

Case Name: *In the Matter of* Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools

Docket No.: 16-44-O

Filing Party: Respondent, Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools

Exhibit No.: B-O-35



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission
PO Box 47864 Olympia, WA 98504-7864

February 20, 2018

Herman Bounds Jr., Ed.S.,
Director Accreditation Group
U.S. Department of Education
Office of Postsecondary
Education Accreditation Group
400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room 270-01
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Director Bounds:

In response to the Federal Register Notice published on January 24, 2018, we are submitting this comment to register our support of the Application for Initial Recognition submitted by the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools ("ACICS"). The Notice solicits third-party comments concerning the performance of accrediting agencies under review by the U.S. Secretary of Education as required by section 496(n)(1)(A) of the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965, as amended. ACICS has presented an Application for Initial Recognition for the accreditation of private postsecondary institutions offering certificates or diplomas, and postsecondary institutions offering associate, bachelor's, or master's degrees in programs designed to educate students for professional, technical, or occupational careers, including those that offer those programs via distance education.

One of the criteria for recognition of an accrediting agency is § 602.13 requiring the accrediting agency to demonstrate "Acceptance of the agency by others." As the state nursing educational licensing agency in Washington State, we require that institutions offering educational programs be accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). Since Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) is recognized by CHEA, institutions accredited by ACICS meet a required element for state licensing in the state of Washington.

The Washington State Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission is responsible for the approval of all nursing education programs in the state of Washington and the licensing of all nurses. The Commission has approved of many nursing distance-learning programs that come from CHEA approved institutions and meet the standards of approval by the Commission.

Please accept this letter as acknowledgement by the Washington State Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission that, for those institutions that have ACICS accreditation to obtain state licensing, ACICS accreditation is a valued component of licensure by the Commission. As a

result, we support the petition for initial recognition submitted by ACICS to the Department.

If you have any questions, I can be reached at (b)(6)

Sincerely,

Mindy Schaffner, PhD, MSN-CNS, RN
Associate Director, Nursing Education State of Washington