



Alabama Commission on Higher Education

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New Program Proposal

The following must be submitted to complete a new program request:

Submission Checklist:

- ☒ New Program Proposal
- ☒ Business Plan (<https://www.ache.edu/index.php/forms/>)
- ☒ Undergraduate or Graduate Curriculum Plan (<https://www.ache.edu/index.php/forms/>)

Primary Contact Information

Institution: Bishop State Community College

Contact: Dr. Andrea Agnew

Title: Dean of Health Sciences

Email: aagnew@bishop.edu

Telephone: 251-662-5363

Program Information

Date of Proposal Submission: 11/19/2025

Award Level: Associate's Degree

Award Nomenclature (e.g., BS, MBA): AAS; CER

Field of Study/Program Title: Funeral Services Education

CIP Code (6-digit): 12.0301

Administration of the Program

Name of Dean: Dr. Andrea Agnew

Name of College/School: School of Health Sciences

Name of Chairperson: Vacant

Name of Department/Division: Funeral Services

Implementation Information

Proposed Program Implementation Date: 8/17/2026

Anticipated Date of Approval from Institutional Governing Board: 12/12/2025

Anticipated Date of ACHE Meeting to Vote on Proposal: 3/13/2026

SACSCOC Sub Change Requirement (Notification, Approval, or NA): Approval

Other Considerations for Timing and Approval (e.g., upcoming SACSCOC review):



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I. Program Description

A. Concise Program Summary (one paragraph) to be included in ACHE Agenda:

The Associate of Applied Science (AAS) in Funeral Service Education program provides comprehensive training to prepare students for all facets of professional funeral service, emphasizing both the technical and compassionate skills required for licensure. The curriculum is structured to ensure graduates can effectively manage all aspects of a funeral home, from applying legal and ethical standards to ensuring public health and safety in the handling and disposition of human remains, including expertise in embalming and restorative art. Significantly, the program develops strong communication and relational skills to support families through grief, conduct professional arrangement conferences and ceremonies, and build essential community relationships.

B. Specific Rationale (Strengths) for the Program

List three (3) to five (5) strengths of the proposed program as specific rationale for recommending approval of this proposal.

1. **Addresses a Critical Workforce Need in Alabama:** The proposed program directly responds to a documented and growing need for licensed funeral service professionals within Alabama. Data from the Alabama Board of Funeral Service and discussions with regional funeral home directors indicate an aging workforce and challenges in recruiting qualified individuals to meet future demands. This program will provide a consistent pipeline of well-trained graduates, ensuring the continuity of essential community services and supporting the dignified care of deceased individuals and their grieving families across the state.
2. **Comprehensive Curriculum Aligning with ABFSE Accreditation and Alabama Regulations:** The curriculum has been designed to meet and exceed the rigorous standards set forth by the American Board of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE), the national accrediting body. Furthermore, it is specifically tailored to incorporate the rules and regulations of the Alabama Board of Funeral Service, including requirements for licensure and apprenticeship. This ensures graduates will not only be academically prepared but also fully eligible to pursue licensure and practice professionally in Alabama immediately upon successful completion of their apprenticeship.



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3. **Integration of Practical Skills and Experiential Learning:** Beyond theoretical knowledge, the program places a strong emphasis on the development of practical skills essential for success in the field. The proposed budget includes dedicated laboratory simulation facilities for embalming and restorative art, arrangement conference rooms for simulated client interactions, and plans for establishing strong partnerships with local funeral homes for apprenticeships and shadowing opportunities. This hands-on approach will provide students with invaluable real-world experience, making them highly competent and sought-after by employers upon graduation.

C. External Support (Recommended)

List external entities (more may be added) that may have supplied letters of support attesting to the program's strengths and attach letters with the proposal at the end of this document.

1. B.E. Brown & Co. Mortuary (Mobile, AL)
2. Norris Funeral Home (Baldwin County)
3. Eternal Rest (Irvington, AL)

D. Student Learning Outcomes

The mission of an ABFSE-accredited program must be to educate students in every phase of funeral service, so that program graduates are prepared for entry-level employment in funeral service. In support of this mission, a program must adopt at least the following Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of an accredited program, students will be able to:

1. Explain the importance of funeral service professionals in developing relationships with the families and communities they serve.
2. Identify standards of ethical conduct in funeral service practice.
3. Interpret how federal, state, and local laws apply to funeral services in order to ensure compliance.
4. Apply principles of public health and safety in the handling and preparation of human remains.
5. Demonstrate technical skills in embalming and restorative art that are necessary for the preparation and handling of human remains.
6. Demonstrate skills required for conducting arrangement of conferences, visitations, services, and ceremonies.
7. Describe the requirements and procedures for burial, cremation, and other accepted forms of final disposition of human remains.



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8. Describe methods to address the grief-related needs of the bereaved.
9. Explain management skills associated with operating a funeral establishment.
10. Demonstrate verbal and written communication skills and research skills needed for funeral service practice.

E. Similar Programs at Other Alabama Public Institutions

List programs at other Alabama public institutions of the same degree level and the same (or similar) CIP codes. If no similar programs exist within Alabama, list similar programs offered within the 16 SREB states. If the proposed program duplicates, closely resembles, or is similar to any other offerings in the state, provide justification for any potential duplication.

CIP Code	Degree Title	Institution with Similar Program	Justification for Duplication
120301	Funeral Services – AAS, CER, STC	Jeff State Community College (Birmingham, AL)	The Mobile metro area has a high concentration of funeral homes that require a steady supply of licensed funeral directors and embalmers. While the Birmingham program (more than 250 miles away) may utilize distance learning for some lecture courses, the clinical component—which often relies on local funeral homes for apprenticeship and hands-on training—is better supported by a local academic partner.

F. Relationship to Existing Programs within the Institution

Nearly all new programs have some relationship to existing offerings through shared courses, faculty, facilities, etc. Is the proposed program associated with any existing offerings within the institution, including options within current degree programs? **Yes** ☐ **No** ☒

If **yes**, please describe these relationships including whether or not the program will replace or compete with existing offerings: (**Note:** If this is a graduate program, list any existing undergraduate programs which are directly or indirectly related. If this is a doctoral program, also list related master's programs.)

If **not**, please describe how the institution plans to support a program unrelated to existing offerings.

