SECTION I

PART V CREATION, MODIFICATION OR DISCONTINUANCE OF ACADEMIC AND VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS AT PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

1.00 Introduction

Senate Bill 17-297 amended §23-1-107(1), C.R.S. to clarify that Commission approval is not required for new academic or vocational programs, so long as the new program is consistent with the institution's statutory role and mission. The Commission delegates review of statutory role and mission to Department staff (see Section 4.02.03 below). There are several exceptions where proposed degrees have additional statutory requirements, including educator preparation degrees, baccalaureate degrees at Colorado Mountain College, bachelor of science in nursing (B.S.N.) completion degrees at Aims Community College, and bachelor of applied science (B.A.S.) degrees at Aims Community College and at Colorado Community College System campuses, which are explained in detail below. This policy does not apply to certificate programs offered at area technical colleges, local district colleges, community colleges or 4-year institutions.

It should be noted that 4-year institutions may offer other programs that are commonly referred to as “certificates” that do not require review by the Department and are not eligible for entry into SURDS. Examples include, but are not limited to, non-credit bearing programs offered on a cash-funded basis, emphasis areas within degrees, and other sequences of courses that do not result in a bona fide credential. To be eligible for entry into SURDS, certificates must be credit-bearing, standalone programs (i.e., not part of a baccalaureate or graduate degree program). Certificates that can be applied to degree program requirements, such as “stackable certificates,” are considered to be standalone programs.

2.00 Statutory Authority

The Commission’s role and responsibility in the creation, modification and discontinuance of academic and vocational programs is defined in §23-1-107, which states that:

(1) A governing board of a state-supported institution of higher education is not required to submit a proposal to or obtain approval from the commission to create, modify, or discontinue academic or
vocational programs offered by the institution, so long as the creation, modification, or discontinuance of the academic or vocational program is consistent with the institution's statutory role and mission.

There are four exceptions where proposed degrees have additional statutory requirements:

2.01 Educator preparation program review and approval is a collaborative review between Colorado Department of Education and Colorado Department of Higher Education and a dual approval process between State Board of Education and Colorado Commission on Higher Education, per §23-1-121, C.R.S.

2.02 The Colorado Community College System schools, as well as Aims Community College, received state authorization to propose bachelor of applied science (B.A.S.) degrees when Senate Bill 14-004 was enacted, which requires the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE) to submit to the Commission for its approval technical, career, and workforce development bachelor of applied science degree programs and specifies the criteria to be used in evaluating the request.

2.03 Similarly, Senate Bill 10-101 amended §23-71-102(1), C.R.S. to read, “…Colorado mountain college, in addition to its mission as a junior college, may also offer no more than five baccalaureate degree programs as its board of trustees determines appropriate to address the needs of the communities within its service area…” and the Commission has the authority to approve those degrees based on the criteria outlined in the statute.

2.04 Similarly, House Bill 18-1300 amended §23-71-102(1), C.R.S. to read, “…Aims community college, in addition to its mission as a local district college, may also offer, as its board of trustees determines appropriate to address the needs of the communities within its service area…bachelor of science degree in nursing programs as a completion degree to students who have or are pursuing an associate degree in nursing” and the Commission has the authority to approve those degrees based on the criteria outlined in the statute.

3.00 Policy Goal

The goal of this policy is to ensure that a new or substantially modified program is consistent with the statutory role and mission of the institution and additional statutory requirements (where applicable). Additionally, Department staff needs certain information, including but not limited to degree level and CIP code, to enter new programs into the Student Unit Record Data System (SURDS) so that institutions may report enrollment and completion, for instance, in those programs.
4.00 New and Substantially Modified Program Process and Procedures

4.01 Governing Board Approval

4.01.01 A governing board may act to approve a new degree program before or after the Department’s endorsement of the program’s fit with the institution’s statutory role and mission.

4.01.02 The governing board shall formally notify the Department of its approval of a new or substantially modified degree program immediately following board action. The Department requests that new program proposals be sent by the institution’s or system’s representative on Academic Council (or their designee) to the Department staff who facilitates Academic Council. Institutions should follow their normal process to ensure compliance with any Title IV, federal Gainful Employment, or accreditation requirements.

4.02 Review by the Department

4.02.01 Upon receipt of the notification of the governing board’s action, the Department reviews the program for fit with the institution’s statutory role and mission, 60 credit cap for associate of arts and associate of science degrees, 120 credit cap for baccalaureate degrees [per §23-1-125(1)(a)], and GT Pathways requirements unless a waiver is sought [per 23-1-125(3)] and responds to the governing board within 30 days of receiving the proposal.

4.02.02 New or substantially modified programs that require Commission action are as follows:

- In the case of new educator preparation programs, Department staff shall follow the review process outlined in Commission Policy I, P: Educator Preparation, per §23-1-121, C.R.S.
- In the case of new baccalaureate degrees at Colorado Mountain College (§23-71-133, C.R.S.), Aims Community College (§23-1-133(2), C.R.S.), or one of the campuses within the Colorado Community College System (§23-1-133(1), C.R.S.), the review process shall be as follows:
  - Upon Department staff’s confirmation that the institution’s proposal meets the above statutory requirements, the proposal will be placed on the next Academic Council meeting agenda or distributed to Academic Council electronically for the Council’s advice to the Department.
  - Based on feedback from the Academic Council the institution submitting the proposal will be encouraged to resolve any areas of concern with other institutions with Department staff acting as facilitator of the discussion.

If there is disagreement, or at the request of an institution, the proposal shall be placed on the next Commission agenda for discussion and action. The
Commission shall have final authority as to whether or not the proposed program is approved.

4.02.03 In the case of new or substantially modified program proposals that are not subject to the statutory requirements outlined above (which will be the majority of new program proposals), if the Department determines that the proposed program is consistent with an institution’s statutory role and mission and meets the other applicable statutory requirements outlined above then the Department shall enter the new program into the Student Unit Record Data System (SURDS) and notify the institution.

- If the Department determines that the proposal is not consistent with the institution’s statutory role and mission or credit cap and GT Pathways requirements (if applicable), it will so inform the governing board. The Department shall take credit cap and GT Pathways (where applicable) waiver requests to the Commission for action.
- If disagreement on Department staff’s determination arises then the review and ensuing discussion shall be elevated to Academic Council for its advice. The Commission shall have final authority as to whether or not the proposed program is approved.

5.00 Modifications to and Discontinuance of Existing Programs

Following institutional and/or governing board approval, proposals that involve non-substantive modification to or discontinuance of an existing program, must be reported to the Department for appropriate entry in the list of approved programs in SURDS and do not require action by the Commission.

HISTORY: CCHE Agenda Item III, B – November 6, 2014; CCHE Agenda Item III, B – December 4, 2014; CCHE Agenda Item VI, A – October 23, 2017; CCHE Agenda Item V, B - December 7, 2017; CCHE Agenda Item III, E – December 6, 2018