



COLORADO

Department of
Higher Education

1600 Broadway, Suite 2200
Denver, CO 80202

Meeting	Academic Council January 13, 2026 1:00 – 3:00 pm
Location	Remote ONLY
Call-In Information	Join Zoom Meeting Meeting ID: 857 6041 3189 Passcode: 408673
Meeting Participants	Provosts and Chief Academic Officers (CAOs) of the public institutions of higher education
Meeting Objectives	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: Kelsey Bennett (WCU); Helen Caprioglio (CSUP); Jerid Counterman (CSUG); Margaret Doell (ASU); Roze Hentschell (CSU-SYS); Andy Herring (CSM); Mark Kavanaugh (CU Boulder); Jill Lange (MSU Denver); Mike Lightner (CU-SYS); Karen Marrongelle (CU Denver); Kimberly Miloch (CSU); Tina Parscal (CCCS); Kathryn Regjo (CMC); Linda Van Doren (EGTC); Rebecca Woulfe (CCCS-FRCC); Christina Carrillo (CDHE); Carl Einhaus (CDHE); Brad Griffith (CDHE)

2. Approval of December Meeting Notes

[see handout: 2025-12-09 NOTES-AC.pdf]

Notes approved

3. Announcements and Discussion Items

a. Announcing JB Holston, CDHE Interim Executive Director

Carl announced the appointment of JB Holston as CDHE Executive Director, following Dr. Angie Paccione's departure. JB will serve through the remainder of Governor Polis' term and brings significant experience as former Dean of Engineering at the University of

Denver (DU). JB plans to visit campuses and will attend a future Academic Council meeting.

b. Updates from CCHE Advisor Michael Lightner

Dr. Lightner reported that no formal CCHE meetings have occurred since the last Academic Council meeting. Upcoming meetings include the Student Success and Workforce Alignment Committee on January 20 and the CCHE Business Meeting on January 30. Dr. Lightner will be unable to attend these meetings and invited volunteers to participate. He noted that the CCHE Transfer Subcommittee has convened and will continue to work on statewide transfer improvements.

c. Discussion on preliminary results from survey on reduced-credits bachelor's degrees (Brad Griffith)

Brad shared preliminary results from the survey on reduced-credit bachelor's degrees:

- **Responses:** 16 responses from 13 institutions; survey remains open until end of January.
- **Support:** ~60% support moving forward with safeguards; ~25% support with caution; ~10–15% oppose at this time.
- **Policy Considerations:** Most respondents favor statutory changes to allow flexibility, with CCHE involvement for equity and consistency.
- **Readiness:** 50% of institutions indicated readiness to launch within 12–18 months if approved; 30% possibly interested; 20% not ready.
- **Safeguards Identified:** Preserve baccalaureate-level rigor and learning outcomes; clear student disclosures (transfer, licensure, graduate school implications); HLC compliance; avoid erosion of general education breadth.
- **Risks:** Student confusion, transfer complications, Title IV issues, and revenue impacts from reduced electives.
- **Potential Program Areas:** Applied technology, IT, data science, business, healthcare administration, education, creative industries, and trades.

Brad will compile full results and present a formal report at the February meeting. Questions included accreditation flexibility and implications for institutions considering alternative accreditors.

d. Transfer initiatives update (Carl Einhaus)

- Higher Education Transfer Audit
- CCHE Transfer Subcommittee

Carl provided updates on statewide transfer work:

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- **Higher Education Transfer Audit:** The State Auditor issued 19 recommendations to improve transfer processes. Three recommendations have been completed, including resolving specific student cases. The other recommendations involve many aspects including clarifying policy gaps (e.g., applicability of statewide transfer beyond AA/AS degrees).
- **Next Steps:** Remaining 16 recommendations must be addressed by October 1, 2026. Work will involve Academic Council, GE Council, and the CCHE Transfer Subcommittee.
- **Transfer Subcommittee:** Reconvened with broad representation, including plans to add student voices. Focus will include audit recommendations and other strategies to improve transfer.

Carl emphasized the importance of clarifying statewide transfer policies and improving transparency for students.

e. Executive Order and Workforce Alignment

Carl and Brad discussed the Governor’s Executive Order to streamline workforce and education initiatives. A bill will be introduced this legislative session to begin merging CDHE with the Colorado Workforce Development Council and related agencies over a 3–5-year timeline. Members raised concerns about maintaining higher education’s broader mission beyond workforce preparation and ensuring nuanced policy development. Brad noted opportunities for alignment through prior learning assessment, statewide transfer, and potential creation of career pathways. Members also discussed implications for short-term Pell eligibility and credential recognition, with Brad summarizing recent federal negotiated rulemaking outcomes. A coordinated information session on short-term Pell and credentialing was requested for future meetings.

4. New, modified, and closed programs

a. New

- Colorado State University – Global Campus
 - Undergraduate Certificate in Azure AI Automation with Leadership Fundamentals
 - Bachelor of Science in Finance and Applied AI
 - Bachelor of Science in Integrated Business and Technology
 - Graduate Certificate in Healthcare Data Analytics
 - Master of Science in Cybersecurity
- Colorado State University – Pueblo
 - Undergraduate Certificate in Security Studies
 - Bachelor of Science in Special Education: K-12 Teacher Preparation
 - Post-Master’s Certificate in Executive Educational Leadership

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- University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus
 - Master of Health Science
- University of Colorado Boulder
 - Bachelor of Science in Integrated Business and Engineering
- b. Modified
 - None
- c. Closed Programs
 - None

ACTION ITEMS

Issue	Action / Next Step	Assigned To & Date Assigned

