**TOPIC: DEGREE AUTHORIZATION: RECOMMENDATION FOR THE RENEWAL OF PROVISIONAL AUTHORIZATION FOR ARIZONA COLLEGE OF NURSING, AURORA**

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1. **SUMMARY**

This consent item seeks renewal of provisional authorization for Arizona College of Nursing, Aurora, to operate as an authorized private, degree-granting institution in Colorado pursuant to the Degree Authorization Act (§23-2-101 et seq.).

1. **BACKGROUND**

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) has statutory responsibility for administration of Title 23, Article 2 of the Colorado Revised Statutes, commonly referred to as the Degree Authorization Act (DAA). The Act articulates the terms by which the Commission may authorize accredited private colleges and universities, out-of-state public colleges and universities, and seminaries and bible colleges to operate in Colorado.

The DAA outlines the department’s jurisdiction over private education programs available to Coloradans. The DAA establishes standards to (1) prevent misrepresentation, fraud, and collusion in offering educational programs to the public; and to (2) protect, preserve, foster, and encourage the educational programs offered by private educational institutions, which meet generally recognized criteria of quality and effectiveness as determined through voluntary accreditation.

Arizona College of Nursing applied for the renewal of its Aurora, Colorado campus, which offers the Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Arizona College’s main campus is in Glendale, Arizona; the institution has been institutionally accredited by the Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES) since 1994. The pre-licensure Bachelor of Nursing program is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). Arizona College operates in four other states: Arizona, Florida, Nevada, and Texas, and is approved by both the Arizona state authorizing agency and the respective state Boards of Nursing. The application included NCLEX pass rates for its Nevada and Tempe, AZ campuses and demonstrated a pass rate of 97.4% and 100% respectively.

1. **STAFF ANALYSIS**

As required by the Degree Authorization Act, Arizona College of Nursing submitted the required documents concerning its organization, program, accreditation, and finances for the renewal of its Aurora campus. The college has to date been compliant with the regulations set by the Degree Authorization Act. Additionally, the Colorado State Board of Nursing has determined that Arizona College sufficiently meets the applicable rule for approval of practical and professional nursing education programs. Arizona College of Nursing’s baccalaureate degree in nursing program is granted Phase II interim approval with the authority to admit 96 students annually and implement the nursing education program. The College has now moved into Phase III of the Board of Nursing approval process.

Nursing education programs that have entered Phase III of the approval process are expected to host a Board site visit within 180 days of admission of the first cohort of students to the nursing portion of the program. Also required is the submission of semiannual reports to the Board regarding progress and problems of implementation of the systematic evaluation plan. Within 9 months of graduation of the initial class, the program is required to submit data and analyses obtained through the evaluation process. It is required that NCLEX pass rates be at or above the 75% average for first time test takers.

1. **STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Staff recommend the renewal of Provisional Authorization for the Arizona College of Nursing, Aurora campus.**

1. **STATUTORY AUTHORITY**

**C.R.S. §23-2-103.3 Authorization to operate in Colorado – renewal**

(1) (a) To operate in Colorado, a private college or university shall apply for and receive authorization from the commission. A private college or university shall obtain a separate authorization for each campus, branch, or site that is separately accredited. A private, nonprofit college or university shall submit with its application verification of nonprofit status, including a copy of the institution's tax-exempt certificate issued by the Colorado department of revenue.

(b) After receiving an application, the department shall review the application to determine whether the private college or university is institutionally accredited by a regional or national accrediting body recognized by the United States department of education. The department shall not recommend and the commission shall not approve an application from a private college or university that, in the two years preceding submission of the application, has had its accreditation suspended or withdrawn or has been prohibited from operating in another state or that has substantially the same owners, governing board, or principal officers as a private college or university that, in the two years preceding submission of the application, has had its accreditation suspended or withdrawn or has been prohibited from operating in another state.

(2) To operate in Colorado, a private college or university shall be institutionally accredited on the basis of an on-site review by a regional or national accrediting body recognized by the United States department of education; except that a private college or university may operate for an initial period without accreditation if the commission determines, in accordance with standards established by the commission, that the private college or university is likely to become accredited in a reasonable period of time or is making progress toward accreditation in accordance with the accrediting body's policies. The commission may grant a provisional authorization to a private college or university to operate for an initial period without accreditation. The private college or university shall annually renew its provisional authorization and report annually to the commission concerning the institution's progress in obtaining accreditation.