

Distance Education Accrediting Commission

Public Notice: Show Cause Directive

February 25, 2019

In accordance with its procedure for Notification and Information Sharing (Section X.C), Part II Processes and Procedures, DEAC Accreditation Handbook) and 34 Code of Federal Regulations §602.26(b)(1), the Commission provides written notice to the U.S. Secretary of Education, the appropriate state licensing or authorizing agencies, the appropriate accrediting organizations, and the public at the same time it notifies the institution of the decision, but no later than 30 days after the Commission makes a decision to place an institution on show cause.

At its May 16, 2018 meeting, the Commission voted to direct the following institution to show cause why its accreditation should not be withdrawn due to concerns regarding financial stability and change of ownership procedures.

Brighton College
8777 Via de Ventura, Suite 300
Scottsdale, AZ 87258

At its January 2019 meeting, the Commission considered the school's response to the show cause order and results of an on-site evaluation. The Commission voted to continue the show cause order and scheduled the next review for June 2019.

Listed below are the DEAC Standards of Accreditation pertinent to the Commission's decision.

Standard I. C. Implementation of the Mission:

The institution identifies key indicators it uses to demonstrate that it is effectively carrying out its mission. The institution documents the achievement of its mission and shares appropriate information on this achievement with relevant groups (e.g., Advisory Councils, faculty, staff, students, and the public).

Standard II. A. Institutional Effectiveness Planning

The institution demonstrates a commitment to its educational offerings and administrative operations through processes that monitor and improve institutional effectiveness. The institution engages in sound research practices and analysis of data used to improve operations, educational offerings, and services.

Standard II.B. Strategic Planning

The institution engages in strategic planning that aligns with and demonstrates a shared commitment to the mission. The institution's planning process involves all areas of the institution's operations (e.g., admissions, academic, technology, etc.) in identifying strategic initiatives and goals by evaluating external and internal trends for continued growth. At a minimum, the strategic plan addresses finances, academics, technology, admissions, marketing, personnel, and sustainability. The strategic plan is reviewed and updated annually using established metrics designed to measure achievement of strategic planning activities.

Standard III.B. Appropriate Program Outcomes

The program outcomes are measurable and reasonably attainable through distance education. Appropriate program outcomes clearly communicate the knowledge, skills, and abilities students will obtain upon completion of the educational offering. Program outcomes reflect the level of student achievement expected that promotes critical thinking, ethical reasoning, social responsibility, global citizenship, civic engagement, or lifelong learning as applicable to educational offerings.

Standard III.C. Curricula Delivery

All curricula and instructional materials are appropriately designed and presented for distance education. Online materials sufficiently support the curriculum and are delivered using readily available, reliable technology.

Standard III. D. Comprehensive Curricula and Instructional Materials:

Curricula and instructional materials are sufficiently comprehensive for students to achieve the stated program outcomes. Their content is supported by reliable research and practice. The organization and presentation of the curricula and instructional materials are designed using sound principles of learning and are grounded in distance education instructional design principles. The curricula and instructional materials are accurate and reflect current knowledge and practice. Effective procedures are continuously used to keep curricula and instructional materials up-to-date, and reviews are conducted and documented on a periodic basis. Instructions and suggestions on how to study and how to use the instructional materials are made available to assist students to learn effectively and efficiently.

Standard III. E. Curricula Development

Qualified persons competent in distance education instructional practices and experts in their subjects or fields develop the content of curricula and prepare instructional materials.

Standard III.G. Educational Media and Learning Resources

Learning resources for faculty and students are available and appropriate to the level and scope of program offerings. Program designers, faculty, and instructors effectively use appropriate teaching aids and learning resources, including educational media and supplemental instructional aids, when creating programs and teaching students. The institution provides faculty and students with access to learning resources and libraries that are appropriate for the achievement of program learning outcomes.

Standard III.H. Examinations and Other Assessments

Examinations and other assessment techniques provide adequate evidence of the achievement of stated learning outcomes. The institution implements grading criteria that it uses to evaluate and document student attainment of learning outcomes.

