



**Minutes of the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) Meeting
Via ZOOM Teleconference
April 3, 2020**

BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Tom McGimpsey called the business meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

I. Opening Business

A. Attendance

Commissioners attending: Chair McGimpsey, Vice Chair Kerr, Abramson, Buescher, Colon, Gannett, Hughes, Stich, Trujillo, Tucker, Executive Director Paccione.

Advisors attending: Rep. Kipp, Rep. McCluskie, Sen. Todd, Wayne Artis, Mark Cavanaugh, David Olguin, Brad Baca, Christina Powell, Misti Ruthven

B. Minutes

Commissioner Colon moved to approve the minutes for the March 6, 2020 Commission meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gannett and passed unanimously.

C. Chair, Vice-Chair, Commissioners and Advisors Reports

Chair McGimpsey thanked all institutions of higher education and the Department for exhibiting leadership during the COVID19 pandemic. The focus has been rightly on the health and safety of our students, staff, employees and Coloradans. My personal opinion is our leaders in Colorado have shown clear and early leadership in this crisis. As a commission I also believe that we are open to creative solutions and flexibility to address the current crisis

Vice Chair Kerr also thanked the team at the Department for all of the work that is being done to stay connected to our institutions and to determine exactly what they need. She was impressed by the thinking behind securing laptops and how we can creatively help support our institutions and ultimately the students within



our communities who want to get their degree and want to continue to learn. We have an incredible team of leaders here in Colorado who are focused on the people and how we can continue to ensure that our people are served and our economy can thrive even through this challenging time.

Fiscal Affairs & Audit Committee – Commissioner Tucker reported that the committee met last Friday and discussed the impact of COVID19 on institutions and on the budget, much of which was shared during the learning session by Jason Schrock. The committee also had an extensive discussion of the undergraduate need based financial aid model for 2021 which will be in the items on the agenda today for action.

Student Success & Academic Affairs Committee – Commissioner Gannett reported that the committee did not meet this month, but expressed appreciation for all the Department is doing to support students and institutions at this time.

Advisor Cavanaugh reported that the independent sector, including private and nonprofit institutions appreciates being included in all the information being shared. When Congress was debating the CARES Act, all institutions of higher education were on the same letter that went forth from the state. Colorado was one of the only states that did that. This is more evidence of the inclusive collaborative spirit that exists in Colorado higher education.

Advisor Ruthven thanked the Commission on behalf of Commissioner Anthes for the joint guidance issued on concurrent enrollment and other shared programs.

Executive Director Report

Dr. Paccione reported that all Colorado institutions have transitioned to remote learning. They've moved from full campuses to essential staff only. They've also moved from a focus on "my campus" and "my school" to a statewide focus and in that way, they have also contributed to the state's fundamental and urgent needs. Many have donated PPE from their programs to healthcare providers. Many research labs have also contributed by providing verification of the new types of PPE that are being created and manufactured right here in Colorado. Institution presidents and CEOs have been meeting weekly to share experience and decision making around key issues that all are facing. The Department is providing our congressional delegation with information so that they can make a case on the floor of the House and Senate as to why they should support higher education. The No Lapse in Learning program has been very successful in getting laptops to the most vulnerable students, especially in rural communities. Dr. Paccione thanked all for their efforts in this health crisis.

D. Public Comment – There was no public comment.



II. Consent Items

- A. Recommendation for Revision of CCHE Policy IV: Statewide Extended Studies – *Dr. Chris Rasmussen*
- B. Degree Authorization Act: Recommendation for Renewal of Full Authorization for the College for Financial Planning – *Heather DeLange*
- C. Degree Authorization Act: Recommendation of Authorization for Field Experience (with no instruction) for Miami University – *Heather DeLange*
- D. Recommendation for Reauthorization of Educator Preparation Unit at Fort Lewis College – *Dr. Brittany Lane*

Commissioner Tucker moved to approve Consent Items A-D. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Buescher and passed unanimously.

III. Action Items

- A. Fiscal Year 2020-21 Undergraduate Need-Based Financial Aid Allocation Model – *Emily Burns*

Ms. Emily Burns provided information on both the undergraduate need-based aid allocation methodology as well as the broader total state financial aid allocations, given the new realities the state is facing in the wake of the COVID 19 pandemic and ensuing economic slowdown. Staff explained the impact this will have on the undergraduate need-based aid allocation scenarios and the potential impact on the broader total allocations. Staff recommended the Commission adopt a principled approach to both the undergraduate need-based aid allocation as well as the total allocation. In the event of a reduction, staff recommended that the Merit and CTE aid lines be reduced in order to protect the undergraduate and workstudy allocations. In response to questions, staff explained the difference between the undergraduate and graduate need-based aid allocation formulas, as well as the timeline for Commission approval of total allocations. Staff also reiterated the importance of guardrails in the undergraduate need-based aid allocation methodology, given the need for some stability in year-to-year allocations while highlighting the differences in the scenarios presently being considered relative to the scenarios presented at the March Commission and Committee meetings.

