



**Minutes of the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) Meeting
Virtual
February 3, 2023**

BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Sarah Hughes called the business meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

I. Opening Business

A. Attendance

Commissioners attending: Chair Hughes, Vice Chair Scott, Executive Director Paccione, Commissioners Abramson, Gonzales, Harber, Kostenbauer, Meyer, Tucker, Walmer, Wilson

Advisors attending: Steve Schwartz, Mark Cavanaugh, Dr. Collen O'Neil, Dr. Melinda Piket-May, Dr. Landon Pirius, Rachel Zenzinger

B. Approval of the Minutes for the December 1, 2022, Commission Meeting

Commissioner Gonzales moved to approve the December 1, 2022, meeting minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Harber, the motion passed by consent.

C. Reports

• **Chair**

Chair Hughes reported that **Commissioners Walmer and Wilson** will co-chair a legislative workgroup that will meet on an as-needed basis and work closely with Chloe. This will be an opportunity to identify bills that might go against the spirit of the strategic plan. This will allow us to weigh in and provide an opportunity to advance the goals of the strategic plan. She reported that Commissioners Walmer, Wilson, Scott and herself participated in a conversation on the strategic plan with the House Education committee. Commissioner Walmer and Chloe are coordinating a similar session with the Senate Education Committee on the strategic plan and how it might help guide their legislative considerations and bills. Finally, she shared that she attended a conference in New Orleans hosted by JFF, Advance CTE, Excel in Ed, New America, and Education Strategy Group as part of the Colorado Succeeds cohort. For Colorado, they took two different cohorts: one focused on impact, and the other focused on innovation in regard to a national college and career pathways initiative to ensure that all students have access and succeed in high quality pathways. Before recognizing Vice Chair Scott, Chair Hughes thanked him for his partnership, leadership and commitment to CCHE and the students of Colorado.



- **Vice-Chair**

Vice Chair Scott briefly discussed the opportunity he had to speak at the CWDC meeting on the strategic plan. It was a wonderful, robust discussion where they were deeply engaged and enthusiastic about the direction that we are taking. He also mentioned that it was great to see the potential opportunity for collaboration across state government in that regard. Finally, he shared that **Advisor Piket-May** kindly invited him in December to come visit her design expo as part of her class which was a fantastic experience. He enjoyed the opportunity to do that and was very appreciative.

- **Commissioners**

Commissioner Wilson gave kudos to the group that attended the presentation in front of the House Education Committee. He stated that everyone did a great job.

Commissioner Gonzales thanked Chair Hughes and Vice-Chair Scott for taking the time to discuss the strategic plan draft to the network from the north area through the Rocky Mountain Partnership. They are already having conversations about ensuring that people in the eighth congressional district can have another session to further discuss the constructs of what the strategic plan and hear more from Chair Hughes and Vice Chair Scott on how this might move forward to action.

Commissioner Meyer mentioned the Craig community college campus and that whole community is struggling with the shutdown of the local coal mining and the plant. They are seeking to become more aligned with Colorado Mountain College.

- **Commission Standing Committees**

- **Student Success & Workforce Alignment**

Commissioner Abramson noted that he will have more to report on stackable credentials at the next meeting. He also mentioned that the committee recently discussed HB22-1215 which is to blur the line pass course and made some interim recommendations and reports. They discussed how this is fitting with the HB21-1330 and the strategic plan work. He mentioned that he will be bringing information about program reauthorizations and recommendations to be discussed at a commissioners meeting.

- **Finance, Performance & Accountability**

Commissioner Tucker reported that in its December meeting, FPA were able to get the CEO perspective on debt relief or the capital requests from **Advisor Schwartz**. They also reviewed the capital rubric and have begun thinking about what's in the realm of possible if that is something to go forward. There will be more to come on this.

- **Strategic Plan Revision Update**

This has been completed and will be removed from the agenda and replaced with a HB22-1349 Technical Workgroup Update.



- **Advisors**

Advisor Cavanaugh provided a few brief updates. There has been a \$500 increase to the Pell maximum grant that the federal government placed into its latest budget, and it has been signed so that brings us to just under \$7,400 for the maximum Pell grant.

