

**Minutes of the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) Special Meeting**  
**Colorado Department of Higher Education**  
**December 14, 2010**

Chairman James Polsfut called the meeting to order at 11:00 am.

Commissioners James Polsfut and Greg Stevinson attended in person. Commissioners Hereford Percy, Larry Beckner, Dave Edwards, Richard Kaufman, Patty Pacey, Gina Rodriguez and BJ Scott attended via conference call.

**ACTION ITEM**

**Degree Authorization Act – Westwood College** – Executive Director Rico Munn presented this item to the Commission after verifying that Mr. Bill Ojile, General Counsel for Westwood College, was present on the conference call. Mr. Munn recapped recent actions with regard to Westwood College: the Accrediting Commission for Career Colleges and Schools (ACCSC) initially put Westwood College on probation in September; at the October CCHE meeting the Commission asked to postpone a decision on the matter until the ACCSC met in November; the ACCSC determined at its November meeting that the school has not demonstrated compliance with the ACCSC’s requirements relative to student achievement outcomes. Additionally, ACCSC requested Westwood College to provide information with regard to compliance with several state agencies and other accreditors given the allegations of the Government Accountability Office August 4, 2010 report. Department staff received a “Continued Probation Order” from the ACCSC on December 9, necessitating this special CCHE meeting.

Department staff recommend that the Commission change the status of Westwood College from Full Authorization to Probationary Authorization in response to the accreditation body’s continued probation order. Staff recommend a Colorado Commission on Higher Education Probation Order.

While the ACCSC probation order was specific to Westwood College’s Denver North campus, the CCHE Probationary Order would include the North, South and online campuses, as authority granted by the CCHE is for the institution, not campus specific. Commissioner Stevinson asked that the Order reflect that the CCHE is aware that the ACCSC Order only affects the North campus.

Commissioner Scott asked that the clarification be made in the Probation Order between the ACCSC and the CCHE; namely that the ACCSC is a quality assurance body and the CCHE is a consumer protection body.

Commissioner Pacey moved that the CCHE change the status of Westwood College to Probationary Authorization. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Percy. The motion passed by a vote of seven to two, with Commissions Kaufman and Edwards voting against the motion. The Probation Order will be sent to Mr. Ojile by Friday, December 17, 2011.

## **DISCUSSION ITEM**

**Financial Aid Update** – Mark Cavanaugh, Chief Financial Officer, and Celina Duran, Financial Aid Administrator, presented this item to the Commissioners. Since the December 2nd Commission meeting, the financial aid advisory group and the chief financial officers (CFOs) met to discuss the financial aid allocation methodology for FY 2012. This item provides an update on the progress made by the two groups prior to bringing recommendations to the Commission in January.

The discussions with the financial aid group and the CFOs are focused around the following three areas with an emphasis on making financial aid to undergraduate students with need the priority: hold harmless provisions; financial aid to graduate students; and financial aid to proprietary institutions.

The financial aid group and CFOs have discussed a number of possible allocation methodologies, with the underlying issues being how to balance the competing interests of predictability for students currently receiving financial aid with acknowledgment of rapid and substantial growth. The leading model under discussion favors growth but has “hold harmless” provisions that seek to protect existing students. The extent to which institutions will be held harmless is still being discussed.

The groups largely agree that there should be some shared pain, meaning that other financial aid pots should not be held flat. The emphasis has been on the importance of financial aid to undergraduate students at public institutions while trying to ensure a reasonable share to graduate students and proprietary students.

The groups are refining scenarios to prepare for a vote. In January, the model(s) that the CFOs and financial aid group have agreed upon will be presented to the Commission for a vote.

Commissioner Edwards moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Scott. The meeting was adjourned at 12:25 pm.