

TOPIC: APPROVAL OF REVISED CCHE POLICY IV: STATEWIDE EXTENDED STUDIES

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I. SUMMARY

This action item recommends that the Commission approve the attached revised version of CCHE Policy IV: Statewide Extended Studies.

II. BACKGROUND

In an effort to remove unnecessary regulation and streamline Commission policies, since November 2011, department staff have been meeting with leaders of campus-level extended studies programs for the purpose of revising the CCHE's Extended Studies Policy (CCHE Policies & Procedures Section IV). As was explained at the November 3, 2011 Commission meeting (Information Item IV, A), this team of campus leaders was charged with studying and making recommendations on the following topics:

1. The evolving relationship between statewide extended studies deans and directors and the Department of Higher Education;
2. Recommending revisions to C.R.S. §23-1-109 and CCHE policy (including reporting requirements); and
3. Recommending a plan for changing the current practice of collecting funds through indirect cost recoveries among extended studies programs.

Representatives from the following institutions participated in this process: the University of Colorado at Boulder, Metropolitan State University of Denver, Colorado State University, the Colorado School of Mines, Colorado Mesa University, the University of Northern Colorado, and the University of Colorado Denver. Recommended policy changes found in this agenda item were developed by the leaders of the extended studies departments mentioned above. In addition, the chief academic officers of all of the state's public colleges and universities were regularly apprised of and invited to make recommendations concerning proposed changes to the extended studies policy.

Though the recommended changes to policy found herein significantly reshape the Department's relationship with campus-based extended studies administrators, Department staff will continue to provide support to the extended studies deans and directors, as appropriate and requested, until such

time that the campus-based administrators determine that such assistance is no longer necessary. Nonetheless, Department staff will continue to coordinate with the extended studies programs and deans and directors as required by state law and CCHE policy.

III. DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION ANALYSIS

The basis for the CCHE's extended studies policy is found in 23-1-109 Colorado Revised Statutes, which states the following:

- (1) The general assembly declares its intent that the state-supported institutions of higher education may engage in instruction off the geographic boundaries of their campuses.
- (2) The commission shall define, after consultation with the governing boards of institutions, the geographic and programmatic service areas for each state-supported institution of higher education. No such institution shall provide instruction off-campus in programs or in geographic areas or at sites not approved by the commission, unless otherwise provided by law.
- (3) The general assembly declares its intent that all instruction at two-year institutions, including the first two years of instruction at Adams state college and Colorado Mesa university, shall be funded throughout the institutions' commission-approved service area on the same basis as on-campus instruction.
- (4) The department shall administer any centralized, statewide extension and continuing education program of instruction that may be offered by any state-supported baccalaureate and graduate institution. All instruction offered outside the geographic boundaries of the campus, including instruction delivered by television or other technological means, shall be a part of this program unless exempted by policy and action of the commission.
- (5) The commission shall set policies, after consultation with the governing boards of institutions, which define which courses and programs taught outside the geographic boundaries of the campus may be eligible for general fund support. The commission may include funding for those courses and programs in its systemwide funding recommendations to the general assembly.

Over time, this guidance from statute was used to develop policies and procedures that are found in the current version of the CCHE's extended studies policy. After consulting with leaders from campus-based extended studies divisions, a decision was made to condense the current twenty-seven page policy down to the attached seven page revised version, which is believed to better reflect the intent and scope of the law.

Many of the proposed changes found in this action item were made because several sections of the current policy were considered redundant to other CCHE policies or are more appropriately the purview of each institution's governing board, not the Commission. Also, removing duplicative

reporting requirements and simplifying language created a simpler, shorter, and more coherent policy.

The main changes from the current policy to this revised version are as follows:

1. Section 4.00 of the revised policy creates “designated officers” who will act as their institution’s liaison to the Department for coordinating purposes. It also charges institutions with ensuring that designated officers are notified of all instruction that falls under extended studies. The revised policy also charges designated officers with ensuring comparable quality and accessibility as regularly offered main campus instruction, as well as filing required reports with the department per C.R.S. §23-5-116(6), which states, “Each governing board shall provide an annual report to the department of higher education that describes all courses offered outside the boundaries of the state of Colorado. The report shall include a statement of need for the instruction, the geographical location of the instruction, and confirmation that no state funds were used in connection with the out-of-state courses.”
2. Sections 5.02.01 and 5.02.02 of the revised policy clarify the process for requesting Commission approval for COF eligibility for some off-campus undergraduate programs per C.R.S. §23-1-109(5), which states, “The commission shall set policies, after consultation with the governing boards of institutions, which define which courses and programs taught outside the geographic boundaries of the campus may be eligible for general fund support...”
3. Sections 5.03 and 5.04 of the revised policy clarify the definition of “distance education” and leave open the possibility for other types of distance education in the future, rather than limiting the definition to courses offered via television, videotape, DVD, or internet.
4. Part B (General Policies) of the current policy was struck entirely, as it was argued that the Department should not directly oversee the activities of extended studies programs. Rather, these programs should coordinate their own activities and conferences. This change has the effect of reducing Department personnel assigned to extended studies from a full-time statewide director position to a portion of an academic policy officer’s position.
5. Importantly, the Department argued to remove its involvement in the long-standing indirect cost recovery program (ICR) for extended studies. Historically, each campus was annually assessed an ICR from the extended studies unit in the DHE. These funds were not appropriated and were not maintained by the Department or the state treasury. The purposes of these funds were to advance the extended studies programs through small grants, to produce extended studies publications, to pay for statewide conference, and to offer “scholarships.” After consulting with the executive leadership at the Department concerning these funds, it was decided that (a) the Department will

immediately discontinue the practice of assessing and collecting ICR funds from extended studies and (b) that the extended studies directors should consult with the chief financial officers of their campuses to determine the future uses or redistributions of the unspent ICR funds previously collected.

6. Part C (Reporting Requirements) of the current policy was struck in favor of simpler reporting requirements recommended by the extended studies deans and directors. The extended studies deans and directors requested that the Department continue collect enrollment data not otherwise collected in the state's Student Unit Record Data System (SURDS).
7. Part D (Approval of Instruction) of the current policy was struck because another CCHE policy (I, V: Approval of New Academic Programs) addresses academic program review and approval procedures.
8. Part F (Regional Education Provider) of the current policy was largely retained, but simplified, to highlight the importance of and clarify some institutions' statutory role and mission as regional education providers and the Commission's role in determining geographical boundaries per C.R.S. §23-1-109(2), which states, "The commission shall define, after consultation with the governing boards of institutions, the geographic and programmatic service areas of each state-supported institution of higher education..."
9. The revised Section 7.00 further reduces reporting requirements by allowing the Extended Studies unit to submit the financial report it generates for its own institution or a comparable report that has been approved by the institution's chief financial officer, rather than preparing an entirely separate report for the Department, which is the current practice.

A copy of the revised policy showing track changes can be found in Attachment A. A clean version of the revised policy can be found in Attachment B.

The proposed, revised policy is in line with statute and other CCHE policies. It has been vetted with the entire Statewide Extended Studies Deans & Directors group, Chief Academic Officers, Chief Financial Officers, Admissions Council, and department staff.

V. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Commission approve the attached revised version of CCHE Policy IV: Statewide Extended Studies.

VI. SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Copies of all relevant statute and policy are on file in the Department of Higher Education.

VII. STATUTORY AUTHORITY

23-1-109 C.R.S. – Duties and powers of the commission with regard to off-campus instruction.