

TOPIC: DEGREE AUTHORIZATION ACT – Colorado University of Commerce; Rivendell College; and Rocky Vista University College of Osteopathic Medicine.

PREPARED BY: MATT MCKEEVER

I. SUMMARY

The Commission has statutory responsibility for the administration of Title 23, Article 2 of the Colorado Revised Statutes, commonly referred to as the Degree Authorization Act. Commission policies and procedures have been developed to include an application process for any institutions wishing to begin operation in Colorado. Institutions meeting the applicable requirements will be granted authority to operate upon the Commission's approval.

Colorado University of Commerce previously requested and was granted preliminary state authorization as a private college or university. Colorado University of Commerce has demonstrated reasonable and timely progress toward accreditation by completing step one of the eligibility process with the Higher Learning Commission, as required by CCHE Academic Affairs policy. As a result, Colorado University of Commerce qualifies to be considered for Category II Authorization. Staff recommends that Colorado University of Commerce be granted Category II Authorization since the institution is making reasonable and timely progress toward accreditation.

Rivendell College previously requested and was granted preliminary state authorization as a private college or university. Rivendell College has demonstrated reasonable and timely progress toward accreditation by completing step one of the eligibility process with the Higher Learning Commission, as required by CCHE Academic Affairs policy. As a result, Rivendell College qualifies to be considered for Category II Authorization. Staff recommends that Rivendell College be granted Category II Authorization since the institution is making reasonable and timely progress toward accreditation.

Rocky Vista University College of Osteopathic Medicine previously requested and was granted preliminary state authorization as a private college or university. Rocky Vista University College of Osteopathic Medicine has demonstrated reasonable and timely progress toward accreditation by gaining pre-accreditation with the American Osteopathic Association's Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation, as required by CCHE Academic Affairs policy. As a result, Rocky Vista University College of Osteopathic Medicine qualifies to be considered for Category II Authorization. Staff recommends that Rocky Vista University College of Osteopathic Medicine be granted Category II Authorization since the institution is making reasonable and timely progress toward accreditation.

II. BACKGROUND

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education has statutory responsibility for administration of Title 23, Article 2 of the Colorado Revised Statutes, which authorizes certain types of institutions to offer degrees and/or degree credits. These are: (1) Colorado publicly-supported colleges and universities; (2) properly accredited private colleges and universities; (3) postsecondary seminaries and bible colleges; and (4) private occupational schools authorized by the Division of Private Occupational School. Persons or unauthorized organizations that violate the provisions of the statute are subject to legal penalties.

All private colleges and universities, out of state public colleges and universities, and seminaries or bible colleges are required to register with the Colorado Commission on Higher Education and to meet criteria found in CCHE Policy Section I Part J, Degree Authorization Act, in order to be granted authorization to offer degrees within Colorado. Such authorization must be received by the institution prior to offering any program of instruction, academic credits, or degrees; opening a place of business; soliciting students or enrollees; or offering educational support services.

The Commission administers the Degree Authorization Act by determining an institution's eligibility to operate pursuant to statute and CCHE policy.

To apply for Category II authorization, an organization must provide to the Commission documentation demonstrating that the organization has established a relationship with an approved accrediting agency and is eligible to begin the accreditation process.

III. STAFF ANALYSIS

Colorado University of Commerce has previously requested and been granted preliminary authorization as a private college or university. On December 12, 2006 The Higher Learning Commission notified CCHE staff that Colorado University of Commerce initiated step one of the eligibility process (confirmation letter is on file in the Division of Academic and Student Affairs at CCHE). Consequently, Colorado University of Commerce has complied with the requirement of making reasonable and timely progress toward accreditation and is therefore eligible for authorization with Category II classification. Category II classification will allow Colorado University of Commerce to accept students, offer instruction, award credits toward a degree, and award a degree as long as the institute continues to demonstrate maintaining reasonable and timely progress toward accreditation. Upon approval, Colorado University of Commerce is required to host the on-site comprehensive accreditation visit within 24 months.

Rivendell College has previously requested and been granted preliminary authorization as a private college or university. On November 27, 2006, The Higher Learning Commission notified CCHE staff that Rivendell College initiated step one of the eligibility process (confirmation letter is on file in the Division of Academic and Student Affairs at CCHE). Consequently, Rivendell College has complied with the requirement of making reasonable and

timely progress toward accreditation and is therefore eligible for authorization with Category II classification. Category II classification will allow Rivendell College to accept students, offer instruction, award credits toward a degree, and award a degree as long as the institute continues to demonstrate maintaining reasonable and timely progress toward accreditation. Upon approval, Rivendell College is required to host the on-site comprehensive accreditation visit within 24 months.

Rocky Vista University College of Osteopathic Medicine (RVUCOM) has previously requested and been granted preliminary authorization as a private college or university. On December 22, 2006, The Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation notified CCHE staff that RVUCOM received the initial award of pre-accreditation (confirmation letter is on file in the Division of Academic and Student Affairs at CCHE). Consequently, RVUCOM has complied with the requirement of making reasonable and timely progress toward accreditation and is therefore eligible for authorization with Category II classification. Category II classification will allow RVUCOM to accept students, offer instruction, award credits toward a degree, and award a degree as long as the institute continues to demonstrate maintaining reasonable and timely progress toward accreditation. Upon approval, RVUCOM is required to host the on-site comprehensive accreditation visit within 24 months.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Commission grant Category II authorization to Colorado University of Commerce; Rivendell College; and Rocky Vista University College of Osteopathic Medicine. These institutions will have to continue to maintain reasonable and timely progress towards accreditation and are required to host the on-site comprehensive accreditation visit within 24 months.

V. SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Copies of all relevant statute, policy, and the above institutions application materials are on file in the Academic Affairs Office.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

23-1-121 C.R.S.

23-2-101 C.R.S.