



**COLORADO**

Department of  
Higher Education

1600 Broadway, Suite 2200

Denver, CO 80202

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Academic Council</b> <b>March 10, 2026</b> <b>1:00 – 3:00 pm</b>
<b>Location</b>	Remote ONLY
<b>Call-In Information</b>	<a href="#">View Meeting Recording</a>
<b>Meeting Participants</b>	Provosts and Chief Academic Officers (CAOs) of the public institutions of higher education
<b>Meeting Objectives</b>	Members advise the Department on policy development and implementation, as well as other matters affecting higher education.

## **AGENDA – NOTES**

### 1. Greetings and Introductions

In attendance: Laura Borgelt (CU Anschutz); Helen Caprioglio (CSUP); Margaret Doell (ASU); Andy Herring (CSM); Mark Kavanaugh (CU Boulder); Mike Lightner (CU-SYS); Matt Makley (MSU Denver); Dave Oehler (Aims); Tina Parscal (CCCS); Kathryn Regjo (CMC); Susan Taylor (UCCS); Linda Van Doren (EGTC); Rebecca Woulfe (CCCS-FRCC); Jess Young (WCU); Christina Carrillo (CDHE); Carl Einhaus (CDHE); Brad Griffith (CDHE)

### 2. Approval of February Meeting Notes

[see handout: 2026-02-10 NOTES-AC.pdf]

Notes approved

### 3. Announcements and Discussion Items

#### a. Updates from CCHE Advisor Michael Lightner

Dr. Lightner provided an extensive update on the most recent CCHE meeting that took place on March 6. He shared materials with Carl to distribute to the Council and summarized both the work session and business session. The work session focused on the new Carnegie Classification for Social and Economic Mobility, presented by HCM Strategies and American Council on Education (ACE). Colorado institutions Colorado State University Pueblo (CSUP) and Regis University were highlighted positively in the national dataset. The business meeting included leadership updates, including the transition of Rico Munn to CSU Chancellor and an announcement that the University of

Northern Colorado (UNC) is seeking an interim president. Denver University's (DU) \$30M deficit was acknowledged, while area technical colleges reported significant growth. Dr. Lightner also reported that the Commission approved the staff request to begin the step-down funding process for optometry students (part of a WICHE program) by a vote of 5-4. He noted that CCHE's Ad Hoc Task Force is actively exploring expanded Commission authority, including possible changes to statewide oversight of academic program approval. Breakout discussions indicated an appetite for significant policy shifts in the coming years. No specific action or deadline was assigned to Council members, though Dr. Lightner encouraged institutions to monitor CCHE and subcommittee meetings closely due to the anticipated "disruptive" changes ahead.

- b. COF requests for selected "off-campus" undergraduate programs for FY27  
Brad Griffith provided an update on the annual process for requesting College Opportunity Fund (COF) eligibility for selected off-campus undergraduate programs. CDHE will issue a memo immediately following the meeting outlining requirements. Institutions may request COF-funded eligibility for up to 0.5% of their statewide COF-eligible credit hours, and requests must describe the program, location, requested FTE, and justification — particularly if FTE increases from prior years. Requests are due **March 27**, allowing CDHE time to review submissions at the April Academic Council meeting and advance approved items to the May CCHE meeting for action. CDHE will provide copies of prior-year requests upon request.
- c. Transfer initiatives update (Carl Einhaus)
  - Higher Education Transfer Audit  
Carl provided updates on statewide transfer reform efforts. The Higher Education Transfer Audit included 19 recommendations, with 3 completed and the remaining 16 due by **October 1, 2026**. CDHE is coordinating closely with the Transfer Subcommittee, which meets every 3 weeks, to work through policy adjustments and systemic changes required to implement the audit. A current focus is the recommendation that institutions accept in transfer any coursework (including PLA such as AP/IB/CLEP) that another Colorado institution has already accepted for GT Pathways credit. Carl is meeting with registrars the same afternoon to discuss operational considerations. He noted that existing PLA policy regarding challenge exams provides a partial framework for addressing the recommendation. No immediate deadline was assigned to institutions, but Carl emphasized that the audit deadline of October 1, 2026, necessitates steady progress.
  - CCHE Transfer Subcommittee  
Carl and Brad noted that policy revision work is moving more slowly than initially hoped due to the complexity of discussions. The Transfer Subcommittee has begun

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working directly with audit recommendations, sparking deep conversation but limited completed revisions. Brad encouraged Academic Council members to attend subcommittee meetings to follow these discussions firsthand. Council members raised concerns about unnecessary disruption, resource constraints, and the need to prioritize required audit work over broader ideological changes. No formal action was requested of Academic Council, though Council voices were encouraged in CCHE and [subcommittee meetings](#).

- d. **AACRAO grant opportunity for transcript evaluation improvements**  
Carl announced that American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Office (AACRAO) is applying for a national grant and is considering Colorado as a partner state. If awarded, the grant would provide \$100,000 to each participating institution, with a required 50% institutional match which can be met through staff FTE. The initiative aims to help institutions accelerate transcript evaluations so that newly admitted students receive their transfer evaluation within 30 days, as required under SB 24-164. The grant would support operational assessment and technical assistance to help institutions evaluate transfer credit immediately upon admission. AACRAO expects to learn grant results in early July, and participating institutions would be selected shortly thereafter. No action is needed now.
- e. **Introduction of new Senior Director for Student Success and P20 Alignment**  
Carl announced that Spencer Ellis has been hired as the new Senior Director for Student Success and P20 Alignment. Spencer begins on Monday, March 16 (next Monday) and will be introduced at upcoming council and committee meetings.

#### 4. New, modified, and closed programs

##### a. New

- Adams State University
  - Graduate Certificate in Name, Image, and Likeness
- Colorado State University
  - Bachelor of Science in Environmental Public Health
  - Bachelor of Science in Medical Microbiology and Infectious Disease
- Metropolitan State University of Denver
  - Master of Science in Event and Experience Management
  - Master of Science in Hospitality Leadership
- University of Colorado Colorado Springs
  - Master of Arts in Military Leader Development
- Western Colorado University
  - Undergraduate Certificate in Industrial Design
  - Undergraduate Certificate in Water Studies

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- Bachelor of Arts in Film
  - Bachelor of Arts in Industrial Design
  - Bachelor of Arts in Theatre
  - Master of Arts in Applied Ethics
  - Graduate Certificate in Community Resilience
  - Graduate Certificate in Forests, Fuels, and Fire
  - Graduate Certificate in Integrative Land Management
  - Graduate Certificate in Mine Reclamation Management
  - Graduate Certificate in Therapeutic Mentoring
- b. Modified
- Western Colorado University
    - Bachelor of Arts in Sociology changed to Bachelor of Arts in Sociology & Criminal Justice
- c. Closed Programs
- Western Colorado University
    - Graduate Certificate in Energy Geoscience
    - Master of Arts in Gallery and Museum Management

**ACTION ITEMS**

Issue	Action / Next Step	Assigned To & Date Assigned

