

**TOPIC: DEGREE AUTHORIZATION ACT – WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY IN ST LOUIS: REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION**

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I. SUMMARY

This item recommends provisional authorization for Washington University in St. Louis to operate a satellite campus in Colorado pursuant to the Degree Authorization Act.

II. BACKGROUND

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education 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. Persons or 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, seminaries and bible colleges are required to register with the Colorado Department of Higher Education and to meet criteria in CCHE Policy Section I Part J, Degree Authorization Act, in order to have authorization to offer degrees within Colorado. Such authorization by CCHE must be received by the institution prior to the institution: offering any program of instruction, academic credits, or degrees; opening a place of business; soliciting students or enrollees; or offering educational support services.

Pursuant to state law, a private college or university is required to be accredited on the basis of an on-site review in Colorado by a nationally recognized regional or national accrediting association.

II. STAFF ANALYSIS

Washington University in St. Louis is applying for provisional authorization in order to launch a satellite campus in Colorado. Washington University in St. Louis is a private, not-for-profit postsecondary institution located in St. Louis, Missouri. The campus operates other satellite campuses in Shanghai and Kansas City. It currently is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools and has been accredited since 1913. The next comprehensive institutional evaluation is scheduled for 2014-2015.

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.

As required by the Degree Authorization Act, Washington University in St. Louis submitted the initial documentation concerning its organization, programs, and finances. Department staff empanelled an evaluation team to review the application. Staff provided the team with statutory references, DAA rules and regulations, the application materials and supporting documents and charged the team with assessing if the institution has the ability to provide appropriate student services at the proposed Colorado site and has the financial ability to support all operations at the new site.

Recent changes to the Degree Authorization Act as well as the CCHE policy promulgated by the law require private Washington University in St. Louis to file evidence of surety in the amount of \$5,000 in its first year operating in Colorado. Washington University in St. Louis shall recalculate the amount of the surety annually to ensure that the institution has the ability to provide students with the indemnification required by Colorado law. The amount will continue to be \$5,000 until such time that the maximum prepaid, unearned tuition and fees exceeds that amount.

Under the Degree Authorization Act policies, an institution that has received provisional authorization by the CCHE will not be eligible for full authorization until the accrediting agency conducts an on-site accreditation resulting in the accreditation of the site.

The evaluation team noted minor concerns to which the applicant provided additional documentation. After reviewing the response by representatives at the institution, the evaluation team provided a favorable recommendation for authorization. Upon receiving authorization, Washington University in St. Louis plans to offer an Executive Master of Business Administration in which instruction will occur at both the Colorado and Missouri campuses.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission approve provisional authorization for Washington University in St. Louis contingent upon the institution's demonstration of compliance with the requirement to file evidence of surety.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

C.R.S. §23-2-103.3

C.R.S. §23-2-103.8 (5)