

APPENDIX J

Summary of Visit of Team of Examiners for Mountain State University

Background

Mountain State University was founded as Beckley College in 1933. Mountain State University is located in Southern West Virginia in the city of Beckley which has about 20,000 residents. The university offers associate, baccalaureate and master's degrees. It is a private, nonprofit institution. Mountain State University is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. The university also has received accreditation for several of its programs by agencies including the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education/APTA, the American Association of Medical Assistants, the Council on Social Work Education, and the National League for Nursing Accreditation Commission.

Mountain State University had an enrollment of 4,048 in Fall 2003. It offers traditional on-campus programs and distance education programs. It also has campuses in Martinsburg, West Virginia; Orlando, Florida; and Center Township, Pennsylvania. Charles H. Polk is the president of Mountain State University.

Application Review and Site Visit

After a preliminary visit to General Administration to discuss licensure, President Polk submitted an application for licensure for Mountain State University on December 13, 2004. Dr. Howard-Vital reviewed the application and appointed a team of examiners to review further the application and to conduct a site visit to determine if Mountain State University would be in compliance with the fifteen standards contained in The University of North Carolina Board of Governors' *Rules and Standards: Licensing Nonpublic Institutions to Conduct Post-Secondary Degree Activity in North Carolina*. Because of their credentials and expertise, Dr. Howard-Vital appointed the following to the team of examiners: Dr. Richard E. Neel (Chair), Dean Emeritus, Belk College of Business, and Professor of Economics Emeritus, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina; Dr. Laurel A. Files, Associate Chair and Associate Professor, Department of Health Policy and Administration, School of Public Health, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, North Carolina; Dr. Pamela Nickless, Director of Interdisciplinary Studies, and Professor of Economics, University of North Carolina at Asheville, Asheville, North Carolina; Charles J. Popovich, Head Librarian, Business Library, and Associate Professor, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio; Dr. Matthew Valle, Chair, Department of Business Administration, The Martha and Spencer Love School of Business, Elon University, Elon, North Carolina; and Dr. Michelle Howard-Vital, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, Ex Officio.

Mountain State University (MSU) initially applied for licensure to offer the Master of Health Science degree, the Master of Arts degree in Interdisciplinary Studies, the Master of Science degree in Interdisciplinary Studies, the Bachelor of Science degree in Organizational Leadership, and the Master of Science degree in Strategic Leadership at a site to be located in either Catawba County, Iredell County, or Mecklenburg County in North Carolina. Each of the proposed degree programs was evaluated for compliance with the *Rules and Standards*. The site visit to Beckley, West Virginia occurred on May 19-20, 2005.

Either prior to the visit or during the visit, many items were reviewed by the team of examiners, including the following: the licensure application and the accompanying exhibits, curriculum vitae of faculty members, faculty personnel files, curriculums of proposed degree programs, library resources, computer resources, educational facilities, budget data, audited financial statements, student records, Mountain State University Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs, and Mountain State University FY 04-05 through FY 08-09 Strategic Initiatives.

During the visit, the team of examiners met with numerous representatives of Mountain State University including Dr. Charles H. Polk, President; James Silosky, Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer; Ron Ward, Chief Business Officer; Dr. Roslyn Clark-Payne, Provost of Distance Education; Dr. Vincent Beach, Senior Academic Officer for Arts and Sciences (includes Interdisciplinary Studies); Dr. Brian Holloway, Dean of Graduate Independent Study and Spectrum Programs; Lawrence Kuszynski, Senior Officer for Institutional Effectiveness; Dr. Mark Miller, Senior Academic Officer for Experiential Learning; Dr. Jessica Sharp, Senior Academic Officer for Graduate Nursing; Dr. William White, Director of Undergraduate Leadership Programs; Dr. Ruth Wylie, Director of Online Leadership Studies, and Acting Dean of Leadership Studies; Judy Altis, Director of Library and Technology Resources; Kelli Mays, Senior Accreditation Manager; Dr. Rhonda Shepperd, Director of Testing and Tutoring Center and Adjunct Faculty Member; Arnold Simonse, Full-Time Faculty Member; Melissa Farrish, Senior Student Services Manager; Rebecca Hall, Registrar; Melanie Hough, Director of Student Services, MSU Center Township, Pennsylvania; Sue Pack, Director of Financial Aid; Alexandria Stone, Dean of Enrollment Management; Tammy Toney, Director of Admissions Processing; Rachel Lanier, Student; Barbara Dawes, Student; Claudia Prendergast, Student; Kelly Daniels, Student; Dan Boothe, Student; and Chris Walker, Student.

After the site visit, to the Mountain State University in Beckley, West Virginia on May 19-20, 2005, Mountain State University rescinded its applications for the Master of Health Science degree, the Master of Arts degree in Interdisciplinary Studies, and the Master of Science degree in Interdisciplinary Studies.

Proposed degree programs for licensure

The Organizational Leadership program is designed to focus on leadership that is used in a professional setting. The Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership is an adult-focused degree completion program designed to introduce students to the methods and skills that maximize human capital in any organization, individual and interpersonal skills for achieving successful organizational goals and personal growth, and problem solving skills that result in positive organizational change. The program is delivered to a cohort of students, and it is designed for working adults. Students review course content and develop knowledge and skills through a combination of individual assignments, once a week class sessions, online discussion formats, a core of courses, and a practicum.

