



**Minutes of the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) Meeting
Via ZOOM Teleconference
September 3, 2020**

BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Tom McGimpsey called the business meeting to order at 1:03p.m.

I. Opening Business

A. Attendance

Commissioners attending: Chair McGimpsey, Vice Chair Kerr, Commissioners Abramson, Colon, Hughes, Kostenbauer, Meyer, Olena, Stich, Trujillo, Tucker.

Advisors attending: Rep. Kipp, Wayne Artis, Mark Cavanaugh, Brad Baca, Landon Pirius, Leah Porter, Misti Ruthven

B. Minutes

Commissioner Abramson moved to approve the minutes for the August 7, 2020 Commission meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Stich and passed unanimously.

C. Chair, Vice-Chair, Commissioners and Advisors Reports

Chair McGimpsey commented that there would be a 30 minute discussion of takeaways from the retreat last month. Affordability will also be discussed. All commissioners with received information about the IHEs in their congressional districts so they can attend governing board meetings and ask questions about the IHE's 3 challenges and best practices. Chair McGimpsey will attend the CU Board of Regents meeting next week and will also meet with their CFO.

Vice Chair Kerr had no report at this time.

Fiscal Affairs & Audit Committee – Commissioner Tucker reported that the committee met on August 28th. They discussed approval of the capital construction requests and renewals, and the capital IT budget requests. The committee also discussed changes by an institution after it withdrew a project



after appeal and how that impacts the scoring criteria. The committee also discussed the state funding allocation formula and principles.

Student Success & Academic Affairs Committee – Commissioner Stich reported that the committee met today and discussed two key issues. The first was the next steps for a grant award the department received to help with post-pandemic recovery for the state. She reported that the department has raised over \$12.5 million in funding from foundations, federal government and other organizations solely dedicated to student success and academic programming for the state. The commission and the department received a request from Colorado Mountain College for consideration of a pilot that could be authorized by CCHE to award state based aid to concurrent enrolled students as a means to expand access to early college programming in Colorado. Staff is reviewing potential paths around broader innovation policy that could be within our authority and possible given the current economic climate.

Commissioner Trujillo reported that he attended the ribbon cutting for the completed CSU Pueblo building renovation. He also accompanied Dr. Paccione on her recent visit to Pueblo. The visit provided a comprehensive review of all COVID-19 safety measures put into place on campuses in the area. He also attended a ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Pueblo Community College Mobile Learning Lab.

Commissioner Meyer reported that he joined Commissioner Hughes and Dr. Paccione on a visit to Colorado Mesa University to see the COVID-19 safety protocols put into place in advance of classes starting.

Advisor Cavanaugh reported that he recently participated in a webinar with Mike Pierce on voter registration and had great materials and takeaways to share. National voter registration day is a nonpartisan civic day on September 22nd. It's a great day to emphasize voter registration. Institutions are required by the Higher Education Act to send voter registration materials to all of their students. This can be done electronically but many institutions do more. And then finally, September 17th is National Constitution Day and we are required by federal law to provide an educational program on the Constitution.

Executive Director Report – Given by Deputy Director Inta Morris in Dr. Paccione's absence. The Department is continuing to be available to presidents, CFOs, academic officers and others to make sure that the institutions are receiving all of the support that they can on the Covid response. We are all doing our best to help our students receive something of a "normal" college experience. Dr. Paccione wanted to thank those of you who have been able to join her on campus visits already mentioned by Commissioner Trujillo and Commissioner Meyer and Commissioner Hughes. She does intend to get visit the rest of the institutions over the coming weeks so if commissioners or advisors would like to join, please let staff know. The Department released its annual investment report titled The Road to Affordability, Reducing Costs, Surmising Value for Students in our State. The report is one of the most read and appreciated reports that the



Department publishes. The report notes that an investment in a post-secondary credential is still a valuable investment and it does pay. Elaine Berman, who is now a trustee at MSU, has been spearheading the effort to bring the trustees together to advocate for higher ed. She is helping coordinate a trustee convening similar to the one hosted by the Department in January 2020. Commissioners will receive information about this convening in the weeks ahead. The Governor is releasing a message to students across the state to encourage them to be responsible over this upcoming holiday weekend. We are seeing increases in Covid positives and want to avoid further cases. Student Advisor David Olguin will be joining the Governor at this press conference today.

D. Public Comment – There was no public comment.

II. Consent Items

- A.** Recommend Approval of COF Eligibility and Student FTE for Extended Studies Programs for FY2021 – *Dr. Chris Rasmussen*
- B.** Approval of Colorado School of Mines Subsurface Frontiers Building Revised Supplemental Request – *Lauren Gilliland*
- C.** Recommendation for Approval of the 2021 Commission Meeting Schedule – *Katrina Smith*

Commissioner Colon moved to approve Consent Items A - C. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kostenbauer and passed unanimously.

