

**TOPIC: CCHE WORK PLAN: OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVEMENT GAP
WORK PLAN – UPDATE AND INFORMATION AFFECTING
IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE**

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I. SUMMARY

This item brings to the commission's attention activities currently underway that could have an impact on the Commission's work with regard to the Ethnic Achievement Gap.

At its March 5, 2010 meeting, the Commission adopted three work plans to better define and accomplish its policy goals. A key priority was adopted to focus the Commission's work on "Closing the Ethnic Achievement Gap." This agenda item presents the second discussion of this key priority established by CCHE. The focus of this discussion is on a proposed change to the original work plan on addressing the achievement gap in Colorado.

II. BACKGROUND

As discussed in February 2010 and in March 2010, the Commission adopted the following goals and timelines:

- 1) Identify successful programs and practices that, if scaled out, could positively impact the achievement gap – October 2010
- 2) Identify and analyze trends that have contributed to Colorado's achievement gap – October 2010
- 3) Identify institutional barriers to closing the achievement gap – November 2010
- 4) Develop a report summarizing the findings – January 2011

III. STAFF ANALYSIS

From this information noted above it is anticipated that the Commission can achieve its goals of serving as a strong advocate for closing the ethnic achievement gap and shaping policy to create an environment that ensures success of ethnic and minority students in Colorado's higher education system.

Since the adoption of the original work plan, several key steps have taken place. First, the Higher Education Strategic Planning (HESP) process has been fully engaged. Two key subcommittees of HESP include the Access Subcommittee and the Pipeline Subcommittee. The charge to the Access Subcommittee is with "developing recommendations to address the accessibility of the state's system of higher education ("system"). Successful recommendations should result in a clear standard for accessibility and goals to meet and maintain that standard. Successful

recommendations should also result in goals to close achievement gaps and clearer pathways for students of all interests and backgrounds.”

The charge to the Pipeline Subcommittee is to “developing recommendations to complement and carry forward the work done by Colorado’s P-20 Commission. Successful recommendations should address the “leakage” between the K-12 and higher education system. Successful recommendations should also the education and recapture of non-traditional learners.” While both subcommittees have different foci, it is clear both are also addressing issues that are pertinent and necessary for Colorado to reach success in addressing the ethnic achievement gap that currently exists.

In addition, recently passed SB10-003 requires that institutions in Colorado must address ways that they will “protect low and middle income students” as well as “first generation students” if they propose to take advantage of the tuition flexibility that SB10-003 provides. Moreover, in the May 20, 2010 CCHE Meeting, Commissioners expressed a clear need for institutions to detail how they will address the needs, more broadly, of all underserved populations in any flexibility plan that an institution and its governing board might present to the Commission.

Finally, the Performance Contract negotiation process that will begin later this year, will also allow the Commissioners to address issues relating to closing the ethnic achievement gap. From the review of Performance Contracts that are currently underway, the Commission will be in position to identify strong institutional accountability metrics that are critical to monitoring successes on the priority of closing the ethnic achievement gap. The Performance Contract Review Process will result in a report that will detail outlines, metrics, and accountability requirements that will include areas related to success of minority and underserved students.

Staff will keep the CCHE apprised of these activities and the information coming from them, and may at a future date formally request a change in the implementation timeline