

**TOPIC: 2010 COMMISSION RECAP**

**PREPARED BY: RICO MUNN**

**I. SUMMARY**

This item provides a summary of the Colorado Commission on Higher Education's work over calendar year 2010. This summary is intended to help the Commission plan for 2011 and for future years.

**II. BACKGROUND**

The CCHE's work in 2010 was defined by ongoing statutorily defined responsibilities; issues and actions that the Commission chose to address (the "Commission Work Plan"); legislation and other events that occurred during the course of the year that required Commission action; and the Strategic Planning process, which had been announced in 2009. In addition, the Commission had certain "soft" goals that it had previously voiced. Each of these areas is discussed briefly below.

**Ongoing Statutorily Required Actions**

The attached matrix provides deadlines for the Commission's statutorily required actions, approvals, and reports. All deadlines were met in 2010 with the exception of finalizing financial aid allocations which was moved from December 2010 to January, 2011. The financial aid allocation was postponed to allow for greater input from the governing boards in light of significant growth in the number of aid-eligible students and an allocation that will result in fewer dollars per student than in the current year.

The Commission also met the goal of approving a General Fund allocation methodology for the upcoming year. Because the projected amount is a reduction of \$150 million from previous year's allocation, the Commission spent significantly more time developing allocation principles, methodologies and facilitating discussion among the governing boards before ultimately approving an allocation.

**Work Plan items**

In December 2009, the Commission agreed to adopt a Work Plan for the year, with three items in that plan for 2010: review of all performance contracts; addressing the ethnic achievement gap; and institutional innovation and efficiencies.

The Commission's first Work Plan item was to review all performance contracts to determine whether the contracts had served as a useful accountability mechanism for the institutions and for the Commission and the state. The Commission successfully reviewed the contracts over the

course of the year and will receive a summary document of the ten contract reviews at the February, 2011 meeting.

In June 2010, the Commission revised its Work Plan, noting that work on the ethnic achievement gap was taking place largely through the strategic planning process and through the implementation of SB03 (see below). Similarly, the passage of SB03 had changed the institutional dynamics by giving more operational flexibility to institutions, thus negating the need for the Commission Work Plan item on institutional efficiencies.

### **New Legislation/Other Unanticipated Issues**

The most significant piece of legislation to impact the Commission's work in 2010 was the passage of SB03, which provided significant tuition and operational flexibility to higher education governing boards. SB03 provided the authority for governing boards to raise tuition up to nine percent without Commission or legislative approval. Governing boards were given authority to raise tuition above nine percent if the Commission approved a Financial Accountability Plan, or "FAP", showing how the governing board would use tuition authority to protect low and middle income students. The policy and procedures that the Commission subsequently implemented included adoption of a FAP timeline and template; FAP appeal process, and a detailed review and approval of the nine FAPs that were submitted in October.

The Commission also continued implementation of SB212, the CAP4K legislation. In 2010, the Commission held two joint meetings with the State Board of Education and adopted a framework for a new assessment system. The Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness description previously adopted by both boards (in June 2009) serves as the conceptual framework for the new statewide assessment system.

Finally, the Commission had to deal with the issue of Westwood College's probation. This issue required a special meeting December at which the Commission voted to place the College on probation.

### **Strategic Planning**

By December, 2009, the Governor had announced the strategic planning initiative and had named a Steering Group, which included representation from the Commission along with business, education organizations, and chamber of commerce leadership. The Higher Education Strategic Planning Group began meeting in January, 2010, and created four subcommittees charged with addressing specific areas. Subcommittees were comprised of Commission members, institutional representatives and additional business leaders. As the strategic planning process unfolded, the Commission's work included the following:

- The Commission Chair and another member served on the Steering Group;
- At least one Commission member served on each subcommittee;
- The Commission was briefed at each meeting throughout the process;

- The Commission received the Higher Education Strategic Plan at its November meeting and at the December meeting, voted to adopt a Master Plan that incorporates the final strategic plan: "The Degree Dividend."

**“Soft” Goals**

The Commission had expressed an interest in being more engaged with legislators and other education policy makers. This goal was in part addressed with the passage of SB03 (the tuition flexibility bill) which gave the Commission a significantly greater role in tuition policy, and has resulted in increased interaction between the Commission and institution CEOs, administration, and lobbyists. The Department expects this engagement to continue in the foreseeable future.

**IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

This report is for information, no action is needed.