

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

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I. SUMMARY

This item recommends an authorization status change for Washington University in St. Louis, from provisional to full, based on the successful completion of the requirements 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 religious training institutions 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

At the January 22, 2013 CCHE meeting, Washington University in St. Louis received provisional authorization to launch a satellite campus in Colorado based on an evaluation by an external review team and staff. Washington University in St. Louis is a private, not-for-profit university based in Missouri and is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (HLC). Staff recently received documentation

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.

(Addendum A) from the HLC stating that the accreditation of the main campus will cover the accreditation of the satellite campus in Denver. Locations that offer less than 50% of a degree program or a Title IV-eligible certificate program do not require separate review and approval by the Higher Learning Commission. Given this information, the campus that will operate in Colorado will have the same accreditation as the programs offered at the main campus. Typically, full authorization is recommended once the accrediting agency accredits the branch or satellite campus. However, as has been demonstrated in the past, some accrediting agencies will accredit other sites based on the main campus' status.

Additionally, Washington University in St. Louis has filed evidence of surety in the form of a savings account in the amount of \$5,000 to fulfill its financial integrity obligation as required by C.R.S. 23-2-103.8 (5). 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.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission approve full authorization for Washington University in St. Louis based on fulfilling the requirements of the Degree Authorization Act.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

C.R.S. §23-2-103.3

C.R.S. §23-2-103.8 (5)