

Two More Jewels in Palmer Florida's Crown

SCHOOL RECEIVES REGIONAL ACCREDITATION, OPERATING LICENSE

Editorial Staff

After a lengthy application process, Palmer College of Chiropractic Florida (PCCF) has been granted accreditation status by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA) as a branch campus of Palmer College of Chiropractic. According to Palmer's interim president, Donald Kern, DC, school officials received the news in a Feb. 13 letter from the NCA which noted that its Institutional Actions Council had voted Feb. 9 to "extend your accreditation to include the Master of Science in Clinical Research Training and the Doctor of Chiropractic program at the Port Orange site."

"A school with no previous NCA accreditation getting accredited for the first time is a significant accomplishment," said Dr. Kern, who served as PCCF's senior campus administrator for 18 months before being named interim president on Feb. 5. "It sends a strong message to current and prospective students."

"Of course, this accreditation is enormously significant for our students," added Dr. Gloria Niles, PCCF's academic dean. "They came to PCCF because of their confidence in our pledge and commitment to obtaining our NCA accreditation status."

NCA is one of six regional accrediting agencies in the United States. It accredits almost 9,000 schools in 19 states, including approximately 1,200 postsecondary educational institutions, such as junior colleges, colleges and universities.

PCCF had been operating under temporary accreditation since opening its doors to students in October 2002. According to Dr. Kern, the accreditation process with NCA began approximately three years ago, long before the first students set foot on campus. After completing the preliminary steps necessary, PCCF submitted a report to NCA in July 2003, requesting consideration for accreditation as a branch campus of Palmer. The following month, an NCA site team conducted a campus visit.

Having NCA accreditation provides tremendous potential benefits to new and continuing PCCF students. Currently, five other chiropractic schools - Cleveland Chiropractic College-Kansas City; Logan University; National University of Health Sciences; Northwestern Health Sciences University; and the main Palmer campus in Davenport, Iowa - are accredited by the NCA. Accreditation may ease the transition of a chiropractic student who desires to transfer from one of these schools to PCCF, because it is often easier to assess the quality of education offered at a similar school, and thereby accept the student's credits and academic record. Accreditation may also provide students with access to certain academic programs and scholarships unavailable at a non-accredited institution.

In related news, Palmer Florida also received an annual license to operate in the state of Florida from the Florida Commission for Independent Education, based on the college's ability to meet the commission's licensure requirements.

"With this second jewel for Palmer Florida, along with the state licensure, we now are setting our sights toward completing the crown with CCE accreditation," declared Dr. Kern, referring to the Council on Chiropractic Education, (CCE), the national accrediting agency for chiropractic colleges.

PCCF officials anticipate hosting a visit from a CCE site team in May to determine if the school is eligible for accreditation as a branch campus. Once the site team completes its visit, it will submit a report to the CCE's Council on Accreditation (COA) for consideration.

"We anticipate continued interaction with the COA as part of an ongoing process seeking to obtain accreditation," said Dr. Kern.

If all goes smoothly, Palmer Florida could earn national accreditation from the CCE as early as this summer. If not, the school is prepared to transfer its first class (due to graduate in December 2005) to the main Palmer campus in Iowa, which has CCE accreditation.

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