staff, and trustees of Highline College are pleased to submit the following *ad hoc* report on the college's implementation of its first applied bachelor's degrees. This report was requested by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) in its June 12, 2014, letter in response to Highline's submission of substantive change documents to alter its degree level.

The NWCCU accepted Highline's Substantive Change Prospectus for each of four baccalaureate degree programs that the college proposed. Those degrees and their dates of Substantive Change acceptance are as follows:

Bachelor of Applied Science in Cybersecurity and Forensics	December 5, 2013
Bachelor of Applied Science in Respiratory Care	February 6, 2014
Bachelor of Applied Science in Global Trade and Logistics	February 6, 2014
Bachelor of Applied Behavioral Science in Youth Development	March 27, 2014

At present, Highline College has completed its second year of offering all four applied baccalaureate degrees. This report details the impact of this change on the college, anticipated revisions to the new baccalaureate programs, evidence of their effectiveness, and plans for continuing assessment of the effectiveness of the change.

Impact of the change on the total institution

The implementation of baccalaureate programming at Highline College has had no adverse impacts — and, in fact, has had many positive effects — on the institution as a whole. When the college undertook to launch its first applied bachelor's degrees, the campus's core themes and mission guided the initiative's approach and provided the lens through which the institution could evaluate the programs' development. In all four cases, the credentials respond to local employment demand, fill regional gaps in educational opportunity, and draw on the capacity of the college's existing associate-level programs to support upper-division work. From a curricular standpoint, the new credentials build on the existing associate-level programs, extending the educational pathway by adding more rigorous upper-division offerings relevant to that professional-technical field. The new coursework was built by the existing associate-level departments, leveraging the expertise of the faculty and the existing infrastructure of each program. Today, Highline's baccalaureate offerings are fully integrated into the sponsoring academic departments and divisions; instructors are drawn from those programs, and the department coordinators initiate planning for instruction at the baccalaureate level.

Alignment with Institutional Mission, Core Themes, and Goals

Perhaps because of this integrated approach, the institution and broader community view Highline's applied bachelor's degree offerings as a natural extension, most directly, of Core Theme One — *Promote student engagement, learning and achievement* — and as particularly supportive of that core theme's primary objective, which calls upon the college to “[empower students] to pursue their own educational pathways through innovative curricula, quality instruction and student services.” Accordingly, the college's leadership remains confident that

this change in degree level complements the institution's mission. As evidence of that confidence, Highline College's Board of Trustees has reaffirmed support for the applied baccalaureate initiative as recently as June 2016, specifically citing the effort's alignment with institutional mission (Appendix A).

Adequacy of Administrative, Faculty, Financial, Library, and Facilities Support

A recent survey of Highline's applied bachelor's faculty reveals that, in their view, all four programs are adequately supported with administrative, faculty, financial, library, and facilities resources. The responses note specifically that:

- Administrative support has been sufficient to enroll, assist, and serve students in the degree programs.
- Advisory boards have provided active support for planning, student recruitment, teaching, and administrative support.
- Qualified faculty have delivered the new upper-division course offerings, with additional hires as needed.
- Programs have the equipment, facilities, and supplies they need.
- The library has responded quickly to obtain requested materials. The reference librarians work closely with the faculty to identify online data bases and print materials, then acquire them, to support baccalaureate studies.

Encouragingly, this program-level feedback helps to validate the planning efforts and subsequent resource commitments that have been devoted to the bachelor's degree initiative. Key elements of those efforts include the following:

Administrative support: The full-time Director of Workforce and Baccalaureate Education reports directly to the Dean of Instruction for Professional-Technical Education and sits on Instruction Cabinet. To sustain the programs' institutional integration, the director convenes the college's division chairs, relevant department coordinators, and selected Student Services staff quarterly. Among other topics, the group plans courses common to multiple degrees, refines admissions and advising practices, and discusses the course format that will best meet student needs while maintaining the integrity of the curriculum delivery. For example, most students prefer online courses, but some content must be delivered in the classroom with hands-on work. This group also ensures that any changes made to accommodate a baccalaureate program will not negatively impact Highline's ability to support previously existing degrees and certificates. In addition to the Director of Workforce and Baccalaureate Education, the bachelor's degree budget underwrites a one full-time equivalent (FTE) generalist Student Services staff position.

