

Minutes of the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) Meeting April 25, 2017

I. OPENING BUSINESS

Chairman Monte Moses called the business meeting to order at 3:00 pm.

A. Attendance

Chairman Monte Moses, Vice Chairman Luis Colon, Commissioner Maia Babbs and Commissioner Vanecia Kerr attended the meeting in person. Commissioners John Anderson, Mary Beth Buescher, Renny Fagan, Cassie Gannett, Jeanette Garcia, Tom McGimpsey and Paula Sandoval attended the meeting via conference call.

Also in attendance via conference call were CCHE Advisory Committee members Wayne Artis and Dr. Barbara Morris.

II. ACTION ITEM

A. Reconsideration of Capital Program Plan Approval – Colorado Mesa University – Health Sciences Center Phase II

Cat Olukotun, Lead Financial Analyst, presented this action item for the Commission to reconsider the approval of the CMU Health Sciences Center Phase II program plan. Ms. Olukotun reviewed the background, the legal rationale and process for considering the CMU program plan out of the normal budget cycle based on C.R.S. 23-1-106(5)(a); and the details of the capital program plan.

After Ms. Olukotun's briefing, President Foster, Colorado Mesa University, described the context and reason for the urgent, out of cycle request to approve the program plan. President Foster emphasized the critical need to add Physician Assistant (PA), Occupational Therapy (OT) and Physical Therapy (PT) programs to help address shortages across Colorado and especially in the western region. President Foster emphasized that CMU is only seeking program plan approval.

President Foster asked Glen Gallegos, CU Regent and former CMU trustee, Gallegos to address the Commission. Mr. Gallegos expressed support for the CMU project. He indicated that the programs would economically benefit the region and present an opportunity for students to remain in the area after graduation.

Commission discussion commenced. Commissioners sought clarification from President Foster regarding accreditation of the programs, intentions regarding state funding, and specifics related to the academic requirements of the programs.

President Foster described the accreditation process and timeline for the three programs. With regard to state funding, he noted that CMU's capacity to finance new construction is very limited. He noted that the CMU Board of Trustees changed their capital prioritization ranking to add this project as their top priority when they learned that their PA/PT/OT programs could apply for a fast track with the accrediting agencies that would have the PA program accredited as early as the Fall of 2018.

Further discussion focused on the CCHE prioritization process and concerns with the integrity of the process as well as the "fairness" to other institutions. President Foster indicated that he had spoken to the Presidents of the other institutions and he assured them that CMU would only substitute this project for a CMU prioritized project that is above the state funding line and at the same level of state funding. President Foster assured the Commission there would be no adverse impact to other institutions.

Commissioner Fagan moved the Commission approve the Colorado Mesa University program plan for the Health Sciences Center Phase II project in accordance with CRS 23-1-106(5)(a), without change in the CCHE prioritization list. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Buescher and unanimously passed.

Commissioner Buescher moved the Commission affirm President Foster's commitment to only substitute the Health Sciences Center Phase II project for one of CMU's existing prioritized projects that is above the funding line and at the same state funding level. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Anderson and unanimously passed.

Commissioner Babbs moved the Commission allow eligible institutions of higher education to submit requests for capital program plan approval for projects that may qualify for additional state capital funding. Such plans may be considered at the June 1, 2017 CCHE meeting. The Commission will consider program plans without change in the CCHE prioritization list. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Colon and unanimously passed.

Chairman Moses issued a directive for DHE staff to work with the Fiscal Affairs and Audit Committee and the Governing Boards of state institutions of higher education to review and bring forward any updates needed to CCHE policy regarding state-funded projects and the timing of their consideration.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30pm