

TOPIC: RECOMMENDATION TO APPROVE REVISIONS TO CCHE POLICY I, PART F: ADMISSIONS STANDARDS POLICY (EFFECTIVE FOR STUDENTS SEEKING ADMISSION FOR FALL 2016 AND AFTER)

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I. SUMMARY

This item recommends approval of the attached proposed revisions to CCHE Policy I, Part F: Admissions Standards Policy (Effective for students seeking admission for fall 2016 and after). Two sets of revisions are requested for approval: those discussed at the September 2014 meeting (tracked in [blue](#) in Appendix A); and new revisions requested by the Admission and Academic Councils after the September meeting (tracked in [red](#) in Appendix A).

II. BACKGROUND

The current Policy I, F was last revised in December 2013. That revision was informed by recommendations from the Admissions Standards Policy Review Task Force, which was convened in response to the Preschool to Postsecondary Education Alignment Act (SB08-212), more commonly known as CAP4K. The CAP4K legislation required the Commission to review and align the admissions standards policy with the postsecondary and workforce readiness description (adopted by the Commission and the State Board of Education in 2009).

The key elements of the changes adopted in December 2013 were: to align postsecondary admissions expectations with high school graduation guidelines; to increase flexibility for institutions to determine their own specific admissions requirements; and to increase the number of tools they may use to do so. Since the December 2013 changes were adopted, a Policy Implementation Committee (made up of institutional admissions officers and data/research staff) was established to answer key data questions and provide guidance to department staff and institutions in developing institutional admissions standards under the new policy. The committee met seven times between January and August 2014.

During the seven month period of implementation meetings, additional changes were identified that will help clarify the policy or resolve issues where problems with implementation were discovered. Those changes were presented at the September 4, 2014 CCHE meeting. Since then, the Academic and Admissions Councils requested additional changes during their September 2014 meetings. The recommendations largely manifest from their wish to better reflect the spirit and intent of the core policy changes approved in December 2013. Other requests are changes to

provide increased clarity and consistency, as well as minor clean-up edits. The Academic, Admission, and Student Affairs Councils were provided with the updated policy with tracked proposed changes. Only support has been expressed regarding these new proposed changes with no objections.

Institutions are required to submit their admissions standards to CDHE by mid-November, and will be presented for approval at the December 4, 2014 CCHE meeting.

III. STAFF ANALYSIS

Guidance from the statutes listed below under “Statutory Authority” was used to develop the proposed revision of this policy. The major proposed changes to the policy were presented at the September 4, 2014 CCHE meeting, and are documented in blue font in Appendix A. Please refer to the September 4 CCHE meeting agenda item and minutes for details regarding the CCHE and staff discussion. There was no public testimony in objection to the changes presented in September. The new proposed revisions, which were requested after the September CCHE meeting, are based on input from the Policy Implementation Committee and members of the Admissions and Academic Councils. The new proposed changes are tracked in red font in Appendix A.

New Proposed Revisions (Tracked in Red Font, Appendix A)

1. Introduction, 4.01.02 Development of Institutional Admissions Policy – Academic Performance Indicators (including many of its subsections), and other areas of the policy which mention “minimum” admission standards. The removal of all references in the policy to a “minimum” admission standard for first time students is proposed. The Admission Council strongly asserted that submitting minimum admission standards contradicts the intent of the new policy. One of the concerns with the index (which has been eliminated from the new policy) is that it sometimes implied a “minimum” standard that, if met, would lead to admission. This is certainly not the case as applicants who meet and/or exceed the institution’s minimum index might not be admitted if their academic profile proves deficient in some way (e.g. high test score but low GPA and poor trend in grades in academic courses). Conversely, an institution may choose to admit a student who does not meet the minimum academic threshold if the student’s academic profile provides evidence that they would be successful at the institution (e.g. student has low test scores but has taken a good mix of academic courses and has a positive trend in grades). Consequently, submitting a minimum GPA and assessment score admission standard would continue possible misrepresentation of admission standards. As described in Section 7.00; “Communicating with Prospective Students”, institutions instead recommend submitting the mid-50th percentile of GPA and test scores of admitted students (in addition to defining course rigor) to CCHE as their

admission standards. Doing so will provide a clearer, holistic, and more complete indication of institutions' admission standards.

