

**TOPIC:**                   **Approval of Cannabis-Related Certificate Program at Colorado State University Pueblo**

**PREPARED BY:**       **Christina Carrillo, Academic Policy Officer and Advocate**  
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## **I. SUMMARY**

This consent item is for the approval of an undergraduate certificate program at Colorado State University Pueblo (CSUP): Institute of Cannabis Research Certificate of Foundational Studies in Cannabis.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

House Bill 19-1311, in creating the Institute of Cannabis Research (ICR) at Colorado State University Pueblo, outlined requirements for institutions of higher education that seek to develop cannabis-related degrees or certificates. The bill amended §23-31.5-112, C.R.S. (Colorado Revised Statutes), adding subsection (3)(d), which reads, “the [ICR] governing board shall advise any Colorado institution of higher education that seeks to develop a cannabis-specific curriculum. The Colorado commission on higher education shall seek input from the governing board before approving any cannabis-related degrees or certification.”

In response to HB19-1311, the Commission revised its policy on Creation, Modification or Discontinuance of Academic and Vocational Programs at Public Institutions of Higher Education ([Section I, Part V](#)) to outline required steps for institutions to seek advisement from the ICR governing board on any cannabis-related curriculum and to seek approval from the Commission of all cannabis-related degrees and certifications. As part of its due diligence, the staff engages the Academic Council as key stakeholders and subject matter experts on matters of academic

policy and programs. (The Academic Council is an advisory body and not a decision-making one.) If the proposed degree program meets statutory requirements and complies with Commission policies, it is recommended for approval by the Commission. If the proposed degree program does not meet statutory requirements or comply with Commission policies, staff advises the institution to revise the program and proposal accordingly.

### **III. STAFF ANALYSIS**

[Commission Policy Section I, Part V](#) stipulates that institutions seeking to develop cannabis-related degrees and certifications shall submit a proposal to the Department addressing the following criteria:

1. Fit with the institution's statutory role and mission
2. Confirmation of required approvals from the institution's governing board and applicable accrediting agencies (or evidence that approval processes have been initiated); and
3. Written confirmation of consultation with the Institute of Cannabis Research.

CSUP has complied with these requirements via the information provided in Attachment A-C. The program description and proposal to the CSU Board of Governors is Attachments A. Confirmation of consultation with the Institute of Cannabis Research is included as Attachment B. CSUP voluntarily offered a rejoinder to the Institute of Cannabis Research in response to feedback, which is Attachment C.

Department staff opened a public comment period on the proposed program on March 3, 2025, and closed the public comment period on April 3, 2025. The proposed program was placed on the Academic Council agenda on March 11, 2025, with representatives of CSUP available to answer questions.

Department staff have determined that CSUP has met the required statutory criteria and has complied with Commission policy and sees no reason for the Commission to withhold approval.

#### **IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Staff recommends approval of the cannabis-related undergraduate certificate program at Colorado State University Pueblo: Institute of Cannabis Research Certificate of Foundational Studies in Cannabis.**

#### **V. STATUTORY AUTHORITY**

##### **C.R.S. §23-31.5-112**

**Institute of cannabis research – governing board – powers relating to the receipt and use of certain tax revenues – definitions.**

...

(2)(a) There is created the institute of cannabis research, to be housed at Colorado State University Pueblo, unless a relocation occurs pursuant to subsection (7) of this section.

...

(3)(d) The governing board shall advise any Colorado institution of higher education that seeks to develop a cannabis-specific curriculum. The Colorado commission on higher education shall seek input from the governing board before approving any cannabis-related degrees or certification.

#### **ATTACHMENT(S):**

Attachment A: CSU\_Pueblo\_NewCertProgram-ICR-Foundational-Studies

Attachment B: Letter of Input - ICR-CSUP Certificate Final

Attachment C: CSUP Response ICR Certificate