

# COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Thursday, February 14, 2013

## **NEW BUSINESS ITEM A:            Administrative Item on Which Staff Proposes Expedited Action**

### **Staff Recommendation**

That the Commission for Higher Education approve by consent the following administrative action, in accordance with the background information provided in this agenda item:

- Authorize staff to solicit proposals and to negotiate a contract agreement for a robust study of the role of effective college advising policies and practices in promoting graduation and on-time completion in Indiana.

### **Background**

As Indiana's college population has grown and become more diverse, the level of guidance and support students need has increased as well. Many Hoosiers are the first in their family to go to college, and they often struggle to navigate the college environment and earn a degree. Moreover, the majority of Indiana college students are working, commuting to campus and trying to balance family and job responsibilities while furthering their education. The available evidence suggests that most college students—both recent high school graduates and returning adults—would benefit from clearer pathways to college completion, more structured support systems, and a better sense of the job opportunities and earning power for their degrees.

In recognition of these realities, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education seeks to conduct an in-depth study of the current state and potential role of effective advising policies and practices in helping Indiana college students successfully navigate their programs of postsecondary study and graduate on time. The resulting analysis will include findings from student, faculty advisor, and general advisor focus groups with particular attention to points of similarity and divergence in perspectives and experiences with college advising. Based on the Indiana-specific research conducted and a survey of national literature on the subject, the final *Strengthening College Advising & Student Pathways* report will include a summary of best practices as well as a set of specific recommendations regarding potential policies and practices that may be implemented at the state and institutional levels to increase the academic success, college completion and career preparation of Hoosier students.

Funding for the *Strengthening College Advising & Student Pathways* study will be provided through a grant from Complete College America.