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December 2, 2015

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 September 25, 2015, the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education considered the interim (fifth-year) report submitted by Dartmouth College and voted to take the following action:

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

that the comprehensive evaluation scheduled for Fall 2019 be confirmed;

that, in addition to the information included in all self-studies, the self-study prepared in advance of the Fall 2019 evaluation give emphasis to the institution's success in:

1. developing financial plans that address the College's needs to enhance its facilities and computing environment and that create a sustainable model for the Geisel School of Medicine;
2. accomplishing the College's planning goals and initiatives;
3. implementing the recommendations of the undergraduate curriculum review committee and moving forward a faculty-invested approach to the assessment of student learning.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

The interim (fifth-year) report submitted by Dartmouth College was accepted because it responded to the concerns raised by the Commission in its letter of July 15, 2011, addressed each of the eleven standards, and included a reflective essay on student learning and success.

The Commission commends Dartmouth College for an exemplary and candid interim report that documents the College's success to position itself as a "highly innovative and proactive institution." We note with approval that the institution remained financially vigilant during the global economic crisis and that it has developed a set of principles to guide its future fiscal planning with the goal of "maintaining a structurally balanced operating budget." In addition, we recognize the inclusive process used to complete the College's strategic plan, *Dartmouth College: Forever New*, in 2013 and note the new president's academic vision that includes five tactics to advance the institution by enhancing its expertise in teaching and faculty scholarship and increasing its global presence; this vision will provide the foundation of the next comprehensive campaign timed to coincide with the institution's 250th anniversary in 2019. Enrollment in Dartmouth's low-residency Master of Health Care Delivery Science program (MHCDS), that involves faculty from both the Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice and the Tuck School of Business, has ranged from 42-52 thereby meeting targets set; the fact that more than one-third of MHCDS graduates have either taken new jobs or received promotions provides early evidence of student achievement of the program's learning outcomes. As detailed in the E-series forms, the results of required external reviews and programmatic accreditation used to guide the strategic direction of curriculum and research are impressive, with the initiation of the Global Insight Requirement that now requires all Tuck MBA students to complete an immersive global experience being a notable example. We recognize the growth in faculty – from 813 tenured and tenure-track positions in 2011 to 871 in 2014 – and find the Society of Fellows that brings together Faculty Fellows, Postdoctoral Fellows, and Visiting Fellows to work with the Dartmouth Community to "develop their research and learn the art of teaching" commendable. Also noteworthy is the institution's commitment to diversity with the percentage of women on the faculty reaching 35% and minority faculty, 12.4%, and with need-based scholarships projected to be \$86 million in FY2015.

We understand from the reflective essay that assessment efforts at Dartmouth College are currently decentralized and, while "pockets of innovation in teaching, learning, and evaluation" are present throughout the institution, the College acknowledges that a comprehensive and systematic culture of evidence is still being put into place. The Digital Learning Initiatives, Advising 360 program, increased use of social media to support career advising and professional development, involvement in the College Transition Collaborative, and other initiatives demonstrate Dartmouth's commitment to enhancing the student experience and to expanding its reach to all learners – undergraduate, graduate, as well as alumni. The work being done by the Institute for Writing and Rhetoric is particularly noteworthy, as is the development of other measures of student success – documented in the S-series forms – that include the finding that over 50% of Dartmouth graduates pursue a higher degree within five years of graduation. We also recognize the ongoing efforts of the College's professional schools all of which have laudable job placement rates exceeding 90%, as well as the Geisel School of Medicine's 98% licensure pass rate.

The scheduling of a comprehensive evaluation in Fall 2019 is consistent with Commission policy requiring each accredited institution to undergo a comprehensive evaluation at least once every ten years. The three 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 *Library and Other Information Resources*, *Physical and Technological Resources*, *Financial Resources*, *Planning and Evaluation*, and *The Academic Program*.

We concur with the College that the institution "remains in strong fiscal health." We note with approval the attention given to the College's endowment distribution rate (down from 7.2% in 2010 to 5% in 2014) and recognize the institution is receiving "record breaking" philanthropic support. Because we understand from the report that deferred maintenance has been underfunded and library staff reduced by 11.5 FTE, we are pleased to learn that the College is in the process of evaluating its projections to ensure that, going forward, sufficient funding will be

allocated to enhance the institution's facilities and information technology environments. Recent investments made in the College's business systems and two data centers support this claim, and we are encouraged to learn of the College's Capital Renewal Strategy process to ensure that deferred maintenance priorities are in line with programmatic requirements. An issue identified in the institution's report that is of concern, however, is the "significant" operating deficits incurred by the Geisel School of Medicine that are projected to continue over the next several years. The Fall 2019 self-study will afford the institution an opportunity to update the Commission on the success of its efforts to provide sufficient funding for its facilities and information technology, and to develop a sustainable financial model for the Geisel School of Medicine. Our standards on *Library and Other Information Resources*, *Physical and Technological Resources*, and *Financial Resources* are helpful here:

Institutional planning and resource allocation support the development of library, information resources and technology appropriate to the institution's mission and academic program. The institution provides sufficient and consistent financial support for the library and the effective maintenance and improvement of the institution's information resources and instructional and information technology (7.2).

