



Transmitted by electronic mail only: [doctorfe@premierecollege.edu](mailto:doctorfe@premierecollege.edu)

August 11, 2022

ID#: I-368

Dr. Fe Ludovico-Aragon  
President  
Premiere Career College  
12901 Ramona Boulevard  
Irwindale, CA 91706

Dear Dr. Ludovico-Aragon:

The Commission, at its July 2022 meeting, reviewed the accreditation record, which included the institution's response to the show cause letter dated May 26, 2022 and the information presented at the institution's show cause appearance on July 11, 2022<sup>1</sup>. The Commission acted to direct the institution to **continue to show cause why its accreditation should not be withdrawn**.

The Commission continues this show cause directive because the institution did not demonstrate compliance with the standards outlined below. This constitutes notice to the institution that absent corrective action and information by and from the institution that demonstrates compliance with the standards, its accreditation may be withdrawn. The institution is being provided another opportunity to respond to the following findings of non-compliance based on the standards set forth in the *Accreditation Manual*.

### **Procedural History**

The Commission directed the institution to show cause why its accreditation should not be withdrawn for the reasons specified in the April 11, 2022. On May 26, 2022,<sup>2</sup> the Commission withdrew the approval of the institution's Vocational Nursing – Diploma program and found reason to expand the institutional show cause directive issued on April 11, 2022.

In a letter dated June 13, 2022, the San Francisco/Seattle School Participation Division of U.S. Department of Education indicated that the institution had been transferred to the Heightened Cash Monitoring 2 (HCM2 - reimbursement) Method of Payment. According to the letter, the Department of Education has taken this action because of (1) an Accusation filed against Premiere by the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (BPPE) based on the California Board of Vocational Nursing and Psychiatric Technicians' (BVNPT) revocation of authorization for Premiere's Vocational Nursing Program; (2) Premiere's failure to notify the BPPE of the BVNP's decision (3) PCC's enrollment of 22 students who did

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<sup>1</sup> The accreditation record includes the February 2022 BVNPT-NEC report, the February 2022 BVNPT Notice of Board Decision, the April 2022 show cause letter, the April 2022 BPPE Removal of Program Approval, the institution's April 2022 response, the May 2022 BPPE Accusation Report, the May 2022 show cause letter, the June 2021 Department of Education HCM2 notification, the June 2022 letter regarding HCM2 status, the institution's June 2022 responses, the institution's financial history, and other relevant correspondence and documentation.

<sup>2</sup> See May 26, 2022 expanded show cause letter.

not meet the minimum score on the Test of Essential Academic Skills Assessment, an admission criterion of the institution and (4) the Show Cause status of Premiere's ABHES accreditation. In a letter dated June 16, 2022, ABHES directed the institution to provide an update on its HCM2 status and describe any impact that the transfer to this status would have on the institution's financial capability. On June 24, 2022, the institution responded to ABHES. At its July 2022 meeting, the Commission placed the institution on financial reporting.

The institution responded to the expanded show cause dated May 26, 2022 and elected to participate in a show cause appearance hearing on July 11, 2022. At the show cause appearance, the institution presented an explanation for several areas of non-compliance. However, the institution's corresponding June 2022 response to the Commission did not contain sufficient evidence to support compliance in all areas. Accordingly, the institution is being provided another opportunity to respond to the specific areas of non-compliance described in this letter and is directed to undergo a focused site visit.

### **Focus Visit**

The institution is directed to undergo an on-site evaluation visit in November 2022, the results of which will be considered by the Commission, together with the continuing show cause directive at its January 2023 meeting. Through submission of a Self-Evaluation Report (SER), the institution is being provided another opportunity to address how it comprehensively meets ABHES standards, including the findings of non-compliance outlined in this letter based on the standards set forth in the *Accreditation Manual*. The SER must be completed in a concise, yet detailed manner, to include the institution's responses to the noted standards. Documentation must also be provided to support the institution's responses for review during the evaluation visit. The institution is reminded that it must complete the following sections of the SER: Chapter II, Chapter IV, Chapter V (must be completed for each program), Chapter VI (for applicable programs), Chapter VII – Surgical Technology, and Chapter IX.

Please also provide, as part of the SER, an Executive Summary that briefly summarizes the institution's narrative responses to each of the numbered items below and provides page references to the SER narratives and supporting documentation that more completely address each of the standards referenced in these enumerated items (1-7). Any supporting documentation regarding such items should be made available to the visitation team as part of the Meeting Room Materials List.

