

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

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Delegation of Authority
Coordinating Board for Higher Education
June 8, 2017

DESCRIPTION

The revised process for the review and approval of new academic program proposals (explained fully under Tab K) recommends the commissioner of higher education, in certain instances, approve new academic programs on behalf of the Coordinating Board. This agenda provides a justification for delegating such power to the commissioner.

Background

In its report to the Coordinating Board, the Higher Education System Review Task Force recommended streamlining the process for reviewing new academic program proposal, which has been presented to the board for approval (Tab K). A key element of the revised process is the “Routine Review,” which applies to proposed programs that are clearly within an institution’s CBHE-approved mission and service region, do not unnecessarily duplicate an existing program in the geographically applicable area or other relevant distinction, will be offered at the institution’s main campus or at a CBHE-approved off-site location, will build on existing programs and faculty expertise, and can be launched with minimal expense and within an institution’s current operating budget. Such proposals that fit within these parameters may be approved on an expedited basis.

Institutions will provide appropriate information about the proposed program to the MDHE and certify that the proposal meets the criteria for routine review and that the program meets the [*criteria for all new academic programs*](#). If warranted, MDHE staff may request additional information from the proposing institution. Requests submitted by the first of the month will be reviewed and processed, and in most cases institutions notified, by the end of that same month. MDHE staff shall review the proposal to verify the proposed program meets the criteria for routine review.

Once this information is verified, MDHE staff will post the proposal on the department’s website to allow for twenty days of public review and comment. This action signifies the department’s intent to approve the program provisionally. All other institutions are invited to review and comment on programs being considered under routine review; comments must be received within 20 days of the posting on the department website. The proposing institution shall address comments received during the comment period. Once all comments or concerns are resolved, the commissioner of higher education shall approve the program provisionally for a period of five years.

At the end of the five-year period, the MDHE will review the program to determine whether it should be approved unconditionally, remain provisionally approved for two additional years, or be terminated. Requests submitted by the first of the month will be reviewed and processed, and in most cases institutions will be notified, by the end of that same month. MDHE staff will follow the schedule below only to report routine review actions to the CBHE.

The Coordinating Board alone has the statutory authority to approve proposed new degree programs offered by the state institutions of higher education. However, the board has the authority to “fix the powers” of the commissioner of higher education. In order to implement the recommendations of the Higher Education System Review Task Force, it is necessary for the Coordinating Board to grant the commissioner of higher education the authority to approve provisionally, on behalf of the Coordinating Board, new academic program proposals that come to the board as a Routine Review. All programs approved by the commissioner of higher education through the Routine Review process are subject to final approval by the Coordinating Board during the Five-Year Provisional Approval review.

STATUTORY REFERENCE

Section 173.005, RSMo – Department of Higher Education created, Coordinating Board duties

Section 173.007, RSMo – Commissioner of education, appointment by board — compensation
— powers — duties

RECOMMENDED ACTION

It is recommended that the Coordinating Board grant the commissioner of higher education the authority to act on behalf of the board and approve provisionally new academic program proposals subject to Routine Review and that meet the criteria for new academic programs, effective July 1, 2017.

ATTACHMENT(S)

None