



# Middle States Commission on Higher Education

3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-2688. Tel: 267-484-5000. Fax: 215-602-5501  
www.msche.org

OFFICE OF THE  
PRESIDENT  
PROVOST

2015 JUN 29 A 11:42  
2015 JUN 30 A 9:24

June 26, 2015

Dr. Eric J. Barron  
President  
The Pennsylvania State University  
201 Old Main Building  
University Park, PA 16802

Dear Dr. Barron:

At its session on June 25, 2015, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education acted:

To reaffirm accreditation. To request a monitoring report, due April 1, 2017, documenting (1) further implementation of the periodic assessment of the effectiveness of institutional leadership and governance (Standard 4); (2) further implementation of the periodic assessment of the effectiveness of administrative structures and services (Standard 5); (3) review of the enrollment management plan for recruitment, retention, marketing, and advertising, particularly with respect to the enrollment of under-represented students, consistent with the institution's priorities and values (Standard 8); (4) further implementation of the assessment of general education outcomes within the institution's overall plan for assessing student learning, and evidence that such assessment results are utilized for curricular improvement (Standards 12 and 14); and (5) further evidence of articulated student knowledge, skills, and competency levels within existing certificate programs (Standard 13). The Periodic Review Report is due June 1, 2020.

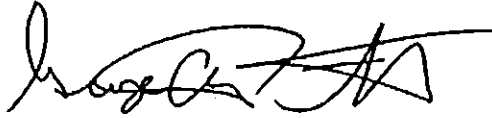
Enclosed for your information is a copy of the Statement of Accreditation Status for your institution. The Statement of Accreditation Status (SAS) provides important basic information about the institution and its affiliation with the Commission, and it is made available to the public in the Directory of Members and Candidates on the Commission's website at [www.msche.org](http://www.msche.org). Accreditation applies to the institution as detailed in the SAS; institutional information is derived from data provided by the institution through annual reporting and from Commission actions. If any of the institutional information is incorrect, please contact the Commission as soon as possible.

Please check to ensure that published references to your institution's accredited status (catalog, other publications, web page) include the full name, address, and telephone number of the accrediting agency. Further guidance is provided in the Commission's policy statement *Advertising, Student Recruitment, and Representation of Accredited Status*. If the action for your institution includes preparation of a progress report, monitoring report or supplemental report, please see our policy statement on *Follow-up Reports and Visits*. Both policies can be obtained from our website.

Dr. Eric J. Barron – Page 2

Please be assured of the continuing interest of the Commission on Higher Education in the well-being of The Pennsylvania State University. If any further clarification is needed regarding the SAS or other items in this letter, please feel free to contact Dr. Tito Guerrero, Vice President.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George A. Pruitt". The signature is stylized with a large initial "G" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

George A. Pruitt, Ph.D.  
Chair



**MIDDLE STATES COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION**  
3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-2680. Tel: 267-284-5000. Fax: 215-662-5501  
[www.msche.org](http://www.msche.org)

## STATEMENT OF ACCREDITATION STATUS

**THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
201 Old Main Building  
University Park, PA 16802  
Phone: (814) 865-4700; Fax: (814) 865-1100  
[www.psu.edu](http://www.psu.edu)

**Chief Executive Officer:** Dr. Eric J. Barron, President

### INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION

**Enrollment (Headcount):** 76759 Undergraduate ; 13591 Graduate

**Control:** Public

**Affiliation:** Government-State - Pennsylvania State-Related

**Carnegie Classification:** Research - Very High Research Activity

**Approved Degree Levels:** Postsecondary Award/Cert/Diploma (< 1 year), Postsecondary Award/Cert/Diploma (>=1 year, < 2 years), Associate's, Bachelor's, Postbaccalaureate Award/Cert/Diploma, Master's, Doctor's - Professional Practice, Doctor's - Research/Scholarship;

**Distance Education Programs:** Fully Approved

**Accreditors Recognized by U.S. Secretary of Education:** Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics ; Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, Inc. ; American Bar Association, Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar ; American Occupational Therapy Association, Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education ; American Physical Therapy Association, Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education ; American Psychological Association, Commission on Accreditation ; American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology ; Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education ; Commission on English Language Program Accreditation ; Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology ; Liaison Committee on Medical Education ; National Association of Schools of Art and Design, Commission on Accreditation; National Association of Schools of

Music, Commission on Accreditation,; National Association of Schools of Theatre, Commission on Accreditation ; National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education

