

**TOPIC: DEGREE AUTHORIZATION ACT – WESTWOOD COLLEGE,
AUTHORIZATION STATUS CHANGE**

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I. SUMMARY

Pursuant to the Degree Authorization Act, this recommends a status change for Westwood College from “Probationary Authorization” to “Full Authorization.” This change is in response to a recent vote by the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC), which granted renewal of accreditation to Westwood College.

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.

The Commission administers the Degree Authorization Act by determining an institution’s eligibility to operate pursuant to statute and CCHE policy. CCHE policy requires Commission action for any change to any institution’s authorization status.

II. STAFF ANALYSIS

At the December 14, 2010 special CCHE meeting, Commissioners voted to change Westwood College’s authorization status from “Full Authorization” to “Probationary Authorization” as a result of the college’s receiving a probation order from its accreditation body, ACCSC. At its August 2010 meeting, the ACCSC voted to place Westwood College – Denver North campus on probation in order to ensure compliance with accreditation standards and other requirements. To lift the probation order, ACCSC required Westwood College – Denver North to comply with corrective actions and comply with accrediting standards.

At its February 2011 meeting, the ACCSC voted to grant Westwood College-Denver North renewal of accreditation for a period of three years going forward from November 1, 2010. The ACCSC’s decision to confer accreditation includes conditions that require Westwood College-Denver North to submit reports that demonstrate the school’s continued compliance

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.

with ACCSC's standards. The specific reporting requirements will be detailed in a follow up letter to the school.

While the ACCSC's action affected Westwood College's Denver North campus, the state of Colorado granted one operational authorization to Westwood College for all three campuses. Therefore, the state's action to change the authorization status affected all Colorado Westwood College campuses.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission require Westwood College to share any additional reporting to the ACCSC with Department staff regarding the status of accreditation in the next three years, including, but not limited to, comprehensive reports and responses to and from both the college and the ACCSC. Staff recommends that the Commission change the status of Westwood College's authorization from Probationary Authorization to Full Authorization in response to the ACCSC's lifting its order of probation.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

C.R.S. §23-2-103.3 (5) (b)