2. Section 4.01.01 College-Readiness Requirement. The grid which describes the various assessment cut-scores (ACT, SAT, Accuplacer, etc.) representing college-readiness is recommended to be removed. Replacing the grid is language directing readers to visit the Remedial Policy (the "real" home for college ready cut scores) for the most up-to-date college ready cut-scores. The removal is requested because listing cut-scores in multiple policies would require increased and inefficient document maintenance and contribute to the likelihood that updates are not reflected in all policies.
3. Section 4.03.02. Coursework Requirement. The sentence at the end of this section that advises "all students" take gtPathways courses is requested to be changed to "many students" as not all degrees contain the gtPathways curriculum and, as a result, those courses will not transfer and apply to all degrees.
4. Section 4.03.04 Guaranteed Transfer Admissions. Verbiage to increase clarity regarding exceptions to the guarantee transfer policy is being proposed by the Academic Council with agreement from the Admission Council.
5. Section 5.00 Public Institutions' Statutory Roles and Missions. Sections 23.60.201 (Colorado Community College System) and 23-1-113.3 (Aims Community College and Colorado Mountain College) were updated to reflected these institutions' revised statutory roles and missions.
6. Section 8.00 Window. It was recommended to remove all references to the "Window" in the policy as it has lost its purpose with the removal of the Index and of punitive language against institutions that exceed the 20% limit. Further, the window contradicts the intent and spirit of the changes to the policy as reflected by this sentence in the Introduction: *"The policy presupposes that institutions will develop admissions requirements and admit students whom they are best able to serve reflecting their statutory role and mission."*

This proposed, revised policy has been vetted and discussed since January 2014 via the Policy Implementation Committee with institutional representatives from admissions and data/research staff, as well as at the Admission, Academic and Student Affairs Council meetings. Department staff presented the proposed policy changes during the Council on High School/College Relations' six counselor workshops held in September and October 2014. Staff also has begun working with College In Colorado to develop the Admission Planning web-based tool that will clearly communicate to students, parents, and counselors each institution's admission standards, which will include: the description of each institution's middle 50th percentile of recently admitted students (using GPA and assessment scores); a clear description of the academic rigor institutions are seeking from applicants; and transfer admission standards. It will also explain what students need to demonstrate to institutions to show they are prepared for college-level courses. The tool is expected to be ready for pre-view in Spring 2015.

V. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission approve all of the proposed changes to CCHE Policy I, Part F: Admissions Standards Policy (Effective for Students Seeking Admission for Fall 2016 and After).

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

C.R.S. §23-1-113. Commission directive - admission standards for baccalaureate and graduate institutions of higher education - policy - definitions

(1) (a) The commission shall establish and the governing boards shall implement academic admission standards for first-time freshmen and transfer students at all state-supported baccalaureate and graduate institutions of higher education in the state. The commission shall establish and may subsequently review and amend the standards after consultation with the governing boards of institutions. The academic admission standards for students who do not have in-state status, as determined pursuant to section 23-7-103, shall equal or exceed those established for determining admission of in-state students.

(b) The standards established for first-time admitted freshman students shall use a combination of high school academic performance indicators and national assessment test scores for eligibility criteria. The academic performance indicators may include, but are not limited to, grade point average, class rank, and content standard performance level assessments. The criteria established and the specified performance levels shall be consistent with the role and mission established for each state-supported institution of higher education. In considering the high school academic performance indicators, the commission and the governing boards may take into account the rigor of a student's high school academic preparation and the academic content of the courses taken. In lieu of the established statewide criteria, each governing board may use additional criteria for up to twenty percent of the freshmen students annually admitted to each institution under the governing board's control. Students who meet the minimum criteria for admission are not guaranteed admission to the institution to which they have applied, but they are eligible for consideration.

