



Founded in 1885

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES, INC.  
COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

October 2, 2012

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Ms. Anita T. Gliniecki  
President  
Housatonic Community College  
900 Lafayette Boulevard  
Bridgeport, CT 06604-4704

Dear President Gliniecki:

I am pleased to inform you that at its meeting on September 20, 2012 the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education took the following action with respect to Housatonic Community College:

that Housatonic Community College be continued in accreditation;

that the College submit a report for consideration in Spring, 2015 that provides an update regarding:

1. the impact on the institution's operations of the policies, priorities, and funding decisions of the Connecticut Board of Regents for Higher Education;
2. its success in reviewing and revising its strategic plan, including progress in developing benchmarks and metrics to measure success as well as strategies to address new mandates in the area of developmental education and the College's goal to diversify its faculty and staff;
3. its success in assuring sufficient financial resources to support its programs and services and to fund institutional priorities identified in the strategic plan;

that the College submit a fifth-year interim report for consideration in Spring 2017;

that the next comprehensive evaluation be scheduled for Spring 2022.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

Housatonic Community College (HCC) is continued in accreditation because the Commission finds the institution to be substantially in compliance with the *Standards for Accreditation*.

We commend Housatonic Community College for a comprehensive, candid self-study that provided evidence of the College's effectiveness in collecting and analyzing data and using data for planning and improvement. Assessment activities are systematic and include measures of institutional effectiveness, assessment of student learning at the course and program level, and specific initiatives related to student success. We note with particular favor the College's participation in the Achieving the Dream program, an initiative that has enabled the institution to deepen its commitment to student achievement. We share the judgment of the visiting team that the institutions' art collection is an asset to the College and the surrounding community that provides a "transformational aspect to the student learning experience." The institution's policy on the award of credit is consistent with Commission policy; the visiting team found evidence that the policy is implemented appropriately in all instructional modalities, including distance education. We concur with the visiting team that with its "highly competent leadership team" and "enthusiastic, dedicated, and well-qualified" faculty and staff, the College is well positioned to continue to provide high-quality educational opportunities to the residents of its service region.

The items the institution is asked to report on in Spring, 2015 are related to our Standards on *Organization and Governance, Planning and Evaluation, Students, Faculty, and Financial Resources.*

The Commission understands that the Connecticut Board of Regents for Higher Education is implementing a number of initiatives that will have an impact on Housatonic Community College. These include the Transfer Articulation Plan, mandates with regard to developmental education, a review of high school exit competencies and community college entrance competencies, and a study of the funding formula for community colleges. We look forward, in Spring 2015, to receiving an update on these initiatives and their impact on the College. We remind you of our standard on *Organization and Governance:*

In multi-campus systems organized under a single governing board, the division of responsibility and authority between the system office and the institution is clear. Where system and campus boards share governance responsibilities or dimensions of authority, system policies and procedures are clearly defined and equitably administered. (3.11)

The Commission is pleased to learn that Housatonic Community College has appointed a committee that will oversee the review and revision of its strategic plan. We understand that the institution intends to propose four to six major goals for the College along with benchmarks and metrics with which to measure success. The planning process will also afford HCC an opportunity to develop strategies to address new state mandates in the area of developmental education and to further its goal to increase the diversity of its faculty and staff. Through the report submitted for consideration in Spring 2015, we look forward to learning of the success of these efforts, in keeping with our standards on *Planning and Evaluation, Students, and Faculty:*

The institution plans beyond a short-term horizon, including strategic planning that involves realistic analyses of internal and external opportunities and constraints. It plans for and responds to financial and other contingencies, establishes feasible priorities, and develops a realistic course of action to achieve identified objectives. Institutional decision-making, particularly the allocation of resources, is consistent with planning priorities. (2.3)

The institution utilizes appropriate methods of evaluation to identify deficiencies and offers appropriate developmental or remedial support where necessary to prepare students for collegiate study. Such testing and remediation receive sufficient support and are adequate to serve the needs of students admitted. (6.4)

The institution ensures equal employment opportunity consistent with legal requirements and any other dimensions of its own choosing; compatible with its mission and purposes, it addresses its own goals for the achievement of diversity among its faculty. (5.4)

