



Concern Over Fairness To Students Should Be Chiropractic's Focus in Life Accreditation Crisis

By James S. Turner
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The decision by the Council on Chiropractic Education (CCE) to deny re-accreditation to Life University's College of Chiropractic, and the subsequent positive reform steps on the part of the institution have prompted a whirlwind of concern over what are alleged to be unnecessarily rigid procedures on the part of the accreditation agency. While those procedures seem to leave no way for the dramatically reformed school to regain its accreditation status other than clos-



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ing down and starting over if Life's appeal of the initial decision is denied, CCE does have options.

I understand that Life initiated the reaccreditation process one year earlier in the accreditation cycle than the rules required. Thus the CCE could extend the probation period it imposed on Life 13 months ago by one year without disrupting the routine accreditation schedule. In addition, CCE appears to have the authority to grant an additional six-month probation to that already served. Such an action would give the school additional time to measure the effects of the new policies and procedures it has instituted to eliminate the operating weaknesses identified by CCE and to take additional steps as and if necessary. Thus the CCE could extend the probation up to 18 months

without disrupting its regulatory routine. It could accomplish this step procedurally by including such an intention in the response to the school's appeal that it files with the appeals hearing committee.

Failure to take such an action could all but put Life University out of business, leaving thousands in distress, including large numbers of students whose education will be significantly de-railed. CCE has, apparently, also refused to discuss with Life's new administration or any other concerned party the options that might be available in the event that Life's appeal of the June 10th decision is unsuccessful.

This is a strange and grave situation, made even more troubling by the fact that there exists a relatively easy solution that addresses, in an orderly manner, all of CCE's legitimate concerns and creates the very likely possibility that the school could prosper as a citadel of educational excellence. Any other outcome does not seem to be justified by any rules or regulations anywhere, let alone any sense of fairness.

As lead legal counsel for Doctors for Excellence in Chiropractic Education, a grass-roots effort on the part of hundreds of individual DCs concerned about the Life situation, I have been obliged to bluntly address these procedural matters with CCE as directly as possible. In a letter to the President of CCE, Dr. Reed Phillips, who is also President of a competing chiropractic school, Southern California University of Health Sciences, I have set out the strategy outlined above and asked the following question regarding the

strange non-communication policy CCE seems to be following:

We request that you identify in CCE Standards and/or in other established procedural documents the basis for, we are told, CCE's complete refusal to communicate with Life University on issues beyond the formal appeal that institution has under way. Please let us know if this is the CCE policy and if so please provide the basis for this position in CCE's governing documents.

Once again, the issue in the minds of thousands of concerned chiropractors, students and their families is not necessarily any initial decision on CCE's part (Since we do not know the charges against the school we do not know how well-founded they might be), but what appears to be an accreditation deck stacked in such a way as to provide no mechanism whatsoever to recognize the tremendous reforms Life has undertaken since CCE's June 10th action. There is a point at which inflexibility becomes arbitrary and capricious behavior, and it is almost impossible to believe that the CCE is willing to set a course so irrevocable and rigid as to ever allow themselves to rightfully fall into that category.

The lives of thousands of people hang in the balance on the matter of Life University's continued operation, as well as a \$150 million annual contribution to the local economy. CCE needs to understand that their behavior is under a microscope, from both within

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