

**TOPIC: FRAMEWORK FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR HIGHER
EDUCATION**

PREPARED BY: DAVID SKAGGS

I. BACKGROUND

State statutes authorize and direct the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) to develop a master plan designed to promote the state's goals for higher education (23-1-108 CRS). The last CCHE master plan was adopted nearly ten years ago and focused on issues that were then current. Conditions facing higher education have changed substantially since then.

Current circumstances that make a comprehensive planning effort timely include the expiration of COF performance contracts with all but one governing board, recent legislation on P-20 alignment and the joint action taken June 30 with the State Board of Education, legislation on concurrent enrollment and remediation, the recent evaluation of the College Opportunity Fund (COF) program, and an economic crisis with only a temporary financial cushion provided by the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act.

With the difficult fiscal environment that higher education in Colorado faces even in good economic times, it is especially important for resources to be deployed as effectively as possible to accomplish clear state goals. The recent evaluation of the COF program identified several areas in which it was advisable for the state to be clearer about its goals and to make a definite connection between those goals and the allocation of resources.

Colorado was selected as one of eleven states to receive a planning year grant from the Lumina Foundation's *Making Opportunity Affordable* initiative and is positioned well to compete for one of the five \$2 million, four-year MOA continuation grants. The proposed comprehensive planning effort would both add value to, and benefit from, the state's participation in the MOA initiative.

II. STAFF ANALYSIS

In consultation with the Governor and his staff, and as previously briefed to the Commission, department staff have taken preliminary steps toward a long-range, comprehensive planning effort. The attached framework document, revised from the version presented to the Commission June 4, is intended to describe the reasons for and the broad parameters of such an effort. It has been circulated for comment to the CEOs of the state's public institutions and to key legislators. It contemplates an event September 21 designed to involve all key stakeholders in a planning process projected to last about 15 months, with extensive opportunity for input from interested parties, with outreach around the state, and with frequent peer and expert review by experienced and knowledgeable persons not directly affiliated with Colorado higher education. Ultimately, the product of the planning effort would be presented to the Commission for adoption, with any

policy recommendations that require statutory changes to be forwarded to the General Assembly in 2011. There is a broadly shared view that having a coherent vision for public higher education in the state is important, if not essential, to convincing the public that the state would be well-served by more adequate funding for higher education.

III. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

This is a study item for Commission discussion and review, building on the consideration given at its June 4 meeting.

IV. STATUTORY AUTHORITY

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

V. ACCOMPANYING MATERIALS

The draft framework for the proposed comprehensive planning effort is attached as Attachment A.