

TOPIC: REVISIONS TO ADMISSION STANDARDS POLICY

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I. SUMMARY

At the July 2008 meeting Commission directed staff to revise the Admission policy on the 2010 HEAR requirements to (A) include an exemption for students whose index number exceeds the minimum institutional admissions index number by more than 10 points¹; (B) to include that each institution's window size and the 20% window be calculated and applied on a statewide rather than an institutional basis; and (C) to include language that defines a process for school districts to apply for waivers from HEAR requirements for graduates of that district's high school. The draft policy (Attachment A) reflects these directives.

Staff recommends that the Commission approve revisions to Commission policy Section I Academic Affairs: Part F Admissions Standards.

II. BACKGROUND

Since 1986, the Colorado Commission on Higher Education has held the authority to establish statewide admission standards for public colleges and universities. C.R.S. 23-1-113 directs the Commission to establish admission standards for public baccalaureate and graduate institutions of higher education. The statute states that "The criteria established and the specified performance levels shall be consistent with the role and mission established for each state-supported institution of higher education." In addition, the statute requires that admission policies use a combination of "high school academic performance indicators" which include, but are not limited to, grade point average (GPA), class rank, and content standard performance level assessments.

The standards established by the Commission in 1987 for entering freshmen were based on the calculation of an admission index. The index has two components: a student's high school performance (i.e., high school GPA or class rank) and performance on a standardized test. Each public four-year college or university in Colorado is assigned a minimum admissible index number based on the role and mission of the institution.

In 2003, the Admission Standards Policy was modified to include minimum academic coursework requirements, otherwise known as the Higher Education Admission Requirements (HEAR). Effective with applicants who graduate from high school in spring 2010 or later, in-state and out-of-state freshmen must meet the institution's index standard and have completed the required pre-collegiate curriculum (if applicable) to

¹ More than 15 points for MSCD.

meet CCHE’s freshmen admission standards. Included in the policy are provisions that exempt students from meeting admissions standards and HEAR 2010 requirements. Exemptions are typically allowed for students who are not in the category of first-time college-going students or who are able to demonstrate comparable knowledge and competencies.

The 17 academic units required for applicants who graduate high school in the spring of 2010 or later are listed below.

Table A: 2010 Higher Education Admission Requirements

Academic Area*	2010+ Graduates
English**	4 years
Mathematics (Must include Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II or equivalents)***	4 years
Natural/Physical Sciences (two units must be lab-based)***	3 years
Social Sciences (at least one unit of U.S. or world history)	3 years
Foreign Language	1 year
Academic Electives****	2years

* CCHE, CDE, and School Districts are developing standards for alternative demonstration of proficiency to be accepted in lieu of course completion. For course guidelines see paragraph 4.01 of the Admissions Standards Policy.
 **Two units of ESL English may count for HEAR requirements when combined with two units of successfully completed college preparatory English.
 ***College-preparatory ESL mathematics/science courses that include content and academic rigor/level comparable to other acceptable courses may satisfy HEAR requirements.
 ****Acceptable Academic Electives include additional courses in English, mathematics, natural/physical sciences and social sciences, foreign languages, art, music, journalism, drama, computer science, honors, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate courses, and appropriate CTE courses.

III. STAFF ANALYSIS

A. Students Exempt from Higher Education Admission Requirements

The Commission directed staff to revise the Admission policy on the 2010 HEAR requirements to include an exemption for students whose index number exceeds the minimum institutional admissions index number by more than 10 points². The proposed policy changes (Attachment A) adhere to the intent of the recommendation discussed and approved at the July 2008 meeting.

² More than 15 points for MSCD.

The exemption would be effective for students graduating from high school in spring of 2010 and later. The primary purpose of HEAR requirements was to reduce the remediation rates of entering students and as a consequence increase retention and graduation rates. An analysis of the relationship between index numbers and remediation rates of entering students suggests that remediation rates decrease significantly with higher index numbers.

