**TOPIC: Degree Authorization – Approval of the Renewal of Provisional Authorization for Arizona College of Nursing – Denver**

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1. **SUMMARY**

This agenda item recommends the renewal of provisional authorization for Arizona College of Nursing to operate as an authorized private, degree-granting institution in Colorado 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.

Arizona College of Nursing is applying to renew its Provisional Authorization for its Denver campus. The College is offering a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Arizona College’s main campus is in Glendale, Arizona and has been institutionally accredited by the Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES) since 1994. In 2022, ABHES included the Denver, CO campus in its list of accredited institutions, as a campus delivering instruction by means of in -person or blended formats. The pre-licensure Bachelor of Nursing program is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). Arizona College operates in nine other states: Arizona, California, Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii, Nevada, Texas, Virginia, and Utah and is approved by both the state authorizing agency and the respective Boards of Nursing in those states. The application included NCLEX pass rates for its Nevada and Tempe, AZ campuses and demonstrate a high pass rate, 97.4% and 100% respectively.

1. **STAFF ANALYSIS**

As required by the Degree Authorization Act, Arizona College submitted the required documents concerning its organization, programs, accreditation, and finances for the renewal of its Colorado campus. Arizona College of Nursing has been approved by the State Board of Nursing for Phase II, which allows the institution to enroll and instruct students. Pursuant to the College’s renewal materials, the Denver campus has hired a campus president and has continued to hire new faculty and staff to support its 201 currently enrolled students. The first class is expected to graduate in 2024. After the program graduates its first class, the Board of Nursing requires the program to request full approval. The earliest a program gets full approval is 15 months after graduating its first class.

All materials submitted and verified by staff are in compliance with requirements promulgated by the Degree Authorization Act.

1. **STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Department staff recommends the renewal of Provisional Authorization for the Arizona College of Nursing, Denver campus.**

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 a 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.