
FISCAL UPDATE Article

Fiscal Services Division

May 15, 2020



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COLLEGE STUDENT AID COMMISSION MEETING — MAY 15, 2020

Regular Meeting. The College Student Aid Commission met virtually on May 15, 2020. The Commission approved minutes of the two previous meetings and approved the meeting schedule for FY 2021.

Executive Director's Report. Executive Director Mark Wiederspan updated the Commission on a variety of Commission programs. Staff have issued three rounds of guidance regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on grants and scholarship programs. Eligibility determination is on hold until the Legislature reconvenes and sets a budget for FY 2021. Executive Director Wiederspan also discussed local college access networks (LCANs), GEAR UP Iowa, Course to College, Virtual Coach, and the College and Career Readiness Academy. The full report is available as part of the [Commission's meeting book](#).

Postsecondary Registration Compliance Enforcement Action — Inspirit Institute. Compliance Officer Carolyn Small presented a report on planned action regarding Inspirit Institute, a massage therapy program in Dubuque, Iowa. The agenda item was originally scheduled for action. However, Commission staff learned yesterday that the owner of Inspirit has retained an attorney who could not be available for today's meeting. Emily Willits, Director of the Licensing and Administrative Law Division of the Attorney General's Office, recommended that the Commission table action on the matter until the next special or regular meeting, and a motion to do so was adopted.

Inspirit Institute applied for registration exemption on November 29, 2017, but failed to complete requirements. Commission staff made repeated attempts to work with the school to achieve full compliance with requirements. On November 15, 2019, the Commission voted to issue an Order to Show Cause against Inspirit based on failure to meet requirements, including maintaining a corporate surety bond payable to the State of Iowa in the amount of \$50,000. The school originally had such a bond but canceled it in January 2019. After the Order to Show Cause was issued, the school reinstated the bond. Commission staff resumed working with the school to achieve compliance until learning that the school was evicted by its landlord on February 24, 2020, and is no longer operating.

Inspirit is maintaining a website that indicates an intent to reopen at a new location soon. Ms. Small said she has not been able to gain access to records to determine whether any students are owed a refund. Ms. Willits indicated that Ms. Small is working with the Consumer Protection Division of the Attorney General's Office to collect on the surety bond and that the collection effort will not be affected by postponement of action at this meeting.

Financial Report. Accountant Prasanna Bujimalla reported on the Commission's Strategic Reserve Fund and the FY 2020 operating budget. The balance in the Strategic Reserve Fund as of April 30, 2020, was \$27.7 million, an increase of \$473,000 since July 1, 2019. The portion of the balance committed to the GEAR UP Trust Fund is \$12.1 million.

Other Business. The Commission received reports on new and renewal applications for postsecondary registration, 10th and 11th grade outcomes for GEAR UP Iowa, and the annual Condition of Higher Education report. The Commission approved the agency's internal budget for FY 2021 and received a brief legislative update.

More Information. Detail regarding agenda items from the meeting is available in the [Commission's meeting book](#). The Commission's next meeting is scheduled for July 17, 2020.

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