### **Response to the Continued Show Cause**

The institution is directed to respond to each of the following reasons for Show Cause in its SER and Executive Summary:

1. An institution must evidence that it is properly licensed, chartered or approved to provide education beyond the secondary level under the laws and regulations of the state(s) or territories in which it operates, including any regulatory oversight body approval required to operate specific programs (Chapter II, Section A, Subsection 1, (a), (5)); notification to ABHES is required for an adverse or probationary equivalent action placed upon an institution or program by a recognized accrediting agency, state approval agency, or federal regulatory agency (Chapter III, Section B, Subsection 4, Notifications); and the on-site administrator demonstrates effective management capability (IV.C.1).

The California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (BPPE) *Accusation Report* dated May 4, 2022, indicated that the BPPE's investigator found that Premiere Career College still had active student enrollments in its vocational nursing program as of March 8, 2022, even though the California Board of Vocational Nursing and Psychiatric Technicians (BVNPT) directed the institution to discontinue conducting vocational nursing courses on February 18, 2022. The BVNPT also notified the institution

of other concerns at the same time. In its show cause appearance on July 11, 2022, the institution asserted the BPPE was in error and that a hearing on the *Accusation Report* and continuing BPPE approval will be held November 9-10, 2022.

Additionally, the May 2022 show cause letter requested an administrative plan to articulate the institution's capacity to meet accreditation and other regulatory requirements. However, the program's response on this point was very limited and lacked detail.

The institution, therefore, is directed to submit sufficient information and documentation in its SER to demonstrate compliance with the standards, including, but not limited to, the following:

Status and outcome of the BPPE's Hearing on the *Accusation Report* and/or the final disposition of the BPPE proceeding.

- An administrative plan documenting how the on-site administrator is responsible for the daily operation of the institution; engaged in professional development activities annually that complement the operations of the institution; and, implementing policies and procedures in keeping with the mission and scope of the institution, accreditation standards, and other regulatory requirements.
  - Evidence that administrator participated in professional development activities that complement the operations of the institution, in the period from November 1, 2021 through October 1, 2022.
2. An institution demonstrates that it has the financial resources to ensure continuity of operation and to fulfill its obligations to students and employees (IV.B.1.).

The Commission reviewed the June 13, 2022 letter from the United States Department of Education which indicates that the institution has been transferred to a Heightened Cash Monitoring 2 (HCM2) status, the June 16, 2022 letter from ABHES requesting additional information regarding the HCM2 status, and the institution's June 24, 2022 response to the letter. The institution's narrative confirmed that the HCM2 status would affect its cash flow.

The institution, therefore, is directed to submit sufficient information and documentation in its SER to demonstrate compliance with the standards, including, but not limited to, the following:

- An update on the institution's HCM2 status with the United States Department of Education, including any impact on the institution's cash flow and the status of payments for reimbursement requests that have been submitted to the Department as of July 1, 2022.
  - A financial improvement plan, including information to demonstrate that the institution is able to ensure continuity of operation and to fulfill its obligations to students and employees notwithstanding being on HCM2 status with the United States Department of Education.
3. An institution has and uniformly applies a published cancellation and refund policy that complies with all applicable state, federal, and accrediting agency requirements (IV.F.3.a.); and an enrollment agreement and other enrollment documents fully and accurately provide required enrollment information that meets the requirements of Appendix D, Enrollment Agreements (IV.E.4.).

The May 2022 show cause letter requested that the institution provide details about the refunds issued to students in the discontinued vocational nursing program, as the institution was not able to conduct a teach-out for the students. The institution's response did not include information for 33 of the reported 55

remaining students. In its July 11, 2022 show cause hearing discussion, the institution communicated that it had given a full refund to all students.

The institution, therefore, is directed to submit sufficient information and documentation in its SER to demonstrate compliance with the standards, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Evidence of a full refund provided to the reported 55 vocational nursing program students who could not complete the nursing program after discontinuation.
  - A detailed accounting of student accounts that displays for each vocational nursing student, the student's name, the student's program start date, how much tuition/fees were charged, how much was refunded, credits completed, and the student's current status.
4. The institution adheres to its admission policies and enrolls only students who can reasonably be expected to benefit from the instruction (V.D.1.). (All programs)

The BPPE *Accusation Report* dated May 4, 2022, indicated the BPPE investigator found that 22 students had not passed admissions requirements relative to passing scores on the TEAS exam. The institution's June 2022 response to the May 26, 2022 continued show cause letter did not clearly communicate where admissions information is published or how the admissions criteria are implemented. It lacked evidence to support how the institution is following its published admissions requirements; for example, enrollment documentation was submitted for one student, Anna Loraine Abellera, but does not include the results of any assessments on the "Admissions Checklist" that was provided as part of the response.

The institution, therefore, is directed to submit sufficient information and documentation in its SER to demonstrate compliance with the standards, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Admissions requirements by program and a copy of the document provided to students (i.e. institutional catalog), along with detail as to how this information is published or provided to students.
  - Evidence that the institution follows its published admissions criteria, including documentation for each student enrolling between October 31, 2021 and October 1, 2022, with required assessments, evaluator tools, or other assessments utilized by the institution to determine a student's ability to successfully complete a program of study.
5. An institution or program receiving a show cause directive from the Commission must disclose this decision to all current and prospective students within seven business days of receipt (Chapter III, Section C, Subsection 5), and representations are accurate and ethical (IV.E.1).

