**TOPIC: DEGREE AUTHORIZATION: RECOMMENDATION FOR THE RENEWAL OF PROVISIONAL AUTHORIZATION OF CONCORDE CAREER COLLEGE**

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1. **SUMMARY**

This consent item seeks renewal of provisional authorization for Concorde Career College. Concorde Career College is currently authorized to offer its Bachelor of Science in Nursing 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.

Provisional authorization is the authorization level for institutions, new or new to Colorado, which have been evaluated by department staff under Commission procedures and authorized by the Commission to enroll students, offer instruction, graduate students, and award degrees under the condition that the institution is continuously seeking and making satisfactory progress toward accreditation at the local site. Institutions with provisional authorization are required to renew annually and must receive accreditation at the Colorado site within three years of authorization.

Concorde Career College is a for-profit institution of higher education headquartered in Kansas City, Missouri, with 15 campuses nationwide, including a campus in Aurora that offers Associate degrees (Dental Hygiene, Physical Therapist Assistant, Radiologic Technology, Respiratory Therapy, and Surgical Technology) and diplomas (Dental Assistant, Medical Assistant, Medical Office Administration, Nursing – Practical). The Aurora campus is approved by the Division of Private Occupational Schools to offer these programs and has been since 1966.

1. **STAFF ANALYSIS**

Concorde Career College offers associate degree programs and diplomas, both of which are the purview of the Division of Private Occupational Schools and the Private Occupational Schools Board. Concorde’s desire to offer a Bachelor program in Nursing activates the requirement of recommendation from the Office of Private Postsecondary Education and authorization by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education. Based on the predominance of students at the diploma and associate level, Concorde Career College will operate under both the Degree Authorization Act and the Private Occupational Schools Act.

As required by the Degree Authorization Act, Concorde Career College submitted the required documents concerning its organization, program, faculty, accreditation, and finances. Department staff contracted an evaluation team to review the application materials. The College has received Phase II interim approval from the Colorado Board of Nursing. This approval permits Concorde Career College to admit 48 students annually and implement the nursing education program.

The College is compliant with policies promulgated by the Degree Authorization Act as well as the State Board of Nursing.

1. **STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Staff recommend approval of provisional authorization renewal for Concorde Career College to offer its Bachelor of Science in Nursing in Colorado under the Degree Authorization Act.**

**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.