



Minutes of the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHHE) Meeting
Virtual
May 3, 2024

BUSINESS MEETING

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

I. Opening Business

A. Attendance

Commissioners attending: Chair Hughes, Vice Chair Walmer, Commissioners Abramson, Gonzales, Harber, Kostenbauer, Meyer, Temu-Otting, Tucker, and Wilson, Executive Director Paccione

Advisors attending: Mark Cavanaugh, Mark Superka, Danielle Ongart, Jamie Viefhaus-Zak, Dr. Melinda Piket-May

B. Approval of the Minutes for the April 5, 2024 Commission Meeting

Commissioner Harber moved to approve the April 5th minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Gonzales . The motion was approved.

C. Reports

1. Chair - Chair Hughes shared the nominees for Chair and Vice Chair of CCHHE as well as the process that will be used for voting later in this meeting. She also reminded the commissioners and advisors that the retreat is scheduled for July 24-26 at Colorado Western University in Gunnison.
2. Vice Chair – Vice Chair Walmer informed the Commission of the Colorado Business Roundtable event that is scheduled for May 8th 1-4pm. She mentioned that this event will include a panel focused on Higher Education. This panel will feature President Marshall, President Brownlee, President Parsons and President Feinstein. She encouraged the commissioners to attend for a chance to hear from these leaders.
3. Commission Standing Committees
 - a. Student Success & Workforce Alignment – Commissioner Abramson reported that this committee met about 10 days ago. This group has really been



focused on recommendations coming out of the 1215 and having conversations around credentialing. This committee has also been identifying opportunities for potential partnerships with higher education colleagues and programs like OEDIT. Commissioner Abramson also mentioned that this committee will bring a few action items before the commission. They are looking forward to presenting those items with explanations and encouragement to approve them.

- b. Finance, Performance & Accountability - Commissioner Tucker reported that this committee has had some great discussions around financial aid in the budget, data challenges and collection processes for when the data systems are back up and running, and also the funded capital projects that are in the works and lastly the review of staff recommendations on the capital review process from Kennedy Evans.
- c. HB22-1349 Technical Workgroup Update – Chair Hughes shared that we had a brief update for this working group during the work session earlier today. In this session 3 main categories were covered. Understanding earnings of Colorado Students starting with 07-08 cohort, understanding what students who didn't pursue post-secondary education would have made if they had gone to college, and finally looking at net cost overall. Chair Hughes also informed the commission of 2 upcoming meetings, 1 with the data group DAG that will have representatives from each IHE across our ecosystem giving feedback and input on the progress to date. The second meeting is the CFO meeting scheduled for the 14th of this month.
- d. Transfer Ad Hoc Subcommittee - Commissioner Abramson – This Committee is on hiatus until after the legislative session.

4. Commissioners.

- a. **Commissioner Temu-Otting – COSI Update** Commissioner Temu-Otting shared with the group that COSI was able to award 4 second chance scholarships this year. New this year they have the Youth Mentorships Scholarship Program with \$100,000 to give. There are currently four organizations that have applied for these funds. Commissioner Temu-Otting also shared some outcomes for COSI from 2021 to now. COSI spent \$11.3 million, served 4,525 students and 2,818 credentials were completed. They are prioritizing the rural areas with their career launch and can fund places like Pueblo and Weld. They have great applications coming from those areas. COSI is still working on their program review and redesign. She mentioned that she invited Cynthia to share information from the COSI Board meetings but if she is unable to attend, Commissioner Temu-Otting is happy to share that information as well.
- b. **Commissioner Kostenbauer** shared
- c. **Commissioner Wilson** shared that he enjoyed being at the Capitol and observing the process for the bill hearing for SB24-164 in April.



5. Advisors

- a. **Advisor Cavanaugh** updated the Commission on the Better FAFSA news from the Federal Level. There were 8.7 million FAFSA applications received, and the initial processing has been done on 8.6 million of those applications. This work continues as the department aims for a 2-3 day turnaround for folks to hear back regarding their applications. Advisor Cavanaugh also shared that the impact of the delays and low application numbers are expected to have a heavy impact on the institutions in the rural areas across the country. He believes that there are some institutions that may not survive the fallout from all of the FAFSA issues this year, in particular, the rural institutions that are enrollment dependent. More to come on this topic in the discussion portion of the meeting.

D. Executive Director Report

Executive Director Paccione – Executive Director Paccione shared that our small outreach team has been traveling all over the state working with leaders and counselors to address the better FAFSA issues and help students mitigate those.

Dr. Paccione reported protests on Auraria Campus, and the protesters were encamping on campus. While we are all in support of the freedom of speech and to assemble, there are policies in place that prohibit encampments, tents, and overnight stays on the campus. Dr. Paccione has been incredibly involved, meeting with students, leadership and campus security regularly discussing strategy and how to keep the protests peaceful and yet allow the administrations to enforce their policies. There are protests on campuses across the country and some commencements have been cancelled as result. Dr. Paccione has offered to answer any questions the commission may have regarding this issue; they can reach out to her directly.

