

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
COLORADO COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION
March 2, 2006**

Chairperson Terry Farina called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

Commissioners Terry Farina, Judy Altenberg, Ray Baker, Richard Garcia, Richard Ramirez, Edward Robinson, Greg Stevinson, James Stewart and Judy Weaver were present. Commissioners Joel Farkas and Dean Quamme were excused. Commission Staff members attending were Executive Director Rick O'Donnell, Jenna Langer, Matt Gianneschi, Diane Lindner, Joan Johnson, Mary Lou Lawrence, and Heather DeLange. Advisory Council Member Stuart Hilweg was in attendance.

Chancellor Robert Coombe welcomed the Commissioners to the University of Denver (DU). For the past nine years, DU has conducted a building campaign and will focus on students and faculty in the next ten years, enhancing its reputation as a great university.

Mr. Robinson moved to approve the minutes of the February 2, 2006, with the correction that he was absent. Mr. Baker seconded the motion and the minutes were unanimously approved as corrected.

There were no advisory or subcommittee reports.

Mr. Farina wished Executive Director, Rick O'Donnell, well in his future endeavors noting that, during his directorship, the first stipend program, performance and fee for service contracts and numerable other monumental issues were addressed under his energetic and effective leadership. Mr. O'Donnell said it had been an honor to work with the Commissioners and institutions.

PUBLIC COMMENT: George Walker, University of Colorado (CU) graduate and President applicant commented on the admissions window and the CU committee on tenure reform.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

PRESENTATION BY RURAL CAUCUS: Paula Stephenson, Executive Director of Colorado Rural School Caucus and Gerald Keefe, Superintendent of Kit Carson and Chairman of Rural Caucus identified themselves a spokesperson for the large contingent of Rural Caucus members in attendance. Dr. Gianneschi stated staff has been working with rural school districts, through a task force, to address their concerns and issues. Ms. Stephenson stated rural school districts are specifically concerned about implementation of Phase II of the pre-collegiate curriculum. These schools face declining enrollment and revenues as well as problems attracting and retaining qualified teachers. They have reduced in their work force, frozen pay, cut curriculum, decreased teacher training and eliminated programs. Dedicated instructors teach more than one subject, some of which they may not be qualified to teach, and are responsible for athletic and other non-

curriculum programs, using their personal time. An additional math class and two foreign language classes will strain thinning budgets and exacerbate attracting and retaining highly qualified teachers. Some students will attend college; others will pursue other post secondary education options. The goal is to ensure that each child graduates with the competencies necessary to pursue that which they choose beyond high school. Districts have altered curriculum and graduation requirements and have shifted resources from non-core programs to satisfy demand for more rigor in reading, math and science. The pressure on curriculum has led these districts to question what is being lost in the process. The absence of some courses, such as arts, physical and vocational education, may compromise a student's scholarship opportunities and increased requirements exacerbate a serious drop-out problem. Should the message to students be that a college degree is the only path to success? Many rural high school graduates choose not to pursue four-year college degrees, instead seeking skilled labor jobs that do not require degrees and offer higher pay.

Rural schools value a well-rounded education and are working with community colleges to allow dual credit coursework and video conferencing and distance learning is being employed at a cost. The East Central BOCES distance-learning program will cost each district in the BOCES a minimum of \$25,000 per year. Supplemental on-line courses cost \$300 per student, and travel expenses to and from community colleges add to student expenses. Unless the state provides additional resources, rural districts will be placed in the unenviable position of deciding whether to honor the values of their local communities or to honor the value of special interest groups.

The Rural Caucus feels Phase I is a fair requirement but is concerned about a fourth year math class. They request time for Phase I implementation to determine if it has met its objectives before proceeding to Phase II. The Commission is asked to postpone the Phase II entrance requirements until state and federal governments adequately fund public schools or until there is compelling evidence that the Phase I requirements are effectively addressing concerns.

The efforts of Dr. Gianneschi and Mr. Stanford are appreciated and useful. There is much anecdotal evidence but no hard facts about the resources available in rural districts. A survey is being conducted to assess rural district teacher subject qualifications, courses taken, graduation requirements and changes made pursuant to pre-collegiate curriculum requirements. They hope to have survey results by the end of summer that provides data on resources in rural schools.

