

BOARD MEETING DATE: 2/17/2026

ITEM NO: XII-a

RECOMMEND THAT the Board review USDOE Reasonable Cause Approval Letter as an informational item only.



November 26, 2025

Sent via email to: pagej@nfc.edu

Jennifer Page
President
North Florida College
325 NW Turner Davis Drive
Madison, FL 32340

Re: Reasonable Cause Determination for Changing Accrediting Agencies – North Florida College (OPE ID: 00150800)

Dear President Page:

The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Federal Student Aid (“Department”) has conducted a Reasonable Cause Determination for North Florida College’s (“NFC”) 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). NFC is accredited by 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 NFC has established reasonable cause to change its institutional accrediting agency to HLC in accordance with 34 C.F.R. § 600.11(a)(1)(ii).

NEXT STEPS

Once NFC has secured accreditation by HLC 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. NFC must take the following steps:

- Select: “Update Information”
- Select specific purpose: “Update/Report Information”
- Identify specific update purpose: “Accreditation and State Authorization”
- In Section B follow the directions to add a new accrediting agency:
 - 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)
 - Click: the “Next” button at the bottom right
 - Question 1: Select: HLC from the drop-down list
 - Question 1a: Enter the year that HLC granted initial accreditation
 - Question 1b: Enter the number of years HLC granted accreditation

- Question 1c: Check the box to designate HLC's as NFC's primary accrediting agency
 - Question 1d: Check the box to confirm that HLC accredits the entire institution
- In Section B follow the directions to delete SACSCOC:
 - Select the edit pencil icon located next to SACSCOC,
 - Question 1g: Enter the date of the E-app as the end date for NFC's accreditation by SACSCOC
 - Select: the "save draft" button at the bottom of the form
 - Select: the "edit accreditor" button to return to the main section of Section B
- Click: "Submit" to complete the update

NFC must submit the HLC 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. NFC 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. 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 dawn.bilodeau@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Early, Ed.D.

Acting Branch Chief, School Eligibility and Oversight Service Branch

Cc: Dr. Stephen Pruitt, President, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, spruitt@sacscoc.org
Higher Learning Commission, legalaffairs@hlcommission.org
Florida Department of Education, Division of Florida Colleges, FCSInfo@fldoe.org
Department of Defense, osd.pentagon.ousd-p-r.mbx.vol-edu-compliance@mail.mil
Department of Veterans Affairs, Incoming.VBAVACO@va.gov
Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, CFPB_ENF_Students@cfpb.gov