

TOPIC: UPDATE ON ADOPTING STATEWIDE GOALS

PREPARED BY: MATT GIANNESCHI, DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I. SUMMARY

At its February 9, 2012 CCHE meeting, Commission members considered revisions to the proposed statewide goals for the Commission's master plan. At that meeting, Commission members provided several suggestions for modifying the first four goals, those related to completion, access, student success, and finance. At the same meeting, Commissioners discussed the utility of the proposed fifth goal, the one related to economic development and research. After an extended discussion on the goals, the Commissioners adopted the first four goals, as amended, and Chairman Percy asked Department staff to consult with the leadership of the colleges and universities about the ways in which they would propose measuring economic development and research activities in the context of a statewide master plan and subsequent performance contracts.

This agenda item presents the four goals adopted by the Commission at its February 9, 2012 meeting and feedback received by campus leadership concerning the utility of a goal on economic development and research.

II. BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Revised "Final" Goals

After discussing alternative language for the goals and considering the ways in which the text of the final master plan will help acquaint the reader with the full context surrounding each goal, the Commission took unofficial action to adopt the following goals for its statewide master plan:

Goal 1: Increase Attainment: Increase the attainment of high quality postsecondary credentials across the academic disciplines and throughout Colorado in order to meet anticipated workforce needs.

Goal 2: Improve Student Success: Improve student success through better outcomes in basic skills education, enhanced student support services and reduced average time to credential for all students.

Goal 3: Diversify Enrollments and Reduce Attainment Gaps: Enhance access to and through postsecondary education to ensure that the system reflects the changing demographics of the state while reducing attainment gaps among students from underserved communities.

Goal 4: Restore Balance in Postsecondary Revenues and Maintain Productivity:

Develop resources, through increases in state funding, that will allow public institutions of higher education to successfully meet projected enrollment demands, lower resident students' relative share of college costs, and maintain the state's position as a national leader in the ratio of credentials produced relative to state investments in higher education.

Goal on Economic Development and Research

Referencing comments made by a number of institutional representatives at the December 2, 2011 summit meeting, the Commission discussed the merits of including the following goal on the role of higher education in economic development:

Goal 5: Continue to Catalyze the State's Economy: Strengthen higher education's impact on the state's recovering economy by expanding research and scholarly activities, enriching the state's human capital by expanding and developing new programs in high demand fields, investing in programs that directly impact state and regional economies, and increasing public-private partnerships.

During their discussion on this goal, Commissioners affirmed strong support for research and economic development activities, citing that these pursuits are fundamental to the state's economy. Commissioner Percy stated that, unlike the other goals, which have near universal resonance with the public, the proposed goal on economic development and research speaks to a specific audience: the business community. Consequently, Chairman Percy stated his inclination to support such a goal. Others agreed with the direction of the goal, but said that all of the goals in the master plan should be meaningful and measurable by way of conventional and reliable methods. Commissioner Haynes argued support for the concept, but stated that the Commission should not pursue goals that are ambiguous or difficult to measure. The Commissioners agreed with Commissioner Haynes, and thus Chairman Percy directed Department staff to consult with campus leadership regarding the ways in which they would propose measuring research and economic development activities.

At a meeting subsequent to the February 9, 2012 CCHE meeting, Executive Director Garcia discussed the proposed fifth goal with campus executives. Generally speaking, campus executives agreed with the Commission, that research and economic development activities are not easily measured. A few gave examples of metrics used on their campuses, such as the number and type of new degree programs developed or wage increases of graduates. Several suggested that the goal could be elective, thus permitting institutions to "opt in" to the goal, while others stated that, given the difficulties with measuring it, institutions could simply report their successes, but that these reports should not be used in a performance contract. The campus executives did not reach consensus on the topic.

III. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

No recommendation. For discussion only.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

C.R.S. 23-1-108