

April 23, 2009

Senator Betty Boyd
Colorado State Capitol
200 East Colfax
Denver, CO 80203

Representative Mike May
Colorado State Capitol
200 East Colfax
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Senator Boyd and Representative May,

Thank you for your sponsorship of SB295, which is important legislation that will address many of the current challenges facing Colorado's public institutions of higher education.

Colorado Concern encourages the General Assembly to pass this legislation and grant the governing boards of each institution, with oversight by the Commission on Higher Education, the flexibility to address issues such as affordability and access, tuition rates, financial aid, capitol construction and state fiscal rules. Colorado's public institutions of higher education must have the ability to react to this changing environment, especially due to significant reductions in state funded support.

Tuition Rates

The governing boards of Colorado's public institutions of higher education should be given greater flexibility to set their own tuition rates and fees that are consistent with the cost of education and the market demands of the institutions. Tuition flexibility will allow institutions to generate revenue to ensure quality instruction and support the essential activities of Colorado public universities as each fulfills its unique role and mission. Each institution serves an undergraduate resident student body that has unique and differing financial capacity and needs. Each institution is in the best position to know their undergraduate resident students and how best to attract, retain and to insure affordability to the low, middle and higher income student.

Financial Aid

Coupled with the need for tuition flexibility comes the need for financial aid flexibility in order to maintain access and affordability to Colorado residents. The General Assembly needs to allow institutions the authority to control how state and institutional financial aid monies are allocated. Through a combination of federal, direct state and institutional aid, the financial assistance of each student can be targeted to achieve affordability with this added flexibility.

Capitol Construction

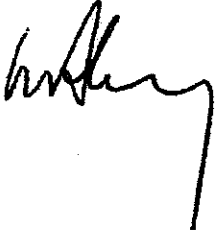
Colorado's public institutions of higher education need the ability to implement 100 percent cash funded projects immediately, with approval by their governing boards. Current law forces these institutions to go through a timely process for approval of these cash funded projects which can result in increased costs for the institutions. By exempting 100 percent of cash funded capital construction projects from the current approval process, this will allow the institutions to work with the State Architect's Office to improve implementation efficiencies.

State Fiscal Rules

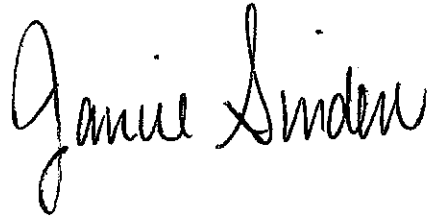
Public higher education institutions operate much differently from other state agencies and should be allowed to adhere to a different set of fiscal rules. New fiscal rules have been proposed to address the operational differences between higher education and the rest of state government.

The aforementioned flexibilities will allow our public institutions of higher education to increase their capacity to serve the citizens of Colorado which is good for the economy and important for advancing a pro-business agenda. Accordingly, we thank you for your leadership on this important legislation and look forward to working with you and your colleagues to pass this important proposal this session.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Walter Isenberg', with a long, sweeping underline.

Walter Isenberg
Chairman

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Janice Sinden', written in a cursive style.

Janice Sinden
Executive Director