The Master of Science in Strategic Leadership is also designed for working adults. The program is constructed to help students attain the skills and knowledge to work more effectively with people, organizational systems, and complex information-critical factors. By the end of the master's program, students should show development of a leadership skill set, strategies for

problem solving, solutions to facilitate and manage change applicable in a small office or large company.

The Report of the Team of Examiners

On September 26, 2005, the team of examiners submitted its *Preliminary Report* to General Administration. The *Preliminary Report* was transmitted to Mountain State University for corrections of fact and errors of omission. On October 20, 2005, Mountain State representatives responded to the comments, and the Chair of the team of examiners made the corrections. On October 26, 2005, a final report was sent to Mountain State University so that the institution could respond to the recommendations in the *Final Report to the President of The University of North Carolina from the Team of Examiners for the Licensure Visit to Mountain State University's Proposed Bachelor and Master's Degree Programs at a Site in Catawba County, Iredell County, or Mecklenburg, County*.

On December 22, 2005, the institution submitted responses to the aforementioned final report. Dr. Howard-Vital forwarded the institution's responses to the recommendations in the *Final Report* to the team members for their review and feedback. After conferring with the team of examiners on January 10, 2006, the team's chair forwarded a written reply to General Administration concerning the team's review of the institution's compliance. The team's response indicated that several of MSU's answers to the recommendations did not approach complete compliance. The team wanted further assurances that MSU would follow Standard 5 on *Faculty and Other Personnel Qualifications* and staff academic programs appropriately. After several exchanges among team members, the team's chair replied again to Mountain State University on February 1, 2006 that the team was still not satisfied that the institution's interpretation of the *Rules and Standards* would lead to compliance with specific areas of Standard 3 and Standard 5. Mountain State University replied again to the team's concerns and indicated that it would comply with all aspects of Standards 3 and 5. On May 8, 2006, the team chair indicated that the team was satisfied with the responses of MSU regarding complying with the *Rules and Standards*.

Overview of Recommendations

The *Final Report* of the team of examiners contained 23 recommendations. Several of the recommendations focused on the structure of the degree programs. The team required that MSU clearly specify requirements for self-directed independent study work and include a minimum of 30 hours general education work in the baccalaureate curriculum. Similarly several recommendations focused on credentials of the faculty. The institution agreed to define the content portion of independent study work so that specific assignments and requirements would be clarified for the students.

The team recommended that MSU follow Standard 5 in the *Rules and Standards* regarding qualifications for faculty. The team recommended, for example, that Mountain State University utilize faculty to teach general education courses in its proposed bachelor's degree program (at its North Carolina campus) who hold a doctorate or master's degree in the teaching discipline or a master's degree with a concentration of at least 18 graduate hours in the teaching discipline. Moreover, the team of examiners recommended that Mountain State University review its projections of faculty size and composition for the Bachelor of Science in Organizational

Leadership and the Master of Science in Strategic Leadership degree for the purpose of increasing the number of full-time faculty persons intended for these two degree programs. The institution agreed to follow these recommendations.

Several recommendations from the team focused on the catalog. The team recommended that the institution state the schedule of tuition, fees, and refund policies in its North Carolina catalog or brochure. Moreover, the team recommended that Mountain State University define and publish its policies for evaluating, awarding, and accepting experiences for academic credit. Further, the team recommended that Mountain State University define and publish in its catalog or brochure for students in North Carolina the undergraduate and graduate residence requirements for degree completion. The catalog should also contain a description of the faculty and their qualifications, as well as other relevant institutional policies. A copy of the catalog should be provided to General Administration, as soon as it becomes available. The institution agreed on the aforementioned recommendations.

Regarding library resources in North Carolina, the team of examiners recommended that MSU enter into contractual arrangements with other colleges and universities in the proximity of the site to support the institution's educational programs and to provide for the use of library acquisitions by students and faculty. The team also recommended that Mountain State University acquire types of data bases such as Mergent Online or U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission EDGAR file to further support the degree programs. The institution's response was satisfactory to the team.

In its closing recommendations, the team recommended that Mountain State University send a statement relative to the amount of the tuition guaranty bond from an independent certified public accountant to General Administration. Further, the team of examiners recommended that MSU forward to General Administration prior to the first day of class documentation that it is in compliance with all laws and ordinances relative to the health and safety of all persons on the premises. Furthermore, the team of examiners recommended that a review of the university's compliance with the 2004 revised *Rules and Standards* be conducted in the 2007-2008 academic year. The tuition guarantee bond should be forwarded to General Administration prior to the beginning of classes.

The team recommended licensure for Mountain State University for the Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership and the Master of Science in Strategic Leadership at a site to be located in either Catawba County or Iredell County or Mecklenburg County in North Carolina, subject to compliance with all recommendations. The team also recommends a visit one year after classes have been in session to review compliance with licensure standards. General Administration concurs with the team's recommendations. Staff affirms the need for a visit in one year within date of licensure to review compliance.