1. Faculty and Personnel

Bishop State is committed to a national search to recruit a full-time Program Director who possesses the required licensure and ABFSE teaching experience. Additionally, qualified adjunct faculty will be hired from the local Mobile funeral service community to teach specialized courses (e.g., Embalming Lab, Restorative Art) and provide essential practical industry experience. As enrollment grows, the institution will commit to hiring additional full-time, core faculty as required by ABFSE standards.



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2. Dedicated Facilities and Equipment

Support will be provided for adequate instructional and administrative space to include:

- A fully equipped demonstration embalming/preparation laboratory
- Dedicated, technology-equipped classroom and merchandising area
- Office space for the program director and faculty

3. Curriculum and Resources

Since no courses are shared, the College will allocate a specific budget for the purchase of all required instructional materials. This includes:

- Specialized textbooks, anatomical models, and instructional software.
- Library resource acquisitions specific to funeral service law, anatomy, chemistry, pathology, and grief counseling, ensuring the library meets ABFSE collection adequacy requirements.

4. Administrative and Financial Commitment

The College will seek ACCS funding separate from existing departmental budgets to cover the start-up costs. This budget includes costs for accreditation fees and the marketing necessary to establish the program. Furthermore, the College will create an Advisory Board composed of local licensed funeral service professionals to ensure the curriculum remains current, relevant to regional workforce needs, and maintain a strong relationship with the local community.

G. Collaboration

Have any collaborations **within your institution** (i.e., research centers, across academic divisions, etc.) been explored? **Yes** ☒ **No** ☐

If **yes**, provide a brief explanation of the proposed collaboration plan(s) for the program:

The Funeral Service Education program will formalize a collaboration with the Natural Sciences Department to ensure students receive the foundational scientific knowledge required by the curriculum and ABFSE standards.

- Course Assignment: The Natural Sciences Department will be responsible for teaching BIO 111 Survey of Human Biology to all Funeral Service Education students.
- Curriculum Alignment: The Funeral Service Program Director will work with the Natural Sciences faculty to ensure the content and sequencing of BIO 111 are appropriately tailored to emphasize human anatomy, physiology, and pathology, providing the necessary background for advanced courses like Embalming and Restorative Art.
- Resource Sharing: This collaboration will utilize the existing staff, laboratory facilities, and resources within the Natural Sciences Department for the lecture and lab components of BIO 111, efficiently leveraging current institutional assets and reducing the need for new, redundant resources.

Have collaborations with **other institutions or external entities** (i.e., local business, industries, etc.) been explored? **Yes** ☒ **No** ☐

If **yes**, provide a brief explanation of the proposed collaboration plan(s) for the program:



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Industry representatives through letters of support and survey response have offered the Funeral Services Education program the following tangible support:

- Mentoring Opportunities: This would involve experienced staff members providing guidance, insights into daily operations, and career advice to students.
- Practical Education Experiences: This could include opportunities for apprenticeships licensed professionals, observing arrangements, participating in preparation room activities (under supervision and in accordance with all regulations), and gaining firsthand exposure to the various aspects of funeral service.
- Employment Consideration for Qualified Graduates: Commitment to considering qualified graduates of the Bishop State funeral services education program for employment opportunities.

H. Programmatic Accreditation

Select the appropriate program accreditor from the drop-down menu below:

American Board of Funeral Service Education Committee on Accreditation (ABFSE)

Provide a detailed timeline for gaining accreditation (i.e., when will full candidacy be reached?):

The ABFSE provides a sample 3-year timeline for candidacy:

Year 1

Fall - Contact ABFSE office and Executive Director

January - March - Executive Director Visit

July - notify ABFSE office that Candidacy application is forthcoming and request consideration on next COA meeting agenda

August 1 - submit Candidacy Self-study (SS)/Feasibility Study

October meeting - COA review and accepts SS

Year 2

Fall - site visit team schedule for winter site visit

April - COA reviews site visit team report, school response and meets with school representatives.

Potential for Candidacy to be approved.

Year 3

Program prepares for Initial Accreditation SS and prepares for Initial Accreditation site visit.

April - Initial Accreditation site visit report evaluated by COA and COA meets school representatives.

Potential for Initial Accreditation to be approved.

The College has engaged an experienced consultant to assist with the candidacy process.

I. Professional Licensure

Will the program be considered a Professional Licensure Program based on the following definition: **Yes** ☒ **No** ☐



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Professional Licensure Program: As defined in federal regulations, an instructional program that is designed to meet educational requirements for a specific professional license or certification that is required for employment in an occupation or is advertised as meeting such requirements.

If **yes**, please explain: Graduates can complete the National Board Examination given by the International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards or the state board examinations given by the Alabama Board of Funeral Service.

Select the appropriate licensure body from the table below:

Alabama Board of Funeral Services

Select the appropriate license from the table below:

Funeral Directors

J. Professional Certification

Will students earn industry certifications while completing the degree or be prepared for industry certifications upon graduation? **Yes** ☒ **No** ☐

If **yes**, please explain:

1. National Board Examination (NBE)

Type: Licensure Examination Preparation.

Description: Successful completion of the NBE, administered by the International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards (ICFSEB), is the most crucial step after graduation. The ABFSE-accredited program curriculum is specifically designed to cover the content for both sections of the NBE:

- Arts Section: Includes Funeral Directing, Funeral Service Psychology & Counseling, Sociology, Funeral Service Management, and more.
- Sciences Section: Includes Embalming, Restorative Art, Anatomy, Pathology, Chemistry, and Microbiology.

Program Goal: Graduates of the program are eligible to sit for the NBE. Passing this exam is a standard requirement for state licensure as a Funeral Director and/or Embalmer.

2. State Board Examination / Jurisprudence Exam

Type: Licensure Requirement.

Description: Upon graduation and typically after passing the NBE, graduates must pass a state-specific examination (often called a Jurisprudence Exam) that tests knowledge of Alabama's laws, rules, and regulations governing funeral service practice. The program's coursework on mortuary law directly prepares students for this exam.



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K. Admissions

Provide any additional admissions requirements beyond the institution's standard admissions process/policies for this degree level. Include prerequisites, prior degrees earned, etc.

The Funeral Service Education program is a selective admission (pre-admit) program and requires applicants to complete a specific set of requirements beyond the institution's standard admissions process.

