



GREETINGS!



Berners Bay by K. Kussart

In this issue, we spotlight Alaska Christian College, introduce ACPE's new research analyst and more! As always, I invite you to send me your feedback or suggestions for future topics.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Kussart'.

SPOTLIGHT ON...

Alaska Christian College

Alaska Christian College (ACC), located in Soldotna, began in 2001 as a mission of the Evangelical Covenant Church of Alaska delivering postsecondary education to Alaska Native students. Initially, ACC was an exempt institution offering a one-year religious program. In the last sixteen years it has grown considerably and is now an authorized institution offering three two-year degree programs. ACC is accredited by the Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE) a national accreditor recognized by the US Dept. of Education. ACC continues to focus on the educational needs of Alaska Natives and selected their degree offerings based on the needs of rural Alaska. In 2013, they began offering two Associate's Degrees: Christian Ministry and Paraprofessional Education. ACC added a third Associate's Degree in early 2017 in Behavioral Health. This new program will begin enrolling students this fall. This summer ACC is constructing a new dorm that will increase campus housing to 115 beds.



ACC

At the July 25th meeting, the Commission re-authorized Alaska Christian College, through July 2020. Congratulations!

Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) offers webinar about "Forever GI Bill"

On August 16th, HR 3218, the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Education Assistance Act of 2017 (commonly called the Forever GI Bill), was signed into law. The bill expands the benefits of the GI Bill. At a high level, some major changes are:

- It eliminates the time limit to use benefits. In one of its most prominent changes, the bill does away with benefit expiration dates for new enlistees - earning it the nickname, the "Forever GI Bill." Previously, veterans had 15 years after discharge to use the education benefits.
- It expands access. National Guard and Reserve members will now be eligible for expanded education benefits. And any member who receives a Purple Heart, regardless of how long they have served, is eligible for the full benefits.
- It restores benefits for veterans whose colleges shut down in the middle of the semester. This provision is specifically designed to help veterans affected by the abrupt closures of massive for-profit chains in recent years, and to shield veterans from future closures.
- It gives extra funds to students in STEM programs. The expansion emphasizes science, technology, engineering, and math degrees by offering additional money to veterans enrolled in those programs.

In anticipation of the impact this bill will have on postsecondary institutions, MHEC set up a webinar with Mr. Will Hubbard, vice president of government affairs at Student Veterans of America (SVA), on September 21, at 1:00 p.m. CT, 10 a.m. Alaska time. MHEC confirmed that Alaska institutions are welcome to attend.

Mr. Hubbard will provide a brief background on how the Forever GI Bill came to fruition and highlight some of the major components. SVA's section-by-section analysis of the legislation can be found [here](#). Register [here](#) for the webinar.

Thank you to MHEC for providing this webinar.

Recent Commission Actions

July 25, 2017 Meeting

Renewal of Authorization

- Alaska Christian College (Soldotna)
- Alaska Institute of Oriental Medicine, Acupuncture and Massage Therapy (Anchorage)
- Hair Science (Anchorage)
- Thomas Edison State University (Eielson AFB)

Program Addition

- Shear Fire Academy of Hair Design (Palmer) - Esthetics

Upcoming Events

October 24, 2017

- Quarterly Commission Meeting (Anchorage and via teleconference)

IMPORTANT DATE: October 16, 2017

Deadline for receipt of materials for items to be presented at the January 9, 2018 Commission meeting

ACPE welcomes new Research Analyst, Gretchen Becker

Gretchen Becker joined ACPE in May 2017. She is a recent graduate from Oregon State University with a Master's in Public Policy. Her graduate research focus was in STEM education and regional strategic partnerships for educational and career success. Previously, she interned at the Oregon Department of Education researching high school dropout prevention.

Her current projects are:

- Researching effective education, financial aid, and workforce development best practices, programs, and policies
- Alaska Education Grant (AEG) program evaluation
- Alaska Performance Scholarship and AEG outcomes analysis
- Evaluation of potential changes to loan programs
- Developing Alaska's first comprehensive postsecondary education almanac
- Collaborating with statewide partner agencies on data analysis initiatives



You may hear from Ms. Becker in the coming months as she conducts her research.

ACPE can now accept IA fee payments via electronic funds transfer (EFT)

When submitting an application for authorization or for amendment to authorization, institutions can now pay the application fees via EFT directly from their bank account to ACPE's bank account. If you would like more information on paying via EFT, please contact Kierke Kussart at 907-465-6741 or kierke.kussart@alaska.gov

Charter College seeks accreditation from the Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES)

In September 2016 the US Dept. of Education (ED) terminated the recognition of the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) as an accreditor. Periodically, a subset of the more than 60 federally recognized accreditors is reviewed for compliance with the Secretary of Education's Criteria for Recognition. ACICS was found not to be compliant. ACICS accredited over 700 campuses including Charter College Anchorage and Wasilla.

Charter College administration identified the Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES), an ED-recognized national accreditor, as a good fit for their programs. The College submitted the initial accreditation application to ABHES in January 2017 and attended the ABHES accreditation workshop in February. Campus site visits have been scheduled for September. If the process proceeds on schedule, ABHES will consider Charter College's application at the January 2018 meeting of the Board of Commissioners. This is well ahead of the June 12, 2018 deadline set by ED.



During this process Charter College continues to be recognized as an accredited institution and maintains eligibility to participate in federal and state of Alaska financial aid programs.

Charter College's Anchorage A.A.S. in Nursing students maintain perfect

pass rate on licensure exam

Charter College's A.A.S. in Nursing program enrolled its inaugural class in late 2013 after receiving approval from ACPE, the Alaska Board of Nursing and ACICS. In October 2015, the program achieved specialty accreditation from the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN). Beginning with the first class that graduated in April 2015, every graduate that has sat for the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) has passed on their first try! The Alaska Board of Nursing requires an 80% first-time pass rate for nursing programs. So far, five cohorts made up of 67 students have a perfect pass rate of 100%!

Congratulations to Charter College!



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