

BOARD OF REGENTS
BRIEFING PAPER

Agenda Item Title: Verification of Post-Employment Credentials

BACKGROUND & POLICY CONTEXT OF ISSUE:

In June 2004, the Board of Regents added Section 5.10.2 to the Code of the Nevada System of Higher Education providing that "...all academic faculty and professional staff positions shall require a minimum of a bachelor's degree ... and that all such academic degrees shall have been awarded by an accredited institution as recognized by the United States Department of Education and/or the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). ... Each institution shall independently verify academic credentials within 30 calendar days from the effective date of employment and develop a procedure to ensure that the verification process takes place."

While the Board's policy requires that academic credentials offered in consideration of employment must be independently verified, it does not provide authority for NSHE institutions to verify the authenticity of academic credentials obtained after the employee's original hire date.

SPECIFIC ACTIONS BEING RECOMMENDED OR REQUESTED:

After consulting with the Human Resources Advisory Committee, the Executive Vice Chancellor recommends that the Board amend Section 5.10.2(a) of the Code to provide that each institution shall independently verify academic credentials obtained after an employee's original hire date prior to recognizing such credentials in official personnel files, academic catalogues, institutional publications, or other official documents

BULLET POINTS TO SUPPORT REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

- § Would enhance public confidence in the NSHE by ensuring that all academic credentials listed in institution publications or official documents have been independently verified, just as pre-employment credentials are currently verified.
- § Post-employment personnel decisions such as raises and promotions may be based in part upon the attainment of academic degrees. It is in the institution's interest to see that such decisions are based upon proper credentials.

POTENTIAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

- § Some faculty who obtain academic credentials after the effective date of their employment may object to the institution verifying the authenticity of newly acquired credentials as conveying an element of institutional distrust of the individual.
- § After the institution has made an initial decision to hire an individual, it is not the best use of funds to continue to track academic progress.
- § Institutions may already have the authority to verify credentials post hire.

ALTERNATIVE(S) TO WHAT IS BEING REQUESTED/RECOMMENDED:

§ None.

COMPLIANCE WITH BOARD POLICY:

Consistent With Current Board Policy: Title # ____ Chapter # ____ Section # ____
 Amends Current Board Policy: Title #2 Chapter # 5 Section # 5.10.2(a)
 Amends Current Procedures & Guidelines Manual: Chapter # ____ Section # ____
 Other: _____
Fiscal Impact: Yes ____ No X

5.10.2 Termination for Falsification of Credentials.

(a) It is the policy of the Nevada System of Higher Education that all academic faculty (including academic faculty on letters of appointment) and professional staff positions shall require a minimum of a bachelor's degree, or appropriate professional experience in lieu of post secondary education equivalent to such degree, and that all such academic degrees shall have been awarded by an accredited institution as recognized by the United States Department of Education and/or the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). All vacancy announcements or advertisements for faculty and professional staff positions shall include explicit reference to these requirements. If the applicant earned their degrees outside of the United States, the applicant must have their transcripts evaluated by an approved evaluating entity. The expense of the evaluation shall be born by the applicant. Each institution shall independently verify academic credentials within 30 calendar days from the effective date of employment and develop a procedure to ensure that the verification process takes place. Further, each institution shall independently verify academic credentials obtained after an employee's original hire date prior to recognizing such credentials in official personnel files, academic catalogues, institutional publications, other official documents, or for the purpose of promotion or title change.