We appreciate the College's candid assessment of the challenging financial environment in which it operates, including the uncertain impact of mandates from the Connecticut Board of Regents for Higher Education on the institution's financial condition. We are gratified to learn of steps the College is taking to enhance its fiscal stability, including the possible development of new academic programs and continuing education training programs and seeking to increase the level of support provided by the Foundation. We anticipate receiving evidence in the Spring 2015 report that Housatonic Community College "preserves and enhances available financial resources sufficient to support its mission" (9.1) and to fund institutional priorities identified in its strategic plan. Our standard on *Financial Resources* offers this additional guidance:

The institution's financial planning, including contingency planning, is integrated with overall planning and evaluation processes. The institution demonstrates its ability to analyze its financial condition and understand the opportunities and constraints that will influence its financial condition and acts accordingly. It reallocates resources as necessary to achieve its purposes and objectives. (9.9)

Commission policy requires a fifth-year interim report of all institutions on a decennial evaluation cycle. Its purpose is to provide the Commission an opportunity to appraise the institution's current status in keeping with the Policy on Periodic Review.

The scheduling of a comprehensive evaluation in Spring 2022 is consistent with Commission policy requiring each accredited institution to undergo a comprehensive evaluation at least once every ten years.

You will note that the Commission has specified no length or term of accreditation. Accreditation is a continuing relationship that is reconsidered when necessary. Thus, while the Commission has indicated the timing of the next comprehensive evaluation, the schedule should not be unduly emphasized because it is subject to change.

The Commission expressed appreciation for the self-study prepared by Housatonic Community College and for the report submitted by the visiting team. The Commission also welcomed the opportunity to meet with you, Ms. Elizabeth Roop, Academic Dean, and Dr. Gail Carberry, team chair, during its deliberations.

You are encouraged to share this letter with all of the institution's constituencies. It is Commission policy to inform the chairperson of the institution's governing board of action on its accreditation status. In a few days we will be sending a copy of this letter to Lewis J. Robinson. The institution is free to release information about the evaluation and the Commission's action to others, in accordance with Commission policy.

The Commission hopes that the evaluation process has contributed to institutional improvement. It appreciates your cooperation with the effort to provide public assurance of the quality of higher education.

If you have any questions about the Commission's action, please contact Barbara Brittingham, Director of the Commission.

Sincerely,



Richard L. Pattenau

RLP/sjp  
Enclosure

cc: Lewis J. Robinson  
Visiting team



**NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES  
COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

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**Public Disclosure of Information  
About Affiliated Institutions**

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The following policy governs the release of information regarding the status of affiliated colleges and universities by institutions and by the Commission.

**1. Release of Information by Institutions Regarding Their Accreditation Following Commission Action**

At the conclusion of the evaluation process institutions are encouraged to make publicly available information about their accreditation status including the findings of team reports and any obligations or requirements established by Commission action, as well as any plans to address stated concerns. Because of the potential to be misleading, institutions are asked not to publish or otherwise disseminate excerpts from these materials.

While the Commission does not release copies of self-studies, progress reports, evaluation reports, or other documents related to the accreditation of individual institutions, it believes it to be good practice for institutions to make these materials available, in their entirety, after notification of Commission action.

While the Commission does not initiate public release of information on actions of show cause or deferral, if such information is released by the institution in question, the Commission will respond to related inquiries.

If an institution releases or otherwise disseminates information which misrepresents or distorts its accreditation status, the institution will be notified and asked to take corrective action publicly correcting any misleading information it may have disseminated, including but not limited to the accreditation status of the institution, the contents of evaluation reports, and the Commission actions with respect to the institution. Should it fail to do so, the New England Association, acting through its Chief Executive Officer, will release a public statement in such form and content as it deems desirable providing correct information.

## 2. **Published Statement on Accredited Status**

The Commission asks that one of the following statements be used for disclosing on its website and in catalogues, brochures, advertisements, etc., that the institution is accredited.

An institution may wish to include within its website, catalogue or other material a statement which will give the consuming public a better idea of the meaning of regional accreditation. When that is the case, the Commission requests that the following statement be used in its entirety:

\_\_\_\_\_ College (University) is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc. through its Commission on Institutions of Higher Education.

Accreditation of an institution of higher education by the New England Association indicates that it meets or exceeds criteria for the assessment of institutional quality periodically applied through a peer review process. An accredited college or university is one which has available the necessary resources to achieve its stated purposes through appropriate educational programs, is substantially doing so, and gives reasonable evidence that it will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. Institutional integrity is also addressed through accreditation.