**Other Accreditors:** Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences; Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education; Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant; Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications; American Academy of Forensic Science; American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians; American Chemical Society; Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International; Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB); Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business-International (AACSB); Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education; Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education; Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy; Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs; Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP); Council on Rehabilitation Education; Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET; Engineering Technology Accreditation Commission of ABET; Institute of Food Technologists; Landscape Architecture Accreditation Board (LAAB); National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences; National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB); National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE); National Association of Schools of Public Affairs & Administration (NASPAA); North America Wildlife Technology Association; Pennsylvania Department of Education; Pennsylvania Department of Education Program Approval; Pennsylvania State Board of Nursing – Licensing; Professional Golfer's Association (PGA) of America; Society of American Foresters; Society of Wood Science and Technology

### **Instructional Locations**

**Branch Campuses:** Dickinson Law, Carlisle, PA; Penn State College of Medicine, Hershey, PA.

**Additional Locations:** Great Valley School of Graduate Professional Studies, Malvern, PA; Penn State Abington, Abington, PA; Penn State Altoona, Altoona, PA; Penn State Beaver, Monaca, PA; Penn State Berks, Reading, PA; Penn State Brandywine, Media, PA; Penn State DuBois, DuBois, PA; Penn State Erie, The Behrend College, Erie, PA; Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus, Lemont Furnace, PA; Penn State Greater Allegheny, McKeesport, PA; Penn State Harrisburg, Middletown, PA; Penn State Hazleton, Hazleton, PA; Penn State Lehigh Valley, Center Valley, PA; Penn State Mont Alto, Mont Alto, PA; Penn State New Kensington, New Kensington, PA; Penn State Schuylkill, Schuylkill Haven, PA; Penn State Shenango, Sharon, PA; Penn State Wilkes-Barre, Lehman, PA; Penn State Worthington Scranton, Dunmore, PA; Penn State York, York, PA.

**Other Instructional Sites:** Abington Hospital, Abington, PA; Allentown, Allentown, PA; Aria Health Systems, Philadelphia, PA; ARIA-SON, Trevose, PA; Cranberry Township, Monaca, PA; Cranberry Township (RLA), Cranberry Township, PA; Emporium, Bradford, PA; Gettysburg, Gettysburg, PA; Hazleton Area Academy of Science, Drums, PA; Kraft/Mondelez, Wilkes-Barre, PA; Lancaster Vln, Lancaster, PA; Marine Corps Recruit Depot Learning Center, San Diego, CA; McConnellsburg, McConnellsburg, PA; McKeesport Hospital, McKeesport, PA; Mount Nittany Medical Center, State College, PA; Navy Yard, Philadelphia, PA; Roxborough Hospital, Philadelphia, PA; Sallie Mae, Wilkes-Barre, PA;

Shady Grove, Shady Grove, PA; Shaver's Creek, Petersburg, PA; St. Mary's, St. Mary's, PA; The Penn State Learning Center (Lewistown), Lewistown, PA; Towanda, Towanda, PA; Uniontown, Lemont Furnace, PA; WCC, Youngwood, Youngwood, PA; WellSpan York Hospital, York, PA; Williamsport, Williamsport, PA.

## **ACCREDITATION INFORMATION**

**Status:** Member since 1921

**Last Reaffirmed:** June 25, 2015

### **Most Recent Commission Action:**

June 25, 2015: To reaffirm accreditation. To request a monitoring report, due April 1, 2017, documenting (1) further implementation of the periodic assessment of the effectiveness of institutional leadership and governance (Standard 4); (2) further implementation of the periodic assessment of the effectiveness of administrative structures and services (Standard 5); (3) review of the enrollment management plan for recruitment, retention, marketing, and advertising, particularly with respect to the enrollment of under-represented students, consistent with the institution's priorities and values (Standard 8); (4) further implementation of the assessment of general education outcomes within the institution's overall plan for assessing student learning, and evidence that such assessment results are utilized for curricular improvement (Standards 12 and 14); and (5) further evidence of articulated student knowledge, skills, and competency levels within existing certificate programs (Standard 13). The Periodic Review Report is due June 1, 2020.

### **Brief History Since Last Comprehensive Evaluation:**

November 15, 2012: To accept the monitoring report, to note the visit by the Commission's representatives, to remove the warning, and to reaffirm accreditation. To request a monitoring report, due November 1, 2013, documenting (1) the impact on the University budget and the identification of sources of funding to cover the requirements of (a) the report of the U.S. Department of Education regarding the University's compliance with the Clery Act and associated penalties; (b) updated estimates of the projected costs and liabilities associated with related litigation and the implementation of the Freeh Report recommendations and the NCAA Consent Decree requirements; and (c) the recommendations that are articulated in the report of the external monitor called for by Recommendation 8.3 of the Freeh Report (Standard 3); and (2) developments associated with the revision of the Bylaws of the Board of Trustees to accommodate (a) the expanded involvement of faculty, staff,

and students on Board committees and (b) the dual reporting accountability to both the Board and the President of key positions, including that of the General Counsel and the Directors of Internal Audit and Compliance (Standard 4). The next evaluation visit is scheduled for 2014-2015.

