



CEI arts degree approved

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Aman

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The State Board of Education approved Thursday the College of Eastern Idaho's associate of arts degree in liberal arts.

Students can now register for the 60-credit, two-year degree, which contains the general education courses needed to transfer to a four-year university to pursue a bachelor's degree.

Faculty hiring has been light since Bonneville County residents voted in May to convert Eastern Idaho Technical College into a community college. Hiring will ramp up for the spring semester, which starts in January, CEI Interim President Rick Aman said. About 70 new hires are expected by August 2018.

"The important thing is that we're up and running now. We're expecting much larger enrollment in January, so approaching that will be when the bulk of the hiring will be," he said.

Prior to conversion, the college mainly offered technical courses. The growing catalog of associate courses will include core subjects such as history, geology and chemistry, among others.

Administrators got a jump on the liberal arts degree so it can be offered during the fall semester, which starts Aug. 22. Now, they'll work on approval of an associate of science degree to offer starting in the spring semester in January.

"By concentrating on the associate of arts we were able to get through the hoops in time for August. We will now apply for the associate of science with the State Board in a month or two," Aman said.

There's little difference between an associate of arts and an associate of science; the latter contains a few more math- or science-oriented classes.

Both make up the foundation of a bachelor's degree before a student specializes on their area of focus during their junior and senior years.

A student with an associate of arts degree may pursue a bachelor's in business, for example, while an associate of science could lead to a bachelor's in physics.

"But at this two-year level it's just a couple classes that are different," Aman said.

Check out the 2017-18 course catalog at www.eitc.edu/catalog.