**TOPIC: Degree Authorization: Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science – Approval of Full Authorization**

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1. **SUMMARY**

This agenda item recommends Full Authorization for Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science (RFUMS) to operate 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.

Provisional authorization is the authorization level for institutions, new or new to Colorado, which have been evaluated by Department staff under Commission procedures and authorized by the Commission to enroll students, offer instruction, graduate students, and award degrees under the condition that the institution is continuously seeking and is making satisfactory progress toward accreditation at the local site. Institutions with provisional authorization are required to renew annually and must receive accreditation at the Colorado site within three years of initial authorization.

Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science is non-profit university with a campus located in North Chicago, IL. The university is institutionally accredited by the Higher Learning Commission since 1980 and will undergo its next reaffirmation of accreditation in 2028-2029. RFUMS is a predominantly graduate health professions university that offers degrees at the bachelor, master, professional doctorate, and doctoral levels in various healthcare and biomedical fields.

Under its provisional authorization, RFUMS has been offering its Doctor of Nursing Practice – Anesthesia (DNP-NA) program. RFUMS’ program is approved by the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs (COACRNA), a programmatic accrediting agency. The University offers the DNP-NA as a hybrid educational program in Colorado to a subset of the approved cohort (up to 10 students out of 40) per academic year. 27% of the curriculum will be provided face to face in Colorado, through an agreement with the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs. A memorandum of understanding between the universities was provided as part of the initial proposal for authorization.

1. **STAFF ANALYSIS**

RFUMS submitted the required documents to move from provisional authorization to full authorization.

The proposal to establish a location in Colorado seeks to address a gap in Colorado program offerings in a highly needed field, stating “There are currently 128 COACRNA-accredited nurse anesthesia programs in the U.S., with none based in Colorado.” RFUMS has programmatic accreditation through 2032 for the DNP-NA degree through the COACRNA, which is the sole U.S. Department of Education recognized accreditor for Nurse Anesthesia programs. The Higher Learning Commission has acknowledged this institution’s additional location in Colorado.

1. **STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Staff recommends the Commission approve full authorization for Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Sciences to offer its nursing program in Colorado under the Degree Authorization Act.**

**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.