



## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

### OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT

September 20, 2017

Dr. Peter H. Vlasses  
Executive Director  
Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education  
135 S. LaSalle Street, Suite 4100  
Chicago, IL 60603

Dear Dr. Vlasses,

I am writing to inform you of my decision on the renewal of recognition of the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE). U.S. Department of Education (Department) staff and the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI) have each made recommendations to me. These recommendations were made under Sections 114 and 496 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, and pursuant to relevant statutory and regulatory provisions.

The Department staff concluded that ACPE was out of compliance with 34 C.F.R. §602.15(a)(4) and needs to revise its policy to stipulate that board members who participate in the evaluation process – as an active evaluator – must be recused during the decision-making process. The Department staff recommended that I grant continued recognition, but require ACPE to come into compliance within 12 months. After discussion of those staff findings, the NACIQI recommended that I renew the agency's recognition without condition. I have reviewed the record thoroughly, noting both the Department staff's rationale for their compliance findings and the deliberations by the NACIQI members at the meeting that led to its recommendation.

I acknowledge the concerns of Department staff, but am renewing ACPE's recognition without requiring further compliance actions at this time. ACPE has sufficiently satisfied the requirements of 34 C.F.R. §602.15(a)(4). However, I would remind ACPE that 34 C.F.R. §602.15(a)(6) requires accrediting agencies to have clear and effective controls against conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflicts of interest. I recommend that ACPE be mindful that the practice noted by staff comes very close to creating the appearance of a conflict of interest. While no information found in the record indicates the practice has resulted in conflicts of interest or the appearance thereof, it is possible to envision circumstances where it could be construed as such.

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*The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.*

Scope of Recognition: The accreditation and preaccreditation, within the United States, of professional degree programs in pharmacy leading to the degree of Doctor of Pharmacy, including those programs offered via distance education.

Please convey my best wishes to the members of ACPE. We do appreciate the work that ACPE does to improve the quality and success of U.S. postsecondary education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Holly L. Ham".

Holly L. Ham  
Assistant Secretary  
Office of Management