



PUBLIC DISCLOSURE NOTICE FOR AN INSTITUTION UNDER A SHOW-CAUSE ORDER

MOUNTAIN STATE UNIVERSITY

Beckley, West Virginia

Effective: June 23, 2011

The following public information is provided by the Higher Learning Commission regarding Mountain State University, Beckley, West Virginia, to assist current and prospective students and other individuals seeking information about the accreditation status of the institution. The Higher Learning Commission is the regional accrediting agency that accredits institutions of higher education in the 19 states of the North Central region.

Current accreditation status of Mountain State University

Mountain State University (“the University”) is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. It is under a Show-Cause Order from the Commission. On June 23, 2011, the Board of Trustees (“the Board”) of the Commission determined that the University may not meet one or more Criteria for Accreditation and ordered the University to Show Cause as to why its accreditation should not be removed. Imposition of the Show-Cause Order is effective as of the date of the Board’s action.

The areas of concern identified by the Board and the next steps for the University are provided in the attached “Order to Show Cause.” Additional information is provided in the Mountain State University Statement of Affiliation Status available on the Commission’s Web site at www.ncahlc.org.

Information about Show-Cause

Show-Cause is a procedural order issued by the Commission that places the burden on an institution of demonstrating that it meets each of the Criteria for Accreditation and related Core Components. An institution that cannot prove to the Commission within no more than one year of the issuance of the Order that it meets the Criteria for Accreditation and Core Components and has ameliorated the concerns leading to the issuance of the Order faces withdrawal of accreditation.

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

The Commission was notified by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (“NLNAC”) that it had withdrawn accreditation of the nursing program at the University. In addition, the West Virginia Board of Examiners for Registered Professional Nurses (“West Virginia Board”) notified the Commission that the University had been placed on provisional

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status with its agency. Following Commission policy and federal requirements, the Commission initiated a review of the institution. An Advisory Visit team conducted an on-site visit to the institution in February 2011 and conducted conference calls with the executive directors of the NLNAC and the West Virginia Board subsequent to the on-site visit. The Advisory Visit team issued a report to the Commission President that included findings that indicated potential noncompliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. The Board of Trustees took the action to issue a Show-Cause Order after considering the materials related to the Commission's on-site visit as well as the institution's response to the Commission's team report and related materials.

Attachment: Order to Show Cause issued to Mountain State University

July 6, 2011



ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE

MOUNTAIN STATE UNIVERSITY

Beckley, West Virginia

Effective: June 23, 2011

At its meeting on June 23, 2011, the Board of Trustees of the Higher Learning Commission (“the Board”) reviewed recent Commission evaluation materials regarding Mountain State University in Beckley, West Virginia (“the University”), including, but not limited to, a report from a Commission evaluation team visit, reports from other accrediting and state licensing agencies, as well as the institution’s materials prepared in advance of the visit and the institutional response to the Commission evaluation team report.

Based on this review, the Board determined that Mountain State University may no longer meet one or more of the Criteria for Accreditation and Core Components and voted to issue a Show-Cause Order to the University. The Show-Cause Order is effective as of the date the action was taken. The areas of concern identified by the Board are summarized below and are detailed in the action letter to the institution.

The Board expressed concerns related to:

- Criterion One, “the institution operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students,” particularly Core Component 1.d, “the institution’s governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission,” because of issues related to shared governance, administrative structures, and provision of information to students;
 - Criterion Two, “the institution’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,” particularly Core Component 2.b, “the institution’s resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future,” because of issues related to the loss of specialized accreditation and the monitoring of program outcomes; and
 - Criterion Three, “the institution provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission,” particularly Core Component 3.d, “the institution’s learning resources support student learning and effective teaching,” because of issues related to faculty resources, library resources, and shared governance.
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Thus, the Board of Trustees hereby orders the institution to Show Cause as to why its accreditation should not be withdrawn.

Mountain State University must present its case for accreditation by means of a Show-Cause Report that provides substantive evidence that the University has ameliorated each concern identified by the Board of Trustees as detailed in the Commission action letter to the University, and that it meets each of the Criteria for Accreditation and Core Components. This Show-Cause Report must include documents related to administration and governance; resources and planning; and effectiveness of learning resources. The Show-Cause Report must be received by December 1, 2011, or eight weeks prior to the Show-Cause Visit. Following receipt of the Show-Cause Report, the Commission will send an evaluation team to the institution no later than February 2012 to validate the contents of the Show-Cause Report and to determine if the University has ameliorated each concern identified by the Board in the action and meets each of the Criteria for Accreditation and the Core Components. The Show-Cause Order will remain in effect until the Board reviews, at its June 2012 meeting, the University's Show-Cause Report, the Show-Cause Team Report, and the University's response to the Show-Cause Team Report. Should the University not file the Show-Cause Report or be unable to establish to the satisfaction of the Board that the University has ameliorated each concern identified by the Board and that the institution meets each of the Criteria for Accreditation and Core Components, the Board will move to withdraw the accreditation of the institution. If the Board determines that University has ameliorated each concern and that it meets the Criteria for Accreditation and Core Components, the Board will establish a date for the next comprehensive evaluation and any other monitoring of the University.

Mountain State University remains an accredited institution during the Show-Cause period. This Order and its contents are public, and the Statement of Affiliation Status for the institution is public. The Commission will make both available on its Web Site. *Mountain State University must post this Order prominently on its Web site; inform its Board, administrators, faculty, staff, students, and prospective students of this Order; and disclose the existence of this Order whenever an interested party inquires about the institution's accredited status.*

July 6, 2011