Executive Director Paccione also reminded the Commission of the deadline to submit legislative ideas to the department.

E. Public Comment – No public comment

II. Discussion Items

- A. **Legislative Update- Dr. Paccione** reported on Bills that have been passed and signed by the Governor. She started with House Bill 1231. This Bill pertains to healthcare campuses in the state and involves UNC, CU Anschutz, Vista Peak (private campus), additions to CSU Vet School and finally a health tower for MSU Denver. This bill has been many years in the making and it finally signed. She also mentioned House Bill 1403, a Bill for providing the cost of attendance to students experiencing homelessness. This Bill is slightly based on the Foster Youth Bill from last year and will allow us to now cover room and board for those students. Teh department is excited about the life-changing impact of this Bill on students. Senate Bill 24-164 also passed and will be signed next week.



Dr. Paccione then briefly talked about House Bill 1340. This is a new Bill that was just introduced yesterday. This Bill provides a Promise Program where the state will pay the last dollar for the first 2 years of college for students at public institutions. Students will need to apply for FAFSA and other grants and scholarships and then the state will provide the last dollar in, as a tax credit to the student. This is a significant Bill and high on the priority list for the Governor.

Executive Director Paccione gave Kudos to the staff that did all the splendid work behind the scenes on this Bill.

- B. **Administrative FAFSA Update Cont.** - Commissioner Kostenbauer asked Advisor Cavanaugh to talk a little about the downstream impact of the Better FAFSA and how it might impact populations other than the Institutions, particularly the first generation, low income and other diverse groups. Advisor Cavanaugh shared that he believes that Colorado has been able to get ahead of the national crisis with Better FAFSA because of the all the hard work of the staff at CDHE. He also reported that the populations that Commissioner Kostenbauer asked about and the very same populations that we want to pull into our institutions are the populations that have and will suffer the most in all of this. They are more likely to not complete the FAFSA application because of the issues and roadblocks to completion. Advisor Cavanaugh realizes that it has been a rough rollout for the Better FAFSA but he also believes that it will eventually be a fantastic new FAFSA. He says that we can work on closing the gap by getting national attention around some of the smaller institutions that are very enrollment dependent. It would be more detrimental to have these institutions close their doors.

III. Consent Items

- A. Approval of Revisions to CCHE Policy, Section I, Part J, Degree Authorization Act – *Heather DeLange, Director Office of Private Postsecondary Education*
- B. Resolution to Endorse the Colorado GenEd Foundational Skills Credential – *Allana Farley, Credential Pathways Coordinator*

Commissioner Wilson moved to approve the consent items. Seconded by Commissioner Gonzales. The motion was approved.

IV. Action Items –

- A. Approval to Continue the CCHE Innovation Policy Pilot Program by Colorado Community College System Institutions and Colorado Mountain College to Award Financial Aid to Concurrent Enrollment Students – *Carl Einhaus, Senior Director of Student Affairs & P20 Alignment and DeAnna Castañeda, Lead Finance Analyst*

Carl gave a brief presentation on the innovation policy, the Concurrent Enrollment (CE) pilot and outcomes pursued by Colorado Mountain College and Pueblo Community College. The pilot provided funding for expenses outside of tuition for low-income students to participate in CE. Shane Larson from Colorado Mountain College and Michael Gage from Pueblo Community College answered questions. Commissioners praised the innovation policy Dr.



Kim Poast wrote and the pilot initiative which PCC and CMC implemented. All Commissioners voted to approve the pilot to continue for an additional two years.

Commissioner Meyer made a motion to approve action agenda item IV. A. Seconded by Commissioner Abramson. The motion was approved with no objections.

B. 2024-2025 CCHE Chair/Vice Chair Election – Executive Director Paccione

Dr. Tricia Johnson facilitated the vote for the CCHE Chair and Vice Chair positions for the commissioners. They all received private forms for voting via email. Chair Hughes allowed an opportunity for the commissioners who were nominated to speak if they wanted.

Commissioner Kostenbauer shared her nomination choices and why she elected to nominate those Commissioners.

Commissioner Harber thanked his fellow Commissioners for their willingness to serve in the Chair and Vice Chair capacity.

Commissioner Gonzales thanked the other Commissioners for their kind words and for the nominations. She is committed to serving and getting to know the other Commissioners, the work and the stakeholders a little better.

Commissioner Meyer shared his nomination choices and why he elected to nominate those Commissioners.

Dr. Johnson tallied the Chair votes first and there were 8 votes for Commissioner Walmer and 2 votes for Commissioner Tucker. Commissioner Jennifer Walmer was named the new CCHE Chair. As a result of this, Commissioner Walmer motioned to remove herself from the nomination for Vice Chair. Commissioner Harber second that motion, and it was approved with no objections. With the removal of Commissioner Walmer on the Vice Chair ballot, Commissioner Gonzales was elected CCHE Vice Chair.

Commissioner Wilson thanked Chair Hughes for leadership of the Commission and congratulated the new Officers.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:08

