

March 7, 2019

**ELECTRONIC DELIVERY**

██████████  
President  
Mauna Loa Helicopters  
73-310 UU Street  
Kailua Kona, Hawaii 96740

*School #M072112  
Continued Warning*

Dear ██████████

At the February 2019 meeting, the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (“ACCSC” or “the Commission”) considered its previous action to continue Mauna Loa Helicopters located Kailua Kona, Hawaii on Warning. Upon review of the January 3, 2019 ACCSC letter and the school’s response, the Commission voted to continue Mauna Loa Helicopters on **Warning** with a subsequent review scheduled for ACCSC’s May 2019 meeting. The reasons for the Commission’s decision and the Commission’s requirements for the school to demonstrate compliance are set forth below.

**History of Incidents/Accidents Reported to ACCSC**

- May 2, 2012: Helicopter crash caused by partial loss of engine power – no injuries reported;
- January 30, 2013: Helicopter crash caused by instructor error – no injuries reported;
- May 8, 2013: Helicopter crash caused by engine failure – no injuries reported;
- June 29, 2015: Helicopter crash caused by pilot error – minor injuries reported;
- August 25, 2016: Helicopter crash caused by mechanical error – no injuries reported;
- November 22, 2016: Helicopter crash caused by instructor error – no injuries reported; and
- October 16, 2017: Helicopter crash caused by pilot error – two fatalities reported.

**History of the Commission’s review**

May 2013

The Commission considered the information cited by the on-site evaluation team pertaining to the May 2, 2012 accident. In response to the on-site evaluation team’s concern, Mauna Loa Helicopters provided the official report from the National Transportation Safety Board.

November 2013

The Commission considered a report pertaining to the May 8, 2013 accident. The report included information from the Federal Aviation Administration along with evidence that the school’s equipment and safety policies comply with occupational standards.

February 2017

The Commission considered the information pertaining to the August 25, 2016 accident. The report included the school’s accident history dating back to May 2012. In addition, the report included a description of the incidents and causes, description of any actions the school has taken as a result of the incidents to promote safety, and the results from investigations conducted by Federal Aviation Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board.

### February 2018

The Commission considered a report of accidents submitted by Mauna Loa Helicopters. The report includes a description of the aircrafts involved in past accidents, the maintenance log for the aircrafts, actions taken by the school to improve safety along with copies of the school's safety and educational protocols. Due to the frequency and serious nature of the incidents that have occurred, and out of an abundance of caution and deference to safety, the Commission voted to place Mauna Loa Helicopters on Warning.

### August 2018

The Commission considered the response to the June 7, 2018 letter pertaining to the school's on-going compliance with the accrediting standards in the areas of safety, equipment maintenance, and administrative, academic, and operational policies and procedures. Upon review of response, the Commission determined that further monitoring of the school's compliance with the accrediting standards in aforementioned areas was warranted. Therefore, the Commission voted to continue Mauna Loa Helicopters on Warning.

### **February 2019 Review and Requirements to Demonstrate Compliance**

At the February 2019 meeting, upon review of the January 3, 2019 ACCSC letter and the school's response, and upon consideration of the entire record in this matter, the Commission determined that Mauna Loa Helicopters must continue to show the school's ongoing efforts to ensure student and faculty safety and continuous compliance with accrediting standards. The response to the January 3, 2019 ACCSC letter includes a description of the internal actions the school has undertaken to promote safety. The school also provided copies of Program Advisory Committee ("PAC") meeting minutes to show the external review of the school's equipment, facilities, and safety processes and procedures. Moreover, Mauna Loa Helicopters provided documentation of professional development activities since July 2018.

Upon review of the documentation submitted, the Commission noted that for the internal actions the school has undertaken, Mauna Loa Helicopters did not include evidence to demonstrate the implementation of such activities. For example, the school's response states that Mauna Loa Helicopters holds bi-weekly instructor meetings to review internal safety policies; however, the school did not include copies of the meetings minutes, a list of attendees or any evidence to show the school's on-going review of its night flight protocols. With regards to the PAC minutes, the Commission found that the minutes lacked sufficient discussion specific to the adequacy of the facilities, equipment, safety procedures, and night flight protocols. Furthermore, the Commission determined that at this time the school's external review must focus significantly on risk identification and prevention particularly in the area of night flight trainings and safety. Also, the Commission determined that the school's professional development activities should include structured trainings that aim to improve staff competency and respond to matters relative to safety.

Based on the foregoing, the Commission again concluded that due to the serious nature of the incidents that have occurred, and out of an abundance of caution and deference to safety, further monitoring of the school's safety policies and procedures is warranted.

The school's on-going compliance with the following accrediting standards remains under review:

- The school must demonstrate that there are appropriate administrative and operational policies and procedures to which the school adheres and reviews and updates as needed (*Section I (A)(1)(d), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation*);

- The school must ensure instructional materials are sufficiently comprehensive and reflect current occupational knowledge and practice and sufficient equipment and learning stations are provided to allow each student adequate scheduled time for practice. (*Section II (A)(5)(a & c), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation*);
- The school must ensure all equipment is properly maintained and provided with proper safety devices (*Section II (A)(5)(d), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation*);
- The school must ensure that all faculty are certified or licensed where required by law, have appropriate qualifications, be able to teach in a manner that permits announced educational objectives to be achieved, and demonstrate a command of theory and practice, contemporary knowledge, and continuing study in their field (*Section III (B)(2 & 3), Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation*); and
- A school must demonstrate that supervised laboratory settings of instruction are under the supervision of a qualified school faculty member (*Section III (B) (2)&(3) and Appendix III, Substantive Standards, Standards of Accreditation*).