Faculty: Highline has appointed faculty as needed to support administration and instruction for the applied baccalaureate programs. Specifically, Respiratory Care hired a program manager in 2014, converting that position to full-time, tenure-track faculty in 2015. Youth Development hired a program manager in 2015. The Cybersecurity and Forensics program was championed by already-tenured instructors who now teach the bulk of upper-division coursework there. To backfill for that reassignment, the department added two adjunct faculty in 2015-16 and converted a visiting faculty appointment to the tenure track in 2016 to increase the base of

students with an AAS degree who could then enroll in the upper-division program. In addition to hiring two new adjunct faculty in 2015-16, Global Trade and Logistics outsources a few courses under contract to Central Washington University's onsite supply-chain certificate program. To maintain adequate control of the curriculum, Highline's Business Department coordinator meets twice a quarter with the leadership of CWU's local programming. The meetings determine whether courses meet the needs of students in Highline's degree. Reciprocally, Highline's coordinator sits in on CWU advisory committee meetings to learn industry needs (skills and knowledge) that are translated into the curriculum at Highline. As a final inter-institutional link, CWU's director serves on the advisory committee for Highline's Center of Excellence for Global Trade and Supply Chain Management, a state-funded resource that promotes trade-related economic and workforce development Washington-wide.

To strengthen the general-education component of Highline's four-year degrees and to widen the network of departments participating in the campus's baccalaureate initiative, the core faculty have worked with several liberal arts disciplines to develop upper-division general-education courses in applied ethics, technical communications, research design, and computational skills. Typically, these courses are taught by tenured faculty whose lower-division courses are, in turn, reassigned to adjuncts. The English Department hired a special adjunct in 2016 to teach technical writing in support of several of the bachelor's degrees.

Finance: As a result of conservative planning, as well as the integration of existing faculty and infrastructure, the college's finances have not been strained by the new bachelor's-level offerings. To underwrite the programs' planning and start-up years, the college invested one-time funding from its reserves. The current 2015-16 budget (Appendix B forecasts the cost of sustaining the new degrees at a modest \$928,000 annually, just under the aggregated Substantive Change forecast. At full capacity, tuition and fee revenue will offset nearly two-thirds of that amount. Based on a conservative target of 80 full-time equivalent students (FTES) across the four degrees, the college projects that it will collect nearly \$600,000 in tuition and fees (\$6,250 and \$600 fees per FTES) directly from participants, leaving only \$300,000 to \$350,000 to be borne by the institution's base budget.

So far, neither expenditures nor enrollment income has reached those long-range targets. But the early trends suggest that the college's projections are reasonable. Between 2014-15 and 2015-16, tuition income essentially tripled, growing from \$130,565 to almost \$400,000. That second-year revenue was sufficient to meet 95 percent of the actual cost of operations for 2015-16 and represents almost half of the target income needed to sustain the full-capacity budget for instruction, professional development, program management, student services support, supplies, equipment, education and training, marketing, conference/catering costs, and library materials for all four degrees.

Recently, to boost the statewide affordability of public higher education, the Washington legislature initiated a tiered reduction in tuition rates, with the larger-percentage cuts at the baccalaureate level. Accordingly, Highline has reduced its anticipated revenue by 15 percent for bachelor's offerings in 2016-17 and beyond, trimming the tuition-only planning number from \$7,500 to \$6,250 per FTES. The legislation promises to close any shortfalls through a corresponding increase to the colleges' state-funded, base allocation. The college's 2016-17

operating budget will reflect that adjustment. Meantime, Highline has set aside adequate funds to bridge the reshuffling of fund sources. As additional sustainability measures, the college opted to increase its baccalaureate-level enrollment fees by a modest \$100-\$150 and has begun promoting the applied baccalaureate as an option for Highline's international-rate students.

