

**TOPIC:                   DEGREE    AUTHORIZATION    ACT    –    WELLINGTON  
                                  UNIVERSITY**

**PREPARED BY:   HEATHER DELANGE**

**I.     SUMMARY**

This item recommends authorization for Wellington University to operate in Colorado.

**II.    BACKGROUND**

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) has statutory responsibility for administration of Title 23, Article 2 of the Colorado Revised Statutes, commonly referred to as the Degree Authorization Act, which sets out the terms under which certain types of institutions<sup>1</sup> may offer degrees or degree credits. Persons or 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, seminaries and bible colleges are required to register with the Colorado Department of Higher Education (DHE) and to meet criteria 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 ability to operate pursuant to statute and CCHE policy. Policy requires Commission action for institutions to be authorized at any level.

**II.    STAFF ANALYSIS**

Wellington University is applying for probationary authorization as a private, for-profit degree granting institution. If granted CCHE approval, Wellington University will seek accreditation from The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Probationary authorization will permit to enroll students, offer instruction, graduate students and award degrees under the condition that the institution is continuously seeking and is making satisfactory progress toward full accreditation. Institutions given probationary authorization may not enroll students until the accreditation process has begun and been verified to the Department.

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<sup>1</sup> (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 Schools.

Pursuant to the Degree Authorization Act rules and regulations, an institution will hold probationary authorization until an on-site review from the accreditation body is conducted and approved.

As required by the Degree Authorization Act, Wellington University submitted the initial documentation concerning its organization, programs and finances. Department staff empanelled an evaluation team to review the application. Staff provided the team with statutory references, DAA rules and regulations, the institution's application materials and supporting documents and charged the team with assessing if the institution has the ability to become accredited by the aforementioned accreditation association.

The evaluation team noted deficiencies to which the applicant provided additional documentation. After reviewing the additional documentation from institution representatives, the evaluation team provided a favorable recommendation for authorization. Upon state authorization, Wellington University plans to offer a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) and a Master of Business Administration (MBA).

#### **IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

**Staff recommends that the Commission approve probationary authorization for Wellington University.**

#### **STATUTORY AUTHORITY**

C.R.S. §23-2-103.3