The admission process for the **Bishop State Community College's Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S.) Degree in Funeral Service Education** is a competitive, selective, and pre-admit program that requires specific criteria to be met before the application deadline. Here are the bulleted steps and criteria for admission to the A.A.S. program:

Admission Criteria and Prerequisites

You must meet the following criteria before or by the application deadline:

- **Apprenticeship Requirement:** Possess a **current valid apprenticeship** with the state board of funeral service in the state where you plan to practice.
- **Prerequisite Courses:** Complete **15 semester hours** (or 25 quarter hours) of specific general education prerequisite courses with a **minimum grade of "C" or higher** in each course:
 - **English:** ENG 101 (English Composition I) and ENG 102 (English Composition II) or SPH 106/107 (Fundamentals of Oral/Public Speaking).
 - **Math:** MTH 100 (Intermediate College Algebra) or MTH 116 (Mathematical Applications) or a higher-level MTH elective (MTH 110 does **not** fulfill this requirement).
 - **Social Science:** PSY 200 (General Psychology) or SOC 200 (Introduction to Sociology).
 - **Humanities Elective:** One course in art, humanities, religion, theatre, music, philosophy, intermediate foreign language, or literature.
- **GPA Requirement:** Achieve a **minimum GPA of 2.5** on all prerequisite courses.
 - *Note: If transferring credits, your transfer credit GPA must also be 2.5 or above.*
- **Work Keys Assessments:** Complete the following Work Keys Assessments and achieve the required minimum scores:
 - **Work Keys Applied Math:** Minimum score of **5** out of 5.
 - **Work Keys Workplace Documents:** Minimum score of **6** out of 7.
 - **Work Keys Graphic Literacy:** Minimum score of **5** out of 6.
 - **Work Keys Business Writing:** Minimum score of **4** out of 5.
 - **Work Keys Workplace Observation:** Minimum score of **3** out of 3.

Steps for Program Admission

1. **Meet General Bishop State Admission Requirements:** First, be admitted to Bishop State Community College. This involves submitting a general application, high school transcripts, and a primary form of identification.
2. **Complete Prerequisite Courses:** Successfully complete all 15 semester hours of the required general education courses (English, Math, Social Science, and Humanities)



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with a grade of **"C" or higher** in each course and a minimum **2.5 GPA** across these courses.

3. **Secure an Apprenticeship:** Obtain and maintain a **current valid apprenticeship** with the state board of funeral service in the state where you plan to be licensed.
4. **Take Work Keys Assessments:** Take all five required Work Keys tests and achieve the specified minimum scores for each section.
5. **Submit Program Application and Documents:** Submit the **specific Funeral Service Education Program Application** and all supporting documents (including official Work Keys scores, transcripts, and proof of apprenticeship) by the established program application deadline.
6. **Attend Mandatory Orientation:** If admitted to the FSE Program, you must attend the **Mandatory Orientation** for the program. Failure to attend will result in non-admission for that semester, requiring you to re-apply.



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L. Mode of Delivery

Provide the planned delivery format(s) of the program as defined in policy (i.e., in-person, online, hybrid). Please also note whether any program requirements can be completed through competency-based assessment.

The planned mode of delivery will be online.

Can students complete the entire degree program through distance education (100% online) based on the following definition? **Yes** ☒ **No** ☐

Distance Education: An academic program for which required instructional activities can be completed entirely through distance education modalities. A distance education program may have in-person requirements that are non-instructional (e.g., orientation, practicum).

M. Instructional Site(s)

Provide the planned location(s) where the program will be delivered (i.e., main campus, satellite campus, off-campus site.) If the program will be offered at an off-campus site, provide the existing site name or submit an **Off-Campus Site Request** if new.

Will more than 50% of this program be offered at an off-campus site(s) **Yes** ☐ **No** ☒

If **yes**, which sites?

N. Industry Need

Using the federal **Standard Occupational Code (SOC) System**, indicate the top three occupational codes related to post-graduation employment from the program. A full list of SOC codes can be found at <https://www.onetcodeconnector.org/find/family/title#17>.

SOC 1 (**required**): 39-4031.00

SOC 2 (optional): 39-4011.00

SOC 3 (optional): 39-4021.00

Briefly describe how the program fulfills a specific industry or employment need for the State of Alabama. As appropriate, discuss alignment with Alabama's Statewide or Regional Lists of In-Demand Occupations (<https://www.ache.edu/index.php/policy-guidance/>) or with emerging industries as identified by [Innovate Alabama](#) or the [Economic Development Partnership of Alabama](#) (EDPA).



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O. Additional Education/Training

Please explain whether further education/training is required for graduates of the proposed program to gain entry-level employment in the SOC occupations selected above.

No. Further education/training is not required for graduates of the proposed program to gain entry-level employment in the SOC occupations selected above.

P. Student Demand

Please explain how you projected the student enrollment numbers in the **Business Plan, Lines 24-27** and provide evidence to substantiate student demand (i.e., surveys, enrollments in related courses, etc.).

Our method relies on using the demonstrated demand for Bishop State's existing, high-application programs (Nursing and PTA) as a proxy for the potential demand of the proposed funeral services education program. Our Nursing program consistently maintains an acceptance rate of less than 30%. In the last cycle, we received over 350 qualified applications for 96 seats. This 27.4% acceptance rate means 254 qualified applicants were turned away. This pool of 254, combined with similar data from the PTA program, forms the basis of our conservative enrollment projection for the new program.

Additionally, with the assistance of the Alabama Board of Funeral Services, we launched a statewide survey. A findings report is included as an appendix to this document. The report summarizes findings from a May 2025 comprehensive needs assessment survey conducted among funeral service providers in Alabama to evaluate the current state of the funeral services industry and assess the need for a funeral services education program at Bishop State Community College. The survey collected responses from 52 funeral homes across various regions of Alabama, representing businesses of different sizes and operational histories. The findings indicate a significant shortage of qualified funeral service professionals in the region, with specific challenges in hiring and retaining skilled staff. A substantial majority of respondents (88%) reported experiencing a shortage of qualified funeral service professionals in their region:

- 72% identified a significant shortage
- 16% reported a moderate shortage
- Only 8% indicated an adequate supply of professionals

The report outlines key findings and recommendations for developing a responsive funeral services education program.



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II. Program Resources and Expenses

A. All Proposed Program Personnel

Provide all personnel counts for the proposed program.

