

TOPIC: DEGREE AUTHORIZATION ACT – ADAM UNIVERSITY

PREPARED BY: HEATHER DELANGE, DR. JULIE CARNAHAN

I. SUMMARY

This item recommends that the Commission revoke of probationary authorization for Adam University to operate in Colorado because the University has failed to fulfill accreditation requirements.

The Commission granted Adams University probationary authorization on January 10, 2005, on the condition that it to pursue accreditation with a U.S. Department of Education recognized accreditation body within 24 months. The Department of Higher Education granted Adams University two extensions since the initial authorization, but it is not yet accredited.

II. BACKGROUND

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education has statutory responsibility for administration of Title 23, Article 2 of the Colorado Revised Statutes, commonly referred to as the Degree Authorization Act, which sets out the terms under which certain types of institutions¹ may offer degrees or degree credits. Persons or 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, seminaries and bible colleges are required to register with the Colorado Department of Higher Education and to meet criteria 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.

III. STAFF ANALYSIS

Under the previous Degree Authorization Act (in effect in 2005), a private, degree-granting institution was typically authorized to enroll, instruct and graduate students once a relationship with an accreditation body was established, and the authorization would remain effect as long as the institution made continuous effort toward accreditation and was in fact accredited in a reasonable and timely manner.

¹ (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 Schools.

The Commission granted Adam University probationary authorization in 2005 on the condition that it would seek accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission within 24 months. The probationary authorization expired in July 2007. In response to a request from the president of Adam University, the Department granted the institution a 24-month extension. In June 2009, the institution requested a further 12-month extension. Department staff granted a 30-day extension to investigate progress toward accreditation. When that extension expired on July 31, 2009, and based on the lack of progress toward accreditation, Department staff denied the 12-month extension.

After reviewing the original authorization and subsequent extensions for Adam University's authorization, DHE staff have determined that the institution has not made reasonable progress toward accreditation in the now four years allowed. Between 2007 and 2009, the institution decided to pursue from seeking accreditation from the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) instead of the Higher Learning Commission. ACICS advised DHE staff that the institution has yet to begin the necessary steps toward accreditation.

Adam University currently has an enrollment of approximately 80 students, all in several countries overseas. It has made an application for authorization in the state of Georgia; if approved there, its students should not be affected.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission revoke authorization for Adam University to operate in Colorado.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

C.R.S. §23-2-103.3(b)