

**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION**

NO.: BHE 24-26

BOARD DATE: February 6, 2024

**APPROVAL OF LETTER OF INTENT OF GREENFIELD COMMUNITY COLLEGE TO
AWARD THE ASSOCIATE IN SCIENCE IN ALLIED HEALTH AND AUTHORIZATION
FOR FAST TRACK REVIEW**

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education (BHE) has evaluated the Letter of Intent of **Greenfield Community College** to award the **Associate in Science in Allied Health** and has determined that the proposal aligns with BHE criteria. Accordingly, the BHE authorizes the Commissioner to review the program and to make a final determination on degree-granting authority pursuant to the Fast-Track review protocol.

VOTED: Motion approved and advanced to the full BHE by the Executive Committee on 1/29/2024; and adopted by the BHE on 2/6/2024.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Section 9(b); AAC 18-40

Contact: Richard Riccardi, Sc.D., Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Student Success

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
February 6, 2024
Greenfield Community College
Letter of Intent
Associate in Science in Allied Health

DEGREE TITLE ABSTRACT ON INTENT AND MISSION OF PROGRAM

The purpose of Greenfield Community College's (GCC) proposed Associate in Science in Allied Health (AS/AH) is to replace the current Health Science Liberal Arts Advising Option with an updated program. GCC's intent is to increase enrollment and graduation rates for students seeking to transfer into health care programs, particularly allied health. GCC reports that by designing the proposed program to include science and math courses that are prerequisites for baccalaureate programs related to biology, chemistry, health sciences, human services, nursing, nutrition and others, students will be better prepared for transfer to baccalaureate programs. (Further details are provided below regarding MassTransfer options with which the proposed program will be in alignment.)

GCC also intends that the proposed AS/AH will enable students to enter the health occupation workforce immediately, especially if taken with additional technical training to become certified medical specialties. (e.g., phlebotomist, surgical technologist, occupational therapy assistant, radiology technician, respiratory therapist, clinical laboratory tech, cancer registrar, pharmacy assistant, medical equipment technician.)

The proposed Associate in Science in Allied Health was approved by the Greenfield Community College Board of Trustees on April 14, 2022. The LOI was circulated on April 25, 2022. No comments were received.

A. ALIGNMENT WITH MASSACHUSETTS GOALS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Address Gaps in Opportunity and Achievement in Alignment with Campus-Wide Goals

GCC reports that currently, the pathway into the health professions is through GCC's *Advising Option in Health Sciences* under the Associate in Arts, Liberal Arts General

Degree Program. Faculty recognition of an increased interest in health professions, evidenced by increasing enrollment numbers in recent years, determined that a standalone associate in science degree would better align with student needs as well as the needs in the healthcare industry. GCC noted that its current program model is limited in terms of the pre-health courses in science and math that students can take because of the large percentage of liberal arts general education courses required to complete the AA degree. The proposed program is expected to provide a strong science and math background such that students may more readily advance and that the healthcare industry will benefit with more qualified candidates to meet demands. The proposed AS/AH offers a foundational degree that students will be able to use both as a point of transfer as well as to gain entry-level employment in healthcare.

Program or Department Supports to Ensure Student Retention and Completion

GCC plans that the proposed AS/AH program will reside in the science department and will collaborate with other healthcare programs on campus. The foundational biology and chemistry courses are already central to the health care programs at the college. It is expected that students in the proposed program will be paired with an academic advisor in the science department who will support each student in completing the foundational courses in addition to supports provided by the advising center. GCC reports that its Advising Center is a significant source of support for students. Upon initial registration, advisor/success coaches provide materials and information about Allied Health, including the nuances that aren't always clear from the catalog. Advisors meet regularly with students, in addition to students being assigned to a faculty advisor in science, who carries primary responsibility for ensuring each student has clear information and deliberate plans to completion. Success coaches provide each student with day-to-day contact, ensuring students stay on track, address academic concerns or other non-curricular factors that may affect persistence. The faculty advisors and success coaches are expected to work together and serve as each student's support team. It is planned that communication among the faculty advisor, success coach, and

student will be documented and shared on the GCC advising portal.

GCC has designed the proposed AS/AH program to be both highly structured and flexible enough to balance foundational courses in math and science with the required general education courses that are necessary for transfer.

