



Testimony on House Bill 2651
House Education Committee
March 18, 2019

Chair Doherty, Vice-Chairs Alonso Leon and Helt, and members of the Committee. My name is Kyle Thomas and I am the Director of Legislative and Policy Affairs for the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC). Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on House Bill 2651.

Under current law, HECC has the authority to approve academic programs at the institutional level. When making the determination to approve a program, HECC considers factors such as alignment with institutional mission, the demand related to the program, and whether or not the program will result in duplication in the statewide portfolio of programs offered.

While institutional boards also approve programs, they do so from a different lens than from the statewide perspective that HECC is charged to consider. Since HECC is responsible for considering these statewide factors, we believe that notification of potential programs should be provided by institutions at the time the institution begins planning for a program, and not, as what most commonly happens today, after the institutional board and the interinstitutional council of provosts have approved the program. We believe this early notification will lead to greater collaboration between institutions and HECC, and a deliberative and functional program approval process.

Because HECC's program approval process is broad, we could create approval criteria that require this notification without the passage of HB 2651 and its amendment, and we look forward to working with institutions to develop such a standard and process even if HB 2651 does not advance.

Thank you for your time today.