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May 15, 2020

Dr. Philip J. Hanlon  
President  
Dartmouth College  
207 Parkhurst Hall  
Hanover, NH 03755

Dear President Hanlon:

I am pleased to inform you that at its meeting on March 6, 2020, the New England Commission of Higher Education took the following action with respect to Dartmouth College:

that Dartmouth College be continued in accreditation;

that the institution submit an interim (fifth-year) report for consideration in Fall 2024;

that, in addition to the information included in all interim reports, the institution give emphasis in the Fall 2024 report to its success in:

1. achieving its goals as both a research and teaching-focused institution;
2. addressing its deferred maintenance;
3. strengthening its student success initiatives, including pre-major advising, undergraduate research, and experiential learning;

that the next comprehensive evaluation be scheduled for Fall 2029.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

Dartmouth College is continued in accreditation because the Commission finds the institution to be substantially in compliance with the *Standards for Accreditation*.

Along with the visiting team, the Commission commends Dartmouth College (Dartmouth) for its decade of accomplishments as it continues to effectively “educate the most promising students and prepare them for a lifetime of learning and of responsible leadership.” We note with favor Dartmouth’s ongoing “unshakable commitment to undergraduate liberal arts education” as well as its “long and distinguished history in graduate and professional education.” As a result of its planning efforts over the past decade, the College launched several new initiatives including Moving Dartmouth Forward, Inclusive Excellence, and the Campus Climate and Culture Initiative. We appreciate that these initiatives emerged out of working groups that “focused on their short-term charges to inform the development of longer-term action plans.” Similarly, the institution has implemented a number of initiatives designed to strengthen its teacher-scholar model including the establishment of the Dartmouth Center for the Advancement of Learning, the Dartmouth Society of Fellows, and the creation of a Curricular Review Committee. The College’s Fall 2018 96% retention rate is commendable, as is its 96% six-year graduation rate. The Commission concurs with the report of the visiting team that Dartmouth’s financial resources are “substantial” and “well-managed;” the College’s endowment has increased from \$2.8 billion in FY2009 to \$5.5 billion in FY2018. In April 2018, Dartmouth launched a four-year, \$3 billion fundraising campaign, Call to Lead: A Campaign for Dartmouth, which, in its first year raised 67% of its target. Lastly, the Commission is pleased to learn from the report of the visiting team that, in November 2019, Dartmouth College was admitted to the Association of American Universities. It is clear that with strong presidential leadership, an effective senior leadership team, and a committed faculty and staff, Dartmouth College is poised to “nimblely respond to challenges as it shapes and implements its vision” for the future.

Commission policy requires an interim (fifth-year) 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. In addition to the information included in all interim reports the College is asked, in Fall 2024, to report on three matters related to our standards on *Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship; Institutional Resources;* and *Students*.

The Commission appreciates that Dartmouth is deeply committed to the teacher-scholar model, and we note with favor that the College is a “top-ranked institution for undergraduate teaching” that aims to recruit and retain “world-class researchers with a passion for teaching.” We are gratified to learn that, moving forward, Dartmouth seeks to be an “unparalleled leader in liberal arts education and ... a leader in select areas of research.” As noted in the visiting team report, this will require both a commitment to strategic planning as well as continued budgetary discipline and the realization of new streams of revenue. The Fall 2024 interim report will provide Dartmouth an opportunity to update the Commission on its success in achieving its goals as both a research and teaching-focused institution, as informed by our standards on *Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship* and *Institutional Resources*:

Consistent with its mission and purposes, the institution provides support for scholarship, research, and creative activities. Faculty and students undertake research to an extent reflective of the level and nature of the degrees awarded. Policies and procedures related to research are communicated throughout the institution (6.20).

The institution preserves and enhances available financial resources sufficient to support its mission. It manages its financial resources and allocates them in a way that reflects its mission and purposes. It demonstrates the ability to respond to financial emergencies and unforeseen circumstances (7.4).

We understand that Dartmouth College completed a Facilities Condition Assessment in 2013. At that time, the campus was in “overall good condition.” Deficiencies were noted, however, in

“building[s] for the professional schools, residential life, academic, and athletic facilities.” The Commission appreciates that the College has plans for renovation projects to address deferred maintenance in several campus buildings, and we look forward to learning, through the Fall 2024 interim report, of Dartmouth’s success in these efforts as specified in our standard on *Institutional Resources*:

The institution has sufficient and appropriate information, physical, and technological resources necessary for the achievement of its purposes wherever and however its academic programs are offered. It devotes sufficient resources to maintain and enhance its information, physical, and technological resources (7.21).

The institution’s physical and electronic environments provide an atmosphere conducive to study and research (7.24).

The Commission is gratified to learn that Dartmouth is implementing a number of initiatives to support student success. In 2016, after a three-year pilot, faculty approved and put into effect a pre-major advising model; faculty are assigned advisees and meet with them several times across their first two years. Dartmouth also aims to “provide undergraduates with opportunities to conduct research mentored by Dartmouth faculty.” The Experiential Learning Initiative further supports faculty and staff as they create innovative teaching and learning experiences “that span the full spectrum of experiential learning.” The Commission concurs with the College that implementing these initiatives is “challenging;” the Fall 2024 interim report will provide an opportunity for Dartmouth to update the Commission on its success in strengthening its student success initiatives, including pre-major advising, undergraduate research, and experiential learning, as guided by our standards on *Students and Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship* (cited above and below):

The institution provides advising and academic support services appropriate to the student body. The institution’s faculty and professional staff collectively have sufficient interaction with students outside of class to promote students’ academic achievement and provide academic and career guidance (5.10).

The institution’s system of academic advising meets student needs for information and advice compatible with its educational objectives. The quality of advising is assured regardless of the location of instruction or the mode of delivery (6.19).

The scheduling of a comprehensive evaluation in Fall 2029 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 Dartmouth College and for the report submitted by the visiting team. The Commission also welcomed the opportunity to meet with you and Vincent Price, 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 Ms. Laurel J. Richie. The institution is free to release information about the evaluation and the Commission’s action to others, in

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accordance with the enclosed policy on Public Disclosure of Information about Affiliated Institutions.

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 in New England.

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

Sincerely,



David Quigley

DQ/jm

Enclosure

cc: Ms. Laurel J. Richie  
Visiting Team