Alliances and Partnerships with PK-12, Other IHE's, Community Employers

GCC has created a Health Occupations Committee with external partners to advise the proposed program through its development and existence. It is planned that this Committee will be represented by faculty from each existing health occupation program at GCC as well as representation from the science department and academic counsel.

The duties of this committee are expected to include program development as it relates to workforce demands and technology; outreach and recruitment of both traditional and nontraditional students with a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, and including area high schools; focused pathways with stacking credentials that enable students to advance from entry to more advanced positions; increased collaboration across programs in the health occupations to enhance transfer opportunities for students and make clear the occupational choices within the healthcare professions.

The Health Occupations Committee will also serve to develop aspirations and feasibility plans for growing the program with its external partners. The full LOI application included granular details regarding the committee work in each of the areas referenced above, as well as a list of the external advisors to this committee, representing Mass Hire, the Greenfield and Massachusetts departments of public health, and the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

In developing the proposed program curriculum GCC worked to ensure alignment and transferability with baccalaureate degrees in biology, chemistry, food science, and health and human services. GCC also worked closely with the University of Massachusetts Amherst advisors for majors in dietetics, nutrition, public health (epidemiology and social science), communication disorders, kinesiology, and occupational therapy.

Relationship to MassHire Regional Blueprints

The proposed AS/AH is expected to prepare students for entry-level employment in a variety of clinical and non-clinical health careers including hospitals, doctor's offices, nursing homes, personal care services and human service organizations. As well, the proposed program is expected to prepare a student for transfer to a four-year institution to complete a bachelor's degree in health and science related areas. GCC reports that as of October 2021, there were 181 non-nursing allied health clinical professional positions open within the Western Mass Baystate Hospital System¹ There were 130 allied health positions open within the Cooley Dickinson Hospital system², and 12 within the Franklin County Public Health Department³. GCC finds that the proposed AS/AH degree would meet the minimum as well as the preferred qualifications for these job opportunities. It is predicted that such opportunities will continue to grow as the population ages and require increased services⁴. Occupations within healthcare are highlighted as a priority in the Pioneer Valley Labor Market Blueprint primarily because there are "critical and emerging gaps in the supply for qualified workers presently or in the near future"⁵. GCC further reports that, according to the Mass Future of Work analysis, healthcare, professional, scientific, and technical services are expected to see the greatest gains in employment.⁶

Duplication

GCC noted that Holyoke Community College offers an AS in Foundations of Health but is differentiated by specific requirements in the program of study. It was also noted that

¹ Health Jobs. Retrieved Oct 11th, 2021 from, www.baystatehealthjobs.com.

² www.cooleydickinson.org/events/open-interviews.

³ Career Opportunities. Retrieved Oct 11th, 2021 from, www.myfcph.org/resources/careers/.

⁴ 2020 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Plan for Franklin County, MA. Page 30

⁵ MassHire Regional Blueprints, Retrieved Oct 15th, 2021 from, <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/view-your-regions-blueprint>.

⁶ Preparing for the Future of Work in The Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Retrieved Oct 25th, 2021 from, <https://www.mma.org/resource/preparing-for-the-future-of-work-in-the-commonwealth-of-massachusetts/> Pages 37-38.

Berkshire Community College offers an A.S. in Health Science Option designed to help students enroll in nursing or other allied health fields. Berkshire requires upper-level science courses as part of the curriculum. The proposed GCC program is characterized as one that will provide both a theoretical and conceptual introduction to health and health care. The GCC program requires a focused set of science courses that prepare students to enter directly into four-year study, as well as preparing students for positions at the entry level to the healthcare labor market.

Innovative Approaches to Teaching and Learning

The AS/AH proposed program is described by GCC as flexible and adaptive to students' needs and professional goals while providing a core education for scientific fields and social sciences. Within the proposed degree, a student will be able to choose from science and math courses that support several healthcare careers. Additionally, the proposed degree is designed to allow the integration of certificates that will fulfill elective requirements. One example from GCC is that Engineering Technology Certificate credits would be eligible to stack into a Biomedical Equipment Technology pathway or a degree in Bioengineering as elective credits. Similarly, GCC indicated that a student with a paramedic certificate who wants to pursue a bachelor's degree followed by a physician assistant program could fulfill AS electives with credits from their paramedic certificate. GCC expects that the flexibility within the proposed AS/AH will accommodate career path changes that students might make without loss of credits toward the degree.