Standard III.I. Student Integrity and Academic Honesty

The institution publishes clear, specific, policies related to student integrity and academic honesty. The institution affirms that the student who takes the examination is the same person who enrolled in the program and that the examination results will reflect the student's own knowledge and competence in accordance with stated learning outcomes.

Standard V. A. Student Achievement

The institution evaluates student achievement using indicators it determines are appropriate relative to its mission and educational offerings. The institution evaluates student achievement by collecting data from outcomes assessment activities using direct and indirect measures. The institution maintains systematic and ongoing processes for assessing student learning and achievement, analyzes data, and documents that the results meet both internal and external benchmarks, including those comparable to courses or programs offered at peer DEAC-accredited institutions. The institution demonstrates and documents how the evaluation of student achievement drives quality improvement of educational offerings and support services.

V.B. Student Satisfaction

The institution systematically seeks student and alumni opinions as one basis for evaluating and improving curricula, instructional materials, method of delivery, and student services. The institution regularly collects evidence that students are satisfied with the administrative, educational, and support services provided.

V. C. Performance Disclosures

The institution routinely discloses on its website reliable, current, and accurate information on its performance, including student achievement, as determined by the institution.

Standard IX. A. Financial Disclosures

All costs relative to the education provided by the institution are disclosed to the prospective student [on an enrollment agreement or similar contractual document] before enrollment. Costs must include tuition, educational services, textbooks, and instructional materials and any specific fees associated with enrollment, such as application and registration fees, and fees for required services such as student authentication, proctoring, technology access, and library services.

- 1. The costs for optional services, such as expedited shipment of materials, experiential portfolio assessment, or other special services, such as dissertation binding, are clearly disclosed to prospective students as not subject to refund after the five (5) calendar day student-right-to-cancel enrollment.*
- 2. The institution's disclosure of its refund policy must include a sample refund calculation that describes the calculation methodology using clear and conspicuous language. Student acknowledgement of the refund policy is obtained and documented on the enrollment agreement or similar contractual document prior to enrollment.*

IX.B. Cancellations

A student's notification of cancellation may be conveyed to the institution in any manner. A student has five (5) calendar days after signing an enrollment agreement or similar contractual document to cancel enrollment and receive a full refund of all monies paid to the institution.

- 1. A student requesting cancellation more than five calendar days after signing an enrollment agreement, but prior to beginning a course or program is entitled to a refund of all monies paid minus:*
 - An application/transfer credit evaluation fee of up to \$75 and*
 - A one-time registration fee per program of no more than 20% of the tuition and not to exceed more than \$200.*
 - Library services fee, if provided by a third party service (e.g., LIRN, Westlaw, ProQuest, EBSCO)*
- 2. Upon cancellation, a student whose costs for education are paid in full, but not eligible for a refund, is entitled to receive all materials including kits and equipment.*

3. If promissory notes or enrollment agreements are sold to third parties, the institution ensures that it and any third parties comply with DEAC cancellation policies.

Standard XI.A. Financial Practices

The institution shows it is financially responsible by providing complete, comparative financial statements covering its two most recent fiscal years and by demonstrating that it has sufficient resources to meet its financial obligations to provide quality instruction and service to its students. Financial statements are audited or reviewed and prepared in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles in the United States of America. The institution's budgeting processes demonstrate that current and future budgeted operating results are sufficient to allow the institution to accomplish its mission and goals.

Standard XI. C. Financial Stability and Sustainability

The institution maintains adequate administrative staff and other resources to operate effectively as a going concern and is not exposed to undue or insurmountable risk. Any risk that exists is adequately monitored, manageable, and insured. In the event the financial operations of the institution are supported by a parent company or a third party, audited or reviewed financial statements are provided by the supporting entity to demonstrate that the supporting entity possesses sufficient financial resources to provide the institution continued financial sustainability, as well as the commitment to do so.