

STATE OF COLORADO



DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION
Colorado Commission on Higher Education

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Strategic Planning Committee Makes Higher Ed Funding Recommendation

The Higher Education Strategic Planning Committee has made a recommendation to address funding issues impacting the state's system of higher education when federal recovery act money runs out in FY2011-12.

The Strategic Planning Committee, chaired by Jim Lyons and Dick Monfort, has recommended a plan which would allow institutions of higher education to have greater tuition and operational flexibility contingent on approval of financial plans submitted by the institutions detailing how access and affordability for low and middle income students will be ensured and that operational flexibility will produce real savings. The recommendation would not give complete tuition autonomy to institutions and will provide the Colorado Commission on Higher Education with the authority to make sure the flexibility is used responsibly.

"The Strategic Planning Committee acted quickly but methodically to develop this recommendation which ensures our state's institutions of higher education will have a manageable plan to deal with the loss of federal funds in FY2012," said Executive Director Rico Munn. "The Committee will still be working towards a long-term funding solution, but this recommendation should allow for the institutions to maintain programs and plan for the near-term while at the same time, minimizing the impact on the majority of students in the state."

This short-term funding recommendation is designed to protect the state's system of higher education from the loss of federal funds and the anticipated lack of state revenues. The Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) would have to approve the financial plans for flexibility and would consider how available state revenues should be allocated with a "system-wide" approach to avoid suspending operations or closing institutions.

The flexibility would be available to institutions beginning in FY2011-12 and would last for up to four years and require periodic reporting to the CCHE to ensure goals are being met.

The CCHE will discuss the funding recommendation at its 1:00 pm meeting today, March 5th, at Red Rocks Community College.

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