



**Minutes of the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) Meeting  
State Capitol, HCR0112  
May 8, 2015**

**I. OPENING BUSINESS**

Vice Chair Patty Pacey called the meeting to order at 1:10pm

**A. Attendance**

Vice Chair Pacey, Commissioners John Anderson, Luis Colon, Jeanette Garcia, Monte Moses, Hereford Percy, Regina Rodriguez and Paula Sandoval attended the meeting. Commissioner Hereford Percy attended via conference call. Also in attendance were CCHE Advisory Committee members Representative Jeni Arndt, Wayne Artis, Steve Kreidler, Dr. Barbara Morris, Dr. Toni Larson and Melissa Wagner.

**B. Minutes**

Commissioner Percy moved to approve the minutes of the April 10, 2015 CCHE meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez and passed unanimously.

**C. Commissioners and Advisor Reports**

- **Academic and Student Affairs Subcommittee** - Commissioner Moses reported that the first meeting of the Academic and Student Affairs met and was very informative. There was a robust discussion about the Prior Learning Assessments.
- **Fiscal Affairs and Audit Subcommittee** - Commissioner Colon reported that the Fiscal Affairs and Audit subcommittee also met for the first time and planned the next 12 months of work.
- **Faculty Representative** - Advisor Artis reported the General Education Council met on April 24<sup>th</sup> to begin a process of revising and updating competencies for the gtPathways program.
- **Institutional Financial Aid Representative** - Advisor Kreidler reported that the business officers in the state's institution are concerned by deep cuts in state funding to higher education, along with tuition freezes and increased reliance on local property taxes.

#### **D. Executive Director Report**

Lt. Governor Joe Garcia, Executive Director, reported that Aims Community College and Adams State University have two new presidents. The Colorado State University System's Ft Collins's campus President Dr. Tony Frank will be serving dual roles as both President of CSU-Ft. Collins and Chancellor of the System.

US Department of Education Secretary Arnie Duncan will be in Colorado May 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> and will meet with Lt. Governor Garcia to talk about higher education issues in Colorado.

Lt. Governor Garcia mentioned legislation passed this session that reduced the standards and assessment testing in the state by eliminating the PARCC tests for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades.

Lt. Governor Garcia then talked about his goal of closing the attainment gap by at least half by 2025. DHE staff has had numerous full day retreats around this goal and on May 19<sup>th</sup> there will be a public outreach meeting with people from around the state to help reach this goal. The Lt. Governor will be traveling around the state to introduce this goal and how to achieve it.

Lt. Governor Garcia attended a Lumina Conference in Chicago recently and both Colorado and Texas were recognized for the leading work being done in higher education.

He informed the Commissioners that the third Annual Summit of all Trustees and Regents and the Commission members in October.

Lt. Governor Garcia told the Commission that the Annual Legislative Report on Remedial Education will be released later in May and presented at the June CCHE meeting. The Supplemental Academic Instruction Report will be released this summer. He also reported that the Concurrent Enrollment Report would be released May 8<sup>th</sup>.

The Lt. Governor introduced Michael Vente, the Department's new Research and Policy Officer, to the Commission.

#### **E. Public Comment**

Frank Waterous, Senior Policy Officer for the Bell Policy Center

- Said he was celebrating the good news in the Concurrent Enrollment Report. The program continues to grow as does the number of minority students participating in the program.

- Mr. Waterous again reinforced the Bell Policy Center’s support of the Prior Learning Assessment process.
- He also thought the tuition policy information paper included in the meeting agenda was important and positive. He was pleased to see that all three elements of the policy; tuition, appropriations and financial aid, were addressed and included.

Mr. George Walker of Denver

- Stated that TABOR wasn’t the only problem in higher education, the main problem, he feels, is a lack of will on the part of the legislators to fund higher education. He also stated that he is against all assessment testing.

## II. CONSENT ITEMS

**A. Recommend Approval of Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy Degrees in Environmental Engineering at University of Colorado Boulder – Dr. Ian Macgillivray**

**B. Recommend Approval of Master of Science Degree in Accounting at University of Colorado-Colorado Springs – Dr. Ian Macgillivray**

Commissioner Percy moved to approve the consent items A and B. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Anderson and unanimously passed.

## III. PRESENTATION

Former Frist Lady of Colorado, Jeannie Ritter, presented a follow up on her work in mental health on college campuses.

## IV. DISCUSSION ITEMS

**A. Legislative Update – Diane Duffy presented for Kachina Weaver. Ms. Weaver prepared a recap of the legislative session that ended May 8<sup>th</sup>. The highlights are:**

- Higher education received an 11% increase for the higher education institutions and an 11% increase in need based financial aid.
- The task of completing HB14-1319 was delivered to the Legislature intact except for the change in underrepresented minority funding being transferred to Pell-eligible funding.
- The Department had two bills this session; HB15-1294 which aligns state statute with federal law regarding VA benefits and HB15-1359 which allows CollegeInvest to offer a new savings program to individuals with disabilities. Both bills passed.

- There were eight out of ten workforce developments bills that passed. One of the bills requires the Commission to establish a tuition assistance program for Pell-eligible students whose coursework does not meet Pell-eligibility requirements.
- Also mentioned that there will be approximately \$330,000 in reappropriated funds to the research group at DHE that will help in many areas of legislative implementation.

**B. New Mexico/Colorado Tuition Reciprocity Agreement** –Todd Haggerty presented this item to the Commission for discussion followed by action at the June 4<sup>th</sup> CCHE meeting. The Tuition Reciprocity Agreement between New Mexico and Colorado is due to expire on June 30, 2015. The three year agreements allow students in Colorado to attend public institutions in New Mexico at a resident tuition rate and vice versa. The cap of 500 students per each state will remain the same in the new agreement, and there will be an additional five FTE in reserve to CSU-Pueblo and Otero Junior College.