Employment Status of Program Personnel		Personnel Information		
		Count from Proposed Program Department	Count from Other Departments	Subtotal of Personnel
Current	Full-Time Faculty		2	2
	Part-Time Faculty			
	Administration		1	1
	Support Staff		2	2
**New To Be Hired	Full-Time Faculty	2		2
	Part-Time Faculty	2		2
	Administration			
	Support Staff			
Personnel Total				9

Provide justification that the institution has proposed a sufficient number of faculty (full-time and part-time) for the proposed program to ensure curriculum and program quality, integrity, and review:

The funeral services education program will begin operations with two full-time and two part-time faculty. The American Board of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE) Standard 6 requires a program to have a minimum of two full-time faculty members. One of these full-time faculty members will serve in the role of the Program Director. Beyond the minimum number of full-time staff, ABFSE also sets guidelines regarding student ratios. The standards impose maximum student-to-faculty ratios to ensure quality instruction:

Embalming Labs: Maximum ratio of **5 students to 1 faculty** member.

General Labs: Maximum ratio of **25 students to 1 faculty** member.

Overall Program: Maximum overall student-to-faculty ratio of **30:1**.

The program will be supported by existing administrative, support staff, and part-time faculty positions:

- Dean of Health Sciences
- Health Sciences Retention Coach
- Health Sciences Administrative Assistant
- Adjunct faculty: Biology
- Adjunct faculty: Computer and Information Sciences



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Note: Include *any new funds* designated for compensation costs (faculty, administration, and/or support staff to be hired) in the **Business Plan, Line 7 - Personnel Salaries and Benefits**. Current personnel salary/benefits *should not be included* in the Business Plan.

Budget Line Item	Calculation	Cost
Full-Time (2) Base Salaries	2 x \$80,000	\$160,000
Full-Time (2) Fringe Benefits	\$160,000 x 25%	\$40,000
Part-Time (2) Base Salary	2 x \$20,000	\$40,000
Part-Time (2) Fringe Benefits	\$40,000 x 10%	\$4,000
Subtotal Personnel Costs		\$244,000
Contingency / Unallocated Funds	\$250,000 - \$244,000	\$6,000
Grand Total		\$250,000



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B. Proposed Faculty Roster*

Complete the following **Faculty Roster** to provide a brief summary and qualifications of current faculty and potential new hires specific to the program.

***Note:** Institutions must maintain and have current as well as additional faculty curriculum vitae available upon ACHE request for as long as the program is active, but CVs are **not** to be submitted with this proposal.

Current Faculty			
1	2	3	4
CURRENT FACULTY NAME (FT, PT)	COURSES TAUGHT including Term, Course Number, Course Title, & Credit Hours (D, UN, UT, G, DU)	ACADEMIC DEGREES and COURSEWORK Relevant to Courses Taught, including Institution and Major; List Specific Graduate Coursework, if needed	OTHER QUALIFICATIONS and COMMENTS Related to Courses Taught and Modality(ies) (IP, OL, HY, OCIS)
Lucas, Rhonda	CIS 146 Computer Applications (F,Sp,Su), 3CR, OL, UT	Ph.D. Computing, University of South Ala	Prior experience teaching this and other courses in an online modality.
Laffitte, Darline	BIO 111 Human Biology (F,Sp,Su), 4CR, OL, UN	M.S. Biology, Prairie View A & M University	Prior experience teaching this course and other courses in an online modality.
Additional Faculty (To Be Hired)			
1	2	3	4
FACULTY POSITION (FT, PT)	COURSES TO BE TAUGHT including Term, Course Number, Course Title, & Credit Hours (D, UN, UT, G, DU)	ACADEMIC DEGREES and COURSEWORK Relevant to Courses Taught, including Institution and Major; List Specific Graduate Coursework, if needed	OTHER QUALIFICATIONS and COMMENTS Related to Courses Taught and Modality(ies) (IP, OL, HY, OCIS)
Instructor/Director (FT)	FSE 101 Funeral Directing (F), 3CR, OL, UN FSE 201 Embalming I (Sp), 3CR, OL, UN FSE 202 Embalming II (Su), 3CR, OL, UN FSE 203 Embalming Lab (F,Sp,Su), 3CR, FSE 225 Funeral Management I (Sp), 3CR, OL, UN FSE 226 Funeral Management II (Su), 3CR, OL, UN	Master's degree from a regionally accredited college or university or bachelor's degree and master's degree within 3 years of initial employment required. Valid funeral director and embalmer licenses required. Graduate of an ABFSE accredited program required.	Minimum of 3 years of full-time experience in the Funeral Services field including one year of embalming experience and sufficient specialized training and experience in funeral service practice required. Experience working with the ABFSE, licensing agencies, and funeral directors' associations. Preferred: Online teaching experience.
Instructor (FT)	FSE 110 Law & Ethics for Funeral Services (F), 3CR, OL, UN FSE 213 Restorative Art (Sp), 3CR, OL, UN FSE 214 Advanced Restorative Art (Su), 3CR, OL, UN FSE 230 Funeral Service Comprehensive Review (F,Sp, Su), 3CR, OL, UN FSE 223 (F) Funeral Services Social Sciences, 3Cr, OL, UN FSE 228 Funeral Services Internship (F,Sp, Su) 3CR, OL, UN	Master's degree from a regionally accredited college or university or bachelor's degree and master's degree within 3 years of initial employment required. Valid funeral director and embalmer licenses required. Graduate of an ABFSE accredited program required.	Minimum of 3 years of full-time experience in the Funeral Services field including one year of embalming experience and sufficient specialized training and experience in funeral service practice required. Experience working with the ABFSE, licensing agencies, and funeral directors' associations. Preferred: Online teaching experience



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Current Faculty			
1	2	3	4
CURRENT FACULTY NAME (FT, PT)	COURSES TAUGHT including Term, Course Number, Course Title, & Credit Hours (D, UN, UT, G, DU)	ACADEMIC DEGREES and COURSEWORK Relevant to Courses Taught, including Institution and Major; List Specific Graduate Coursework, if needed	OTHER QUALIFICATIONS and COMMENTS Related to Courses Taught and Modality(ies) (IP, OL, HY, OCIS)
Instructor (PT)	FSE 145 Basic Accounting Procedures for Funeral Services (F,Sp,Su), 3CR, OL, UN	Graduate of an ABFSE accredited program required. Valid funeral director and/or embalmer licenses required as applicable to courses to be taught.	Minimum of 3 years of full-time experience or equivalent in the Funeral Services field. Preferred: Online teaching experience.
Instructor (PT)	FSE 206 Principles of Mortuary Science (Sp), 3CR, OL, UN FSE 207 Thanatochemistry (Su), 3CR, OL, UN	Graduate of an ABFSE accredited program required. Valid funeral director and/or embalmer licenses required as applicable to courses to be taught.	Minimum of 3 years of full-time experience or equivalent in the Funeral Services field. Preferred: Online teaching experience.

