

*DRAFT Minutes of the December 9, 2022, Quarterly Board Meeting*

Vice Chairman Alan Rudolph called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

In attendance: Alan Rudolph (Colorado State University), Jeri Lyons (University of Northern Colorado), Massimo Ruzzene (University of Colorado) and Michael Kaufman (Colorado School of Mines – covering for Walt Copan). Also in attendance were Lisa Kinzel (Colorado School of Mines), Ben Boggs (Secretary and Treasurer) and Trisha Esquibel (Colorado Department of Higher Education Controller).

Vice Chairman Alan Rudolph welcomed everyone and time was taken to ensure all were aware of who was on the zoom call.

**Funding Opportunities and Proposed Allocations.** Two projects were brought forward for action.

1. Massimo brought forward a request in support of the *Materials Frontiers Research Center* (MFRC), a multi-institutional Materials Research and Engineering Science Center (MRSEC), proposal which was recently submitted to the National Science Foundation. If awarded, the grant will provide \$3 million a year for 6 years (with the possibility of renewal).

The MFRC will pursue highly integrated education, workforce diversification and training programs, including K-12 outreach in the Denver and St. Vrain Valley School districts, a Pre-Collegiate Diversity Program (e.g., urban, rural, tribal students), research experiences for undergraduates in partnership with MSIs Colorado Mesa University and Fort Lewis College, and a new Materials Characterization Certificate Program.

The request was \$400,000/year in CHECRA funding over the course of the MFRC's 6-year grant period to support the MFRC's education, workforce, and training programs. This funding request is subject to the MFRC's successful award of the NSF MRSEC grant (anticipated by March 2023).

Alan moved to support the request. Seconded by Jeri, the motion passed.

2. Alan brought forward a request for CHECRA to cost share for the NSF Engine Type II proposal. The 10-year \$ 160 million NSF proposal includes CHECRA higher education members, national labs, and the Colorado-Wyoming Innovation Engine (CO-WY Engine) who are corporate partners in our region. Alan noted that the proposal is very much like an NSF ERC or STC anchored in our region. The proposal theme is focused on enhancing our regional innovation ecosystem in rapidly scaling climate solutions. This will engage space and satellite research, agriculture and innovations derived in our region to address decarbonization, methane and other contributions to our climate challenges in the region. The proposal includes themes in workforce development and inclusive excellence in building the next generation workforce and diverse access to solutions in our community.

The request of CHECRA was \$500,000 per year over 10 years of the CO-WY Engine's NSF grant period to support the CO-WY Engine as the group works to advance critical technologies that will address national and societal challenges, as well as spur regional innovation and talent throughout urban and rural areas. This funding request is subject to the CO-WY Engine's successful award of the NSF type-2 Regional Innovation Engines grant award that is expected to be determined by late summer 2023.

Jeri moved to support the request. Seconded by Massimo, the motion passed.

**2022 Annual Report Preparation.** Ben reminded the board members that the annual report to the legislature is due March 1, 2023. As with the 2022 report, CDHE would request that each institution provide summaries of their projects that will serve as appendices to an introductory cover letter. This will get underway in earnest in February 2023.

The group discussed that in addition to submitting the annual report to legislators, it might be beneficial to have a "Day on the Hill" through which legislators could be engaged through meetings to learn more about the substantial benefits of CHECRA's funding and design. Ben suggested that the CDHE legislative liaison could work with the Higher Education Lobby group to coordinate legislator and staff visits. The CDHE legislative liaison would be engaged to help identify the best dates for this to occur.

**Other Updates.** The remainder of the meeting was open to general discussion. The topic of MRI commitments was discussed, noting that these no longer require cost-shares. The NSF now limits costs allowed, thus CHECRA funds are more significant. A consensus was expressed that the board will continue to consider them, but perhaps with a reduced number of requests each year. The question was posed if the board needs a CHECRA set-aside for MRIs. In response, the suggestion was made that there be no set-aside for now, and revisit to see if this is becoming an issue. However, this would no longer be a special category.

The meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.