

**TOPIC:                   DEGREE AUTHORIZATION ACT: WELLINGTON UNIVERSITY  
– REQUEST FOR THE RENEWAL OF PROVISIONAL  
AUTHORIZATION**

**PREPARED BY:       HEATHER DELANGE, ACADEMIC POLICY OFFICER**

**I.       SUMMARY**

This item recommends the renewal of provisional authorization for Wellington University to continue operating as an authorized private, degree-granting institution 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, 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 Schools. 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 and bible colleges are required to register with the Colorado Department of Higher Education and meet criteria in CCHE Policy Section I Part J in order to receive authorization to offer degrees within Colorado. Authorization by CCHE 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.

Recent changes to C.R.S. §23-2-102, et seq. authorize the Colorado Commission on Higher Education to renew the authorization of institutions that previously received authorization. To renew its authorization to operate in Colorado, a private college or university or seminary or religious training institution shall demonstrate that it continues to meet the minimum operating standards specified in statute. Department staff created a procedure for institutions to follow in order to apply for the renewal of provisional authorization.

## **II. STAFF ANALYSIS**

As required by the Degree Authorization Act, Wellington University submitted the renewal documentation concerning its progress towards its accreditation along with a renewal fee of \$2,500, which is required of all institutions seeking renewal of provisional authorization.

Under the Degree Authorization Act, an institution that has received provisional authorization by the CCHE will not be eligible for full authorization until an on-site visit results in accreditation by a U.S. Department of Education recognized accrediting agency. Wellington University is seeking accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), is meeting HLC deadlines, and is keeping department staff apprised of its progress. Wellington University is currently compiling preliminary evidence to submit to the HLC in November 2013.

Given the above, staff concludes the institution is making adequate progress towards accreditation.

## **IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

**Staff recommends that the Commission approve the renewal of provisional authorization for Wellington University until October of 2014.**

## **STATUTORY AUTHORITY**

§23-2-103.3, C.R.S.