



**COLORADO
MOUNTAIN COLLEGE**

MEMORANDUM

TO: Colorado Commission on Higher Education
FROM: Matt Gianneschi, Chief Operating Officer, Colorado Mountain College
CC: Angie Paccione, Executive Director, Colorado Department of Higher Education
State Representatives Dylan Roberts and Perry Will (bill sponsors)
Carrie Hauser, President & CEO, Colorado Mountain College
DATE: March 6, 2020
RE: CMC Late Bill: CMC “Dual Mission” clarification and designation

On behalf of CMC President Dr. Carrie Hauser and the CMC Board of Trustees, we appreciate the opportunity to address the CCHE about an approved late bill which is specific to CMC and that is sponsored by Representatives Dylan Roberts and Perry Will.

The change contemplated in this bill is generally a “clean up” to neaten and clarify the statutes and processes that apply to Colorado Mountain College. CMC intended to introduce this bill concept prior to the January 29, 2020 deadline, but was then still in active discussions with the Department of Higher Education regarding its review of CMC’s academic programs. Since then, the DHE has finalized its plan for the review of CMC’s academic programs, resulting in this request for a late bill.

Detailed Bill Description

The purpose of the bill is to (a) clarify Colorado Mountain College’s status as an institution with a “dual mission” which is reflective of its existing authority to offer both two-year and four-year degrees, and (b) to align the review of CMC’s baccalaureate programs with the prevailing standards for all four-year colleges in the state, the standards which have been applied to all of CMC’s exiting bachelor’s programs since 2010.

Background and stakeholder outreach

Representatives of CMC have engaged in extensive stakeholder engagement, including sharing the information and/or seeking feedback from the following organizations:

- The Office of Governor Jared Polis
- The Department of Higher Education
- The University of Colorado System
- The Colorado Community College System
- Colorado State University System
- Fort Lewis College
- The University of Northern Colorado
- Colorado Mesa University
- Aims Community College

As other institutions around the state have evolved to meet and match the needs of their regions, students, and economies without permission from CMC, we are simply seeking to do the same. As a courtesy, representatives from CMC have reached out and received affirmations of neutrality or support from the organizations listed above with the exception of the Department of Higher Education, which has not yet offered an official opinion of the bill, but has invited CMC to meet with you today.

Importantly, CMC has had authority to offer four-year degrees for ten years, during which time the college has maintained successful bachelor's degrees in nursing, business, teacher education, sustainability studies, and leadership and management. Enrollments in these programs is very strong and represent, nearly exclusively, local students from mountain communities who have extremely limited access to bachelor's degree programs, as presented below:

Active Declared Student Enrollments, Colorado Mountain College

Bachelor of Science in Nursing:	114
Bachelor of Education:	324
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration:	1,298
Bachelor of Arts in Sustainability Studies:	719
<u>Bachelor of Applied Science/Leadership & Management:</u>	<u>301</u>
Total Active Declared Enrollments	2,756

As a result of these enrollments, Colorado Mountain College has been designated as a “Four-year Institution with Associates Authority” by the U.S. Department of Education. And yet, for purposes of Colorado regulation, definition, and funding, CMC is inconsistently assigned a designation as a “two-year college” in some cases and referenced as a four-year college in others. The confusion is perhaps understandable, as we consider ourselves as a “both and” institution which offers a combination of 2- and 4-year degrees, and dozens of specialized certificates.

Notably, as a result of its authority to offer BA programs, CMC has contributed hundreds of new college graduates toward the state's goal of 66% degree attainment while not competing with any other public institution for student enrollments or funding. And, due to CMC's ability to offer BA degrees, enrollments of students in local communities – those residing in CMC's district – have reached all-time highs. The growth of historically underserved students has surged to levels that, at several CMC campuses, exceed the designation for “Hispanic Serving Institution” status. In 2018, in part due to the availability of BA degrees, Latino students at CMC became the highest performing population (when designated by ethnicity) among all students at the college. Latino students at CMC now outperform majority students with regard to retention and degree completion. It is a fact: CMC has closed the achievement gap between Latino and majority students at the college.

Though CMC embraces its mission as a two-year and a four-year college, the college's leadership and Board of Trustees believe that officially designating the college as “Dual Mission” would clarify the college's status with the state and, relatedly, align it more consistently with national accrediting agencies and the U.S. Department of Education.

While this change would have no impact on the college's funding, it would help explain the college's distinct status in the state as it relates to its inclusion in state funding formulas – such as the one currently under discussion with the JBC – and performance funding processes, which require institutions to designate institutional “peers.”

