INDIANA COMMISSION *for* HIGHER EDUCATION

Resolution to Update Commission Policy Regarding Associate Degrees

December 10, 2015

WHEREAS, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education ("Commission") has set a goal that 60 percent of the state's population complete education beyond high school by the year 2025;

WHEREAS, 750,000 Hoosiers have earned some college credit, but no postsecondary credential;

WHEREAS, the Commission has calculated that to meet the 60 percent goal, approximately 200,000 of these students will need to return and complete a certificate or degree;

WHEREAS, IC 21-18-14-2 requires the Commission in partnership with Indiana's postsecondary education institutions to encourage students with some college, but no degree to return to complete an associate or baccalaureate degree or a technical certificate through the Return and Complete Initiative;

WHEREAS, the Commission recognizes many Return and Complete students with 60 or more credits earned toward a baccalaureate degree may be eligible to receive an associate degree;

WHEREAS, Commission policy is that four-year institutions may only offer an associate degree by exception and only if a clear workforce need exists and it has been determined the program cannot be offered at a two-year institution;

WHEREAS, students who did not earn at least 15 credits at a two-year institution have not established academic residency and cannot be granted an associate degree by the two-year institution without completing additional coursework;

WHEREAS, policy that prohibits four-year institutions from conferring associate degrees extends the time and cost of a degree for the subset of stopped-out students who have sufficient academic credits, but not academic residency, to receive an associate degree from a two-year institution;

WHEREAS, achieving Indiana's 60 percent attainment goal rests on the state's ability to offer students the most efficient and cost-effective path to graduation;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that:

I. The Commission permits four-year institutions at which Return and Complete students have established academic residency to confer Associate of Art and Associate of Science general studies degrees to students who meet the following criteria:
   - Stopped out prior to 2016
   - Needed 14 or fewer credits to earn an associate degree at the time they returned

   All other students pursuing associate degree programs offered by two-year institutions must do so at a two-year institution.