

**TOPIC: DEGREE AUTHORIZATION ACT – NOVA SOUTHEASTERN
UNIVERSITY: REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION**

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I. SUMMARY

This item recommends authorization for Nova Southeastern University to offer its Doctor of Education degree 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 institutions¹ 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 eligibility to operate pursuant to statute and CCHE policy. Policy requires Commission action for institutions to be authorized at any level.

II. STAFF ANALYSIS

Nova Southeastern University has submitted an application for full state authorization in Colorado. Nova Southeastern University is a private not-for-profit institution headquartered in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Nova Southeastern is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), a status it has held since 1971.

As required by the Degree Authorization Act, Nova Southeastern University submitted initial documentation concerning its organization, programs and finances to the Colorado Department

¹ (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.

of Higher Education. Department staff empanelled an evaluation team to review Nova Southeastern University's application. Staff provided the team with statutory references, DAA rules and regulations, the Nova Southeastern University application materials and supporting documents, and charged the team with assessing the institution's ability to provide appropriate student services at the proposed Colorado site as well evaluating the institution's financial viability for operations at its new site in Colorado.

The evaluation team identified some minor findings, about which Nova Southeastern University provided or is in the process of providing additional documentation². After reviewing NSU's response to the majority of the evaluation team's findings, the evaluation team provided a favorable recommendation for authorization. Upon receiving authorization to operate in Colorado, Nova Southeastern University plans to offer a Doctor of Education degree.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Commission on Higher Education authorizes Nova Southeastern University to operate in Colorado under the Degree Authorization Act.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

C.R.S. §23-2-103.3

² Though program content review is not part of the CCHE Degree Authorization Act authorization process, the evaluation team noted that it was unclear from NSU's report whether independent research is required for the dissertation phase of the Doctor of Education degree program. The evaluation team requested additional information about this for purposes of ensuring that the degree program has rigor consistent with the expectations for an advanced academic credential. Nova Southeastern University is preparing a response. Department staff expect to receive this information soon.