Keep in mind that CMC is the *ONLY* public institution serving the nine counties in north central Colorado, a region spanning 12,000 square miles of rugged mountain terrain. CMC has exclusive

authority to offer postsecondary credentials to residents of communities from the Eisenhower Tunnel to the border of Mesa County (Grand Junction) and from the Wyoming border north of Steamboat Springs and then south to Aspen and Salida, which border Gunnison and Alamosa Counties (see the service area map below). There is not another higher education institution physically located within 75 miles of any CMC campus. Again, given CMC’s independent local district structure, funding, and geographic locations, CMC does not compete with other colleges and universities in the state for students or for funding. And, as a reminder, CMC receives no state funding for capital projects or adult basic education, funding these efforts entirely on our own for 55 years.

Finally, while the term “dual mission” would be new to Colorado law, the term is found in other states and is gaining momentum as a fully recognized role and mission in the nation. In fact, institutions outside of Colorado, which parallel Colorado Mountain College in many ways, have been officially designated as “dual mission” colleges. In Utah, for example, these include Snow College, Dixie State College, Utah Valley, and Weber State. The benefits of dual mission institutions are that they are flexible, affordable, accessible, offer “stackable credentials,” and can meet the needs of a vast cross section of students, those in geographically remote areas, or of those seeking ESL training, a skilled trade, a workforce certificate, a transfer associates, or a bachelor’s degree.



Proposed Bill Language:

23-71-102. Definitions

As used in this article 71, unless the context otherwise requires:

(1) (a) "Local district college" means an educational institution that provides not more than two years of training in the arts, sciences, and humanities beyond the twelfth grade of the public high school curriculum or vocational education and that conducts occupational, technical, and community service programs, with no term limitations, and general education, including college transfer programs, with unrestricted admissions. WHEN AUTHORIZED TO OFFER BOTH TWO-YEAR DEGREES AND CERTIFICATES AND A LIMITED NUMBER OF BACCALAUREATE PROGRAMS, A LOCAL DISTRICT MAY BE DESIGNATED A DUAL MISSION LOCAL DISTRICT COLLEGE.

(b) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (1)(a) of this section:

(I) Colorado mountain college SHALL SERVE AS A DUAL MISSION local district college WITH AUTHORITY TO OFFER TWO-YEAR DEGREES AND CERTIFICATES AND A LIMITED NUMBER OF BACCALAUREATE DEGREES AS ITS BOARD OF TRUSTEES DETERMINES APPROPRIATE TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITIES WITHIN ITS DISTRICT, ~~may also offer a limited number of baccalaureate degree programs as its board of trustees determines appropriate to address the needs of the communities within its service area and that are approved by the Colorado commission on higher education.~~ Colorado mountain college should confer with regional education providers to determine the feasibility of cooperative delivery of new bachelor's programs in adjacent localities. COLORADO MOUNTAIN COLLEGE SHALL NOT BE SUBJECT TO THE STANDARDS SET FORTH IN 23-1-133 (2). THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION SHALL LIMIT ITS APPROVAL OF BACHELOR'S DEGREES AT COLORADO MOUNTAIN COLLEGE TO PREVAILING PRACTICES FOR ALL PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS IN THE STATE.

(II) Aims community college, in addition to its mission as a local district college, may also offer, as its board of trustees determines appropriate to address the needs of the communities within its service area that are approved by the Colorado commission on higher education pursuant to the criteria set forth in section 23-1-133 (2):

(A) Bachelor of applied science degree programs; and

(B) Bachelor of science degree in nursing programs as a completion degree to students who have or are pursuing an associate degree in nursing.

23-71-133. Local district colleges - ~~approval of baccalaureate degrees~~ - attorney general to advise

~~(1) When approving baccalaureate degrees for any local district college pursuant to the authority in section 23-71-102 (1), the Colorado commission on higher education shall make its determination based on the following criteria:~~

~~(a) Whether the local district college can demonstrate workforce and student demand for the baccalaureate degree program by providing data;~~

~~(b) Whether the local district college can demonstrate regional and professional accreditation requirements, when applicable, and compliance with those requirements as deemed appropriate at both the institutional and program levels;~~

~~(c) Whether the local district college can demonstrate that its provision of the baccalaureate degree program is the most cost-effective method of providing the baccalaureate degree program in its service area; and~~

~~(d) Whether the local district college can provide a cost-benefit analysis showing that the additional baccalaureate degree program will not create a negative impact for the local district college or require additional state-appropriated money to operate.~~

(2) Upon request of its board of trustees, the attorney general shall serve as legal advisor to Colorado mountain college, and the board has the authority to select and retain legal counsel at the board's discretion.

~~(3) In accordance with the budget adopted by the board of trustees pursuant to section 23-71-123 (1), a local district college may use any state-appropriated money it receives, in addition to any other revenues of the college, to operate any baccalaureate degree program that the Colorado commission on higher education approves pursuant to this section.~~