Further, Highline projects its baccalaureate enrollments to increase over the next few years, based on three factors. First, the programs have built their recognition among the community and continue to meet the needs of the community. Second, programs are increasing capacity at the associate degree-level to increase the number of students eligible for upper-division study. Third, the state-mandated drop in tuition rates should attract more students.

Library: The baccalaureate program budget earmarks roughly \$17,500 annually for materials. An already-tenured reference librarian has been given lead authority to act as liaison to the faculty who plan and instruct bachelor's curricula. So far, due to the extraordinary demands of program start-up, the expenditures have exceeded budget but are expected to stabilize soon.

Facilities: As an extension of longstanding departments on campus, Highline's bachelor's-level programs occupy the same classrooms, offices, and laboratories as their associate-level counterparts. Offerings are scheduled to minimize competition for facilities, with many upper-division courses delivered as evening or hybrid sections. As a result, though specialized spaces are constantly at a premium, current facilities have generally proven adequate to support the applied baccalaureate initiative. Even so, the college has committed significant funding to long-term enhancements, where necessary. Already, the network security labs have received almost \$400,000 in new equipment investments, with future upgrades budgeted from user-fee accumulations. In 2018-19, a substantial renovation of Building 26 will dramatically improve the clinical-simulation areas for respiratory care instruction.

Desirable revisions based on initial year(s) of experience

At the end of the start-up of Highline College's first bachelor's degrees, the transition has been smooth. The college appointed a new Director of Workforce and Baccalaureate Education, hired additional faculty as needed to teach the required courses, made additions to library resources, increased Student Services staffing levels, and secured facilities and materials for the programs. So much planning was done ahead of time that, to date, the needed revisions have been simply small, on-going adjustments as the programs learn from experience how to better meet students' needs. Still, in the interest of continuous improvement, the programs have collected a set of recommendations for near-term adjustments. Further, as with all professional-technical degree programs, each degree area is continually searching for new skills that are needed in the profession, adding them into the coursework on an ongoing basis.

Current revision plans

The following items capture the current priorities of the applied baccalaureate programs' faculty and administrative leadership. At present, the plans include commitments to:

- *Develop new, additional articulation agreements to grow the baccalaureate programs*

further. As one example, nearby Renton Technical College offers an AAS in Applications Development that could articulate into the Cybersecurity and Forensics BAS here. At the other end of the educational pathway, Highline will finalize an articulation agreement between its baccalaureate degrees and Pacific Lutheran University's master's-level programs in the coming year.

- *Place admissions criteria in the hands of each degree area to make the enrollment process more efficient and effective for students.* As a result of this change, intake processes will be more responsive, more retention-focused, and more in line with the practices of Highline's competitors. For example, going forward, students in Highline's Network Security Engineer AAS degree program who have completed 60-70 credits will be allowed to dual-enroll in an upper-division core course that is offered only once a year, so that when they enter the BAS degree they can finish it in a more timely manner.
- *Seek additional faculty with special expertise in the degree fields,* specifically in Cybersecurity and Forensics and Global Trade and Logistics.
- *Continue to refine scheduling of classes* in formats and at times that best meet the needs of students, based on ongoing feedback from enrollees.
- *Explore additional ways to connect upper-division students to the broader campus community* and resources, including student life, tutoring, clubs, and other aspects of the student experience.
- *Increase marketing and outreach,* including an intentional focus on international student integration.
- *Assess scheduling and locations of lab-based classes* so that the affected programs can expand some high-demand, on-campus offerings.

Evidence of the addition of the baccalaureate program's effectiveness

Again, because Highline's bachelor's degree programs have been built as extensions of existing associate-level credentials and processes, the sponsoring departments have worked to integrate their baccalaureate-level assessment processes into what is already in place. On an ongoing basis, the programs measure their effectiveness through the following major avenues:

- *Advisory committee feedback:* Each program has benefited from an active advisory group. These industry professionals provide ongoing, specific feedback for each course in the program, evaluating the effectiveness of training, technology, and course content to prepare students for work in the current field.
- *Attainment data:* As with any degree program, Highline monitors student retention and completion of its baccalaureate program. The Office of Institutional Research measures these retention and completion rates (Appendix C). A system of providing detailed results to each program's sponsoring department is under development.

