

“Being challenged in life is inevitable, being defeated is optional.”

– Roger Crawford

Date: March 19, 2024

To: Pittsburgh Technical College Community
From: Dr. Alicia B. Harvey-Smith, President/CEO
Subject: **Special Message – Middle States Commission On Higher Education**

Dear PTC Community,

You may have heard that Pittsburgh Technical College has received a request from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) for additional information regarding the College’s accreditation compliance and impacting our current accreditation status.

In line with our commitment to continued transparency and ongoing communication, I want to ensure you are all fully informed:

- PTC is an accredited institution and a member of Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) (often also referred to as “Middle States”).
- PTC was notified by MSCHE of a change in its accreditation status indicating temporary probation based on concerns with compliance with two of seven MSCHE Standards.
- PTC was notified that the College remains accredited while on temporary probation.
- PTC is actively working with MSCHE representatives and will fully comply with all requests for information.
- PTC will address any issues raised by MSCHE and will submit a Monitoring Report on or before May 1, 2024.
- PTC is not planning to close and will continue providing an excellent learning experience.

In the meantime, let me be clear: now and forever, our students are our #1 priority. Our goal remains to assure that we deliver on our promise to provide a quality teaching and learning experience and provide a great place to learn and work for our community. Please read on for answers to additional questions you may have.

Q: Is PTC still accredited?

A: Yes, PTC remains an accredited institution throughout the probationary period. The College is actively working in coordination with MSCHE to respond to all requests for information.

Q: What does probation mean?

A: Probation is a temporary sanction related to an institution's accreditation status. This status indicates that there is insufficient evidence that an institution is in compliance with certain accreditation standards.

We are working in partnership with Middle States to substantiate PTC's compliance with the two accreditation standards identified as non-compliant and a third that requires additional information. PTC will prepare a detailed and complete response that fully complies with all requests.

Q: Has PTC ever been on probation?

A: No. In 2012, the College submitted a progress report to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, but it was not placed on probation.

Q: How long does this probation last?

A: PTC's probation status will be reviewed after the College submits the requested information to MSCHE, which is due no later than May 1, 2024.

Q: Does this affect my degree if I have already graduated, or if I graduate while PTC is on probation?

A: No, this does not affect the awarding or recognition of degrees for past, present or future students.

Q: Is PTC closing?

A: No. As we continue to overcome past challenges, PTC is committed to ensuring that PTC is stable and sustainable long-term. We continue to look at options to strengthen our mission, programs, and services, for the success of current and future students.

Q: Does this affect my financial aid?

A: No, this probation status does not change the financial aid process at PTC. Students can still apply for and receive financial aid.

Q: What is the plan to get off probation?

A: The College is actively working to address compliance questions, including outlining our planning and policies related to accreditation status.

Q: Is PTC preparing a teach out plan?

A: Per standard protocol, PTC maintains an up to date Teach Out Plan with the Pennsylvania Department of Education. This is done to protect and support our students. PTC will continue to submit as requested this and all respective agreements to MSCHE, per request.

While this is not the desired outcome, we are prepared for all scenarios, and are committed to making decisions in the best interest of the students, the College community, and the region in-order to fulfill our mission to be fuel economic development, by providing a pipeline to Middle Skill Careers as an Educator of Choice to train the next generation of workers in Western Pennsylvania and beyond, for many years to come.

Please be reminded that we must stay focused on our goals and not become distracted. I continue to hold weekly office hours on Wednesdays from 2-3 p.m. You are invited to stop by if you have questions and to engage in robust discussions, idea sharing and provide feedback. This is much more effective than sending an anonymous note.

We continue to see strong student outcomes at PTC, and I am proud of our dedicated, passionate team working tirelessly to drive our College forward. These are challenging times, and it is important that we work together to achieve the success we all want. Thank you for taking the time to read this important update and for continuing to support Pittsburgh Technical College.