Table B: Fall 2006 Comparison of the Number of Students Needing Remediation - by Index Score

Institution	Index	Fall 2006 1st Time Enrollment	Remedial #	Remedial %	Remedial # 10+ points above index	Remedial % 10+ points above index
Adams State College	80	449	291	64.81%	117	26.06%
Colorado School of Mines	110	755	16	2.12%	0	0.00%
Colorado State University	101	4052	316	7.80%	29	0.72%
Colorado State University - Pueblo	86	592	314	53.04%	108	18.24%
Fort Lewis College	80	876	265	30.25%	122	13.93%
Mesa State College	80	1067	564	52.86%	244	22.87%
Metropolitan State College of Denver	76	1386	468	33.77%	211	15.22%
University of Colorado - Boulder	103	5606	86	1.53%	5	0.09%
University of Colorado - Colorado Springs	92	970	4	0.41%	3	0.31%
University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center	93	902	252	27.94%	69	7.65%
University of Northern Colorado	94	2453	787	32.08%	139	5.67%
Western State College	80	499	194	38.88%	69	13.83%
		19607	3557	18.14%	1116	5.69%

Source: SURDS data, Fall 2006

* MSCD Remedial count and percentage reference students with an Index score 15 or more than the assigned Index score

Exempting students with higher index numbers regardless of whether or not they meet HEAR 2010 would accomplish the intent of reducing remediation, and thereby increasing retention and graduation rates.

B. Specifications for Freshman Admission Window Sizes

The commission directed changes to the admission policy to include that each institution's window size and the 20% window be calculated and applied on a statewide rather than an institutional basis. The proposed policy changes (Attachment A) adhere to the intent of the recommendation discussed and approved at the July 2008 meeting.

This policy would allow for the reallocation of unused window slots as needed by institutions whose entering students do not meet HEAR 2010. Applying the 20% window statewide is a continuation of policy approved by the Commission for students graduating from high school from spring 2008 to fall 2009. It should be noted that flexibility in applying admissions window sizes occurred when admissions standards were first put in place by the Commission as documented in the CCHE policy dated October 3, 1986. During the implementation period for 1986 policy, institutions were given two, four and six years to reach the 20% admissions window size.

Table C indicates the extent to which each institution used its exemption window in its most recent admissions decision. The table also shows the number of potential window slots that could be reallocated based on institution window sizes of less than 20%.

Table C : 2006/2007 Admits by Index and Window

Institution	# Admitted in Window	# Admitted above Index	Total Admitted	2007 Window %	Window Difference	Projected # Reallocation
Adams State College	66	1,160	1,226	20%	0%	0
Colorado School of Mines	110	2,444	2,554	10%	10%	255
Colorado State University	985	8,660	9,645	14%	6%	579
Colorado State University - Pueblo	202	1,468	1,670	17%	3%	50
Fort Lewis College	155	2,138	2,293	20%	0%	0
Mesa State College	48	1,597	1,645	20%	0%	0
Metropolitan State College of Denver	64	3,684	3,748	20%	0%	0
University of Colorado - Boulder	1,671	14,420	16,091	14%	6%	965
University of Colorado - Colorado Springs	173	2,410	2,583	17%	3%	77
University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center	200	2,106	2,306	17%	3%	69
University of Northern Colorado	1,022	5,362	6,384	17%	3%	192
Western State College	152	1,298	1,450	20%	0%	0
	4,848	46,747	51,595	-	-	2,188

Source: SURDS data, Fall & Summer 2005
 * Numbers came from 2007 Spring UAF using full year tables.

C. School District Waivers for meeting Higher Education Admission Requirements

The Commission directed staff to define how a school district could apply for a waiver and how the staff will administer the waiver application process. The proposed policy changes (Attachment A) adhere to the intent of the recommendation discussed and approved at the July 2008 meeting.

Specifically, school districts seeking a waiver for students in their district shall by a vote of the school board ***“attest that their school district does not have available resources to meet HEAR 2010 requirements as established in current policy and requests a district waiver from CCHE starting with the graduating class of 2010”***.

The resolution and request for a waiver must be submitted to the Department of Higher Education by January 15, 2009. The request will specify that the school district cannot meet the requirements of the fourth year of mathematics, the one year of foreign language, or both and provide an explanation as to why the requirements can not be met.

School district waivers will be effective for three years, until the graduating class of 2013.

Staff will forward requests for school district waivers to the Commission for approval at the February 2009 Commission meeting. The institutions of higher education will be given a list of school districts approved for a waiver for HEAR 2010 by March 13, 2009.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Commission approve revisions to policy Section I Academic Affairs: Part F Admissions Standards.