



**House  
Legislative  
Analysis  
Section**

SEP 14 1987

Mich. State Law Library

**MAKE COLLEGES UNIVERSITIES**

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**House Bills 4490, 4492, 4495, 4496, 4498  
and 4499 as passed by the House**  
Sponsor: Rep. Pat Gagliardi

**House Bills 4491 and 4497 as passed by the  
House**  
Sponsor: Rep. Alvin Hoekman

**House Bills 4493 and 4494 as passed by the  
House**  
Sponsor: Rep. Joanne G. Emmons

**Second Analysis (8-14-87)**  
**Committee: Colleges and Universities**

H.B. 4490-4499 (8-14-87)

**THE APPARENT PROBLEM:**

Four of Michigan's baccalaureate institutions are called "colleges", rather than universities — Ferris State College, Grand Valley State College, Lake Superior State College, and Saginaw Valley State College. The colleges are seeking to have their names formally changed to "universities," to better reflect their status as autonomous institutions offering bachelor's degrees in both liberal arts and technical fields, and offering graduate degree programs.

**THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:**

House Bills 4490 through 4492 would amend the acts establishing Saginaw Valley State College, Grand Valley State College, and Ferris State College to rename the institutions "universities" and to specify the following powers for the Saginaw and Grand Valley boards: general supervision of the university, control and direction of all expenditures from the university's funds, the right to sue and be sued, and adoption and alteration of a seal. House Bill 4496 would make the same name change and specify the same powers with regard to Lake Superior State College. The other bills in the package would amend various statutes to change references to the colleges to reflect the new names. The package would provide that the state would not bear any cost incurred in the transition from college to university, and that costs presented by the name changes would be borne by the schools. Each bill in the package is tie-barred to every other bill in the package. The acts to be amended and Michigan Compiled Laws references for the bills are as follows.

HB 4490	Public Act 278 of 1965	MCL 390.711 et al.
HB 4491	Public Act 120 of 1960	MCL 390.841 and 390.844
HB 4492	Public Act 114 of 1949	MCL 390.801 and 390.802
HB 4493	Public Health Code	MCL 333.2672
HB 4494	Public Act 55 of 1953	MCL 390.821 and 390.824
HB 4495	Public Act 205 of 1951	MCL 38.853
HB 4496	Public Act 26 of 1969	MCL 390.391 and 390.395
HB 4497	Public Act 21 of the Second Extra Session of 1963	MCL 390.861

HB 4498	Public School Employees Retirement Act	MCL 38.1305 and 38.1306
HB 4499	State Employees Retirement Act	MCL 38.17b

**FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The House Fiscal agency reports that the bills would have no fiscal impact. (6-8-87)

**ARGUMENTS:**

**For:**

Michigan's four state colleges are really universities in that they offer graduate degrees and do not confine their baccalaureate programs to single courses of study. Calling the institutions colleges misleads the uninformed into thinking that the schools are not as large or prestigious as they actually are. Calling the institutions universities will improve their image and help to attract out-of-state and foreign students, faculty, and staff, aid graduates in job placement, and enhance prestige and economic development capabilities for their local communities. The only costs represented by the package would be nominal ones of new letterheads and signs, which the schools could replace gradually.

**Against:**

The bills run contrary to the December 1984 recommendations of the governor's Commission on the Future of Higher Education. The commission recommended that a classification system be adopted by state policymakers as the framework for future funding decisions. That classification system included technical colleges such as Ferris State and Lake Superior State Colleges, which were assigned roles of providing high market demand, mainly technical, two- and four-year undergraduate instruction and offering primarily baccalaureate degrees, with some associate and few masters. Grand Valley State, Saginaw Valley State, and others were classified as regional state colleges, with the roles of providing broadly based and regionally accessible general four-year instruction; limited, highly focused, high-market demand nontechnical business and

professional graduate training; and regional public service and economic development assistance. Rather than clarifying the roles of the four state colleges, the bills would further confuse their functions, increase intra-state competition for scarce higher education funding, and complicate funding decisions.

**Response:** The bills have no direct effect on the funding process or the development of graduate programs. They simply change the colleges' names to better reflect their current status and their standing among other schools across the country, many of which are called universities even though smaller.

***POSITIONS:***

Ferris State College supports the package of bills. (8-14-87)

Grand Valley State College supports the package. (8-14-87)

Lake Superior State College supports the bills. (8-13-87)

Saginaw Valley State College supports the bills. (8-14-87)