The May 2022 continued show cause letter requested evidence of when the institution disclosed to students the loss of program approval by the BVNPT on February 18, 2022, and the ABHES show cause notice of April 11, 2022. In its response to the May 2022 letter, the institution submitted evidence of four postings of Show Cause Notification and Disclosure, with indications they were from March 30, 2022, April 15, 2022, May 31, 2022, and June 17, 2022. However, it is not clear whether the disclosures were delivered on these dates. Additionally, the initial communications appear to occur far after the BVNPT discontinuation of the vocational nursing program.

The institution, therefore, is directed to submit sufficient information and documentation in its SER to demonstrate compliance with the standards, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Evidence that the Show Cause Notifications and Disclosures were published/posted/distributed on March 30, 2022, April 15, 2022, May 31, 2022, and June 17, 2022.
6. External clinical experiences are available to serve the diverse needs of a program (V.B.4.a.); and a program has clinical experiences to meet its goals and objectives (V.B.4.b.). (All programs)

The February 2022 BVNPT Nursing Education Consultant (NEC) report indicates that in December 2019 students did not complete their clinical rotations and some students completed hours at an unapproved site, delaying scheduled graduation for seven weeks. The institution's response to the May 16, 2022 continued show cause letter did not include evidence of site viability forms for all sites identified in the student records. Additionally, faculty qualifications documentation was not complete for all signers of site viability forms to evidence that they meet the minimum qualifications of a program faculty member. The signatures of Elgie Apacible, Jovita Buenaseda, and Laredo Velasco were not supported by documentation to show they are qualified as faculty members.

The institution, therefore, is directed to submit sufficient information and documentation in its SER to demonstrate compliance with the standards, including, but not limited to, the following:

- For all programs with external clinical experiences, a signed copy of the clinical site viability form for all sites currently in use. Documentation must include evidence that each viability form has been signed by an individual who meets the minimum qualifications of a program faculty member, including a complete and signed ABHES Faculty Data Sheet, resume/cv, signed job description, and academic transcripts.
  - For all programs with external clinical experiences, a list of graduates from November 1, 2021, through October 1, 2022, along with evidence, such as approved timesheets, that the graduates completed their clinical experiences, in order to verify the clinical sites currently in use.
7. Each student demonstrates the attainment of the required program competencies in order to successfully complete the program (V.D.2.a.) and students are apprised of their academic status throughout a course through continuous evaluation and review (V.D.2.b.) (All programs)

The February 2022 BVNPT Nursing Education Consultant Report indicated the program was subject to a NCLEX-PN Improvement Plan to increase pass rates and the 2019 ATI improvement plans were not fully implemented until the 2021 class start. The report further notes that the program's passage rates did not improve, instructors were not consistent in using ATI assessment, and instructors were not reviewing missed concepts with students.

The institution's response to the May 26, 2022 continued show cause letter provided a list of competencies for its programs, along with many assessment tools, but none of the provided exhibits adequately evidenced successful student completion of those competencies; nor did the exhibits tie the competencies to the evaluation of student performance. For example, evaluations of student clinical experiences were submitted, but they did not indicate successful completion of competencies. Written examinations were submitted but it was unclear which programs these exams applied to, and the exams were not correlated to the course or program competencies.

Additionally, the institution communicated several practices designed to assist students in their progress toward successful program completion, such as Last Chance Agreements, Deficiency Notice Warnings, Remediation Forms, and Student Success Plans. However, it is unclear how the forms submitted are consistently deployed as part of the overall institutional advising strategy as it relates to the attainment of competencies.

The institution, therefore, is directed to submit sufficient information and documentation in its SER to demonstrate compliance with the standards, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Lists of required program competencies required for students to successfully complete each program.
- Evidence that students are being evaluated on competencies, such as samples of completed checklists, faculty assessments, exams, or other graded work. Assessments and exhibits should be clearly linked to the program competencies.
- A narrative response describing the advising process for students who do not achieve competency attainment, along with evidence that the advising process has been implemented, including an explanation of how the forms and steps fit together in a cohesive process.

### **Maximum Timeframe for Compliance**

The maximum period of time the Commission may allow for an institution to be brought into compliance with ABHES requirements is stated in Chapter III, Section C of the *Accreditation Manual*. The findings of non-compliance set forth above were first identified by the Commission in the show cause letter dated April 11, 2022. The institution must demonstrate compliance within the maximum timeframe with a final response due May 1, 2023, for review at the Commission's July 2023 meeting.

