**TOPIC:** DEGREE AUTHORIZATION ACT: UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, GLOBAL CAMPUS – RECOMMENDATION FOR PROVISIONAL AUTHORIZATION

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1. **SUMMARY**

This discussion item provides information regarding the application of University of Maryland, Global Campus, staff is recommending provisional authorization for the university 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 sets out 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 or out-of-state public education programs available to the residents of the state of Colorado. The DAA establishes standards to (1) prevent misrepresentation, fraud, and collusion in offering educational programs to the public and (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 is 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 initial authorization.

The University of Maryland, Global Campus (UMGC) is a Maryland public, not-for-profit institution of higher education and one of 12 degree-granting institutions in the University System of Maryland. UMGC was formerly named University of Maryland University College and in 2019, the institution’s name was changed to University of Maryland Global Campus to better reflect its global presence and ongoing mission of serving the education needs of working adults and military students around the world.

UMGC now serves more than 90,000 students worldwide with 20+ locations in Maryland, D.C. and Virginia, 80+ locations across the United States, and 170+ worldwide locations – including military bases in more than 20 countries and territories.

1. **STAFF ANALYSIS**

University of Maryland, Global Campus has been invited to establish a presence on the Fort Carson, CO US Army Base. Initial plans include offering three undergraduate certificate programs, six bachelor’s degrees, three graduate certificates and six master’s degrees. All programs are offered at other locations and are well-established. UMGC has regional accreditation from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and the University has five programmatic accreditations.

As required by the Degree Authorization Act, UMGC submitted the required documents concerning its organization, programs, faculty, accreditation and finances. Department staff contracted an evaluation team to review the application materials. The team found the University’s proposed programs and methods for management and delivery as educationally sound and consistent with good academic practice.

Pursuant to statute, institutions new to Colorado shall execute a bond or other surety instrument to provide indemnification to any student that the Commission finds to have suffered loss of tuition or any fees as a result of any act or practice that is a violation of statute. UMGC is procuring the bond to meet this requirement.

1. **STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Though this is a discussion item, if there are no concerns from the Commission, staff recommends the Commission act this month to approve Provisional Authorization for University of Maryland, Global Campus to operate in Colorado.**

**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.