Colorado College is going to take steps to accept COF. President Song Richardson is clarifying with the department how Colorado College can be included in COF. She is also backing an initiative for Colorado College called a Colorado Pledge that is intended to bring more Coloradans to Colorado College. In its first year, the initiative has led to an increased 51 percent in Colorado applications, and 56 percent increase in Colorado admits.

Finally, Advisor Cavanaugh noted that former CCHE Chair Venetia Kerr is a finalist for the Channel 9 leader of the year! He encouraged all to vote for her in this event.

Senator Zenzinger offered a quick review of a pre-filed bill she is working on. She is committed to addressing pressing needs in Adult Education, with Colorado having over 400,000 adults without a high school diploma or its equivalency. In 2020, a bill was passed to help remove barriers for these Coloradans to find additional pathways, but no funding was provided. Her pre-filed bill will allow colleges, ATCs and local district colleges to confer the high school equivalency diploma if they have provided the education.

D. Executive Director Report

Dr. Paccione began her report by welcoming the newly-appointed and reappointed legislative advisors. These include **Senators Zenzinger, Marchman, and Baisley**. From the House, advisors include **Representatives Storey** (re-joining now from the House having previously served from the Senate), and **Martinez** (who also happens to have been a faculty member at Adams State University).

She also introduced her new Executive Assistant, **Ms. Renee Patilla**. She joins CDHE from the Department of Human Services. Dr. Paccione also thanked **Ms. Erin McDonnell** who has performed extremely well over the past 6 months as interim Executive Assistant.

Dr. Paccione highlighted the progress the department has made executing on recent legislation. Sponsored by Senator Zenzinger, SB22-008 provides for the entire cost of postsecondary attendance for Coloradans in the foster youth program. The department has hired outreach coordinators to help with the execution of this bill and is making fast progress. The Educator Loan Forgiveness program has already distributed \$9.5 million to about 300 early childhood educators. Dr. Paccione added that these funds make all the difference. In her case, 25 years ago she received a Future Educators Scholarship from the Commission to obtain her teaching certificate – she encouraged consideration of returning to those kinds of programs.



For institutional updates, she noted that Fort Lewis College has formed a partnership with CU-Anschutz and the College of Nursing to have pre-nursing students at FLC that will join the CU-A nursing program. Other of our institutions are seeking similar partnerships which allow for greater efficiency while also serving all corners of the state. She also noted that MSU-Denver's Aerobic Team has been named national champions – this is the fourth national championship from MSU-Denver over the past few years.

She took a moment to highlight the Area Technical Colleges who have increased enrollment by 37 percent over the last 11 years. The graduate rates are very strong, and more could be enrolled if capacity among the ATCs could be increased.

In presidential news, she noted that Amy Parsons is now the president of CSU – Fort Collins and had formerly been with the CSU System Chancellor's office. Lamar Community College welcomes Dr. Rosanna Reyes as president. Tim Alvarez of Otero Community College has announced his retirement for later this year. In response to Commissioner Meyers earlier remarks about Craig and the mining operations, she wanted to note that Colorado Northwestern Community College has undertaken many partnerships to assist with the job transitions – an opportunity for Craig to work with both CMC and CNCC.

Dr. Paccione took a few minutes to discuss the recent news regarding ChatGPT. This Artificial Intelligence product is shifting the paradigm for writing and research. IHEs nationwide are undertaking considerations of what this means in terms of possible plagiarism among academic writings and projects. In Colorado, the Council of Deans are already having conversations about possible policies in this regard. Currently, these are institution-specific consideration, not a statewide policy.

Dr. Paccione closed noting her excitement for the Commission's work and the strategic plan. She fully supports the plan and seeks to ensure equity remains front and center within it. Colorado's highest unemployment rate is among black women. She is committed to moving forward with the plan so that all Coloradans can benefit from postsecondary educational opportunities and pathways.

E. Legislative Update

Ms. Chloe Figg noted that the legislative session has been meeting for one month and the department is currently tracking over 30 bills. Workforce issues are significant focus. The department is working to amend HB23-1114 which creates a designation for first-generation serving institutions. Currently, this bill focuses on enrollment and the department seeks to add metrics for retention and graduation rates as well. SB23-96, led by the University of Colorado, seeks to amend statute that caps the number of out-of-state students our public IHEs can enroll. The initial intent of the statute is to ensure Colorado institutions continue to prioritize Coloradans. The department is sympathetic with the budgetary constraints our IHEs face, and the bill will allow for additional revenue;



however, per the strategic plan, the IHEs need to address the overall college-going rate of Coloradans.

