

**TOPIC: DEGREE AUTHORIZATION ACT – CLOSURE OF RIVENDELL COLLEGE**

**PREPARED BY: HEATHER DELANGE**

**I. SUMMARY**

This item recommends a status change for Rivendell College from Probationary Authorization to Closed.

**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 receive 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 eligibility to operate pursuant to statute and CCHE policy. Policy requires Commission action for authorized institutions at any level.

**II. STAFF ANALYSIS**

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education granted Rivendell College Preliminary Authorization in October 2006. Subsequently, CCHE approved the recommendation to change the College's status to Probationary Authorization, indicating proof of the institution beginning the accreditation process, in February 2007. The change of status from preliminary to probationary allowed the institution to begin recruiting, enrolling, instructing, and graduating students.

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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.

In a letter dated August 10, 2010, the Rivendell College president informed DHE that the College is not accepting any new students into undergraduate or graduate degree programs for the 2010-2011 academic year. As part of the process, the College is limiting courses to those necessary for two undergraduate students and one graduate student to complete their programs at the close of this fall semester, which ends December 17, 2010. The College has contacted several regionally accredited schools on behalf of the remaining students in an attempt to assist them in the transfer of credits and continuation of their education. The schools include Colorado Christian University, Nazarene Bible College, Argosy University, and Colorado Technical University. Each of these schools has indicated that they would transfer appropriate earned credits from Rivendell College. The students are aware of the situation and the college has provided them this information.

Rivendell College's parent organization, Centers for Christian Study International, will maintain the College's student records.

As a result of this voluntary closure, Rivendell College surrenders its operational authority.

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

**Staff recommends that the Commission approve the closure of Rivendell College.**

#### **STATUTORY AUTHORITY**

C.R.S. §23-2-103.5