The new finding of non-compliance set forth above, IV.B.1 of the *Accreditation Manual*, was first identified by the Commission in this letter. For this finding specifically, provided the institution demonstrates compliance with all other standards noted above, the institution's maximum timeframe will extend through to the Commission's January 2024 meeting, with a final response due November 1, 2023. The Commission has discretion to take a negative or adverse action at any time when warranted, including as its next action in the event the institution or program does not demonstrate compliance with any ABHES standard or policy.

### **Submission Procedures and Requirements**

The institution is directed to submit the following:

#### **1. Teach-Out Plan and student disclosure**

By **August 22, 2022**, the institution or program must submit, online via [DropBox Forms/Applications](#) its updated Teach-Out Plan and the corresponding *Teach-out Plan Form* (available for download from the ABHES website at <https://abhes.org/resources/#Forms>).

The institution must include in its submission evidence it has published a new student disclosure notice **within seven business days of the date of this letter** informing enrolled and prospective students of the continued Show Cause action as the reason the updated Teach-Out Plan is being required.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> This disclosure is also required under 34 Code of Federal Regulations § 668.43(a) (19) which states: "If the institution is required to maintain a teach-out plan by its accrediting agency, notice that the institution is required to maintain such teach-out plan and the reason that the accrediting agency required such plan under § 602.24(c)(1). . ."

## 2. Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and updated Application

By **October 25, 2022**, the institution must submit its response to the standard-related directives identified within this letter when it completes its new institutional SER, including an Executive Summary addressing items 1-7 and an updated *Application for Institutional Accreditation* as Exhibit 1. To obtain a copy of the SER for completion, it must be downloaded from the ABHES website at <https://abhes.org/resources/#Reporting>. The SER must be submitted as one seamless Portable Document Format (.pdf) file. The one file should contain a cover letter, SER narrative and the required exhibits uploaded to [DropBox](#), in accordance with the “**SER Instructions**” available at <https://abhes.org/resources/#Reporting>.

The institution must also remit payment of the Commission-Directed Focus Visit Fee in the amount of \$3,000 by **October 25, 2022**. Payment of any fees are to be remitted electronically. Please contact the Accounting Department at [accounting@abhes.org](mailto:accounting@abhes.org) or (703) 917-9503 to obtain an invoice.

## 3. Workshop Attendance Documentation

By **October 25, 2022 with submission of the SER**, evidence that an appropriate administrator or owner, attended an ABHES Accreditation Workshop. For details and to register for an upcoming workshop, visit <https://www.abhes.org/accreditation-workshops/>.

**The institution is advised that the instructions for submitting the new SER must be followed precisely. If the institution’s submissions do not conform to the instructions outlined within this letter or is not submitted by the due date, a late-fee assessment will be imposed in accordance with Appendix G of the Accreditation Manual.**

### Appearance

If, as part of its response to this directive, the institution wishes to appear before a panel of the Commission via teleconference, its request to appear must be submitted to ABHES online via [DropBox Commission Responses](#) by **August 22, 2022**, with file name "ABHES ID#\_Request to Appear." A teleconference appearance fee of \$2,000 will be assessed in accordance with Appendix G, Fees, of the *Accreditation Manual*. Payment of any fees are to be remitted electronically. Please contact the Accounting Department at [accounting@abhes.org](mailto:accounting@abhes.org) or (703) 917-9503 to obtain an invoice.

### Audited Financial Statement Reporting Reminder

The institution is reminded of its obligation under Chapter III, Section A, Subsection 10 of the *Accreditation Manual* to submit audited financial statements to the Commission **within six months after the completion of its fiscal year end**. The audited financial statements must be emailed to [financial@abhes.org](mailto:financial@abhes.org). In addition, institutions that participate in a Federal Student Aid Program are required to comply with the reporting requirements under Standard IV.D.2. of the *Accreditation Manual*.

### Disclosures

ABHES will not review, consider, or process substantive changes (as defined in III.B.2. of the *Accreditation Manual*) while the institution is under a show cause directive, unless the institution demonstrates that the substantive change is likely to resolve the show cause directive. An institution’s request for acceptance of the application must include justification for the change and its effect on the institution’s operation.

Dr. Fe Ludovico-Aragon

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The U.S. Department of Education, the appropriate State licensing or authorizing agency, the appropriate accrediting agency, and the public have been notified of this action as required under 34 Code of Federal Regulations § 602.26 *et seq* and set forth in Chapter III of the *Accreditation Manual*.

If you have any questions concerning this correspondence, please contact staff liaison, Crystal Calarusse, at [ccalarusse@abhes.org](mailto:ccalarusse@abhes.org) or at (571) 282-0061.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "India Y. Tips".

India Y. Tips  
Executive Director

Attachment: Notice for Commissioner Recusal

c: Debbie Cochrane, California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education