

**TOPIC: DEGREE AUTHORIZATION ACT – MONTHLY UPDATE**

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**I. SUMMARY**

This standing information item is to provide an update to the Colorado Commission on Higher Education on the past month's activities related to the Degree Authorization Act.

**II. BACKGROUND**

The Commission has statutory responsibility for administration of Title 23, Article 2 of the Colorado Revised Statutes, commonly referred to as the Degree Authorization Act. All private colleges and universities, out-of-state public colleges and universities, seminaries and religious training institutions are required to register with the Colorado Department of Higher Education; meet the criteria in CCHE Policy Section I, Part J: Degree Authorization Act; and be authorized by the Commission prior to offering in Colorado any program of instruction, academic credits, or degrees; opening a place of business; soliciting students or enrollees; or offering educational support services.

This standing information is an update on institutions that operate within Colorado borders as well as those institutions that are applying for authorization. In the past month, Department staff:

1. Denied Zoubida Cole College's application for authorization as a seminary or religious training institution because the school's proposed degrees were secular in nature and did not meet the requirement of offering only programs that are religious in nature [CCHE policy Section I, Part J, Section 3.04.01 (d)]. Department staff suggested, based on the occupational nature of its academic programs, that the school pursue approval through the Division of Private Occupational Schools. The school responded that it is following that suggestion and will subsequently apply for national accreditation. The school will also narrow its focus down to one degree program (professional studies). The school reports, "It will allow our students an opportunity to use what they have accumulated in coursework over the past three years and maximize the strengths of our faculty and produce a bachelor's/ master's program that is marketable for students." The school expects to return with a revised proposal under the Degree Authorization Act next year.
2. Received an application for seminary or religious training authorization from SUM Bible College and Theological Seminary. The institution's headquarters is Oakland, CA. Staff just began processing this application.

3. Received a letter (Addendum A) from the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC) regarding the progress that American Pathways University is making toward accreditation. APU's President and Vice-President of Academic Affairs attended the June 10-11, 2013 Initial Accreditation Workshop hosted in Arlington, Virginia. This workshop is the first step of ACCSC's accreditation process. APU has already submitted its application for initial accreditation, part 1 and ACCSC staff is currently reviewing the application. Department staff has determined, in conjunction with additional conversations with ACCSC leadership, that this demonstrates the satisfactory progress conditions set at the Commission's April 5, 2013 meeting. APU will continue to operate under Probationary Authorization until it achieves accreditation by a recognized accrediting agency. Furthermore, staff will continue to provide updates to the Commission every six months with the cooperation of the ACCSC and the institution. It is important to note that the accreditation process through the ACCSC can take up to two years.
4. Received notification from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) regarding recent actions for the University of Phoenix and the Art Institute of Colorado. The HLC recently placed both institutions on notice. It is important to note that during the notice period, the institution remains accredited and it has the opportunity to remedy the concerns that led to the notice sanction. Staff will continue to monitor the accreditation status of both institutions throughout the notice period.

*Placed on Notice: An institution is placed on notice if it is found to be pursuing a course of action that could result in its being unable to meet one or more of the Criteria for Accreditation. Only the Commission's Board of Trustees, acting on a recommendation by an evaluation team, the Commission's president, or a committee of peer reviewers, can place an institution on notice. The institution is required to supply a written report on corrective measures, which is used by the president and Board of Trustees to determine to either remove the institution from notice or move it to probation.*

- a. University of Phoenix – Placed on notice based on concerns to governance, assessment, and research and scholarship. The University is required to file a Notice Report in fall 2014 providing evidence that the University has resolved the concerns of the HLC. The University will host a focused site visit in January 2015 to validate the contents of the Notice Report.
- b. Art Institute of Colorado – Placed on notice because of concerns related to student success, including retention and attrition, institutional review of data related to student success, faculty workload and development, enrollment management, and evidence-based planning. The Institute will host a focused visit in October 2014 focused on validating the contents of the Notice Report. At its meeting in February 2015, the HLC will review materials related to the evaluation and determine whether the Institute can

be removed from the Notice. If the Institute has not resolved the HLC's concerns that led to the imposition of Notice and demonstrated that it is in compliance with the Criteria with Accreditation, other action may be appropriate.

### **III. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

**This item is for information purposes only; staff makes no recommendation.**

### **STATUTORY AUTHORITY**

§ 23.2.103.3, C.R.S.  
§23-2-103.4 (2) (D)