

TOPIC: REVOCATION OF AUTHORIZATION OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITY FOR HUMANITIES - COLORADO COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

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I. SUMMARY

This agenda item recommends revocation of authorization for the American University for Humanities - Colorado College of Arts and Sciences (AUH).

II. BACKGROUND

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education has statutory responsibility for administration of Title 23, Article 2 of the Colorado Revised Statutes, which authorizes certain types of institutions to offer degrees and/or degree credits. These are: (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 School. Persons or unauthorized 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, and seminaries or bible colleges are required to register with the Colorado Department of Higher Education and to meet criteria found 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. Commission action is required by policy in order for institutions to be authorized at any level.

III. STAFF ANALYSIS

Under the Degree Authorization Act, prior to May 29, 2008, non-public, degree-granting institutions were given authorization to enroll, instruct, and graduate students once a relationship with an accreditation body was established. During that time, a state authorized institution maintained its authorization if it made continuous efforts toward accreditation and was accredited within a reasonable and timely manner.

As of October 28, 2011, AUH has not received an award of accreditation. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Education no longer recognizes the accrediting body with which AUH was working.

AUH was awarded its initial authorization by CCHE in April 2007 under the auspice that accreditation was to be sought from the American Academy of Liberal Education (AALE). In 2008, the institution's status changed to Category II authorization (probationary).

After reviewing the original authorization, Department staff determined that, because the institution has not achieved accreditation, and because the U.S. Department of Education no longer recognizes AALE, AUH is out of compliance with the Degree Authorization Act.

As a result, AUH has taken steps to discontinue its academic programs and close the institution. According to the Chair of the Board of Trustees for AUH, the institution has taken the following steps:

- Colorado students have been refunded tuition and have transferred to other institutions;
- All instructional activity at AUH in Colorado has ceased; and,
- The AUH administrative offices in Denver have closed with the exception of one person to handle situations that may require attention.

The recommendation in this item is being made as a result of actions taken outside the authority of the Department. As a result, if AUH wishes to reinstate its authorization in Colorado, an application will be accepted and processed under C.R.S. 23-2-103(3).

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission revoke the authorization for American University for Humanities - Colorado College of Arts and Sciences.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

C.R.S. 23-2-103.3(2)