Abbreviations: (FT, PT): Full-Time, Part-Time; (D, UN, UT, G, DU): Developmental, Undergraduate Nontransferable, Undergraduate Transferable, Graduate, Dual: High School Dual Enrollment
Course Modality: (IP, OL, HY, OCIS): In-Person, Online, Hybrid, Off-Campus Instructional Site



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C. Equipment

Will any special equipment be needed specifically for this program? Yes ☒ No ☐

If **yes**, list the special equipment and include all special equipment costs in the **Business Plan, Line 8**:

Item	Estimated Unit Cost	Quantity	Approximate Total Cost
A. Prep Room Equipment			
Hydraulic Embalming Table(s)	\$3,500	3	\$10,500
Embalming Machine(s) (Electric, Gravity Feed)	\$15,000	3	\$45,000
Removal Cot (Professional Multi-Level)	\$3,000	2	\$6,000
Body Lift/Transfer Device (Professional Electric/Hydraulic)	\$4,500	1	\$4,500
Subtotal Equipment & Transfer			\$66,000
B. Casket & Merchandise Display			
Casket and merchandise items (Full Caskets)	\$3,500	5	\$17,500
Urn & Vault Samples (Assorted materials/styles)	\$1,425	10	\$14,250
Subtotal Merchandise (Adjusted from \$32,500)			\$31,750
C. Consumables & Art Supplies			
Sample Fluids (Arterial, Cavity, Jaundice, etc.)	\$500	12 cases	\$6,000
Restorative art armatures (Head, Hand, Facial)	\$75	50 sets	\$3,750
Restorative art modeling tools (Sets & Kits)	\$150	20 sets	\$3,000
Modeling wax (10 lbs)	\$150	10 units	\$1,500
Cosmetics (Full Professional Kits, Tints, Opaques)	\$500	10 kits	\$5,000



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Subtotal Supplies			\$19,250
GRAND TOTAL			\$117,000

D. Facilities

Will new facilities or renovations to existing infrastructure be required specifically for the program?

Yes ☐ No ☒

If **yes**, describe the new facilities or renovations and include all *new* facilities and/or *renovation* costs in the **Business Plan, Line 9**:

E. Assistantships/Fellowships

Will the institution offer any assistantships specifically for this program? Yes ☐ No ☒

If **yes**, provide the number of assistantships to be offered and include all *new* costs for assistantships in the **Business Plan, Line 10**.

Explain the function of the Assistantships (i.e., teaching, research, etc.):

F. Library

Will any **additional** library resources be purchased to support the program? Yes ☒ No ☐

If **yes**, briefly describe new resources to be purchased and include the cost of new library resources in the **Business Plan, Line 11**:

The Bishop State library will enhance its collection to fully support the program's required curriculum, which includes:

- **Funeral Service:** Comprehensive materials on funeral directing, embalming theory and practice, restorative art, cremation, and final disposition methods.
- **Sciences:** Current textbooks and resources for anatomy, pathology, microbiology, chemistry, and public health.
- **Law and Ethics:** Up-to-date legal, ethical, and regulatory resources (federal, state, and local).
- **Grief/Psychosocial:** Adequate materials on grief counseling, death education (thanatology), cultural/religious funeral customs, and the psychology of death and dying.



Alabama Commission on Higher Education

Accessibility. Affordability. Coordination.

New Program Proposal

- **Business:** Resources on business management, merchandising, accounting, and communication.

Library costs are estimated at approximately \$5,000/year.

G. Accreditation Expenses

If programmatic accreditation was indicated above, please include all accreditation costs in the **Business Plan, Line 12** and itemize and explain below:

ABFSE Candidacy Fee - \$22,000 (with annual renewal of \$8,500)

H. Other Costs

Please include all other costs incurred with program implementation, such as marketing or recruitment, in the **Business Plan, Line 13** and explain below:

Marketing - \$5,500

III. Program Revenue and Funding

- A. Tuition Revenue:** Please describe how you calculated the tuition revenue that appears in the **Business Plan, Line 17**. Specifically, did you calculate using cost per credit hour or per term? Did you factor in differences between resident and non-resident tuition rates?

Note: Tuition Revenue should be proportional to total enrollment.

Tuition was calculated using cost per credit hour. The calculation assumes that there are no increases in tuition and up to 10% non-resident tuition rates per year.

- B. External Funding:** Will the proposed program require external funding (e.g., Perkins, Foundation, Federal Grants, Sponsored Research, etc.)? **Yes** ☒ **No** ☐

If **yes**, please include all external funding in the **Business Plan, Line 18** and explain specific sources and funding below:

The program will seek external funding from Perkins. Additionally, the program will apply to ACCS for workforce equipment grants.

- C. Reallocations:** For each year will tuition revenue and/or external funding cover projected expenses? **Yes** ☒ **No** ☐

If **not**, budget reallocation may be required. Please include all reallocations in the **Business Plan, Line 19** and describe below how your institution will cover any shortfalls in any given year.

ACADEMIC DEGREE PROGRAM PROPOSAL SUMMARY								
INSTITUTION:	Bishop State Community College							
PROGRAM NAME:	Funeral Services Education					CIP CODE:	12.0301	
SELECT LEVEL:	UNDERGRADUATE (ASSOCIATE)							
ESTIMATED *NEW* EXPENSES TO IMPLEMENT PROPOSED PROGRAM								
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	TOTAL
FACULTY	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$1,375,000
ADMINISTRATION/STAFF	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
EQUIPMENT	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
FACILITIES	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
ASSISTANTSHIPS/FELLOWSHIPS	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
LIBRARY	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$35,000
ACCREDITATION AND OTHER COSTS	\$22,000	\$5,000	\$13,500	\$13,500	\$13,500	\$13,500	\$13,500	\$94,500
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$152,000	\$135,000	\$143,500	\$268,500	\$268,500	\$268,500	\$268,500	\$1,504,500
NEW REVENUES AVAILABLE FOR PROGRAM SUPPORT								
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	TOTAL
REALLOCATIONS	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
EXTERNAL FUNDING	\$117,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$50,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$104,000	\$371,000
TUITION + FEES	\$152,064	\$152,064	\$152,064	\$152,064	\$165,888	\$179,712	\$193,536	\$1,147,392
TOTAL REVENUES	\$269,064	\$177,064	\$177,064	\$202,064	\$190,888	\$204,712	\$297,536	\$1,518,392
ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS								
<i>Note: "New Enrollment Headcount" is defined as unduplicated counts across years.</i>								
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	AVERAGE
FULL-TIME ENROLLMENT HEADCOUNT	No data reporting	12	12	12	12	14	14	12.67
PART-TIME ENROLLMENT HEADCOUNT		10	10	10	12	14	16	12.00
TOTAL ENROLLMENT HEADCOUNT		22	22	22	24	28	30	24.67
NEW ENROLLMENT HEADCOUNT		12	12	14	16	18	20	15.33
Validation of Enrollment			YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	
DEGREE COMPLETION PROJECTIONS								
<i>Note: Do not count Lead "0"s and Lead 0 years in computing the average annual degree completions.</i>								
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	AVERAGE
DEGREE COMPLETION PROJECTIONS	No data reporting	8	8	9	9	9	10	8.83

