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Colorado Department of Higher Education Releases 2011 Remedial Education Report and Highlights Work to Improve Educational Outcomes

DENVER – **Tuesday**, **Feb. 7**, **2012** – Lt. Gov. Joe Garcia and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education today released the Colorado Department of Higher Education's 2011 Remedial Education Report to the Legislature.

The report finds that Colorado is succeeding in retaining more students who entered college in need of remediation. Between 2007 and 2009, retention rates for remedial students increased by 19 percent at the two-year college level and by four percent at the four-year level. These improvements suggest that institutions throughout the Colorado postsecondary system are realizing noteworthy gains in addressing students' academic needs.

"We are committed advocates for reforming remedial education with the goal that all students are ready for college-level work," said Garcia who also serves as the Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Higher Education. "We must continue to collaborate with our colleges and universities, school districts, and private partners to meet the needs of the state's increasingly diverse students and increase the number of well-educated Coloradans."

However, the report shows that the number of first-time recent high school graduate students placed into remediation in at least one subject increased by about 11 percent, or 3.2 percentage points, from the previous year (31.8 percent in 2010-11 from 28.6 percent in 2009-10). The remedial rate for non-traditional students (above the age of 20) is nearly double that of traditional students at 57 percent in 2010-11.

Over the past year, the Department of Higher Education has been awarded more than \$1.5 million in competitive philanthropic grants for improving K12 to higher education alignment and remedial outcomes. Through a \$1 million grant from the Complete College America grant initiative, the Department of Higher Education is working with the Colorado Community College System to improve and expedite outcomes in remedial education courses and reform the

state's remedial education policies. A grant from Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors supports efforts to improve student achievement and readiness through improved academic alignment, in so doing minimizing the need for remediation.

The Department is also actively supporting House Bill 12-1155, Improvements in College Completion, sponsored by House Education Committee Chairman Tom Massey (R, Poncha Springs) and Senate Education Committee chairman Bob Bacon (D, Fort Collins). House Bill 12-1155, which will be heard in committee on February 22, is intended to help align the state's admission and remedial policies and promote timely college completion.

Lastly, through its federally-funded GEAR UP program, the Department of Higher Education's is piloting a program in schools with high proportions of free/reduced lunch eligible students. This pilot offers remedial math courses to students as early as the eighth-grade. The results are promising: 87 percent of students are currently on track to complete their first remedial course.

A complete copy of the 2011 Remedial Education Report can be found at the Department of Higher Education's website: http://highered.colorado.gov/dhedefault.html

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