



March 20, 2025

sent via email to: [sywhite@haywood.edu](mailto:sywhite@haywood.edu)

Dr. Shelley White  
President  
Haywood Community College  
185 Freedlander Drive  
Clyde, NC 28721

Re: **Reasonable Cause Determination for Changing Accrediting Agencies- for Haywood Community College (OPE ID: 00885500)**

Dear President White:

The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Federal Student Aid (“Department”) has conducted a Reasonable Cause Determination for Haywood Community College’s (“Haywood”) request to change accrediting agencies as required by section 496(h) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, 20 U.S.C. § 1099b(h). Haywood is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (“SACSCOC”) and seeks to change its institutional accrediting agency to the Higher Learning Commission (“HLC”).

The Department has determined that Haywood has established reasonable cause to change its institutional accrediting agency to HLC.

## NEXT STEPS

Once Haywood has secured accreditation by HLC to become its institutional accreditor it must use the electronic *Application for Approval to Participation in the Federal Student Financial Aid Programs* (E-App) located inside FSA Partner Connect to notify the Department, add HLC as its institutional accrediting agency and end its affiliation with SACSCOC as it has determined it will not be retaining SACSCOC. Haywood must select the application purpose of “Update Information,” selecting the specific update purpose of “Update/Report Information,” and further identifying the specific update purpose of “Accreditation and State Authorization.” In Section B, Haywood is advised to follow the directions to add a new accrediting agency. To do so, click the “+ Add New” button located at the top right in Section B (this is right above the listing of all accrediting agencies currently applicable to the institution) and then the “Next” button at the bottom right. A list of questions appears. In Question 1, select the accrediting agency to be added from the drop-down list. Haywood must select the item that corresponds to HLC. In Question 1a, Haywood will be prompted to enter the year that HLC granted initial accreditation and in Question 1b add the number of years HLC granted Haywood accreditation. As HLC will now

be considered Haywood's institutional accreditor, it must check Boxes 1c and 1d to notate that HLC accredits the entire institution and is considered its primary accreditor.

For SACSCOC, since it will no longer be considered Haywood's institutional accrediting agency effective with its change of designation of HLC to its institutional accrediting agency, please do the following: In Section B, (Accreditor and State Authorization), select the edit pencil icon located next to SACSCOC, and provide the end date of your accreditation with SACSCOC (1g), using the date you are submitting this E-app update as the end date of Haywood's association with SACSCOC. Then select the "save draft" button at the bottom of the form and then select the "edit accreditor" button to return to the main section of Section B. Finally, Haywood must ensure it hits the "submit" button to complete the update.

Please note Haywood must submit HLC's approval letter with its supporting documentation provided to the Department as part of the E-App process as well as a copy of this reasonable cause determination letter. Haywood is directed to upload the materials into the Partner Connect portal in the appropriate location identified.

**Note:** An institution that is seeking to change accrediting agencies should not withdraw from its current accreditation until after the new agency has granted accreditation to the institution, and the Department has provided written notice that it acknowledges the new accrediting agency as the institution's primary accrediting agency or the multiple accreditation. When an institution maintains multiple accreditation, an institution may not change its primary accrediting agency to a secondary agency, or withdraw from accreditation from the primary agency without submitting a request for a new reasonable cause determination regarding that change.

Failure to comply with these procedures may result in the institution's accreditation status not being recognized by the Secretary and could result in a loss of Title IV eligibility.

If you have any questions, please send your questions to [tammi.sawyer@ed.gov](mailto:tammi.sawyer@ed.gov).

Sincerely,

Jeremy Early, Ed.D.  
Acting Branch Chief  
School Eligibility and Operations Service Branch

Cc:

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)  
The Higher Learning Commission (HLC)  
North Carolina Community College System  
[osd.pentagon.ousd-p-r.mbx.vol-edu-compliance@mail.mil](mailto:osd.pentagon.ousd-p-r.mbx.vol-edu-compliance@mail.mil)  
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