Ms. Weaver asked if the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) has data on some of the survey questions. Ms. Stephenson said CDE's data is insufficient. Mr. Garcia asked how many students attended rural schools and was told about 25% of all Colorado K-12 students attend but the exact number is unknown. Ms. Weaver wanted to know if the schools were working with local community colleges and four-year institutions to recruit and prepare local students as teachers and highlighted related incentives. Mr. Keefe said recent teacher hires had been recruited for their experiences in rural communities. He is aware of loan forgiveness programs and they are being researched. Recruiting is difficult and out of state applicants may not have been trained in Colorado standards and expectations. Ms. Stephenson said the northwest Colorado BOCES combined their resources to target rural recruits and everyone wants to train their students to teach. Loan forgiveness programs attract teachers for the duration of the program after which they leave.

Ms. Weaver stated, in conjunction with her work with rural health resources, she has seen creativity bring communities together to meet the lack of resources in ways urban communities have not considered and is interested to see how that creativity can address these educational requirements. Statistically, the United States is educating fewer mathematicians and scientists in a global economy. While the United States attempting to meet local demands and raise educational standards, other countries are exceeding the United States in education. Collaboration is necessary to provide our children the education they deserve in all post-secondary venues. Mr. Keefe said math, science and engineering are outsourced to India and China at lower prices and wants to know how entering those occupations will benefit the United States' graduates.

Mr. O'Donnell asked if they were aware of the remediation rate for higher education freshmen from their district and how much math is required to determine if there is a misalignment between pre-collegiate and district admission requirements. Mr. Keefe replied in his school district, it is 0% and students gravitating toward math, engineering, and science fields voluntarily take additional math courses. They have graduates attending Princeton, Penn, West Point, and the United States Air Force Academy indicating two-credit math requirement has not been a disincentive for district students.

Mr. O'Donnell reported higher education faculty are concerned about the continuity of math and advocate taking a math course in the senior year. Otherwise the instructional gap sets students back quantitatively, irrespective of the discipline studied. Students consistently taking four years of math are better prepared for quantitative material than students who miss a year. Ms. Stephenson said a fourth year of math in accounting, business math, or similar course, could provide the linear progression. Faculty constraints may be an issue and the survey will provide answers to this question as well as remediation and graduation rates.

Chairman Farina appreciated their attitudes and comments and desire to collaboratively provide opportunities for success for students, realizing adequate governmental funding is not feasible. Their endorsement for Phase I courses is appreciated and their concerns about Phase II courses deserve deliberation. Pre-collegiate standards were adopted as it has been determined that a rigorous K-12 curriculum is the single, biggest indicator of success in college, more than ACT scores, socio-economic status.

Mr. Stewart said one of rural education's challenges is curriculum qualified teachers and asked if creative inventions, including technological options and different incentives for teachers, were employed or are creative, high performing students stifled or transferred. Mr. Stevinson said there are issues that need to be addressed by creative collaboration as remediation in smaller school districts is substantially above the state average. Mr. Keefe said gifted students have suffered under NCLB and/or school accountability systems because of the emphasis placed on proficiency and, perhaps, not all data has been reviewed leading to misconceptions on rural district remediation rates.

Paul Fiorino, President of the Colorado Arts Consortium and Partner with the Americans for the Arts, said the removal of creative arts from schools has lead to the crises in math and science. The metro area's Scientific and Cultural Facility District encourages sciences and arts and they

relate to physical education. There was a state standard for arts in the 1980's that has not been implemented to his knowledge. Students need to stay in school and not drop out. He asks if teachers are being taught to teach and stated every college in the nation has an arts component and dance program. Students need to be excited about education.

Rona Wilensky, principal of New Vista High School, a non-traditional, progressive school in Boulder, said her colleagues are concerned about the graduation requirements and the resources for quality math and foreign language teachers. A college degree is necessary to obtain a job but maybe not be necessary to do the job. Anthony Carnivali, an education writer advocating higher standards, estimates only 5 percent of jobs in America require Algebra II, an ACT benchmark for college readiness. The demand for math is not as clear as the demand for critical thinking. Courses taken have been a predictor of future success, but more courses taken does not mean more success as other characteristics factor into academic and professional success. She fears the requirements will lower the diversity at colleges.

Advisory Council Member Stuart Hilweg commented that Adams State College was founded and primary purpose is to train teachers. Currently, there are no student teacher applicants requesting Alamosa or the San Louis Valley indicating teachers want better paying jobs in non-rural school districts. Creative curricula may be necessary to ensure quality teachers in rural districts.

