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May 20, 2019

Dr. Laura L. Douglas  
President  
Bristol Community College  
777 Elsbree Street  
Fall River, MA 02720

Dear President Douglas:

I am pleased to inform you that at its meeting on April 12, 2019, the New England Commission of Higher Education considered the interim (fifth-year) report submitted by Bristol Community College and voted to take the following action:

that the interim (fifth-year) report submitted by Bristol Community College be accepted;

that the comprehensive evaluation scheduled for Spring 2024 be confirmed;

that, in addition to the information included in all self-studies, the self-study prepared in advance of the Spring 2024 evaluation give emphasis to the institution's success in:

- 1) establishing data collection processes for institutional assessment;
- 2) assessing the effectiveness of its student advising;
- 3) achieving its student diversity goals.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

The interim (fifth-year) report submitted by Bristol Community College was accepted because it responded to the concerns raised by the Commission in its letters of December 2, 2014 and April 18, 2017 and addressed each of the nine standards, including a reflective essay for Standard 8: *Educational Effectiveness* on student learning and success.

The Commission commends Bristol Community College (Bristol) for its candid and comprehensive interim report. We note that Bristol welcomed President Laura L. Douglas in July 2017. The Commission understands that the College revised its mission statement as part of the 2016-2020 Strategic

Planning Process to more “accurately describe[] the College’s character...and the students it seeks to serve.” The new Strategic Plan outlines seven key strategies, and President Douglas has identified her goals related to those strategies. Bristol has created an Adjunct Faculty Advisory board, added a Faculty/Professional Staff Representative to the Academic Vice President’s Council, and formed a Staff Senate to improve shared governance and communication at the College. We note with favor the use of co-requisite models in English and Math, including a “self-paced, computer-aided (CAI) modularized developmental math curriculum” which is “at scale,” and the creation of three new faculty coordinator positions to support these models. Bristol has also updated its physical space, adding one new lab at the Attleboro Campus and two new labs at the Fall River campus. A technological infrastructure upgrade provides students and staff more cloud-based computing opportunities.

In its reflective essay, Bristol Community College describes the significant progress it has made in assessment and educational effectiveness. The Commission is pleased to learn of Bristol’s annual Assessment Day with activities that include assessing student work corresponding to the General Education competencies, workshops on assignment design and data collection and analysis, and curriculum revision work sessions. An analysis of artifact scoring revealed that Bristol’s internal scoring was consistent with scoring performed by the Multi-State Collaborative. We also note with favor the analysis of DFWI rates and the use of supplemental instruction (SI) to support “high challenge” courses with high DFWI rates. Data show that 77% of students earn an A, B, or C in SI courses as compared to 65% of students in traditional courses. Similarly, an analysis of “general tutoring services reflects increased persistence and retention as well.” The Commission appreciates that Bristol’s analysis of the correlation between orientation and retention will inform the planning of the integrated First-Year Experience. The Commission commends Bristol Community College for its progress in student learning assessment and data-driven decision-making.

The scheduling of a comprehensive evaluation in Spring 2024 is consistent with Commission policy requiring each accredited institution to undergo a comprehensive evaluation at least once every ten years. The items the Commission asks to be given special emphasis within the self-study prepared for the comprehensive evaluation are matters related to our standards on *Planning and Evaluation* and *Students*.

As noted above, the Commission is gratified to learn of Bristol Community College’s use of student learning data for assessment and improvement. We appreciate that, as part of its institutional assessment plan, Bristol will establish “regular data collection processes” for all areas of the College. We look forward to being apprised, through the Spring 2024 self-study, of Bristol’s success in “using the results of its evaluation activities to inform planning, changes in programs and services, and resource allocation” (2.8).

The Commission understands that Bristol, after piloting proactive advising, analyzed the persistence of at-risk students in the pilot. After two semesters of proactive advising, “98.5% of these students persisted” from fall to spring and “72% returned to Bristol” the following fall. We appreciate that the College will now scale the program, training faculty and staff to be proactive advisors and, under the leadership of the Vice President of Student Services and Enrollment Management, planning for a “broader assessment of student advising outcomes.” We anticipate being apprised, in the Spring 2024 self-study, of Bristol’s success in assessing the effectiveness of its student advising. We are guided here by our standard on *Students*.

Through a program of regular and systematic evaluation, the institution assesses the appropriateness and effectiveness of its student services to advance institutional purposes. Information obtained through this evaluation is used to revise these goals and services and improve their achievement (5.20).

