

Palmer Files Lawsuit Against Council on Chiropractic Education

Editorial Staff

DAVENPORT, IOWA - On December 12, 2002, Chancellor Michael E. Crawford announced that the Palmer Chiropractic University System has filed a lawsuit in Wisconsin against the Council on Chiropractic Education (CCE), charging that the Council deprived Palmer of appropriate representation in its recent CCE reorganization process.

Palmer's claim, representing Palmer College of Chiropractic in Iowa and Palmer College of Chiropractic West in California, was filed December 5 in Jefferson County (Wis.) Circuit Court. The claim asserts five causes of action in which Palmer alleges that the CCE deprived Palmer of its rights of representation in the CCE corporate organization. The reorganization process Palmer is challenging, Chancellor Crawford said, includes the CCE's attempt to dissolve itself as a Wisconsin corporation to begin operations as an Arizona corporation. The Palmer lawsuit claims these actions were taken in violation of the CCE's own bylaws and articles of incorporation.

The lawsuit names the CCE and four of its officers as defendants. Sued in their official capacities are Paul D. Walker, CCE executive vice-president; Reed B. Phillips, president of CCE's board of directors; James F. Winterstein, chairman of the CCE corporate board; and Joseph C. Brimhall, chairman of the CCE's Commission on Accreditation (COA).

Palmer President Guy F. Reikeman, DC, assessed the impact of the lawsuit on Palmer's accreditation status with the CCE:

"It's important for all to recognize that the Commission on Accreditation (COA) is a separate division within the CCE. Issues relating to educational standards stand apart from those relating to corporate structure. We do not expect that the CCE would make any effort to influence the COA with regard to the unrelated issues relative to accreditation. We are proceeding with our relationship with the COA as though this other issue were not on the table."

"Palmer has always complied with CCE standards and held accredited status, and will continue to comply with those standards to ensure accreditation for its students," Dr. Reikeman added. "This lawsuit will not affect faculty, students or prospective students."

Dr. Reikeman also noted that the COA recently sent site teams to visit Palmer College, Palmer College West, and the extension of the Palmer program in Port Orange, Fla. The site team reports are in preparation, and final recommendations to the COA are yet to be determined.

The Palmer lawsuit comes at a turbulent time for chiropractic college accreditation. Life University in Marietta, Ga., lost its CCE-accredited status this year. However, Chancellor Crawford emphasized that Palmer's action was not connected to the CCE's decision regarding Life's accreditation, and that Palmer had filed its suit independently of any group of Life supporters.

"We have been laboring with the issues relating to corporate organization since long before Life lost its accreditation, and indeed, ours is an entirely separate issue from educational standards and how they are applied. What we are interested in is having an accrediting agency that is representative of all chiropractic colleges and that, in so far as possible, is above chiropractic politics."

Chancellor Crawford also noted that Palmer's objective in the lawsuit is to have the CCE's former corporate structure restored, "and then move on from there." That would mean, "bringing all the chiropractic colleges back to the table, to establish by proper means an accrediting body that is objective, constructive and professional."

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