ACTION ITEMS

FINANCIAL AID POLICIES: Ms. Lindner recommended a broad policy for financial aid reform for further collaborative study with the institutions resulting in submission of specific policies by October, 2006. Three models were studied with the intent of helping students financially plan for college, particularly low-income students, clarifying financial aid, providing portability and assuring the best state funded financial aid. Of the three models studied, the stipend plus aid model appears to satisfy these needs. This is not part of the stipend program but the association communicates that the state is contributing. It will provide \$2,400 stipend plus dollars to every eligible Colorado resident's tuition, and for lowest income students, that will be a flat contribution. Model 1, a version of need-based aid, did not assure students financial aid. Institutions thought Model 2 confusing, providing no advantage. Model 3, stipend plus, provides a flat amount for Pell eligible or level one students and acknowledges the different cost at 2 and 4 year institutions. Staff will work with institutions to explore intended and unintended consequences of this model before final policies are developed. By June, 2006, staff, in conjunction with the institutions, will present recommendations on financial aid vouchers that will give institutions the flexibility they want.

Nancy McCallin, President of the Community College System, expressed her thanks for providing financial aid system certainty and the opportunity to study the consequences of the recommended model, which would pay for the first 60 credit hours at community colleges on a flat voucher stipend model. She is concerned how the stipend plus will be differentiated for access schools since the 2-year stipend is lower and may encourage students to apply for the higher 4-year college stipend, resulting in lower 2-year college funding. Mr. Baker questioned if it would be perceived as a psychological difference or a question of what school best fits the

student. Ms. Lindner said there would be high school focus groups to determine perceptions of the stipend plus program. Mr. Baker noted student involvement was essential and would provide ideas for marketing the new program.

Michel Dahlin, University of Colorado (CU), said an unintended consequence of Model 2 is an extreme reduction of funding at UCD/HSC from an estimated \$1.6 million to \$105,000, a 90 percent reduction, affecting every student seeking a health profession degree. She hopes the review will provide protection for these students. Retention rates of underrepresented could also be impacted. She also is concerned about the stipend label causing student confusion. Ms. Lindner said among elements to be studied are retention and graduation incentives, work-study, and incentives for pre-collegiate course work.

Alan Lamborn, Colorado State University System (CSU) concurs on recommendation that it would be unwise to adopt a model before further research is done. George Walker testified that the lack of funding for higher education is a problem.

Mr. Farina stated that item would be passed with the understanding that the model is the best alternative but has flaws to be addressed.

Judy Weaver moved to call question and Judy Altenberg seconded the motion, which was unanimously passed.

REPEAL OF CAPITAL ASSET POLICIES: PARTS I, L, O, P: Joan Johnson stated that Parts I, O, and P were incorporated into performance contracts and were no longer applicable. The subcommittee on capital assets agreed Part L, commission prioritization of state-funded projects, needed to be re-written and was being done.

There was no commissioner or public comment.

Ms. Weaver motioned for approval of the item and Mr. Baker seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

CONSENT ITEMS

TEACHER EDUCATION AUTHORIZATION – JONES INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY: Dr. David Leasure, President of Jones International University, said Jones International is a regionally accredited on-line institution, offering a Masters of Education. It includes 36 credit hours, intended to take an existing bachelor's degree and an endorsement area of 30 credits from a regionally accredited institution, adding additional standards and Colorado state standards and includes 800 hours of student teaching.

Ms. Weaver asked if the program would effectively provide field experience. Dr. Leasure said 6 credit hours are devoted to field experience that is compiled into a portfolio detailing experience and meetings with supervisors to ensure standards are met. Dr. Gianneschi said this procedure was similar to that being done at Adams State College.

PROPOSED MODIFICATION TO THE MESA STATE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS INDEX

There was no public or Commissioner discussion on this item.

Commissioner Altenberg moved to approve the Consent agenda items as presented and Commissioner Stewart seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

WRITTEN REPORTS – NO DISCUSSION

- ❑ **CCHE CAPITAL ASSETS POLICIES – PROGRESS REPORT**
- ❑ **CCHE – CAPITAL ASSETS QUARTERLY REPORTS (PROGRAM PLAN WAIVERS, CASH-FUNDED, SB 92-202, AND OTHER PROJECTS AND LEASES)**

There was no discussion and no action was taken.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30.