



Middle States Commission on Higher Education

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Statement on Commission Action with regard to Cheyney University

On June 22, 2017, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education acted to require Cheyney University to show cause—to give reasons as to why it should not have its accreditation withdrawn.

The Commission took this action based on its concerns that the university has not met three standards of accreditation and its membership requirement for full documentation of financial resources. The specific standards and requirement are available in the text of the action and in the FAQ document we have prepared, both of which are posted at <https://www.msche.org/?Nav1=NEWS&Nav2=NEWSROOM&Nav3=CHEYNEYUNIVERSITY&strPageName=STATEMENT%20ON%20CHEYNEY%20UNIVERSITY>

Cheyney currently has not met the Commission's standards demonstrating:

- **Planning to guide resource allocation and institutional improvement.** The university needs to demonstrate that it is planning its work and working its plan, and that it is allocating resources based on its mission and goals to achieve its objectives. This also requires the institution to use the results of its assessment activities for institutional renewal.
- **Necessary resources** to achieve the university's goals. The Commission wants to be sure that Cheyney University has the human, financial, technical, facilities, and other resources necessary to achieve its mission, goals, and objectives, and that it uses its resources efficiently and effectively through assessment of student learning.
- **Leadership and administrative structure and services** to facilitate learning and scholarship, foster quality improvement, and support the institution's organization and governance.

In addition, the Commission determined that Cheyney has not met requirements to demonstrate **its overall financial health**. Specifically, the university needs to show the Commission that its resources, funding base, and plans for financial development are adequate to support current and future educational purposes and programs and to assure financial stability.

These standards and requirements must be met by all of the 525 institutions we accredit. Cheyney University is fully aware of our standards and the issues that need to be addressed. It will need to show the Commission that it is addressing each of these issues by September 1, 2017 or risk having its accreditation withdrawn.

Also by that date, Cheyney University must complete a plan showing how it will ensure that its students can transfer to other accredited institutions to complete their education should the Commission decide to withdraw its accreditation.

The Commission will review what Cheyney University provides, along with the results of an upcoming evaluation team visit to the university. The Commission will give the University a chance to respond to questions and concerns at a meeting of the entire Commission on November 16, 2017.

If sufficient evidence of meeting the standards and requirement is not presented at that time, the Commission can decide to withdraw accreditation. If this occurs, the university would then have the right to appeal to a special panel of Commission members.

Alternatively, according to federal regulations, the Commission could grant one more year (an extension for good cause) to make improvements. But the decision is up to the Commission alone, and that is the last possible stay that is allowed by federal requirements.

We want to be clear. The Commission has not withdrawn Cheyney University's accreditation.

We are taking the corrective actions that we are charged with as a federally recognized accreditor, following the process that the government requires us to take to protect students and be fair to institutions.

Withdrawing accreditation from a college is not an action that the Commission takes lightly, nor a decision made in haste. In recent years, the Commission has withdrawn accreditation from three institutions. But we are bound by our duty to take action in the public interest if an institution falls short of Commission standards or requirements. The decision will be based not on politics or any other factor but clear evidence about whether or not the university meets the standards and requirements that we have cited.

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) is a non-government, voluntary membership association that promotes educational excellence across institutions with diverse missions, student populations, and resources. It examines each institution as a whole, rather than focusing only specific programs of study offered by an institution. Institutions must demonstrate compliance with accreditation standards that address mission and goals, strategic planning and resource allocation, institutional resources, leadership and governance, administration, integrity, institutional assessment, student admissions and retention, student support services, faculty, educational offerings, general education, assessment of student learning, and other areas. MSCHE is authorized by the United States Secretary of Education to accredit post-secondary, degree-granting institutions in Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The Commission currently accredits 525 colleges and universities, including large public and private universities, numerous community colleges, private liberal arts colleges, religious seminaries, several federally-sponsored institutions, and several private, for-profit institutions.