(c) The standards established for transfer students shall use college academic performance indicators as the eligibility criteria for admitted transfer students. The academic performance indicators may include, but are not limited to, grade point average, credit hours completed, and successful completion of basic skills courses, if required and as appropriate considering the role and mission of the receiving institution. In lieu of such criteria, additional criteria may be used for up to twenty percent of the admitted transfer students. The academic admission standards and

policies established for transfer students shall be consistent with the student transfer agreements established by the commission pursuant to section 23-1-108 (7) (f). Students who meet the minimum criteria for admission shall not be guaranteed admission to the institution to which they have applied, but they shall be eligible for consideration.

(d) Repealed.

(1.5) (a) (I) The commission shall establish and the governing boards shall implement a policy pursuant to section 23-1-113.3 to identify matriculated students who need basic skills courses in English and mathematics and standards and procedures whereby state institutions of higher education may offer basic skills courses as provided in section 23-1-113.3. The commission, in consultation with the governing boards, shall ensure that the policy aligns with the admission policy adopted pursuant to subsection (1) of this section. In identifying the standards for basic skills, the commission may differentiate requirements for mathematics based on the prerequisite skills needed for required courses within a student's declared program of study.

(II) As part of the policy established pursuant to this paragraph (a), the commission may authorize a state institution of higher education to provide supplemental academic instruction even though the institution is not authorized to provide basic skills courses pursuant to section 23-1-113.3. The institution may receive stipend payments from the state pursuant to section 23-18-202 on behalf of an eligible undergraduate student, as defined in section 23-18-102 (5), who is enrolled in a college-level course that includes supplemental academic instruction.

(b) Each governing board shall adopt policies and procedures that are aligned with the policy established by the commission pursuant to paragraph (a) of this subsection (1.5) and that ensure that, to the extent required by the commission policy, each matriculated student takes or has taken basic skills placement or assessment tests in English and mathematics. The institution that enrolls the student shall select which tests to use from among those that meet the standards established in the commission policy and shall administer the tests. The commission, in consultation with the governing boards, shall ensure the comparability of the placement or assessment tests for the purpose of providing consistent reporting data as such data are required by section 23-1-113.3 (4).

(c) Students identified by institutions as needing basic skills courses based on their test scores shall complete the appropriate basic skills courses by the time the student completes thirty college-level credit hours. The commission, in consultation with the governing boards, shall ensure that each student identified as needing basic skills courses receives written notification identifying which state institutions offer basic skills courses and the approximate cost and relative availability of the basic skills courses, including any on-line courses.

(2) Repealed.

(3) (a) (Deleted by amendment, L. 2004, p. 201, § 16, effective August 4, 2004.)

(b) (Deleted by amendment, L. 96, p. 1236, § 78, effective August 7, 1996.)

(4) The commission shall work with the state board of education to align the academic admission standards established pursuant to this section with the guidelines for high school graduation requirements developed pursuant to section 22-2-106 (1) (a.5), C.R.S. Any revised academic admission standards shall be implemented no later than the selection of the freshman class of fall 2012.

(5) (a) On or before December 15, 2009, pursuant to section 22-7-1008, C.R.S., the commission shall consult with the state board of education, and the commission and the state board of education shall negotiate a consensus and adopt the description of postsecondary and workforce readiness.

(b) On or before July 1, 2015, and on or before July 1 every six years thereafter, the commission and the state board of education may adopt revisions to the postsecondary and workforce readiness description.

(6) (a) On or before December 15, 2010, pursuant to section 22-7-1008, C.R.S., the commission and the state board of education shall negotiate a consensus and adopt one or more postsecondary and workforce planning, preparation, and readiness assessments for use by school districts, boards of cooperative services, district charter high schools, and institute charter high schools. The commission and the state board of education also shall negotiate a consensus and adopt scoring criteria to indicate a student's level of postsecondary and workforce readiness, as provided in section 22-7-1008, C.R.S.

(b) Every six years after the adoption of the postsecondary and workforce planning, preparation, and readiness assessments pursuant to section 22-7-1008, C.R.S., the commission and the state board of education may negotiate a consensus and adopt revisions to such assessments. The commission and the state board of education may also revise the scoring criteria for the postsecondary and workforce planning, preparation, and readiness assessments, as necessary.

