

**TOPIC:                   DEGREE AUTHORIZATION ACT – SHIMER COLLEGE**

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**I.       SUMMARY**

The Commission has statutory responsibility for the administration of Title 23, Article 2 of the Colorado Revised Statutes, commonly referred to as the Degree Authorization Act. Commission policies and procedures have been developed to include an application process for any degree granting institutions wishing to begin operation in Colorado. Institutions meeting the applicable requirements will be granted authority to operate upon the Commission's approval.

*Shimer College* is an existing fully accredited institution operating a main campus in Illinois. Shimer College is seeking Category I-A authorization to operate the Teaching Fellows Program in Colorado. Department of Higher Education staff has reviewed the required documentation and recommends the Commission approve Category I-A authorization for Shimer College.

**II.       BACKGROUND**

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education has statutory responsibility for administration of Title 23, Article 2 of the Colorado Revised Statutes, which authorizes certain types of institutions to offer degrees and/or degree credits. These are: (1) Colorado publicly-supported colleges and universities; (2) properly accredited private colleges and universities; (3) postsecondary seminaries and bible colleges; and (4) private occupational schools authorized by the Division of Private Occupational School. Persons or unauthorized organizations that violate the provisions of the statute are subject to legal penalties.

All private colleges and universities, out of state public colleges and universities, and seminaries or bible colleges are required to register with the Colorado Department of Higher Education and to meet criteria found in CCHE Policy Section I Part J, Degree Authorization Act, in order to be granted authorization to offer degrees within Colorado. Such authorization must be received by the institution prior to offering any program of instruction, academic credits, or degrees; opening a place of business; soliciting students or enrollees; or offering educational support services.

The Commission administers the Degree Authorization Act by determining an institution's eligibility to operate pursuant to statute and CCHE policy. Commission action is required by policy in order for institutions to be authorized at any level.

To apply for Category I-A authorization, the institution must provide the Department of Higher Education proof of accreditation by a regional or national accrediting agency and must

demonstrate that the accrediting agency is aware of the new location and is prepared to perform a site visit within two years of authorization.

### **III. STAFF ANALYSIS**

Shimer College is currently accredited and in good standing with the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Shimer College's main campus is located in Chicago, Illinois. Shimer College has requested authorization to operate the Teacher's Fellow Program in Colorado at the Thompson Schools District. Shimer College has provided sufficient documentation to demonstrate accreditation and compliance with the requirements of the Degree Authorization Act. Staff has confirmed that the Higher Learning Commission is aware of this program and that Shimer College is working towards an onsite visit for full accreditation of the Colorado location. Copies of all relevant application materials are on file in the Academic Affairs Office.

### **IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Commission approve Category I-A authorization for Shimer College.**

### **STATUTORY AUTHORITY**

23-1-121 C.R.S.; 23-2-101 C.R.S