March 6, 2014: To accept the monitoring report. The next evaluation visit is scheduled for 2014-2015.

**Next Self-Study Evaluation: 2024 - 2025**

**Next Periodic Review Report: 2020**

**Date Printed: June 26, 2015**

## **DEFINITIONS**

**Branch Campus** - A location of an institution that is geographically apart and independent of the main campus of the institution. The location is independent if the location: offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential; has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization; and has its own budgetary and hiring authority.

**Additional Location** - A location, other than a branch campus, that is geographically apart from the main campus and at which the institution offers at least 50 percent of an educational program. ANYA ("Approved but Not Yet Active") indicates that the location is included within the scope of accreditation but has not yet begun to offer courses. This designation is removed after the Commission receives notification that courses have begun at this location.

**Other Instructional Sites** - A location, other than a branch campus or additional location, at which the institution offers one or more courses for credit.

**Distance Education Programs** - Fully Approved, Approved (one program approved) or Not Approved indicates whether or not the institution has been approved to offer diploma/certificate/degree programs via distance education (programs for which students could meet 50% or more of the requirements of the program by taking distance education courses). Per the Commission's Substantive Change policy, Commission approval of the first two Distance Education programs is required to be "Fully Approved." If only one program is approved by the Commission, the specific name of the program will be listed in parentheses after "Approved."

## **EXPLANATION OF COMMISSION ACTIONS**

An institution's accreditation continues unless it is explicitly withdrawn or the institution voluntarily allows its accreditation to lapse. In addition to reviewing the institution's accreditation status at least every 5 years, the Commission takes actions to approve substantive changes (such as a new degree or certificate level, opening or closing of a geographical site, or a change of ownership) or when other events occur that require review for continued compliance.

Any type of report or visit required by the Commission is reviewed and voted on by the Commission. Reports submitted for candidacy, self-study evaluation, periodic review or follow-up may be accepted, acknowledged, or rejected.

The Commission “Accepts” a report when its quality, thoroughness, and clarity are sufficient to respond to all of the Commission’s concerns, without requiring additional information in order to assess the institution’s status.

The Commission “Documents receipt of” a letter or report when it addresses the Commission’s concerns only partially because the letter or report had limited institutional responses to requested information, did not present evidence and analysis conducive to Commission review, were of insufficient quality, or necessitated extraordinary effort by the Commission’s representatives and staff performing the review. Relevant reasons for not accepting the letter or report are noted in the action. The Commission may or may not require additional information in order to assess the institution’s status.

The Commission “Rejects” a letter or report when its quality or substance are insufficient to respond appropriately to the Commission’s concerns. The Commission requires the institution to resubmit the report and may request a visit at its discretion. These terms may be used for any action (reaffirm, postpone, warn, etc.).

#### Types of Follow-Up Reports:

**Accreditation Readiness Report (ARR):** The institution prepares an initial Accreditation Readiness Report during the application phase and continually updates it throughout the candidacy process. It is for use both by the institution and the Commission to present and summarize documented evidence and analysis of the institution’s current or potential compliance with the Commission’s accreditation standards.

**Progress Report:** The Commission needs assurance that the institution is carrying out activities that were planned or were being implemented at the time of a report or on-site visit.

**Monitoring Report:** There is a potential for the institution to become non-compliant with MSCHE standards; issues are more complex or more numerous; or issues require a substantive, detailed report. A visit may or may not be required. Monitoring reports are required for non-compliance actions.

**Supplemental Information Report:** This report is intended only to allow the institution to provide further information, not to give the institution time to formulate plans or initiate remedial action. This report is required when a decision is postponed. The Commission may request a supplemental information report at any time during the accreditation cycle.

#### Commendations:

Periodically, the Commission may include commendations to the institution within the action language. There are three commendations. More than one commendation may be given at the same time:

To commend the institution for the quality of the [Self-Study or PRR] report. The document itself was notably well-written, honest, insightful, and/or useful.

To commend the institution for the quality of its [Self-Study or PRR] process. The Self-Study process was notably inclusive.

To recognize the institution's progress to date. This is recognition for institutions that had serious challenges or problems but have made significant progress.

#### Affirming Actions

**Grant Candidate for Accreditation Status:** This is a pre-accreditation status following a specified process for application and institutional self-study. For details about the application process, see the MSCHE publication, *Becoming Accredited*. The U.S. Department of Education labels Candidacy as “Pre-accreditation” and defines it as

the status of public recognition that an accrediting agency grants to an institution or program for a limited period of time that signifies the agency has determined that the institution or program is progressing toward accreditation but is not assured of accreditation) before the expiration of that limited period of time. Upon a grant of candidate for accreditation status, the institution may be asked to submit additional Accreditation Readiness Reports until it is ready to initiate self study.

