

November 21, 2024

**BY CERTIFIED MAIL**

Mr. Lawrence Schumacher  
President  
Northwestern College  
9400 South Cicero Ave.  
Oak Lawn, IL 60453

Dear President Schumacher:

This letter is formal notification that the action taken by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Board of Trustees (“the Board”) to withdraw accreditation from Northwestern College (“the Institution”) is now final. As you know, at its meeting on October 31, 2024, the Board acted to withdraw the accreditation of the Institution. This action was communicated to the Institution via an action letter dated November 6, 2024.

As an adverse action, the Board’s action to withdraw accreditation was subject to appeal. Therefore, the action was not a final action until the later of (1) the expiration of the time period in which to appeal if no appeal was filed; or (2) the conclusion of the appeal if an appeal was filed.

The deadline for the Institution to file its intent to appeal was November 20, 2024. The Institution did not notify HLC of its intent to appeal by this date. Therefore, in accordance with HLC procedure, the Institution has forfeited its opportunity to appeal the action, and the action to withdraw accreditation is now a final action.

**Withdrawal of Accreditation Effective Date:** In accordance with HLC policy INST.E.60.010, Denial or Withdrawal of Status, once final, an action to withdraw accreditation is effective the later of either (1) the date on which degrees are conferred following the conclusion of the current academic term in which students are enrolled, if any, or (2) the date on which the action becomes final if there is no such academic term in progress.

In accordance with this policy, the withdrawal of accreditation from the Institution is now effective as of November 21, 2024.

**Basis for Withdrawal of Accreditation:** At its meeting on October 31, 2024, the Board acted to withdraw the accreditation of Northwestern College because the Institution was found to be out of compliance with HLC requirements. The Board determined that the Institution did not meet Eligibility Requirement #2.

**Board Rationale:** The Board based its action on the following findings made with regard to the Institution as well as the entire record before the Board:

Northwestern College (“the Institution”) does not meet Eligibility Requirement #2, “[t]he institution is appropriately authorized in each of the states, sovereign nations, or jurisdictions in which it operates to award degrees, offer educational programs, or conduct activities as an institution of higher education. At least one of these must be in HLC’s jurisdiction,” for the following reasons:

- As indicated by the Illinois Board of Higher Education on September 26, 2024, the Institution is not authorized to operate and grant degrees in the State of Illinois.
- The Institution is not otherwise authorized by an appropriate state authorizing agency.

**Institutional Disclosure Obligation:** HLC policy<sup>1</sup> requires that an institution inform its constituencies, including Board members, administrators, faculty, staff, students, prospective students, and any other constituencies about the withdrawal of accreditation and how to contact HLC for further information. The policy also requires that an institution disclose that HLC withdrew the Institution’s accreditation whenever it refers to its HLC accreditation.

The action letter dated November 6, 2024 previously required the Institution to notify its constituencies about the withdrawal of accreditation, including that it was not a final action and was subject to appeal.

As the action is now a final action, at a minimum, the Institution must now also provide a copy of this action letter to its governing board, administration, and faculty and provide a copy of the enclosed Public Disclosure Notice to its currently enrolled students. Once disclosures have been made, the Institution must submit copies of its disclosure documents as a single .pdf file to <https://www.hlcommission.org/sign-in/submit-documents-to-hlc/> (by selecting “Information about Institutional Disclosures”) no later than seven (7) business days following receipt of this action letter. HLC will retain this information as part of the Institution’s record.

**HLC Disclosure Obligations:** The Board action resulted in changes that are reflected in the Institution’s Statement of Accreditation Status as well as the Institutional Status and Requirements Report. The Statement of Accreditation Status, including the dates of the last comprehensive evaluation visit, is posted to the HLC website. In accordance with HLC policy,<sup>2</sup> information about this action is provided to members of the public and to other constituents in several ways. This action letter and the enclosed Public Disclosure Notice will be posted to HLC’s website not more than one business day after this letter is sent to the Institution. Additionally, a summary of Board actions will be sent to appropriate state and federal agencies and accrediting associations. This summary also will be published on HLC’s website. The summary will include this HLC action regarding the Institution.

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<sup>1</sup> INST.E.60.010, Denial or Withdrawal of Status.

<sup>2</sup> COMM.A.10.010, Notice of Accreditation Actions, HLC Public Notices and Public Statements

**Reapplication Following Withdrawal of Accreditation:** In accordance with HLC policy INST.E.80.010, Reapplication Following a Denial or Withdrawal of Status, the Board will not consider an application for initial accreditation or candidacy from the Institution until a period of at least two years has elapsed following the date the withdrawal action became effective.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, thank you in advance for your cooperation. If you have questions about any of the information in this letter, please contact your HLC Staff Liaison, Dr. Linnea Stenson.

Sincerely,



Barbara Gellman-Danley  
President

Enc: Public Disclosure Notice

Cc: Chair of the Board of Trustees, Northwestern College  
Gail Schumacher, Executive Vice-President/COO, Northwestern College  
Linnea A. Stenson, Vice President of Accreditation Relations, Higher Learning  
Commission  
Marla Morgen, Vice President and General Counsel, Higher Learning Commission  
Nkechi Onwuameze, Senior Associate Director for Academic Affairs, Illinois Board of  
Higher Education  
Herman Bounds, Director, Accreditation Group, Office of Postsecondary Education,  
U.S. Department of Education