



The Higher Learning Commission

A Commission of the
North Central Association
of Colleges and Schools



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Serving the common good by assuring and advancing the quality of higher learning

Public Disclosure Notice on Chancellor University (formerly Myers University) November 3, 2008

The following public information is provided by The Higher Learning Commission regarding Chancellor University. The Higher Learning Commission is a regional accrediting agency that accredits organizations of higher learning in the 19 states of the North Central region.

What is the accreditation status of Chancellor University?

Chancellor University, which officially changed its name from Myers University on September 3, 2008, is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission. On October 31, 2008 the Board of Trustees of the Commission placed Chancellor University on the sanction of Probation, which indicates that the institution is in danger of not meeting one or more of the Commission's Criteria for Accreditation. This action concurred with the recommendation of a team that conducted a focused visit to the University on September 22-24, 2008, and was based on findings by the Commission's Board of Trustees that the University is in danger of not meeting Criterion One ("The organization operates with integrity to ensure fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the Board, administration, faculty, staff, and students"); Criterion Two ("The organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities"); and Criterion Three ("The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission").

A comprehensive on-site evaluation of Chancellor University will take place no later than November 2009, at which time the institution must demonstrate it has ameliorated the concerns identified by the Commission's Board of Trustees and that led to its finding that the institution was in danger of not meeting specific Criteria as noted above. If the problems leading to this sanction are determined to have been adequately resolved, the sanction will be removed. Otherwise, accreditation may be withdrawn. Chancellor University remains accredited while it is on Probation, which is not an appealable status.

What is the history of accreditation review that led to this situation?

After the 2005 comprehensive visit to Myers University, the Commission called for monitoring of finances and enrollment. The University's reports failed to provide evidence of resolution of these matters and, in fact, Myers signaled that it might close. When Myers reported an infusion of capital sufficient to operate for at least another year, the focused visit once scheduled for the spring, was conducted on August 6-7, 2007. The visiting team found the University to be pursuing a course of action that, if not corrected, could lead the institution to be in jeopardy of not meeting one or more Criteria for Accreditation. The team recommended that the institution be placed on the sanction of On Notice and that the next comprehensive evaluation be scheduled for spring 2009. Between that visit and the Commission's next scheduled Review Committee, required for consideration of a proposed sanction, the University again announced its closure. That led to intervention by the Court of Common Pleas in Cuyahoga County, Ohio which effectively placed the University under control of a Special Master assigned by the court.

When the Commission's Review Committee met with Myers University on January 28, 2008, it concluded that the University faced more serious challenges than those observed by the team. Consequently, the Review Committee forwarded to the Board of Trustees the recommendation that Myers be placed on the more stringent sanction of Probation for a period of 12 months.

On February 29, 2008 the Commission's Board of Trustees notified Myers that the Board was formally considering withdrawing Myer's accreditation and, therefore, initiating a series of due process procedures to allow the institution to respond to the Board's concerns prior to the Board taking any action. The Board specified a series of concerns related to Criterion One ("The organization operates with integrity to ensure fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the Board, administration, faculty, staff, and students") and Criterion Two ("The organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities"), asked for a response to its intent and rationale, and offered the opportunity for a Board hearing before the Board next revisited the status of Myers University in early June.

The Board held a hearing on May 22, 2008 at which representatives of the Special Master, the academic leadership of Myers, and the new court-approved purchasers appeared. During the hearing these representatives stated that through the proposed purchase the Commission's primary concerns would be effectively addressed. The proposed purchase would change the status of Myers from not-for-profit to for-profit.

At its meeting on June 8, 2008 the Board voted to defer its consideration of withdrawing the accreditation of Myers University pending staff action on a Change of Ownership request from individuals seeking to purchase Myers University and, if the request is approved, completion of the report of an on-site evaluation by the Commission before the end of September, 2008. The Board also provided Myers University with a detailed set of expectations based on Commission concerns and proposals made by the purchasers. On August 20, 2008, Commission staff approved the change of ownership subject to the receipt of further documentation no later than September 3, 2008, and subject to the outcome of the on-site evaluation that would take place in September 2008. The further documentation, which concerned governance and financial resources, was received in full on September 3, 2008. A Commission evaluation team visited the institution in September 2008 to review the change of ownership and the institution's response to concerns identified by the Board in its February and June 2008 actions. The Board considered the full record of these interactions and its findings in imposing Probation.