



HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

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May 5, 2020

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dr. Timothy Faltyn
President
Oklahoma Panhandle State University
P.O. Box 430
323 W. Eagle Blvd.
Goodwell, OK 73939-0430

Dear President Faltyn:

Thank you for notifying the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of your institution's efforts in response to the coronavirus outbreak. These efforts demonstrate the institution's commitment to the public good and attention to the general well-being of its constituents.

As you may be aware, on March 5, 2020, the Office of Postsecondary Education of the U.S. Department of Education (the Department) posted *Guidance for Interruption of Study related to Coronavirus (COVID-19)* on the Federal Student Aid website. In the case of institutions, the Department is allowing the use of online technologies to accommodate students on a temporary basis, without requiring strict adherence to its approval processes by institutions that would otherwise be required to seek Department approval for the use or expansion of distance learning programs. The Department is also permitting accreditors to waive their distance education review requirements for institutions working to accommodate students whose enrollment is otherwise interrupted as a result of COVID-19. **Your institution is approved at the highest level of distance education approval, "Approved for distance education courses and programs," and does not require any waiver or approval to change its offerings.**

The institution is reminded of its obligations to portray itself accurately to its constituents. In this context, regular updates to students, faculty, staff, administrators and the public related to the institution's activities in managing this public health issue are appropriate.

If at any point, the institution anticipates ceasing operations in a manner that would unreasonably disrupt the academic pursuits of students currently enrolled in one or more programs, please submit a Provisional Plan that conforms to the requirements articulated in the guidance document related to teach outs (http://download.hlcommission.org/Teach-OutRequirements_PRC.pdf).

Finally, please notify the institution's assigned HLC staff liaison as soon as possible once a determination has been made that routine on-ground instruction and/or operations can resume.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Higher Learning Commission

Cc: Julie Dinger, Accreditation Liaison Officer, Oklahoma Panhandle State University
Steph Brzuzy, Vice President of Accreditation Relations, Higher Learning Commission
Anthea Sweeney, Vice President of Legal and Regulatory Affairs, Higher Learning
Commission