III. Action Items

- A.** Approval of Supplemental for AES Building at Metropolitan State University - Denver – *Lauren Gilliland*

Lauren Gilliland, CDHE, presented a supplemental budget request submitted by Metropolitan State University - Denver (MSU) to decrease their cash spending authority on their AES Building construction project. Ms. Gilliland explained the project was appropriated \$20 million in state funding and \$40 million in institutional cash funding. The institution was \$6.45 million short and modified the project to complete within budget. The building is now complete and occupied. Despite their concerns, commissioners requested the record reflect their praise for MSU coming in under budget.

Ms. Gilliland further explained that due to the state's proportional spending requirement, MSU would be required to revert \$2.15 million to the state if it is not relieved of its remaining cash commitment through a reduction in cash spending authority. Multiple commissioners expressed concern over setting a precedent if this supplemental is approved. They also acknowledged that this request is being made under extraordinary budget circumstances, and requiring a reversion would result in significant financial hardship for MSU.



Commissioners suggested imposing a consequence in the scoring a future capital projects submitted by institutions who have not met their cash commitments in the past five years. The details of this suggestion were left to the capital construction scoring criteria review working group of commissioners. Commissioners suggested that MSU be given the option to withdrawal this supplemental request knowing that there may be a consequence in the prioritization of their future capital submissions.

Commissioner Tucker moved to approve the supplemental. Commissioner Kostenbauer seconded. Commissioner Meyer abstained and all other commissioners approved. Ms. Gilliland presented language expressing the Commission was not taking this decision lightly and is considering future consequences for institutions not meeting their cash commitments. The Commission approved the language to accompanly their approval to the Office of State Planning and Budgeting and the Capital Development Committee.

B. Approval of Prioritized List of Capital Construction and Renewal Projects and Prioritized List of Capital IT Projects for Capital Budget Request – *Lauren Gilliland*

Ms. Gilliland presented the FY 2021-22 Prioritized Capital Construction and Renewal List, and the FY 2021-22 Prioritized Capital IT List approved by the Fiscal Affairs and Audit Committee. Commissioner Meyer noted that President Foster of Colorado Mesa University contacted him and Director Paccione, CDHE, requesting the rescoring of their projects. CMU's internal prioritization, which impacts scoring, changed due to withdrawal one of their projects. Ms. Gilliland noted that the Fiscal Affairs and Audit Committee decided the current capital process did not allow for this rescoring.

Commissioner Tucker suggested the submission of the prioritization to the Office of State Budgeting and Capital Development Committee include a note that CMU withdrew a project in order to cash fund it rather than waiting for state funding, and that scoring was not changed given the point in the process. Commissioner Meyer agreed this was an acceptable solution. Ms. Gilliland noted that University of Colorado also withdrew two projects and that they would need to be included in the note as well.

Commissioner Hughes stated that she did not want to unintentionally encourage institutions who can self-fund projects to make changes after submission to get additional points. She also noted that due to budget circumstances, not many capital projects, if any, will be funded this year, making this a moot point. She suggested that a note not accompany the prioritized lists.

Commissioner Colon moved to approve the prioritized lists. Commissioner Tucker seconded. Commissioner Kerr and Commissioner Meyer abstained. Commissioner Hughes approved with the recognition that the changing of prioritization due to



withdrawing a project be addressed in the larger capital criteria review for future scoring. The remaining commissioners approved.

IV. Commission Initiatives

A. FY 2021-22 State Funding Allocations to Higher Education Institutions through Funding Formula – *Emma Fedorchuk, Emily Burns, and Jason Schrock*

Jason Schrock, CDHE, discussed a new proposed principle to guide the Department's work with the Governor's Office on the higher education funding formula for the Governor's November 1 Budget Request. The principle was more simple and straightforward than the principles discussed during the Commission's work session that occurred before the business meeting.

Given the lack of available state funding at this time due to COVID-19, the proposed principle to guide the Department's work with the Governor's Office is as follows: *To the extent possible given available state revenue, ensure that all public institutions in the state can operate for FY 2021-22.*

Mr. Schrock explained that a simple straightforward principle was best at this time given the amount of unknowns regarding the state funding that will be allocated in the formula and all the factors that need to be considered. Commissioner Hughes requested that an additional principle be added that in a funding reduction scenario the Commission is generally opposed to an across-the-board same percentage reduction for each institution. Chair McGimpsey requested that institutions report activities undertaken to reduce costs and increase affordability and how those actions relate to the Governor's Affordability Roadmap.

In addition, the Commission discussed having an independent, third party evaluate the current structure of the state's public higher education ecosystem and provide nonbinding recommendations to ensure the existing ecosystem can thrive and continue to serve students and regional economies throughout the state. The principles and guidance discussed will be distributed to the full Commission for review and comment, and then also distributed to the institutions for comment.

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Abramson and seconded by Commissioner Tucker. The meeting adjourned at 3:25pm.

