

HIGHER EDUCATION

Adams State restless over probation issue

University wants reconsideration of accreditation assessment

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THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

ALAMOSA — Adams State University officials want its accrediting organization to speed up the reconsideration of the probation status placed on the school earlier this month.

But so far, that request has fallen on deaf ears.

Margaret Doell, the school's assistant vice president of academic affairs, said in an email the school has not gotten a response from the Higher Learning Commission, which accredits

roughly 1,000 institutions in 19 states.

The commission has called for a written response from the university by May 2017 but its board will not make a final determination on whether the school can be released from probation until February 2018, according to its website.

The commission placed the school on probation at the beginning of the month, citing violations in how the school handled its online and correspondence courses.

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But the evidence used by the commission, which visited the campus for two days in Sep-

tember, has rankled the school's administrators, faculty and supporters.

The team that visited the site concluded that Adams was in compliance with four of the six areas examined and met a fifth area with concerns.

But a sixth area in which the school failed to meet commission standards stemmed from courses the school had eliminated as part of its own reforms.

School faculty and students held a rally on campus earlier this week in support of its admin-

istration and have joined President Beverlee McClure in criticizing the commission's decision.

McClure, who was not the school's president when concerns about the online and correspondence courses were first raised in a 2014 article in The Chronicle of Higher Education, said the commission has ignored the reforms already undertaken by the school.

Lt. Gov. Joe Garcia, who also heads the Colorado Department of Higher Education, said in a statement last week his department would

continue to offer advice and support to the university.

"The Colorado Commission on Higher Education is optimistic that ASU's leadership will be able to work with its regional accrediting body, the Higher Learning Commission, to ensure the quality and rigor of its online course offerings and that it will demonstrate that it has acted quickly to meet all of the HLC's quality assurance requirements," Garcia said.

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