The institution undertakes physical resource planning linked to academic and student services, support functions, and financial planning. It determines the adequacy of existing physical and technological resources and identifies and plans the specified resolution of deferred maintenance needs. Space planning occurs on a regular basis as part of physical resource evaluation and planning, and is consistent with the mission and purposes of the institution (8.4).

The institution's multi-year financial planning is realistic and reflects the capacity of the institution to depend on identified sources of revenue and ensure the advancement of educational quality and services for students (9.3).

We take note of several initiatives underway at Dartmouth College including the possibility of establishing a graduate school that is administratively independent of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and the expansion of the Thayer School of Engineering to accommodate 50% program growth over the next decade. In addition, the Dartmouth Innovations Center and New Venture Incubator that will serve as the College's "physical and intellectual hub for entrepreneurial activities" was created in 2013 with \$4.3 million raised within nine months to support the new Center. We ask that the Fall 2019 self-study give emphasis to the further development of these initiatives as evidence that "the institution has a demonstrable record of success in implementing the results of its planning" (2.4).

Finally, we understand from the report that Dartmouth College established a 14-member Curriculum Review Committee (CRC) in 2012 with responsibility to review the undergraduate curriculum and that the Committee's recommendations are currently under discussion by the faculty with a goal to complete the process by the end of 2015 with implementation in Fall 2016 or "soon thereafter." The CRC report, compiled following a process that included an analysis of peer institutions, input from focus groups, and review by an external consultant, advocates simplifying the distributive requirements, incorporating a "reflective document," and strengthening major requirements with a review of each culminating course to ensure the central role of "undergraduate research and knowledge production." In addition, we note with approval the creation of a faculty assessment leadership team in 2014, chaired by the Director of Dartmouth's Center for the Advancement of Learning, that is in the process of comparing the institution's current assessment practices with those of other institutions to develop a five-year strategy to ensure the resources and structures are in place to "enable initiatives, innovation, and assessment activities to be *sustainable*." We look forward to learning, through the Fall 2019 self-study, of the institution's progress to implement the recommendations of the undergraduate

curriculum review committee and to move forward a faculty-invested approach to the assessment of student learning. Our standards on *Planning and Evaluation* and *The Academic Program* offer this guidance:

Undergraduate degree programs are designed to give students a substantial and coherent introduction to the broad areas of human knowledge, their theories and methods of inquiry, plus in-depth study in at least one disciplinary or interdisciplinary area. Programs have an appropriate rationale; their clarity and order are visible in stated requirements in official publications and in student records (4.14).

The institution implements and provides support for systematic and broad-based assessment of what and how students are learning through their academic program and experiences outside the classroom. Assessment is based on clear statements of what students are expected to gain, achieve, demonstrate, or know by the time they complete their academic program. Assessment provides useful information that helps the institution to improve the experiences provided for students, as well as to assure that the level of student achievement is appropriate for the degree awarded (4.48).

The institution's approach to understanding what and how students are learning and using the results for improvement has the support of the institution's academic and institutional leadership and the systematic involvement of faculty (4.51).

The Commission expressed appreciation for the report submitted by Dartmouth College and hopes that 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 of action on its accreditation status. In a few days we will be sending a copy of this letter to Mr. William W. Helman IV. The institution is free to release information about the report 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,



Patricia Maguire Meservey

PMM/jm

Enclosure

cc: Mr. William W. Helman IV



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

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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 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 or is otherwise made public, the Commission will respond to related inquiries and may issue a 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, 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 Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.

Accreditation of an institution of higher education by 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:

**Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
New England Association of Schools and Colleges
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100, Burlington, MA 01803-4514
(781) 425 7785
E-Mail: cihe@neasc.org**

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

_____ College (University) is accredited by 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 Commission on Institutions 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 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 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:

**Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
New England Association of Schools and Colleges
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100, Burlington, MA 01803-4514
(781) 425 7785
E-Mail: cihe@neasc.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
- 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 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.

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 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 Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. In responding to inquiries, the Commission will endeavor to do so.

The Commission does not generally 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 and may issue its own statement.

Adverse actions (placement of an institution on probation, denial of candidate status 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. 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

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

Editorial Changes, March 2014

April 2015