**C. Commissioners’ Initiative for Public Awareness of the Value and Benefit of Public Higher Education** – Julie Poppen gave a brief overview of the item. Vice Chair Pacey is now a member of the Rocky Mountain PBS Board of Directors and would like to use public service announcements (PSAs) on Rocky Mountain PBS to raise public awareness of the value and benefit of public higher education in the state. This campaign would be a partnership with PBS and the Commission.

Vice Chair Pacey said that PSAs are inexpensive on PBS and \$150,000 could buy three to four 30 second PSAs every day for a year. She would like current and former Commissioners, who have been frustrated about their inability to get the word out about the value of higher education in general and also specifically what different institutions have to offer, to raise money for the PSAs through receptions or business luncheons. She acknowledged that only half the money may be raised but that’s a start.

The commissioners had many questions, such as:

- Who are we trying to reach and what is the message we are trying to get to them?
- Who holds the money once it’s raised and decides how it is spent?
- What are the legal aspects of it?
- Is there a conflict of interest between the statutory role of CCHE and raising money for PBS?
- Are we replicating the institutions advertisements and recruiting messages?
- Can the funds come from the General Assembly rather than fund-raising?

It was decided that the Commissioners will form a subcommittee to further discuss these issues and report back to the Commission at the August retreat.

**D. Degree Authorization Act – Proposed Revisions to CCHE Policy, Section I Part J, and to Degree Authorization Act Fee Schedule - Heather DeLange**

- Commissioners were asked to review this item after the meeting.

**E. Annual Report on Concurrent Enrollment 2013-2014 School Year – Dr. Beth Bean**

- Commissioners were asked to review this item after the meeting.

**F. Tuition Policy Informational Paper – Diane Duffy and Todd Haggerty**

- Commissioners were asked to review this item after the meeting.

**V. ACTION ITEM**

**A. Recommend Approval of Process for Statewide Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Policy – Dr. Rhonda Epper, Dr. Barbara Morris (Ft. Lewis College), Dr. Kathleen Pickering (Colorado State University) and Dr. Jerry Migler (Colorado Community College System) -** Dr. Epper informed the Commission that the action item is recommending a process for moving forward, not a policy at this time. She reminded the Commission that in fact, most of our institutions across Colorado have practiced and do accept prior learning assessment, and they have for years, as they also understand the importance of prior learning assessment to student success. This process had not been seamless in the past. Staff recommends the establishment of a policy that guarantees the transferability of PLA credit within the GT Pathways curriculum for purposes of fulfilling general education requirements. However, for purposes of transferability of PLA credit as it applies to the major each institution will determine cut scores and course equivalencies for accepting PLA transfer credit.

This process is designed to be inclusive and deliberative and take the time needed to ensure that students are being put at the center of the recommendations. There is a distinction between how PLA credit applies when it transfers between general education and the major. The guarantee that is being proposed is only within the GT Pathways curriculum. There will be a guarantee that PLA credit granted at one institution will be accepted for general education credit at another institution and then there will be an establishment of a more complete matrix of what different institutions expect in terms of transfers for their majors. This procedure will also establish a reporting and review process to ensure that there is a framework to examine data and the effects of accepting a baseline cut score and PLA process and what those effects are on student success.

Dr. Barbara Morris reported that there was a concern about how and when to engage faculty, especially from the regional and rural institutions. In the past, the process has been to hold convenings but those are expensive for faculty to attend. One solution is, since there is more commonality than differences between the regional and community colleges, look at gtPathways as the common thread across institutions with varying roles and missions then streamline and collaborate working within our own institutions first to determine that uniform cut score for general education.

Dr. Jerry Migler said that the Community College System's revision of PLA is very similar to the one being presented to the Commission. The Community Colleges are seeing an increasing number of students that come to the institutions that have learning experiences outside of college that they can document the assessment on those that they really ought to be recognizing and particularly with veterans.

Dr. Kathleen Pickering spoke to the interest of the research institutions. The research institutions have a lot of experience with prior learning assessments, particularly those that involve testing and test scores because many of the best, highest performing and highest achieving students do take PLA credits. The concern is that the research institutions want to support this without unintentionally creating harm to students by putting them into situations where they can't succeed because they haven't received the appropriate preparation. All are eager to work together and try to find that place where commonality works very well without setting up these kinds of unintended consequences. The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) insists that faculty be the drivers of the curriculum and another concern is that we have an appropriate process for including faculty input and that when it comes to majors, in particular not only is HLC concerned about faculty input but the many majors at research and four year institutions that are accredited by specific disciplinary bodies. That can't be changed without creating vulnerabilities that we will lose accreditation in some of the most important majors.

Dr. Epper explained the timeline for this process:

- December 2015 - Establish common cut scores for standardized assessments; integrate into the transfer equivalency process institutional mechanisms that allow transfer of credit; each public institution defines a process to test out of a course; examine the PLA offerings for active military and veterans
- March 2016 - Credits earned at state public institutions through PLA meeting a receiving institution's requirements for a major shall transfer and immediately be applicable to the major. Institutions will examine cut-scores for AP, IB, DSST and CLEP, driven by institutional data, that apply to the major.
- December 2016 - Develop mechanisms to consistently transcript PLA credit; develop an effective, common reporting model for PLA containing all policies from all public institutions; each public institution defines a process to test out of a course "including specifying use of a national test or the criteria for approving institutionally devised tests".

Commissioner Moses moved to approve the Prior Learning Assessment process. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sandoval and unanimously passed.

### **MEETING ADJOURNED**

Commissioner Anderson moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Garcia. The meeting was adjourned at 4:30pm.