

COLORADO COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION

May 10, 2001
Special Teleconference Meeting
Denver, Colorado

MINUTES

Commissioners

Present: Raymond T. Baker; Terrance Farina; David E. Greenberg; Robert A. Hessler; Peggy Lamm, Vice Chair; Ralph Nagel, Chair; Dean Quamme; James Stewart; and William B. Vollbracht.

Advisory Committee

Present: Wayne Artis.

Commission Staff

Present: Timothy E. Foster, Executive Director; Jeanne Adkins; JoAnn Evans; and Sharon Samson.

Guest Participants: Les Goodchild, University of Denver; Toni Larson, Independent Higher Education of Colorado; John Musciano, Colorado Christian University; Charlotte Mendoza, Colorado College; Suzanne Perry, Regis University; and Jennie Whitcomb, University of Denver.

I. Call to Order

Chair Ralph Nagel called the special teleconference meeting to order at 10 a.m.

II. Teacher Education Reauthorization of Private Colleges and Universities

At the May 3, 2001, meeting the Commission discussed the teacher education reauthorization for four independent colleges (Colorado Christian University, Colorado College, Regis University, and the University of Denver). At that meeting, the Commission tabled any action on the reauthorization of the private colleges to provide

additional time for the representatives of the private institutions and the CCHE staff to resolve concerns raised at the May 3, 2001, meeting.

Dr. Samson reported that representatives of three private institutions (Colorado Christian University, Regis University, and University of Denver) and CCHE staff met on Thursday afternoon, May 3, 2001. At that meeting, they came to a general understanding of terms and changes that needed to be made to the CCHE staff recommendation as presented to the Commission on May 3, 2001. Subsequent to the meeting CCHE staff drafted language for review by the private institutions prior to a conference call to be held within the next week.

Staff Recommendation

That the Commission approve the reauthorization for each particular institution's programs seeking teacher education licensure in Elementary Education and Secondary Education with the understanding that the institution will conduct an assessment of the content knowledge of its post-baccalaureate applicants prior to admission and that post-baccalaureate candidates will pass the appropriate content test prior to placement in student teaching.

In this context, "assessment of content knowledge" means to determine if the student has sufficient content knowledge and courses to successfully participate in the teacher preparation program, typically assessed by a transcript review and "pass the appropriate content test" means that the student will pass the PLACE (or other assessment as decided upon by deans of teacher preparation programs in conjunction with CCHE and CDE) content exam in the subject area of the teaching license being sought. The understanding accomplishes two goals (1) it reflects CCHE's and the superintendents' interests to ensure that student teachers have the appropriate knowledge of subject matter and demonstrate mastery of content knowledge before the student teacher acts as the primary instructor in the classroom, and (2) provides performance data to assess teacher education programs in the future. All four independent institutions have a content assessment admission process in place for their post-baccalaureate students. The main difference is that all candidates for the post baccalaureate program, just like the undergraduate programs, will pass the content assessment test prior to student teaching. The four institutions support the recommendation.

Dr. Samson provided additional information on the agreement with Colorado College (CC) that was reached several months ago. Since CC operates on a block schedule, it complicates the timing of the post-baccalaureate assessment prior to student teaching. To address CCHE policy standards, CC conducts a content review prior to admission and requires their students to take the PLACE exam (the current test required in Colorado) offered in October (first possible opportunity). However, because of their block schedule, CC students are placed in the student teaching situation before CC receives the PLACE results. CCHE has agreed that taking the October PLACE exam would meet the intent of policy for two reasons: (1) CC has demonstrated a high performance pass rate on the exam, i.e., one hundred percent of CC completers pass the exam, and (2) this provides an opportunity to pilot one function of the performance model. If, for some reason, the performance rate changes, CCHE would renegotiate this agreement with CC.

Action: Chair Nagel moved approval of the revised staff recommendation. Commissioner Quamme seconded the motion.

Chair Nagel asked if there were any questions or discussion. There being no questions from the Commission, the chair asked for comments from the persons representing the private colleges.

