**Topic: DEGREE AUTHORIZATION: CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY, ST. PAUL – CHANGE OF STATUS FROM PROVISIONAL TO FULL AUTHORIZATION**

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1. **Summary**

This agenda item recommends the change of authorization from Provisional Authorization to Full Authorization for Concordia University, St. Paul pursuant to the Degree Authorization Act (§23-2-101 et seq.).

1. **Background**

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) has statutory responsibility for administration of Title 23, Article 2 of the Colorado Revised Statutes, commonly referred to as the Degree Authorization Act (DAA). The Act sets out the terms by which the Commission may authorize accredited private colleges and universities, out-of-state public colleges and universities, and seminaries and bible colleges to operate in Colorado.

The DAA outlines the Department’s jurisdiction over private education programs available to the residents of the state of Colorado. The DAA establishes standards to (1) prevent misrepresentation, fraud, and collusion in offering educational programs to the public and (2) protect, preserve, foster, and encourage the educational programs offered by private educational institutions, which meet generally recognized criteria of quality and effectiveness as determined through voluntary accreditation.

Full Authorization is awarded to institutions that have successfully completed a site visit by its institutional accrediting agency and is compliant with all applicable statutory and policy language at the state, federal, and accreditor levels.

Concordia University, St. Paul is a Minnesota based private not for profit, religious institution offering comprehensive and coeducational educational programs. The programs include a traditional 4-year Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) at the St. Paul, MN campus, and an accelerated track (16-month) Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSN) degree offered at the St. Paul campus and at a Portland, OR campus. CSP now offers a 16-month ABSN in Colorado at the former Platt College location. CSP ABSN students in Oregon and Minnesota have high first-time pass rates on the NCLEX-RN licensure exam. The university has been institutionally accredited by the Higher Learning Commission since 1959 and will undergo its next reaffirmation of accreditation in 2027-2028.

1. **Staff Analysis**

In compliance with the Degree Authorization Act, Concordia University, St. Paul successfully completed its on-site visit with the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). In reviewing the HLC website, the Colorado location of Concordia University, St. Paul is listed as an approved additional location of the main campus in Minnesota. The University has also obtained full approval by the Colorado State Board of Nursing.

All requirements of institutions operating under the Degree Authorization Act are now met by Concordia University, St. Paul. Pursuant to statute, the university will need to renew its authorization after the completion and final determination of its reaffirmation of accreditation in 2027-2028 by HLC.

1. **Staff Recommendations**

**Staff recommends the Commission approve full authorization for Concordia University, St. Paul under the Degree Authorization Act.**

1. **Statutory Authority**

**C.R.S. §23-2-103.3 Authorization to operate in Colorado – renewal**

(1) (a) To operate in Colorado, a private college or university shall apply for and receive authorization from the commission. A private college or university shall obtain separate authorization for each campus, branch, or site that is separately accredited. A private, nonprofit college or university shall submit with its application verification of nonprofit status, including a copy of the institution's tax-exempt certificate issued by the Colorado department of revenue.

(b) After receiving an application, the department shall review the application to determine whether the private college or university is institutionally accredited by a regional or national accrediting body recognized by the United States department of education. The department shall not recommend and the commission shall not approve an application from a private college or university that, in the two years preceding submission of the application, has had its accreditation suspended or withdrawn or has been prohibited from operating in another state or that has substantially the same owners, governing board, or principal officers as a private college or university that, in the two years preceding submission of the application, has had its accreditation suspended or withdrawn or has been prohibited from operating in another state.

(2) To operate in Colorado, a private college or university shall be institutionally accredited on the basis of an on-site review by a regional or national accrediting body recognized by the United States department of education; except that a private college or university may operate for an initial period without accreditation if the commission determines, in accordance with standards established by the commission, that the private college or university is likely to become accredited in a reasonable period of time or is making progress toward accreditation in accordance with the accrediting body's policies. The commission may grant a provisional authorization to a private college or university to operate for an initial period without accreditation. The private college or university shall annually renew its provisional authorization and report annually to the commission concerning the institution's progress in obtaining accreditation.