(7) Notwithstanding any provision of this section to the contrary, a student who graduates with a high school diploma that includes a postsecondary and workforce readiness endorsement based on criteria adopted by the state board and approved by the commission and the governing boards of the state institutions of higher education pursuant to section 22-7-1009, C.R.S., shall be guaranteed:

(a) To meet minimum academic qualifications for admission to, and to be eligible, subject to additional institutional review of other admission and placement qualifications, for placement into credit-bearing courses at, all open, modified open, or moderately selective public institutions of higher education in Colorado; and

(b) To receive priority consideration, in conjunction with additional admissions criteria, and to be eligible, subject to additional institutional review of other admission and placement qualifications, for placement into credit-bearing courses, at all other public institutions of higher education in Colorado. The additional admissions criteria shall be determined by each institution of higher education.

(8) (a) On or before December 15, 2013, based on adoption of the description of postsecondary and workforce readiness, the commission shall, if necessary, revise the minimum academic admission standards for first-time freshmen at all state-supported baccalaureate and graduate institutions of higher education in the state to ensure that the minimum academic admission standards are aligned with the description of postsecondary and workforce readiness adopted by the commission and the state board of education.

(b) On or before December 15, 2013, the commission shall review the policy established pursuant to paragraph (a) of subsection (1.5) of this section and the basic skills placement or assessment tests administered pursuant to subsection (1.5) of this section to ensure that the policy and tests are aligned with the postsecondary and workforce readiness description.

(c) Consistent with any revisions adopted pursuant to this section to the description of postsecondary and workforce readiness, the commission shall, if necessary, adopt revisions to the minimum academic admission standards, the policy established pursuant to paragraph (a) of subsection (1.5) of this section, and the basic skills placement or assessment tests to ensure continued alignment with the postsecondary and workforce readiness description.

(d) In revising the minimum academic admission standards, the policy established pursuant to paragraph (a) of subsection (1.5) of this section, and the basic skills placement or assessment tests pursuant to this subsection (8), the commission shall consult with the governing boards of the state institutions of higher education.

(9) On or before February 15, 2012, and on or before February 15 each year thereafter, the department of higher education shall submit to the state board of education, the department of education, and the education committees of the house of representatives and the senate, or any successor committees, a report, subject to available data, concerning the enrollment, placement and completion of basic skills courses, first-year college grades, and types of academic certificates and degrees attained at all postsecondary institutions in Colorado and the United States for the high school graduating classes of the preceding six academic years. The department of higher education shall report the information disaggregated by high school and school district of graduation, to the extent practicable, and by ethnicity, gender, financial aid status, and any other characteristic deemed relevant by the commission. The department of higher education and the department of education shall also make the report available on their respective web sites.

(10) On or before February 15, 2009, and on or before February 15 each year thereafter, the

department of higher education shall submit to the department of education the unit records used for its reporting purposes under this section to enable the department of education to evaluate the effectiveness of the alignment of the preschool through postsecondary education systems in preparing students who demonstrate postsecondary and workforce readiness and subsequently succeed in postsecondary education and to enable the department of higher education to disseminate the unit records to the appropriate school districts.

(11) As used in this section, unless the context otherwise requires:

(a) "Academic skills courses" means courses that teach the basic academic skills necessary to succeed at a postsecondary institution.

(b) "Basic skills courses" means courses that are prerequisites to the level of work expected at a postsecondary institution and include academic skills courses and preparatory courses.

(c) "National assessment test scores" include, but are not limited to, ACT test scores and SAT test scores.

(d) "Preparatory courses" means courses designed for students who demonstrate a deficient skill level in the general competencies necessary to succeed in a standard postsecondary curriculum and include but are not limited to reading courses that focus on nontechnical vocabulary, word identification, and reading of everyday material; writing courses that focus primarily on grammar, usage, punctuation, and effective sentences and paragraphs; and mathematics courses primarily covering concepts introduced in elementary and intermediate algebra and geometry.

(e) "Supplemental academic instruction" means co-requisite instruction in reading, writing, or mathematics for students with limited academic deficiencies who are placed into college-level course work that is approved for statewide transfer pursuant to section 23-1-125 (3).

"Supplemental academic instruction" does not include prerequisite basic skills courses.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Proposed Revisions to CCHE Policy I, F: Admissions Standards Policy (Effective for students seeking admission for fall 2016 and after).