- *Learning outcomes assessment:* The rate at which students meet the programs' learning outcomes is assessed in a variety of ways. Below is a description of how, at present, each baccalaureate program measures attainment of its learning outcomes.

Program	Method of assessing student learning outcomes for the applied bachelor's degree are met
Cybersecurity and Forensics	Is in the process of linking its learning outcomes to the rigorous projects students must demonstrate they can successfully complete for this degree
Global Trade and Logistics	Assesses with a combination of portfolio of papers and projects, course mastery, and internship employer evaluation that document and demonstrate that they have met the learning outcomes for this degree
Respiratory Care	Assesses with a combination of papers, projects, course mastery, group discussions, and employer evaluations that document and demonstrate that students have met the learning outcomes for this degree
Youth Development	Assesses with a capstone course collecting a combination of papers, projects, course mastery, and internship employer evaluation that document and demonstrate that students have met the learning outcomes for this degree

Plans for continuing assessment of program effectiveness

Going forward, the baccalaureate programs will continue to integrate their assessment processes into departmental and instruction-wide routines. Advisory committees will continually play an active role in planning and improvements, specifically helping each degree program to identify trends, gaps in curriculum, needed faculty expertise, and new technology. Furthermore, as extensions of existing professional-technical departments, the baccalaureate programs will undergo regular program reviews in the same fashion as all other professional-technical units at Highline College. That process will include the regular analysis of the methods identified used to assess program effectiveness at delivering the degree learning outcomes to students. Additionally, faculty in the sponsoring departments will continue to situate their outcomes-assessment efforts within the campus-wide Assessment Committee's work, leveraging that resource to refine and update practices over time.

Conclusion

Today, Highline College is very pleased with its progress in initiating the institution's first applied baccalaureate programs. To the best of the college's ability to assess the initiative, there has been no negative impact from this change of degree level. Furthermore, the institution's commitment to its core themes, mission, and resources and capacity remains strong. So far, as desirable revisions have emerged, they represent relatively modest adjustments where the college

can improve the students' experience. Looking ahead, the campus has identified a variety of ways to collect evidence of the initiative's effectiveness, with a clear plan to continue assessing the effectiveness of the change.

Highline College is proud of its first class of 2016 baccalaureate graduates. Those degree-earners were able to pursue an educational pathway that they didn't have before. Before the development of a local applied bachelor's option, the Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree was effectively a terminal credential. While Highline and its peer institutions tried to create pathways for AAS-holders to continue into the university, the four-year campuses were generally uninterested in the professional skill-development and employment-friendly delivery models that AAS graduates needed. Further, the university sector often imposed significant additional credit requirements on AAS transfers, lengthening their pathway to a bachelor's degree by a year or more — a time and resource barrier that few students could overcome.

Increasingly, working professional-technical graduates need a four-year credential to meet employment demands and to advance in their careers. Highline's applied bachelor's programs are helping to meet that labor-market need. As a consequence, the college sees a bright future for its baccalaureate initiative and for the graduating classes ahead.

Appendix A: Highline College Trustees Reaffirmation of Baccalaureate Initiative 2016



HIGHLINE COLLEGE, DISTRICT 9
RESOLUTION 139-2016

(Pertaining to Reaffirmation of College Mission Statement and Core Themes)

Whereas, the College has previously developed and seeks to sustain a culture of evidence-based planning, with a focus on the metrics of its Mission, Core Themes, and Core Theme Objectives, and,

Whereas, the four current core themes continue to resonate broadly within the campus community and reflect the vision of the Board and the College's leadership, express the connection among the institution's values, its priority of community engagement, and the necessity of student success, and remain responsive to the communities it serves;

Whereas, the College's mission has seamlessly incorporated the baccalaureate degree as a means to meet current and future opportunities for enhancing workforce development; both locally and regionally,

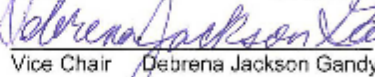
Be It Therefore Resolved that the Board of Trustees restates its commitment to the College's current core themes, broadly delineated as student achievement, diversity and globalism, community engagement, and sustainability to continue as the framework for the College's planning efforts for this accreditation cycle, and,


Be It Further Resolved, within this context the Board encourages continued improvement in Core Theme objectives such as student attainment and community engagement in our local ethnic communities.


