

Hellenic College Holy Cross at risk of losing accreditation



Hellenic College Holy Cross is at risk of losing its accreditation this fall, leaving it just a few months to show that it can bring its finances and leadership into shape.

The New England Commission of Higher Education will hold a hearing on placing Hellenic on probation or pulling its accreditation altogether at its meeting in November. The school is scheduled to present a progress report next month.

The accreditor has raised concerns about the school's financial resources and planning.

Hellenic, a Greek Orthodox school in Brookline, like many small, private colleges in New England, has been struggling with declining enrollment and less money.

But Hellenic's interim president, Metropolitan Methodios, said in a statement that the school and the archdiocese are working on "reducing our deficits and fixing our finances."

The college has been running an operating deficit for nearly eight years, has borrowed money from its endowment, and suffers from declining enrollment and poor planning, the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education noted in the spring.

Like many small colleges, Hellenic, which enrolls just over 154 students, relies heavily on tuition and suffers when enrollment declines.

Religious schools in the Northeast are among those that have seen the most precipitous drop in enrollment over the past decade.

Methodios said that the school ended the recent fiscal year with operating revenues exceeding expenses. The college also has a balanced budget for this upcoming school year, Methodios said in a statement, and is on the fast track to finding a new president.

Whether this will allay the concerns of the accreditors and the state regulators remains uncertain.

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