Commission Buescher moved to approve and Commissioner Tucker seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Discussion Items

- A. Proposed New Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreements in Computer Science, Dance, Journalism and Public Health – *Dr. Chris Rasmussen*
- B. Proposed New Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreement in Mechanical Engineering – *Dr. Chris Rasmussen*



These two discussion items (IV.A and IV.B) were addressed together. Dr. Chris Rasmussen, CDHE Director of Academic Affairs, provided context for the Department's work to develop Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreements, which are statutorily mandated agreements among public institutions for student transfer from an associate's to a bachelor's degree in the same academic discipline or programmatic area. Dr. Rasmussen outlined the process to develop five new agreements in computer science, dance, journalism, mechanical engineering, and public health. The mechanical engineering agreement departs from previous ones in requiring 64 credits for the associate degree (vs. 60), and requiring only 7 of 10 required GT Pathways courses. He noted that the computer science and mechanical engineering agreements are the first to include the Colorado School of Mines. Also presenting were Dr. Tracy Camp, professor of computer science and department chair at Colorado School of Mines, and Ms. Christy Gomez, faculty in mathematics at Front Range Community College, and the Colorado Community College System statewide faculty chair for engineering programs and pathways.

C. Degree Authorization Act: Recommendation of Provisional Authorization for Norwich University – *Heather DeLange*

Heather DeLange, Director of the Office of Private Postsecondary Education, provided an overview of a new institution, Norwich University, which seeks authorization to offer instruction in Colorado. Ms. DeLange informed the Commission about the University going through the authorization process and ultimately, the evaluation team recommended authorization for the University in Colorado. Dr. Bill Clements, Vice President and Dean of the College of Graduate and Continuing Studies for Norwich University joined the meeting and provided the Commission with an overview of the University's desire to be in Colorado.

Dr. Clements provided a brief history of the University and why Colorado was chosen for an additional location, citing personal connections of its new president, the military presence as well as economic and population growth.

The item was presented for discussion only but staff stated its support if the Commission wished to take action. The item was moved to an Action Item by Commissioner Abramson, seconded by Commissioner Colon. Commissioner Buescher moved to approve and Commissioner Tucker seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Recommendation for Reallocation of OER Conference Funds – *Spencer Ellis*

Mr. Spencer Ellis and OER Council Chair Brittany Dudek provided a proposal for CCHE to approve the \$40,000 planned for the June 4-5 Annual OER Conference to be reallocated toward the Department's *No Lapse in Learning* initiative, to help expand access to essential technologies for students in direct response to the



growth in online education due to COVID-19. The reallocation of the conference funds to support the *No Lapse in Learning* initiative extends the spirit of access to open educational resources both for the immediate needs of students learning online and in the long-term investment to enable infrastructures necessary for sustainable open education work. Already awarded OER Grants remain supported to their full effect as institutions continue to incorporate OER in instructional practices. In conclusion, staff recommended that the Commission approve the proposal to reallocate the OER Conference funds, in the amount of \$40,000, toward the *No Lapse in Learning* initiative to expand access to essential technologies for students in greater need due to the COVID-19 crisis.

This item was moved to an Action Item by a motion from Commissioner Tucker and a second by Commissioner Trujillo. Commission Buescher moved to approve and Commissioner Hughes seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Commission Initiatives

A. Legislative and Budget Update – *Chloe Mugg and Jason Schrock*

Budget Update – Mr. Jason Schrock, CDHE, provided an update on the state budget situation, especially as it pertains to higher education. The budget landscape has changed substantially over the past month due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The March revenue forecast from the legislature showed approximately \$800 million in less revenue for the General Fund budget for FY 2020-21. There is expected to be an updated revenue forecast by early May for the legislature to use to finalize the budget. Unfortunately, the revenue picture is likely to deteriorate. The Joint Budget Committee (JBC) will have to reverse much of the spending increases it had initially approved, including the seven percent increase for higher education institutions.

The federal stimulus package being adopted by Congress will provide some state relief. Mr. Schrock referenced a document “CARES Act and Colorado State Budget” from the Office of State Planning and Budgeting (OSPB) which outlines the federal stimulus money for the state, However, it is unclear whether the funds can be used to backfill revenue shortfalls or only for new spending related to the pandemic.

Mr. Schrock discussed the potential substantial revenue shortfall the state could face over the next few fiscal years due the economic downturn, again referencing the CARES Act and Colorado's State Budget document. He also discussed the \$14 billion in funding for higher education nationwide from the federal stimulus package. Most of this money for Colorado will be split between higher education institutions and emergency grants to students.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45pm.