**Grant Accreditation:** The Commission has acted to grant accreditation to a Candidate institution and does not require the submission of a written report prior to the next scheduled accreditation review in five years.

**Grant Accreditation and request a Progress Report or Monitoring Report:** The Commission has acted to grant accreditation to a Candidate institution but requires the submission of a written report prior to the next scheduled accreditation review to ensure that the institution is carrying out activities that were planned or were being implemented at the time of the report or on-site visit.

**Reaffirm Accreditation via Self Study or Periodic Review Report:** The Commission has acted to reaffirm accreditation and does not require the submission of a written report prior to the next scheduled accreditation review in five years. The action language may include recommendations to be addressed in the next Periodic Review Report or Self Study. Suggestions for improvement are given, but no written follow-up reporting is needed for compliance.

**Reaffirm Accreditation via Self Study or Periodic Review Report and request a Progress Report or Monitoring Report:** The Commission has acted to reaffirm accreditation but requires the submission of a written report prior to the next scheduled accreditation review to ensure that the institution is carrying out activities that were planned or were being implemented at the time of the report or on-site visit.

#### **Administrative Actions**

**Continue Accreditation:** A delay of up to one year may be granted to ensure a current and accurate representation of the institution or in the event of circumstances beyond the institution's control (natural disaster, U.S. State Department travel warnings, etc.). The institution maintains its status with the Commission during this period.

#### **Procedural Actions**

**Defer a decision on initial accreditation:** The Candidate institution shows promise but the evaluation team has identified issues of concern and recommends that the institution be given a specified time period to address those concerns. Institutions may not stay in candidacy more than 5 years.

**Postpone a decision on (reaffirmation of) accreditation:** The Commission has determined that there is insufficient information to substantiate institutional compliance with one or more standards. The Commission requests a supplemental information report.

**Voluntary Lapse of Accreditation:** The institution has allowed its accreditation to lapse by not completing required obligations. The institution is no longer a member of the Commission upon the determined date that accreditation will cease.

#### **Non-Compliance Actions**

**Warning:** A Warning indicates that an institution has been determined by the Commission not to meet one or more standards for accreditation. A follow-up report, called a monitoring report, is required to demonstrate that the institution has made appropriate improvements to bring itself into compliance.

**Probation:** Probation indicates that an institution has been determined by the Commission not to meet one or more standards for accreditation and is an indication of a serious concern on the part of the Commission regarding the



level and/or scope of non-compliance issues related to the standards. The Commission will place an institution on Probation if the Commission is concerned about one or more of the following:

1. the adequacy of the education provided by the institution;
2. the institution's capacity to make appropriate improvements in a timely fashion; or
3. the institution's capacity to sustain itself in the long term.

Probation is often, but need not always be, preceded by an action of Warning or Postponement. If the Commission had previously postponed a decision or placed the institution on Warning, the Commission may place the institution on Probation if it determines that the institution has failed to address satisfactorily the Commission's concerns in the prior action of postponement or warning regarding compliance with Commission standards. This action is accompanied by a request for a monitoring report, and a special visit follows. Probation may, but need not always, precede an action of Show Cause.

By federal regulation, the Commission must take immediate action to withdraw accreditation if an institution is out of compliance with accreditation standards for two years, unless the time is extended for good cause.

**Show Cause:** An institution is asked to demonstrate why its accreditation should not be withdrawn. A written report from the institution (including a teach out plan) and a follow-up team visit are required. The institution has the opportunity to appear before the Commission when the Commission meets to consider the institution's Show Cause status. Show Cause may occur during or at the end of the two-year Probation period, or at any time the Commission determines that an institution must demonstrate why its accreditation should not be withdrawn (i.e. Probation is not a necessary precursor to Show Cause).

#### **Adverse Actions**

**Withdrawal of Accreditation:** An institution's candidate or accredited status is withdrawn and with it, membership in the association. If the institution appeals this action, its accreditation remains in effect until the appeal is completed.

**Denial of Accreditation:** An institution is denied initial accreditation because it does not meet the Commission's requirements of affiliation or accreditation standards during the period allowed for candidacy. If the institution appeals this action, its candidacy remains in effect until the appeal is completed.

**Appeal:** The withdrawal or denial of candidacy or accreditation may be appealed. Institutions remain accredited (or candidates for accreditation) during the period of the appeal.

Other actions are described in the Commission policy, "Range of Commission Actions on Accreditation."