Dr. Laura L. Douglas  
May 20, 2019  
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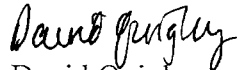
We appreciate learning from the interim report that “President Laura Douglas has identified goals related to diversity and inclusion at the college” and that activities, such as hiring a Diversity Nursing Coordinator, have been designed to support these goals. The self-study prepared in Spring 2024 will provide Bristol Community College the opportunity to update the Commission on its success in “address[ing] its own goals for the achievement of diversity among its students” (*Students*, Statement of the Standard).

The Commission expressed appreciation for the report submitted by Bristol Community College and hopes its preparation has contributed to institutional improvement. It appreciates your cooperation in the effort to provide public assurance of the quality of higher education in New England.

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 and the head of the system of action on its accreditation status. In a few days we will be sending a copy of this letter to Ms. Joan Mederios and Dr. Carlos Santiago. The institution is free to release information about the evaluation and the Commission’s action to others, in accordance with the enclosed policy on Public Disclosure of Information about Affiliated Institutions.

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

Sincerely,

  
David Quigley

DQ/sjp

Enclosures

cc: Ms. Joan Mederios  
Dr. Carlos Santiago



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## Public Disclosure of Information About Affiliated Institutions

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 ordinarily 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.

The Commission will release information on actions of Notation, show cause or deferral. If such information is also released by the institution in question or is otherwise made public, the Commission will respond to related inquiries and may issue a revised public statement.

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 in an immediate and timely way, the Commission, acting through its President, will release a public statement in such form and content as it deems desirable providing correct information. This may include release of notification letters sent by the Commission to the institution, and/or a press release.

## 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 Commission of Higher Education (formerly the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.).

Accreditation of an institution of higher education by the Commission 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 Commission 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 Commission should be directed to the administrative staff of the institution. Individuals may also contact:

**New England Commission of Higher Education**  
**3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100, Burlington, MA 01803-4514**  
**(781) 425 7785**  
**E-Mail: [info@neche.org](mailto:info@neche.org)**

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

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

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

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Accreditation by the New England Commission of Higher Education has reference to the institution as a whole. Therefore, statements like “fully accredited” or “this program is accredited by the Commission” or “this degree is accredited by the Commission” are incorrect and should not be used.

### 3. **Published Statement on Candidate Status**

An institution granted Candidate for Accreditation (Candidacy) status must use the following statement whenever it makes reference to its affiliation with the New England Commission of Higher Education:

\_\_\_\_\_ College (University) has been granted Candidate for Accreditation status by the New England Commission of Higher Education (formerly the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.). 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 Commission should be directed to the administrative staff of the college or university. Individuals may also contact:

**New England Commission of Higher Education**  
**3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100, Burlington, MA 01803-4514**  
**(781) 425 7785**  
**E-Mail: [info@neche.org](mailto:info@neche.org)**

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

The Commission publishes the following information about member and candidate institutions on its website:

- Name of the institution
- The date of initial accreditation and/or when candidacy was granted
- Accreditation status (member or candidate)
- Address
- Phone and fax numbers
- CEO name and title
- Degree levels awarded
- Dates of initial accreditation (or candidacy), last review and next review
- Locations of off-campus instructional sites
- The basis for Commission action affecting candidacy or accreditation status
- 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 date and nature of any Notation, show-cause for denial of candidacy or accreditation, probation, or withdrawal of candidacy or accreditation status
- The extent of, or limitations on, the status of affiliation
- In cases of adverse action (denial or withdrawal of candidacy or accreditation, placing an institution on probation), the Commission's reasons for 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 withdrawn, the date of, and reasons for, withdrawal.

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 New England Commission of Higher Education. In responding to inquiries, the Commission will endeavor to do so.

The Commission may also publish on its website a public statement about an action taken regarding a member or candidate institution when further information about the action and the Commission's reasons for taking the action would be helpful to members of the public.

Adverse actions (placement of an institution on probation, denial of candidacy or accreditation, and withdrawal of candidacy or accreditation) are communicated when the decision becomes final (i.e., when the institution does not appeal or when the appeals process is completed and the decision is upheld). The Commission, at its discretion, may make the adverse action public before the decision is final or the appeal is completed. In so doing, the Commission will provide information about the appeal process.

## **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. The Commission will also make public on its website the basis for these decisions. Such actions include:

A final decision to:

Grant candidacy or accreditation

Continue an institution in accreditation

Deny or withdraw the candidacy or accreditation of an institution

Issue a Notation

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.



Per federal regulation, within 60 days of a final decision to take an adverse action (probation, denial of candidacy or accreditation, or withdrawal of candidacy or accreditation), the Commission will submit a copy of the final decision letter to the Secretary of Education. The Secretary will make the letter public.

*November 1998*

*September 2001*

*April 2010*

*September 2011*

*Editorial Changes, March 2014*

*April 2015*

*April 2017*

*Editorial Changes, September 2018*

*Editorial Changes, April 2019*