Dr. Charlotte Mendoza, representative of Colorado College, clarified that CC offers both post baccalaureate and undergraduate programs. She indicated that CC supports the motion with major reservations. Furthermore, she requested that her statement of concern would be entered into the minutes officially on behalf of Colorado College. She said it is important to approve CC's teacher education program, and for that reason, CC supports the motion. However, in so doing, they have three concerns:

1. Alternate content assessments are not in use in this state currently. So the support of the motion is based on the assumption that there will be a process for assuring consensus of all parties to agree that a yet to be selected content test is valid, that the tests can be offered frequently, and that the exam can be scored immediately for feedback to students and institutions.
2. For the Colorado College post-baccalaureate program, the content exam needs to be taken in October, when the Master of Arts in Teaching Elementary School candidates have had coursework to prepare them and not before, which establishes a need for timely admissions testing and communications, neither one of which currently exists.
3. The stipulation that students must pass the content test prior to teaching is problematic. Colorado College students come from throughout the nation to enroll in the Master of Arts in teaching program. In effect, after careful admission decisions, they would be placed in the position of having to pass a test on their first effort in October or terminate their participation in our program. Student teaching begins at the end of October and must be so scheduled due to the structure of the program and contacts with the school districts. Thus requiring they pass the test on their first try would mean that Colorado College students would be in an unenviable position of either passing on the first attempt or losing their graduate program enrollment. The impact on CC's program and the five school districts that depend on it for future student teachers could be most devastating. Therefore, requiring a first effort passing grade on a yet to be selected exam, that may not be appropriate in time for scoring, forms the basis for our reservations at this point.

In their communications with CCHE, Dr. Samson indicated that Colorado College student's pass rate is 100 percent and should it continue it would be no problem. Ultimately, someone won't pass. CC is concerned that their teacher education approval would be jeopardized if the post baccalaureate students do not maintain a high pass rate. So, Colorado College supports the motion, and enters their reservations in the record accordingly.

Les Goodchild, representative of the University of Denver (DU), spoke to the staff recommendation. He expressed support on behalf of the University of Denver's

administration to approve the recommendation of DU's teacher education program. He noted that DU has a reservation about whether the Commission has the power to impose an admissions requirement on students at a private university. Since this requirement conforms to DU's current admission policy, the university can live with this requirement.

Suzanne Perry, representative of Regis University, stated that Regis University wholeheartedly supports and believes its program embodies CCHE's focus on quality. Therefore, the university proudly accepts the recommendation for full authorization of the Regis teacher education program along with the understanding reached for assessment in conjunction with admission and a test prior to student teaching. Regis' teacher education program already conforms with the understanding stated in CCHE's authorization recommendation. Regis would further like to extend an offer of the use of Regis' approved testing center for the purpose of test administration of content tests for students enrolled at other institutions.

John Musciano, representative of Colorado Christian University (CCU), expressed the institution's support for the resolution as indicated. The jurisdiction issue is something that has been on the minds of all the independents, and Colorado Christian University agrees that issue must be resolved at some time. At this point, CCU accepts the resolution as it is written and wholeheartedly supports it.

Upon hearing no further testimony, Chair Nagel requested that the official minutes of this special meeting contain the full testimonies so that if this issue is revisited, the Commission and the public can clearly understand the good will and good faith on all parties.

There being no further discussion, Chair Nagel called for a vote on the staff recommendation.

Staff Recommendation:

That the Commission approve the reauthorization for Colorado Christian University, Colorado College, Regis University, and University of Denver's programs seeking teacher education licensure in Elementary Education and Secondary Education with the understanding that the institution will conduct an assessment of the content knowledge of its post-baccalaureate applicants prior to admission and that post-baccalaureate candidates will pass the appropriate content test prior to placement in student teaching.

Action: Chair Nagel moved approval of the revised staff recommendation. Commissioner Quamme seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously, all in favor, none opposed.

The meeting adjourned at 10:25 a.m.