Undergraduate Curriculum Plan

Undergraduate Curriculum Checklist:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Overview | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Components | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Options (as required) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

1. Undergraduate Overview

**Enter the credit hour value for all applicable components (N/A if not applicable).
The credit hours MUST match the credit hours in the Curriculum Components table.**

Curriculum Overview of Proposed Program	
Credit hours required in General Education	19
Credit hours required in Program Courses & Required Electives	45
Credit hours in Program Options (concentrations/specializations/tracks)	0
Credit hours in Free Electives	0
Credit hours in required Capstone/Internship/Practicum	3
Total Credit Hours Required for Completion:	67

Maximum number of credits that can be transferred in from another institution and applied to the program:	NA
Intended program duration in semesters for full-time students:	4
Intended program duration in semesters for part-time students:	6

Does the program require students to demonstrate industry-validated skills, specifically through an embedded industry-recognized certification, structured work-based learning with an employer partner, or alignment with nationally recognized industry standards?:	YES	NO
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If **yes**, please explain (i.e., number of hours required, etc.): The FSE program utilizes a cooperative education model and is exclusively for those with a state board-sanctioned apprenticeship who are seeking to satisfy specific state licensing requirements.

	YES	NO
Does the program include any concentrations/ tracks/ options?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

If **yes**, please explain (i.e., define):

2. Undergraduate Components

Please provide all course information as indicated in the following table. Indicate new courses with “Y” in the associated column. If the course includes a required work-based learning component, such as an internship or practicum course, please indicate with a “Y” in the WBL column.

Insert Additional Rows as Needed				
Institution:	Bishop State Community College			
Program Name:	Funeral Services Education			
Program Level:	UNDERGRADUATE (ASSOCIATE)			
Curriculum Components of Proposed Program				
Course Number	Course Name	Credit Hours	New? (Y)	WBL? (Y)
General Education Courses		19		
ENG 101	English Composition I	3		
SPH 107 or SPH 107	Fundamentals of Public Speaking or Fundamentals of Oral Communication	3		
MTH 100 or MTH 112	Intermediate College Algebra or Precalculus Algebra	3		
PSY 200	General Psychology	3		
BIO 111	Human Biology	4	Y	
Humanities Elective	Includes art, religion, theatre, music, philosophy, literature, foreign language	3		
Program Courses and Required Electives		45		
FSE 101	Funeral Directing	3	Y	
FSE 110	Law and Ethics for Funeral Services	3	Y	
FSE 145	Basic Accounting Procedures for Funeral Services	3	Y	
FSE 201	Embalming I	3	Y	
FSE 202	Embalming II	3	Y	
FSE 203	Embalming Laboratory	3	Y	Y
FSE 206	Principals of Mortuary Sciences	3	Y	
FSE 207	Thanatochemistry	3	Y	
FSE 213	Restorative Art	3	Y	
FSE 214	Advanced Restorative Art	3	Y	
FSE 223	Funeral Service Social Science	3	Y	
FSE 225	Funeral Management I	3	Y	
FSE 226	Funeral Service Management II	3	Y	
CIS 146	Computer Applications	3		
FSE 230	Funeral Service Comprehensive Review	3	Y	
Program Options (enter total credit hours from all options below)				
Free Electives				
Capstone/Internship/Practicum		3		
FSE 228	Internship	3	Y	Y
Total Credit Hours Required for Completion:		67		

Undergraduate Curriculum Plan

Undergraduate Curriculum Checklist:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Overview | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Components | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Options (as required) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

1. Undergraduate Overview

**Enter the credit hour value for all applicable components (N/A if not applicable).
The credit hours MUST match the credit hours in the Curriculum Components table.**

Curriculum Overview of Proposed Program	
Credit hours required in General Education	9
Credit hours required in Program Courses & Required Electives	21
Credit hours in Program Options (concentrations/specializations/tracks)	0
Credit hours in Free Electives	0
Credit hours in required Capstone/Internship/Practicum	
Total Credit Hours Required for Completion:	30

Maximum number of credits that can be transferred in from another institution and applied to the program:	NA
---	----

Intended program duration in semesters for full-time students:	3
--	---

Intended program duration in semesters for part-time students:	
--	--

Does the program require students to demonstrate industry-validated skills, specifically through an embedded industry-recognized certification, structured work-based learning with an employer partner, or alignment with nationally recognized industry standards?:	YES	NO
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If **yes**, please explain (i.e., number of hours required, etc.): The FSE program utilizes a cooperative education model and is exclusively for those with a state board-sanctioned apprenticeship who are seeking to satisfy specific state licensing requirements.

Does the program include any concentrations/ tracks/ options?	YES	NO
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

If **yes**, please explain (i.e., define):

2. Undergraduate Components

Please provide all course information as indicated in the following table. Indicate new courses with “Y” in the associated column. If the course includes a required work-based learning component, such as an internship or practicum course, please indicate with a “Y” in the WBL column.

Insert Additional Rows as Needed				
Institution:	Bishop State Community College			
Program Name:	Funeral Services Education			
Program Level:	UNDERGRADUATE (LONG CERTIFICATE (CER))			
Curriculum Components of Proposed Program				
Course Number	Course Name	Credit Hours	New? (Y)	WBL? (Y)
General Education Courses		9		
ENG 101	English Composition I	3		
SPH 106 or SPH 107	Fundamentals of Public Speaking or Fundamentals of Oral Communication	3		
MTH 100 or MTH 112	Intermediate College Algebra or Precalculus Algebra	3		
Program Courses and Required Electives		21		
FSE 101	Funeral Directing	3	Y	
FSE 110	Law and Ethics for Funeral Services	3	Y	
FSE 145	Basic Accounting Procedures for Funeral Services	3	Y	
FSE 223	Funeral Service Social Science	3	Y	
FSE 225	Funeral Management I	3	Y	
FSE 226	Funeral Service Management II	3	Y	
CIS 146	Computer Applications	3		
Program Options (enter total credit hours from all options below)				
Free Electives				
Capstone/Internship/Practicum				
Total Credit Hours Required for Completion:		30		

B.E. BROWN & CO.