PASSED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES this 26th day of July, 2016

COLLEGE DISTRICT 9
State of Washington


Chair Sili Savusa


Vice Chair Debrena Jackson Gandy


Member Fred Mendoza


Member Bob Roegner


Member Dan Altmayer

Certification:

I, Jack Bermingham, Secretary to the Board of Trustees of Community College District 9, State of Washington, do hereby certify that the above is a true and accurate copy of Resolution No. 139-2016 for the use and purpose intended.


Secretary to the Board

Appendix B:
Highline College Applied Bachelor's Degree Budget, 2014-2015 and 2015-16

Highline College BAS Financial Report						
	Budget	Actual		Budget	Actual	
	2014-15	2014-15	Variance	2015-16	2015-16	Variance
<u>Revenues:</u>						
Local Support	\$ 311,731	\$ 212,265	\$ 99,466	\$ 458,000	\$ 23,422	\$ 434,578
Tuition and Fees	\$ 132,638	\$ 130,565	\$ 2,073	\$ 469,800	\$ 399,977	\$ 69,823
Total Revenue	\$ 444,369	\$ 342,830	\$ 101,539	\$ 927,800	\$ 423,399	\$ 504,401
<u>Expenditures</u>						
Full-time faculty position	\$ 135,000			\$ 240,000		
Part-time Faculty	\$ 18,225			\$ 68,000		
Total faculty cost	\$ 153,225	\$ 156,284	\$ (3,059)	\$ 308,000	\$ 164,825	\$ 143,175
Department Coordinator BAS Administrative Stipend	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000	\$ -	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000	\$ -
CWU Contract Enrollments	\$ 6,750		\$ 6,750	\$ 20,000	\$ 13,520	\$ 6,480
BAS Director	\$ 60,900	\$ 54,689	\$ 6,211	\$ 60,900	\$ 67,950	\$ (7,050)
Student Services	\$ 43,313	\$ 10,168	\$ 33,145	\$ 77,000	\$ 32,465	\$ 44,535
Paraprofessional Lab Assistant	\$ 36,000		\$ 36,000	\$ 64,000		\$ 64,000
Benefits	\$ 89,944	\$ 67,126	\$ 22,818	\$ 176,300	\$ 93,642	\$ 82,658
Professional Development	\$ 3,375	\$ 8,883	\$ (5,508)	\$ 6,000	\$ 1,768	\$ 4,232
Supplies	\$ 14,625		\$ 14,625	\$ 26,000	\$ 483	\$ 25,517
Library Materials	\$ 18,000	\$ 37,146	\$ (19,146)	\$ 17,500	\$ 29,616	\$ (12,116)
Equipment	\$ 5,513	\$ -	\$ 5,513	\$ 10,000		\$ 10,000
Marketing	\$ 4,725	\$ 533	\$ 4,192	\$ 8,400	\$ 1,770	\$ 6,630
Student aid	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 9,360	\$ (9,360)
Transfer to Equipment Replacement Reserve	\$ -		\$ -	\$ 145,700		\$ 145,700
Total Expenditures	\$ 444,369	\$ 342,830	\$ 101,539	\$ 927,800	\$ 423,399	\$ 504,401

**Appendix C: Retention and Completion Data
Highline College Applied Baccalaureate Programs, 2014-2016**

BAS retention and completion rates

	Students Enrolled in Year	Fall to Spring Retention	Number of Graduates through June 2016	Completion Rate*
2014-15	53	94%	12	23%
2015-16	97	86% of all, 77% of new	0	Not available

* complete a BAS degree within 3 years of their start quarter