

STATE OF COLORADO



DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Bill Ritter, Jr.
Governor

David E. Skaggs
Executive Director

July 31, 2009

Dr. Arthur M. Presser, CEO
Huntington College of Health Sciences
1204 Kenesaw Avenue, Suite D
Knoxville, TN 37919

Dear Dr. Presser:

The Colorado Department of Higher Education (DHE) has received the report from the evaluation committee regarding Huntington College of Health Sciences (HCHS). There are a number of areas which DHE finds problematic because they are not easily rectified or do not meet Colorado's standards for quality.

Based on the findings of the evaluation committee, the Colorado Department of Higher Education is not recommending approval for Huntington College of Health Sciences to the Colorado Commission on Higher Education from its current application.

The following criteria are in violation of Colorado statute or the rules and regulations under the Degree Authorization Act (DAA). The violations are broken up into technical violations (governing board and mission) and significant violations (faculty, degree and academic programs and financial resources).

Governing Board

Colorado rules and regulations state that an institution shall include among its members some who represent the public interest and are sufficiently autonomous from the administration and ownership to assure the integrity of the institution. There is no evidence of autonomy on the HCHS board from the materials submitted. Additionally, there is an absence of resumes for board members in the application materials.

Mission

Although the mission includes "health sciences" it is unclear what is meant by that term, since the degrees are only in Nutrition with the exception of Business Management. Per Colorado statute, C.R.S.23-2-104 (4) "It is a deceptive trade practice for:" (c) A school or agent to adopt a name, trade name, or trademark that represents falsely, directly or by implication, the quality, scope, nature, size, or integrity of the school or its educational services. Nutrition programs are considered part of the 'science' curricula rather than the 'health sciences'.

HCHS materials do not mention of utilizing advances in technology that have been exploited to a high degree by non-traditional, e-learning programs, i.e. WebCT and Blackboard.

Faculty

Academic credentials for faculty are missing. Faculty names are listed along with highest degree earned and date of hire but there is no information regarding previous experience, publications or teaching fields included.

From the catalog, some faculty members' credentials appear to not be from accredited colleges or universities; several are graduates of HCHS. Unaccredited credentials create questionable quality.

Degree and Academic Programs

Admission policies seem low to ensure quality, especially with the statement that "No student has been dismissed for academic failure." Given the lack of tutorial services and the relatively generous admission standards, this suggests relatively low academic standards.

Basic student services such as academic advising, counseling (personal and career), and support for underprepared students are not available on a regular basis. Per Colorado's rules and regulations, "student access to all necessary learning resources and support services shall be provided. Necessary resources and support services vary by type of program, but all require some use of library resources. The institution shall describe the learning resources and support services that it will provide and state how they will be provided to students on a regular, dependable basis."

The number of credits and the scope of the general education requirement are lower than in traditional academic programs; it is impossible to assess rigor.

The difference between a registered Dietician and a certified Nutritionist could potentially be misleading to students. The catalog and other application materials are potentially misleading because a student could easily conclude that a degree in Nutrition carries the same weight as a degree in Dietetics.

Financial Resources

In the latest financial information provided (as of December 31, 2008), the institution's liabilities in loans of \$55 thousand and prepaid tuition of \$52 thousand far exceeded its available cash and other assets of \$13 thousand. The institution apparently does not have the available resources to support startup activities, nor to sustain operations.

The institution reported a net loss of \$22 thousand in calendar year 2008 on increased tuition revenues, following a net profit of \$27 thousand in 2007. Again, the institution does not appear able to sustain operations over time.

The financial information provided is also questionable. The income and expense balances for calendar year 2007, reported in the review dated August 5, 2008, do not match the 2007 amounts reported as comparative in the reports dated April 21, 2009. The balance sheet amounts do agree in the two reports.

Expenditures for course development, investment in learning resources and equipment, and adequate support staff are highly inadequate in meeting either standards claimed by the institution or generally accepted academic standards.

We thank you for your interest in operating in Colorado and appreciate the opportunity to review your institution.

Please feel free to contact me if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Heather DeLange
Degree Authorization Act Officer

cc: Julie Carnahan, Chief Academic Officer, DHE