

TOPIC: ADMISSIONS STANDARDS POLICY

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I. SUMMARY

All applicants to Colorado's four year postsecondary institutions who graduate from high school in 2008 and later are required to meet the Higher Education Admission Requirements (HEAR). Over the past year staff has worked with multiple K-12 and higher education groups to study the implementation of Phase I (2008) and Phase II (2010) of HEAR. This study resulted in several recommendations that were approved by the Commission in July and August of 2007. Taking those recommendations into consideration, the Admission Standards Policy language has been modified to include a new definition of the fourth year of math requirement for Phase II (2010), a reduced requirement for Phase II (2010) Foreign Language, adjustment to the window calculation for years 2008 and 2009, and the addition of an exemption for 2008 and 2009 applicants with index scores that exceed the institutions minimum by more than 10 points (more than 15 at Metropolitan State College of Denver).

Staff recommends that the Commission approve the changes in the Admissions Standards Policy (Attachment A).

II. BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

A staff review of the implementation of HEAR was prompted by the March 2006 commission meeting. The staff analysis included a review of research and professional papers, discussion of multiple options on providing flexibility to students and higher education institutions, and meetings with various groups of stakeholders including: Rural Caucus, Colorado Department of Education, State World Language Advisory Council (SWLAC), Colorado Education Association, Colorado Association of School Executives, Colorado Association of School Boards, Academic Council, Deans And Directors of Admission, and the Data Advisory Group. The culmination of the review was two agenda items that concerned changes to the Admission Standards Policy.

The July 2007 meeting and agenda item provided the Commission an opportunity to listen to public testimony, review national and state research, and discuss options concerning Phase II (2010) of the Higher Education Admission Requirements. The result of that meeting was threefold: the Commission authorized a change in the definition of the acceptable fourth year of math, reduced the foreign language requirement to one year, and instructed staff to work cooperatively with representatives of the K-12 community to explore a waiver to exempt school districts or students from HEAR.

At the August 2007 meeting the Commission approved two recommendations that allow for flexibility in the implementation of Phase I of the Higher Education Admission Requirements. Applicants in 2008 and 2009 will be exempt from HEAR if their index score is more than 10 points higher than the minimum required (more than 15 for Metropolitan State College of Denver). The Commission also approved the recalculation of the window on a statewide level.

Since the July and August meeting, staff has drafted official policy language (Attachment A) concerning the change in the fourth year of mathematics, reduction in foreign language requirement, the index score exemption, and the revised calculation of the window. The proposed policy language was drafted based on discussion with the Colorado Department of Education, Deans and Directors of Admission, and the Academic Council. These proposed changes also include some minor clean up of confusing language. Note that these changes do not include any waiver language for Phase II (2010) HEAR which are still being discussed and drafted.

III. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Commission approves the policy language based on the July and August 2007 Higher Education Admission Requirements agenda items.

C.R.S. 23-1-108.