Accreditation by the New England Association is not partial but applies to the institution as a whole. As such, it is not a guarantee of every course or program offered, or the competence of individual graduates. Rather, it provides reasonable assurance about the quality of opportunities available to students who attend the institution.

Inquiries regarding the accreditation status by the New England Association should be directed to the administrative staff of the institution. Individuals may also contact:

**Commission on Institutions of Higher Education  
New England Association of Schools and Colleges  
209 Burlington Road, Suite 201  
Bedford, MA 01730-1433  
(781) 271-0022  
E-Mail: [cihe@neasc.org](mailto:cihe@neasc.org)**

The shorter statement that an institution may choose for announcing its accredited status follows:

\_\_\_\_\_ College (University) is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc., through its Commission on Institutions of Higher Education.

Inquiries regarding the accreditation status by the New England Association should be directed to the administrative staff of the institution. Individuals may also contact:

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Accreditation by the New England Association has reference to the institution as a whole. Therefore, statements like "fully accredited" or "this program is accredited by the New England Association" or "this degree is accredited by the New England Association" are incorrect and should not be used.

**3. Published Statement on Candidate Status**

An institution granted Candidate for Accreditation status must use the following statement whenever it makes reference to its affiliation with the New England Association:

\_\_\_\_\_ College (University) has been granted Candidate for Accreditation status by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc. through its Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. Candidacy for Accreditation is a status of affiliation with the Commission which indicates that the institution has achieved initial recognition and is progressing toward accreditation.

Candidacy is not accreditation nor does it assure eventual accreditation.

Inquiries regarding the status of an institution affiliated with the New England Association should be directed to the administrative staff of the college or university. Individuals may also contact:

**The Commission on Institutions of Higher Education  
New England Association of Schools and Colleges  
209 Burlington Road, Suite 201  
Bedford, MA 01730-1433  
(781) 271-0022  
E-Mail: [cihe@neasc.org](mailto:cihe@neasc.org)**

#### **4. Public Disclosure of Information About Affiliated Institutions by the Commission**

Upon inquiry, the Commission will release the following information about affiliated institutions:

- The date of initial accreditation and/or when candidacy was granted;
- The date and nature (comprehensive or focused) of the most recent on-site evaluation and subsequent Commission action on the institution's accredited status;
- The date and nature (comprehensive or focused) of the next scheduled on-site evaluation;
- Submission date and action taken on the most recent written report required by the Commission;
- The extent of, or limitations on, the status of affiliation;
- In cases of adverse action (denial or termination of candidacy or accreditation, placing an institution on probation), the Commission's reasons for recommending that status and, in the case of probation, its plans to monitor the institution. The Commission, in consultation with the institution, will prepare a written statement incorporating the above information. The Commission reserves the right to make the final determination of the nature and content of the statement. The institution will also be offered the opportunity to make its official comment; if the institution does make an official comment, the comment will be made available by the Commission.
- For institutions whose candidacy or accreditation has been terminated, the date of, and reasons for, termination.

The Commission does not provide information about deferments of action on candidate or accreditation status, or show-cause orders. However, if such information is released by the institution in question, the Commission will respond to related inquiries.

Adverse actions (placement of an institution on probation, denial of candidate status or accreditation, revocation of candidacy, and termination of accreditation) are communicated after the available appeals process is completed. The Commission, at its discretion, may make the adverse action public before an appeal is completed. In so doing, the Commission will provide information about the appeal process.

The Commission recognizes that, to be fully understood, information about the accredited status of institutions must be placed within the context of the policies and procedures of the Commission and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. In responding to inquiries, the Commission will endeavor to do so.

**5. Public Disclosure of Institutional Actions**

Within 30 days after the action on accreditation status is taken, the Commission will notify the Secretary of Education, New England state higher education officers, appropriate accrediting agencies, and the public. Such actions include:

A final decision to:

Grant candidacy or accreditation

Continue an institution in accreditation

Deny or terminate the accreditation of an institution

Place an institution on probation

Approve substantive change (e.g., moving to a higher degree level)

A decision by an accredited or candidate institution to voluntarily withdraw from affiliation with the Commission.

*November 1998*

*September 2001*

*April 2010*

*September 2011*