

Federal Judge Grants Edward Waters College (EWC) A Preliminary Injunction Against the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). Ruling means EWC retains its accreditation.

JACKSONVILLE, Fla., March 11, 2005 – A federal judge ruled today that Edward Waters College (EWC) will remain accredited through its pursuit of a lawsuit against the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. College leaders and its attorneys held a press conference this afternoon on the steps of the U.S. Courthouse to discuss the ruling.

Judge Timothy Corrigan, after hearing evidence and arguments from both EWC and SACS, ruled that “the college has shown substantial likelihood that it will prove at trial, that the association denied the college due process in the procedures the association employed to expel the college from association membership.”

“This is an important victory for EWC,” said Bishop McKinley Young, Chairman of the Board of Trustees. “It is now beginning to be understood that EWC has been denied its due process.”

EWC filed the request for a temporary injunction, a preliminary injunction and a lawsuit against SACS on Monday, February 28 after learning its internal appeal to SACS had been denied. EWC was granted the injunction that afternoon and argued later in the week in a three-hour hearing that the injunction should remain in place through conclusion of the lawsuit.

The ruling forces SACS to keep EWC as a member (remaining accredited) until and throughout its lawsuit against the accrediting association. It also directs SACS to mediate with EWC in mediation to be presided over by the U.S. District Judge Harvey Schlesinger and Attorney and Interim Supervisor of Elections William Scheu. The judge also ruled that under the Higher Education Act, federal courts have exclusive jurisdiction over civil actions involving the accreditation issue and he denied SACS’ request to have the case dismissed.

Edward Waters College was established in 1866 to educate the descendants of African Americans, newly emancipated from slavery. Today, its enrollment continues to be substantially African- American students from the Southeast and Northeast regions of the United States, while also welcoming students from all racial and ethnic groups within the United States and from around the world. The college is a private, four-year, liberal arts, coeducational, residential institution, committed to Christian principles which emphasize high moral and spiritual values, as a result of its close affiliation with, and support from the African Methodist Episcopal Church. It offers baccalaureate degrees in the arts and sciences and other career-based professional fields.