



COLORADO HIGHER EDUCATION COMPETITIVE RESEARCH AUTHORITY

University of Colorado:Colorado State University:University of Northern Colorado:Colorado Schools of Mines:State of Colorado

**Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors
February 11, 2022
12:00 pm – 2:00pm
Remote Only (Via Zoom)**

--MINUTES--

Attending: Board Members Walter Copan (CSM), Jeri Ann Lyons (UNC), Teri Fiez (CU), Angie Paccione, (Chair, CDHE), and Alan Rudolph (Vice Chair, CSU); Trisha Esquibel (CDHE), Patrick Meyers (OEDIT), Ashlee Pate (CDHE), Chris Rasmussen (Interim Secretary, CDHE), Hana Sayeed (OEDIT), Becky Takeda-Tinker (OEDIT)

I. Welcome, Introductions, and Establishment of Quorum

Chair Angie Paccione confirmed that a quorum of board members was present and called the meeting to order at 12:08 p.m. She thanked Chris Rasmussen for staffing CHECRA for the Department of Higher Education since the departure of Spencer Ellis in August 2021, and also thanks Spencer and Inta Morris for their work with CHECRA over the years. Angie noted that with the departure of both Spencer and Inta, department staff will be discussing how best to support CHECRA and where it best fits within organizational structure.

II. Approval of minutes from February 12, September 14, and December 14 meetings

- Attachment: CHECRA 2021 annual meeting minutes (handout 1)
- Attachment: CHECRA September 2021 ad hoc meeting minutes (handout 2)
- Attachment: CHECRA December 2021 ad hoc meeting minutes (handout 3)

Alan Rudolph moved to approve minutes from these three meetings; seconded by Teri Fiez. Motion approved.

III. Election of Chair and Vice Chair; Appointment of Secretary/Treasurer

Angie Paccione moved to nominate Alan Rudolph as CHECRA board chair and Jeri Ann Lyons as vice chair; seconded by Teri Fiez. Motion approved. Angie suggested that an appointment of a permanent secretary/treasurer be postponed until the Department of Higher Education determines how best to staff CHECRA. Alan Rudolph expressed his appreciation for the support of CDHE staff over the years and his understanding for the department to consider how CHECRA fits organizationally. Alan provided a brief history of funding for CHECRA, including the pause in funding in FY20 and FY21 due to COVID.

IV. Annual Financial Update

- Attachment: Board financial summary 2021 final (handout 4)
- Attachment: Financial forecast February 2022 (handout 5)

Trisha Esquibel walked through the financial documents sent to the board and noted an expected fund balance in the CHECRA account following known 2022 distributions of \$1,915,657.

V. Funding Opportunities, Proposed Allocations, and Process

- ERCs and STCs
- MRIs
- NAWI
- Other opportunities
- Annual + Quarterly meetings?

The board discussed the process of learning about, advocating for, and securing funding for different federally-funded research projects and the value of CHECRA in helping institutions demonstrate state commitment to research, which provides a competitive edge to Colorado research universities in competitions. Alan noted the particular value of MRIs and opportunities for cross-institutional application and resource sharing, especially with UNC, and suggested continuing the annual MRI set-aside of \$300,000. Walter Copan noted the value of shared access to research instruments and facilities and opportunities for faculty/student collaboration (including site visits to institutional partners). Teri Fiez noted opportunities to enter into service contracts for MRIs, which Walter suggested illustrates what something called “the collaboratory” used to do.

Walter noted that the governor recently visited Mines and discussed the state having more money than it knew how to spend effectively, and that this was an opportunity for Colorado to step forward. Alan suggested that CHECRA may need to slow spending in the short term given the two-year moratorium on appropriations. Angie suggested that CHECRA attempt to secure the \$4.2 million that had been held back due to COVID. Walter noted that the U.S. has an opportunity with available funds to rebuild its infrastructure base. Alan stated we are at a critical junction relative to the development of regional hubs to study the use of hydrogen as an alternative to fossil fuels. The governor’s office is involved in this along with the NREL and research offices in Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah. USDOE is the lead agency. Angie suggested that states leverage their chief sustainability officers in this work, including our own Will Tor. Walter noted that Build Back Better legislation has \$100 million for this work.

Ben Boggs said that he and Ashlee Pate will work to secure \$4.2 million in backfunding – he also noted that figure setting hearings are coming up and information/requests are due March 8.

Walter suggested it might be time to revisit the role of CHECRA and what it can do with a more cohesive, intentional, integrated strategy, rather than institutions advocating for a series of individual, one-off funding opportunities. Perhaps the group needs to go back to a more collaborative purpose to build an infrastructure in Colorado for future success in securing research funds from a variety of sources. Angie asked what it would take to go “the

collaboratory”; Alan said the funding ran out three years ago—an economic ROI report was done but the project ran out of funds. Teri suggested the group should focus on research as a student engagement and retention strategy that aligns with larger student success goals. Need to emphasize the student experience with research.

On the particular funding areas/buckets – Alan asked if the group should establish a deadline for MRIs rather than a rolling process, so all requests can be evaluated at the same time and funding decisions made based on full information available. ERCs/STCs are due in the fall. Alan said we need to know ASAP about potential NAWI opportunities. He is concerned about being asked to provide more than the standard cost share to be more “competitive” with institutions in other states, something he plans to address with the Council of Federal Research Institutions.

The group decided that quarterly meetings would be helpful—at least set them up and they can be cancelled if not needed. It was also suggested that two more immediate meetings—one in March and one in April—would be helpful to address immediate funding opportunities and potential requests.

VI. Advocacy/branding efforts (guest Pat Meyers, OEDIT)

- Attachment: CHECRA Talking Points December 2021 (handout 6)
- Future infrastructure opportunities (e.g., USED A Build Back Better grants, Colorado regional partnership grants)
- Website

The CHECRA board welcome Pat Meyers, executive director of the Office of Economic Development and International Trade and Colorado’s Chief Recovery Officer; Hana Sayeed, deputy director of economic recovery and deputy state recovery officer; and Becky Takeda-Tinker, recovery officer for CDHE and CDLE. Pat is also the Whitehouse liaison for infrastructure.

Pat noted that between \$7-8 billion has been appropriated for infrastructure, with half of this allocated by formula and half through competitive grants. Don’t yet know how much of this will be allocated at the state level and how much will go to regions and to individual entities. Pat suggested that institutions dig into the legislation and let him know where they think there are opportunities or alignment. He also said that he met with the Colorado congressional delegation to influence how they are developing RFPs/rules for various funding programs. Angie asked how to get higher ed to the table, and Pat suggested the hydrogen program.

VII. Other Updates

- Annual Audit
- Annual legislative report due to the General Assembly March 1, 2022
- Submission form revision (for requests, invoices, reports)

VIII. Adjourn