B. ALIGNMENT WITH CAMPUS STRATEGIC PLAN AND MISSION

GCC's Strategic Plan was adopted by the Board of Trustees in April 2021. Contributing to regional resilience by engaging with the community and employers as students are prepared for the future of work and for citizenship is a primary goal with GCC's first priority being to strengthen the health sciences. As well, GCC's strategic plan intends that the college will evaluate and update existing healthcare programs to determine relevance, growth capacity, and alignment with current employer need and anticipated demand and career mobility. The Pioneer Valley Blueprint has identified health care as

a top priority for the region. In these ways, the proposed program is well-aligned to the campus strategic plan. Further, GCC expects to increase both its technological and human capacity in the healthcare arena and continue to serve the community by supplying a trained workforce. GCC underscored that the proposed AS/AH degree will directly address this strategic goal by offering the types of foundational knowledge necessary for students to enter a range of traditional and emerging fields in healthcare. It is intentionally a standalone degree that is designed to facilitate transfer and it will support students who want to enter a broad array of health care fields.

LOI Program Goals and Objectives (Form B)

GCC program goals are to analyze, interpret and demonstrate a well-rounded and integrative understanding of concepts from various scientific fields to meet the requirements for entry-level healthcare positions or admission to professional programs in allied health fields (e.g., public health, nutrition, physical therapy, occupational therapy, physician assistant, biomedical engineering); demonstrate critical thinking and novel approaches to effectively analyze challenges, concepts, research, and clinical/research outcomes and apply them to professional practice; effectively evaluate and communicate information in a professional and knowledgeable manner; and approach human health and patient care from a culturally inclusive perspective that respects varied backgrounds including racial, gender, and ethnic diversity of the patient and family regarding disease and their health. Form B further explicates how these goals will be met.

C. ALIGNMENT WITH OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL OBJECTIVES OF INSTITUTION

Enrollment Projections (Form C)

GCC expects to enroll fifteen full-time and ten part-time students each year. These projections are based on faculty recognition of increased interest in health professions evidenced by increasing enrollment numbers in recent years.

*Resources and Financial Statement of Estimated Net Impact on Institution
(Form D, Appendices)*

GCC's budget reflects that the college is investing significant resources into the proposed program. Through the library, students have access to technology lending. Additionally, GCC is preparing to expand its health facilities through an iterative DCAMM process. All of this is reportedly supported through numerous grants and funds made available through donors.

STAFF REVIEW AND VALIDATION

Staff thoroughly reviewed the **LOI** proposing full degree granting authority for the **Associate in Science in Allied Health** submitted by **Greenfield Community College**. Staff validate that the **LOI** includes all data required by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education. Staff recommendation is for BHE authorization for the Commissioner to review the program pursuant to the Fast-Track review protocol.

Curriculum Outline: Form A

AS in Allied Health

<i>Required (Core) Courses in the Major (Total # courses required = 12)</i>		
<i>Course Number</i>	Course Title	Credit Hours
ENG 101	English Composition I	3
ENG 112, 114, or 116	English Composition II	3
PSY 101	Principles of Psychology	3
PSY 209 or PSY 217	Abnormal Psychology or Human Growth and Development	3
SOC 101	Principle of Sociology	3
200-level ENG	One 200-level course coded ENG	3
HIS	One course coded HIS	3
PCS 101, 141, or 142	Public Speaking, Interpersonal Communication, or Intercultural Communications	3
Any 3: BIO 126, 127, 215, 216 205, CHE 111, 112, PHY 101, 102	Biology I, Biology II, Anatomy and Physiology I, Anatomy and Physiology II, Microbiology, Chemistry I, Chemistry II, Physics I, or Physics II	12
MAT 107, 108, 114, 151, 201, 202, 203, 204, or 205	College Algebra, Precalculus, Introduction to Statistics, Applied Calculus, Calculus with Analytic Geometry I, Calculus with Analytic Geometry II, Multivariate Calculus, Elementary Differential Equations, Elementary Linear Algebra	4
	<i>Sub-total Required Credits</i>	40
<i>Elective Courses (Total # courses required = 7)</i>		
	Humanities and Fine Arts Gen Ed Elective	3-4
	Any six of the 3 or 4 credit courses coded ACC, ART, BIO, BUS, CHE, CIS, ECO, EMS, FRE, HIS, LAT, MAC, MAT, MOM, PHY, PHI, SPA	18-24
	<i>Sub-total Elective Credits</i>	21-28