Based on the foregoing, Mauna Loa Helicopters must submit the following:

- a. Evidence that the school has notified current students and notifies prospective student of the school's Warning status which includes a summary of the reasons for the Warning;
- b. Evidence of the internal activities the school has undertaken to promote safety trainings including copies of the bi-weekly instructor meeting minutes, agenda and a list of attendees;
- c. A description of any changes, if applicable, implemented or being considered regarding the Professional Pilot program curriculum, staffing, instruction, admissions requirements, suspensions or limitations in enrollment, cessation in program offerings, or any other material change implemented by the school in the wake of the Warning status;
- d. PAC minutes for a meeting held in 2019, convened at the school, that includes a clear description of the review and ample commentary made by the PAC members with regards to safety, night flight protocols, adequacy of the facilities and equipment along with a description of each member in attendance, the date, time, and location of the meeting, and evidence the school gives consideration to PAC input;
- e. A list of all aircraft maintenance and inspection documents showing that school adheres to its policies and FAA requirements;
- f. A list of all faculty along with a description of their qualifications to teach at the school;
- g. Documentation of professional development activities aimed to improve staff and faculty competency in the area of safety;
- h. A description an any safety incidents that have occurred since January 2019; and
- i. Any additional information that the school believes will be useful to the Commission in making a determination regarding the school's compliance with accrediting standards.

Please be advised that any additional incidents at the school may result in the Commission taking more severe action to include among others the issuance of a Probation Order, a directive to cease enrollment, or the withdrawal of the school's accreditation.

**Notification to Students:**

The Commission requires the school to inform current and prospective students in writing that the school has been placed on Warning and to provide a summary of the reasons for the Warning Order (*Section VII (K)(7) Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation*).

**Warning Restrictions:**

Pursuant to *Section VII (K)(7), Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation*, the Commission will not consider substantive changes, a change of location/relocation, or additions (i.e., separate facilities, new programs) to a school or its separate facilities while the school is under a Warning.

**Notification to Students:**

The Commission requires the school to inform current and prospective students in writing that the school has been placed on Warning and to provide a summary of the reasons for the Warning Order (*Section VII (K)(7) Rules of Process and Procedure, Standards of Accreditation*).

**Response Requirements:**

By applying for accreditation, a school accepts the obligation to demonstrate continuous compliance with the *Standards of Accreditation*. While the Commission employs its own methods to determine a school's compliance with accrediting standards, the burden rests with the school to establish that it is meeting the standards. The Commission's deliberations and decisions are made on the basis of the written record and thus a school must supply the Commission with complete documentation of the school's compliance with accrediting standards.

Mauna Loa Helicopters must provide a response to the items expressed above that provides the information requested along with any additional information that the school believes supports a demonstration of compliance with accrediting standards.<sup>1</sup> If the school's response contains documentation that includes personal or confidential student or staff information that is not required for the Commission's review (e.g., social security numbers, dates of birth, etc.), please remove or redact that information.

Mauna Loa Helicopters must upload the school's electronic response directly to ACCSC's College 360 Database. The ACCSC College 360 database can be accessed by [clicking here](#). Please note that the password utilized by the institution to access the Annual Report Portal is the same to access the School Submission section of the College 360 database. The Instructions for Electronic Submission can be found [here](#). A detailed overview on how to upload a school submission can be found [here](#).

Keep in mind, the school's response must be prepared in accordance with ACCSC's Instructions for Electronic Submission (e.g., prepared as one Portable Document Format ("PDF") file that has been prepared using Adobe Acrobat software (version 8.0 or higher) and which has a .pdf extension as part of the file name). The school will receive an e-mail confirmation that the file has been received within 24 hours of the submission.

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<sup>1</sup> ACCSC has issued two modules of the **Blueprints for Success Series** – [Organizing an Effective Electronic Submission](#) and [Preparing a Comprehensive Response for Commission Consideration](#) – which provide a framework for submitting a well-documented, organized, electronic response for Commission consideration. ACCSC encourages the school to review these modules when formulating its response to this letter. More information is available in the [Resources section](#) at [www.accsc.org](http://www.accsc.org).

The school's response must also include a signed certification attesting to the accuracy of the information and be received in the Commission's office **on or before April 15, 2019**. If a response and certificate attesting to the accuracy of the information is not received in the Commission's office **on or before April 15, 2019**, the Commission will consider further appropriate action.

For assistance with the password or for any other questions regarding the electronic submission requirements, please contact [REDACTED]. Please note that any password requests to access College 360 must be made by the school director, or designated member of the school's management team, via e-mail.

For further assistance or additional information, please contact [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

[REDACTED]

Michale S. McComis, Ed.D.  
Executive Director

c: [REDACTED]  
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