M O R T U A R Y

May 19, 2025

Mr. Olivier Charles, President
Bishop State Community College
351 N. Broad Street
Mobile, AL 36603

Subject: Letter of Support for the Proposed Funeral Services Education Program at Bishop State Community College

Dear President Charles,

On behalf of B.E. Brown & Co. Mortuary, we are writing to express our strong support for the proposed funeral services education program at Bishop State Community College. As a long-standing provider of funeral services in the Mobile County and surrounding areas, we recognize the vital importance of having well-trained and compassionate professionals entering our field.

We believe that a local, high-quality program at Bishop State will be instrumental in addressing the growing need for qualified funeral service professionals in our community and throughout Alabama. We are particularly enthusiastic about the program's potential to provide students with the foundational knowledge and practical skills necessary to excel in this demanding yet rewarding profession.

To demonstrate our commitment to the success of this program and its students, B.E. Brown & Co. Mortuary is pleased to offer the following tangible support:

- **Mentoring Opportunities:** We are willing to offer mentoring opportunities to students enrolled in the program. This would involve experienced members of our staff providing guidance, insights into daily operations, and career advice to students.
- **Practical Education Experiences:** We are prepared to collaborate with Bishop State to provide practical education experiences for students. This could include opportunities for shadowing licensed professionals, observing arrangements, participating in preparation room activities (under supervision and in accordance with all regulations), and gaining first hand exposure to the various aspects of funeral service.
- **Employment Consideration for Qualified Graduates:** We are committed to considering qualified graduates of the Bishop State funeral services education program for employment opportunities within our organization.

5817 Grelot Road, Mobile, Alabama 36609
www.BEBrownCo.com | Email: info@BEBrownCo.com
T: 251.662.9600

B.E. BROWN & CO. M O R T U A R Y

We strongly believe this program will greatly benefit our community by providing a pipeline of skilled professionals, and we are committed to collaborating with Bishop State Community College to ensure its success. We look forward to the positive impact this program will have on the future of funeral service in our area and to welcoming its well-prepared graduates into the profession.

Thank you for your dedication to developing this essential program. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can provide any further information or assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'BEB', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Bobbie E. Brown, CFSP

CEO & Owner

B.E. Brown & Co. Mortuary

251.662.9600

info@bebrownco.com



December 5, 2025

Mr. Olivier Charles, President
Bishop State Community College
351 N. Broad Street Mobile, AL 36603

Dear President Charles,

On behalf of Eternal Rest Funeral Home Services, we are writing to express our support for the proposed funeral services education program at Bishop State Community College. As a provider of funeral services in the South Mobile County area, we recognize the vital importance of having well-trained and compassionate professionals entering our field. We believe that a local, high-quality program at Bishop State Community College will be instrumental in addressing the growing need for qualified funeral service professionals in our community and throughout Alabama. This initiative is crucial for workforce development and ensuring our community has access to dignified and professional funeral care for years to come. To demonstrate our commitment to the success of this program and its students, we are pleased to offer the following tangible support:

- **Mentoring Opportunities:** We are willing to offer mentoring opportunities to students enrolled in the program. This would involve experienced members of our staff providing guidance, insights into daily operations, and career advice to students.
- **Practical Education Experiences:** We are prepared to collaborate with Bishop State to provide practical education experiences for students. This could include opportunities for shadowing licensed professionals, observing arrangements, participating in preparation room activities (under supervision and in accordance with all regulations), and gaining first hand exposure to the various aspects of funeral service.
- **Employment Consideration for Qualified Graduates:** We are committed to considering qualified graduates of the Bishop State funeral services education program for employment opportunities within our organization.

We look forward to the positive impact this program will have on the future of funeral service in our area and to welcoming its well-prepared graduates into the profession. Thank you for your dedication to developing this essential program. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can provide any further information or assistance.

Sincerely,

Carlton Malone, Owner
Eternal Rest Funeral Home Services

Norris Funeral Home

Telephone
251-937-9596

P.O. BOX 1646
BAY MINETTE, ALABAMA 36507

Facsimile
251-937-9597

November 19, 2025

Mr. Olivier Charles, President
Bishop State Community College
351 N. Broad Street
Mobile, AL 36603

Subject: Letter of Support for the Proposed Funeral Services Education Program at Bishop State Community College

Dear President Charles,

On behalf of Norris Funeral Home, we are writing to express our strong support for the proposed funeral services education program at Bishop State Community College. As a long-standing provider of funeral services in the Baldwin County area, we recognize the vital importance of having well-trained and compassionate professionals entering our field.

We believe that a local, high-quality program at Bishop State will be instrumental in addressing the growing need for qualified funeral service professionals in our community and throughout Alabama. We are particularly enthusiastic about the program's potential to provide students with the foundational knowledge and practical skills necessary to excel in this demanding yet rewarding profession.

To demonstrate our commitment to the success of this program and its students, Norris Funeral Home is pleased to offer the following tangible support:

- **Mentoring Opportunities:** We are willing to offer mentoring opportunities to students enrolled in the program. This would involve experienced members of our staff providing guidance, insights into daily operations, and career advice to students.
- **Practical Education Experiences:** We are prepared to collaborate with Bishop State to provide practical education experiences for students. This could include opportunities for shadowing licensed professionals, observing arrangements, participating in preparation room activities (under supervision and in accordance with all regulations), and gaining first hand exposure to the various aspects of funeral service.
- **Employment Consideration for Qualified Graduates:** We are committed to

considering qualified graduates of the Bishop State funeral services education program for employment opportunities within our organization.

We strongly believe this program will greatly benefit our community by providing a pipeline of skilled professionals, and we are committed to collaborating with Bishop State Community College to ensure its success. We look forward to the positive impact this program will have on the future of funeral service in our area and to welcoming its well-prepared graduates into the profession.

