

TOPIC: DEGREE AUTHORIZATION ACT – UPDATE

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I. SUMMARY

This standing written report provides an update to the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) on recent 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 item provides any updates on institutions that operate within Colorado borders as well as those institutions that are applying for authorization. In the past month, Department staff:

1. Received an application for seminary or religious training authorization from Aspen Christian College & Seminary. Staff is reviewing the materials and expect to bring a recommendation to the April CCHE meeting.
2. Received a verbal update from the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC) regarding the progress that American Pathways University (APU) is making toward accreditation. At its February 2014 commission meeting, the ACCSC voted to approve Part I of APU's initial application, which includes the financial viability of the institution. The institution is on schedule toward securing accreditation. The next step for the institution is the Self-Evaluation Report. APU will continue to operate under Probationary Authorization until it achieves accreditation by a recognized accrediting agency. Staff will continue to provide updates to the Commission with the cooperation of the ACCSC and the institution. As a reminder, this process can take up to two years to complete.
3. Argosy University and the Colorado Community College System have created an articulation and transfer agreement. The agreement covers:
 - AA in Sociology → BS in Criminal Justice

- AA in Psychology → BA in Psychology
 - AA in Business → BS in Business Administration
4. At the December 2013 CCHE meeting, staff informed the Commission of a Settlement Agreement between the Colorado Office of the Attorney General and Argosy University. Staff have received and summarized the University's response to that settlement agreement. As a reminder, the Attorney General's Office of Consumer Fraud investigated Argosy University's Ed.D. in Counseling Psychology program at the Denver campus and its resulting in licensure in Colorado, or lack thereof. Pursuant to the response, to close and resolve the investigation of the Consumer Fraud Unit of the Attorney Generals' Office, Argosy University agreed to:
- An injunction regarding advertising and enrolling students into Argosy University Denver's Doctorate of Education in Counseling Psychology if it were offered as a psychology licensure-track degree program;
 - Restrictions on program advertising and statements regarding licensing and employment prospects until certain conditions have been satisfied;
 - Provide written disclosures about programmatic accreditation, professional licensure, and employer hiring requirements relevant to particular degree programs;
 - Certain actions regarding determination as to accreditation and licensing requirements, including training and hiring employees with specific knowledge of local training, licensure and accreditation requirements;
 - Hire an independent auditor to conduct an audit of programmatic compliance; and
 - Conduct periodic training and program reviews.

Argosy University notified its regulatory bodies of the settlement including the University's accrediting agency, the Senior College and University Commission of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). WASC advised the University that its decision to settle the case would not impact its accreditation status. DHE staff considers this issue resolved and no further action is expected.

III. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

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