A question was asked for more information on SB23-96. Chloe noted that the statute was initially written in 1994 which caps the number of out-of-state students per your institutional mission. In 2013, CU created the Colorado Scholars program for those who graduated within the top 10% of their high school class. These students can be double-counted towards the in-state portion of the cap. Currently, only 8% of the in-state population count can be Colorado Scholars, and CU would like that increased to 15%.

F. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

II. Consent Items

- A. Reauthorization of Educator Preparation Programs at Colorado State University – *Sam Fogleman, Interim Director of Educator Preparation Program Pathways*
- B. Recommend Approval of Two-Year Cash-Funded Capital List – Morgan Community College – *Kennedy Evans, Lead Finance Analyst*

Commissioner Harber moved to approve the consent items. Seconded by **Commissioner Walmer**, the motion passed by consent.

III. Discussion of HB23-1114.

The Commission sought additional conversation on HB23-1114. The bill creates an opportunity for an IHE to be designated a first-generation serving institution. This is the first of its kind across the nation. Currently, the bill calls for 45% enrollment of first-generation students. The department seeks additional metrics for retention and graduation rates of first-gen students that are within 5% of the overall institutional retention and graduation rates. Additional aspects could include campus support services to help meet the needs of these students. These could align with existing Hunger Free Healthy Minds designations. The goal for the institutions is to better serve these students, receive the designation, and then seek additional resources to better meet these needs. The department agrees yet seeks to see a demonstration that the structure is in place and efforts underway as an institutional priority prior to the allocation. It was noted that this could also be included in discussions regarding performance-based funding revisions. A comment was added that, historically, “first-gen” had served as a proxy for many metrics related to low-income students and students of color, as these often overlap with first-generational students. How the first-generation term is defined will be important considering its previous inferences. In conclusion, advice was given to consider three questions: Who does the bill help; who does it hurt; and what are the unintended consequences.



The Commission then undertook additional conversation on SB23-96. The bill suggests three different changes to the classification of in-state students. Currently, per the 1994 statute, 55% of incoming students are to be Colorado residents. In 2013, CU, CSU, Colorado School of Mines, and UNC were granted different provisions. This included the designation as Colorado Scholars. In exchange for the additional aid CU provides to these students, they are allowed to double-count them. This allows CU to admit two additional out-of-state students and keep their balances correct. The proposed bill would do three things: Allow a Peace Corps volunteer who was classified as in-state prior to their service to return as an in-state student; allow for non-resident student athletes to count as in-state students for tuition purposes; and increase the eligible count of Colorado Scholars from 8% to 15%.

Discussion ensued as to the appropriateness of these three components, and if Colorado students were being denied admission due to out-of-state admissions. It was also noted that by admitting out-of-state students paying higher tuition, more funds were being generated to assist with in-state financial aid. Additional responses noted that a large percentage of Colorado populations are currently underserved by our institutions across the state – the recent strategic plan notes this opportunity. Additionally, state funding per resident student has increased by 35 percent over the past 12 years. So, while IHEs do seek additional funding, the state has not been negligent. Concern also raised about the redesignation of student-athletes and accountability for state funds going to athletic programs. Additionally, Colorado’s very top students often find attending out-of-state universities more affordable than Colorado – this needs to be addressed so our truly best students remain in Colorado.

Chair Hughes recognized **Mr. Aaron Grecko**, lobbyist for the University of Colorado, to help address some concerns raised. He stated that the purpose of the bill was to help address challenges in last-minute calculations of the number of in-state students who may choose not to enroll and the effect that has on the ability to enroll out-of-state students. The opportunity is to increase the amount of financial aid support for in-state students and perhaps increase overall admissions of both categories of students.

As the conversation concluded, **Chair Hughes** thanked everyone and called for a motion to adjourn. **Commissioner Abramson** moved to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 2:30 pm.