<i>Distribution of General Education Requirements</i>		# of Gen Ed Credits
Arts and Humanities, including Literature and Foreign Languages		12-13
Mathematics and the Natural and Physical Sciences		16
Social Sciences		9
<i>Sub-total General Education Credits</i>		37-38
<i>Curriculum Summary</i>		
Total number of courses required for the degree		19
Total credit hours required for degree		61-68

Form B: LOI Goals and Objectives

Goal	Measurable Objective	Strategy for Achievement	Timetable and Assessment
<p>Create A.S. degree pathways in allied health that allow for student exploration in the medical professions.</p>	<p>Matriculated students moving between pathways determining what area of allied health is most aligned with their vision for their future.</p>	<p>Providing clear pathways for students to explore.</p> <p>Students advised using program-specific advising plans with a focus on applied allied health or nonprofit programming/planning.</p> <p>Core degree required courses expose students to a broad range of studies in allied health populations and practice settings to refine the focus as they move through their degree.</p>	<p>Ongoing specialized advising. Timely program level and course level curricular revisions that address the dynamic nature of the allied health field, e.g., emerging needs of specific populations or changes in funding requirements.</p>
<p>Prepare students for transfer with junior standing to four-year institutions.</p>	<p>Students fulfill all requirements outlined in their program pathway.</p>	<p>Creation of a degree program that satisfies the Mass Transfer STEM Foundation. Directed advising from faculty with expertise in the concentration area.</p>	<p>Careful advising of students that choose to matriculate into allied health from other programs to ensure a seamless transition. Advising will be concentration and population/practice-setting specific.</p>
<p>Diversify cohorts of emerging helping professionals that reflect the populations and practice settings where allied health services are delivered.</p>	<p>Enrolled students and program graduates include a mixture of diverse ethnic, socioeconomic, cultural abilities, and gender identifying groups.</p>	<p>Collaboration with the GCC Director of DEI, the Diversity Standing Committee and the Racial Justice Working Group, consult with the Racial Equity and Justice Institute.</p>	<p>Regular review of enrollment demographics and corrective actions taken as needed.</p>

<p>Provide students with a solid foundation in the allied health field, while equipping them with the academic and social skills necessary for professional success.</p>	<p>Graduation requirements include the Mass Transfer STEM Foundation courses along with subject-specific courses that address competency areas of knowledge specific to the degree program.</p>	<p>Consistent and regular meetings with advisors/success coaches to ensure students are on the path to graduate.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
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Form C: LOI Program Enrollment

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
New Full-Time	15	15	15	15	15
Continuing Full-Time	10	10	10	10	10
New Part-Time	15	15	15	15	15
Continuing Part-Time	10	10	10	10	10
Totals	50	50	50	50	50

Form D: LOI Program Budget

<i>One-time/ Start -up Costs</i>		Annual Enrollment				
	<i>Cost Categories</i>	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
	Full-time Faculty <i>(Salary & Fringe)</i>	\$82,305	\$84,774	\$87,317	\$89,936	\$92,635
	Part-time/Adjunct Faculty <i>(Salary & Fringe)</i>	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$26,000
	Staff					
	General Administrative Costs	\$2,200	\$2,200	\$2,200	\$2,200	\$2,200
	Instructional Materials, Library Acquisitions					
	Facilities/Space/Equipment					
	Field & Clinical Resources					
	Marketing					
	Total	\$108,505	\$110,974	\$114,517	\$117,136	\$120,835
<i>One-time/Start-Up Support</i>		Annual Income				
	<i>Revenue Sources</i>	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
	Grants					
	Tuition	\$31,200	\$31,200	\$31,200	\$31,200	\$31,200
	Fees	\$312,100	\$312,100	\$312,100	\$312,100	\$312,100
	Departmental					
	Reallocated Funds					
	Other					
	TOTALS	\$343,300	\$343,300	\$343,300	\$343,300	\$343,300