Thank you for your dedication to developing this essential program. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can provide any further information or assistance.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Norris
Funeral Director/Embalmer
Norris Funeral Home
251-937-9596
norrisfh@hotmail.com

Funeral Services Education Program Needs Assessment Survey Report

Executive Summary

This report presents findings from a May 2025 comprehensive needs assessment survey conducted among funeral service providers in Alabama. The survey aimed to identify workforce needs, skill gaps, and educational priorities to inform the development of a funeral services education program at Bishop State Community College. With responses from 24 funeral service establishments of varying sizes and operational histories, the survey provides valuable insights into industry challenges and opportunities.

Key findings indicate a significant shortage of qualified funeral service professionals in the region, with funeral directors and embalmers being the most difficult roles to fill. Respondents emphasized the importance of hands-on practical experience in education programs and expressed strong interest in potential collaboration with Bishop State through internships, advisory roles, and educational activities.

Survey Methodology and Respondent Profile

The survey was distributed to funeral homes and service providers across Alabama, with 24 establishments participating. Respondents represented a diverse range of businesses in terms of:

- **Operational History:** Participating businesses ranged from newly established (2.5 years) to long-standing institutions (80 years), with an average operational history of approximately 36 years.
- **Staff Size:** Most respondents (60%) reported having small teams of 1-5 employees, with 20% having 6-10 employees, 15% having 11-20 employees, and 5% employing 21+ staff members.
- **Service Areas:** Respondents serve various geographical regions across Alabama, including Mobile, Baldwin County, Lawrence County, Chilton County, Birmingham, and other cities and counties throughout the state.

Current Workforce Challenges

Shortage of Qualified Professionals

The survey reveals a critical shortage of qualified funeral service professionals in the region:

- 80% of respondents indicated there is a "significant shortage"
- 10% reported a "moderate shortage"
- Only 5% felt there is an "adequate supply"
- 5% were "unsure"

This overwhelming consensus (90% reporting some level of shortage) signals an urgent need for educational programs to address this workforce gap.

Difficult-to-Fill Positions

When asked about specific roles that are challenging to fill, respondents identified:

- Embalmers (85%)
- Funeral Directors/Managers (65%)
- Funeral Service Assistants (55%)
- Pre-Need Counselors (25%)
- Administrative/Office Staff (15%)

The high percentages for embalmers and funeral directors highlight the critical need for trained professionals in these core functions.

Primary Hiring Challenges

Respondents identified several challenges when hiring new employees:

- Lack of qualified applicants (90%)
- Lack of specific technical skills (57%)
- Lack of soft skills (48%)
- Insufficient practical experience (38%)
- Competitive salaries offered by other industries (38%)

Skill and Knowledge Gaps

When asked about specific skills or knowledge lacking in recent graduates or new hires, several themes emerged:

1. **Work ethic and attitude** - Multiple respondents mentioned concerns about motivation, work ethic, and commitment
2. **Practical skills** - Including embalming theory and practice
3. **Interpersonal abilities** - Particularly communication with grieving families and compassion
4. **Business understanding** - Including financial aspects and time management
5. **Willingness to work unconventional hours** - Handling nights, weekends, and on-call duties

Business Impact

The shortage of qualified professionals has affected businesses in several ways:

- Increased workload for existing staff (90%)
- Difficulty maintaining service standards (50%)
- Difficulty expanding services (50%)
- Increased overtime costs (30%)
- Delays in service provision (15%)

Future Outlook and Educational Needs

Industry Demand Projections

When asked about anticipated demand for funeral service professionals over the next five years:

- 55% expect demand to increase
- 30% believe it will remain the same
- 5% anticipate a decrease
- 10% are unsure

This projection suggests continued or growing demand for qualified professionals, reinforcing the need for educational programs.

Priority Educational Topics

Respondents identified several key topics that should be included in a funeral services education program:

- Embalming and Restorative Art (81%)
- Funeral Directing and Management (81%)
- Funeral Service Law and Ethics (81%)
- Technology and Digital Services (57%)
- Business Management and Marketing (52%)
- Cultural and Religious Diversity in Funeral Practices (52%)
- Grief Counseling and Support (43%)
- Pre-Need Planning and Sales (43%)
- Anatomy and Physiology (33%)

Additional suggestions included arrangement conference simulations, first call/removal training, and social-emotional support.

Importance of Practical Experience

Hands-on, practical experience was deemed crucial for a successful education program:

- 85% rated it as "very important"
- 15% considered it "moderately important"
- No respondents rated it as "slightly important" or "not important"

Preferred Educational Formats

For continuing education and professional development, respondents preferred:

- Online courses (90%)
- Evening classes (48%)
- Short-term intensive courses (29%)
- Weekend workshops (19%)

This strong preference for online options suggests flexibility is a key consideration for working professionals.

Potential for Collaboration

Internship Opportunities

When asked about offering internship or externship opportunities:

- 40% responded "yes"
- 60% responded "maybe"
- No respondents declined outright

This indicates potential for establishing meaningful experiential learning opportunities for students.

Interest in Program Development

Regarding interest in collaborating with the community college to develop the education program:

- 30% expressed definite interest
- 60% indicated possible interest
- Only 10% were not interested

Preferred Collaboration Methods

Among those interested in collaboration, preferred forms included:

- Advisory board participation (67%)
- Offering site visits or tours (67%)
- Guest lecturing (61%)
- Providing equipment or resources (22%)

Recommendations for Program Development

Based on respondent feedback, several key recommendations emerged for developing a successful funeral services education program:

1. **Prioritize hands-on training** - Establish an on-site embalming lab with diverse equipment that reflects what students will encounter in the field

2. **Balance technical and interpersonal skills** - Address both technical competencies (embalming, restorative art) and soft skills (communication, compassion, ethics)
3. **Incorporate experienced instructors** - Ensure faculty have extensive practical experience in the funeral industry
4. **Design flexible program formats** - Consider offering certificate options alongside degree programs and provide online/hybrid options
5. **Emphasize industry partnerships** - Develop strong connections with local funeral homes for internships, site visits, and guest lectures
6. **Address work ethic and professional demeanor** - Include curriculum components focusing on the service mindset required in the profession
7. **Consider practical program length** - Some respondents suggested shorter, more focused training programs

Conclusion

The survey results clearly demonstrate a significant need for a funeral services education program in the region. The shortage of qualified professionals, particularly embalmers and funeral directors, is having tangible impacts on funeral service businesses. Industry stakeholders show strong interest in collaborating on program development and providing experiential learning opportunities for students.

A successful program should balance technical skills with soft skills, emphasize hands-on experience, and offer flexible delivery formats to accommodate working professionals. By addressing these identified needs and incorporating industry feedback, the community college can develop a funeral services education program that effectively serves both students and the regional funeral service industry.