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March 29, 2018

Dr. Susan D. Huard  
President  
Manchester Community College  
1066 Front Street  
Manchester, NH 03102

Dear President Huard:

I am pleased to inform you that at its meeting on March 1, 2018 the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education took the following action with respect to Manchester Community College:

that Manchester Community College be continued in accreditation;

that the College submit an interim (fifth-year) report for consideration in Fall, 2022;

that, in addition to the information included in all interim reports, the College give emphasis to its success in:

- 1) developing and implementing integrated strategic, academic, and facilities planning;
- 2) enhancing its use of assessment results for improvement;
- 3) continuing to achieve its goals to diversify its faculty and staff;

that the next comprehensive evaluation be scheduled for Fall, 2027.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its actions.

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

The Commission commends Manchester Community College (MCC) for the enthusiastic participation of its campus community in the comprehensive evaluation process, and we join with the visiting team in congratulating the College on the "creative and innovative" ways it serves students and the community within its "resource-constrained environment." We take

favorable note of the “impressive” number of construction projects completed during the last five years as well as the “significant technology projects” that are underway. MCC has a well-developed program review process that incorporates insights from advisory boards. We are gratified to learn of the College’s successful implementation of two dual enrollment programs (Running Start and Early College) that engage “upwards of 1500 high school students” and note with approval the procedures the College has established to select and mentor dual enrollment faculty. The Commission concurs with the visiting team that the recent co-location of student services offices has enhanced student use of and satisfaction with these services, and we are pleased to learn of the success of initiatives designed to create a “more welcoming environment” for MCC’s increasingly diverse student population. We also note positively the steps taken by the College to improve communication across the campus, including the redesign of the institution’s website, a renewed focus on committee work, and the scheduling of strategic meetings to share information. We share the judgment of the visiting team that, supported by the leadership of a competent and committed president and senior team, the well-qualified and hardworking faculty, staff, and administrators of Manchester Community College are well-positioned to continue the institution’s mission to be a “dynamic, student-centered and accessible community college that promotes and fosters the intellectual, cultural, and economic vibrancy of [its] region.”

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 the report scheduled for consideration in Fall, 2022, to report on three matters related to our standards on *Planning and Evaluation*; *Educational Effectiveness*; *Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship*; and *Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure*.

As candidly acknowledged in the self-study and the team report, resource constraints, including relatively low numbers of full-time faculty and staff, have made it challenging for Manchester Community College to engage in strategic planning and, therefore, have resulted in a tendency for MCC to focus on short-term goals. We also understand that the creation of a new academic plan was delayed due to a transition in academic leadership. We concur with the visiting team that the College would benefit from a more strategic, integrated, and data-informed approach to planning. The Commission is, therefore, gratified to learn that MCC has begun an “inclusive process” to develop a new academic plan and is updating several other plans, including the Campus Master Plan and technology plans. We note with favor MCC’s intention to include in these plans “more metrics to track and objectively evaluate” its progress toward achieving its goals. We anticipate being apprised, in Fall, 2022, of the College’s continued success in engaging in planning that is “systematic, comprehensive, broad-based, integrated, and appropriate to the institution” (2.1). Our standard on *Planning and Evaluation* provides this additional guidance:

Institutional research is sufficient to support planning and evaluation. The institution systematically collects and uses data necessary to support its planning efforts and to enhance institutional effectiveness (2.2).

The institution plans beyond a short-term horizon, including strategic planning that involves realistic analyses of internal and external opportunities and constraints. The results of strategic planning are implemented in all units of the institution through financial, academic, enrollment, and other supporting plans (2.3).

The institution has a demonstrable record of success in implementing the results of its planning (2.5).

The Commission notes with approval MCC's widespread collection of data and broad array of assessment activities, including the use of measures encompassed within the Voluntary Framework of Accountability and Complete College America. We concur with the visiting team, however, that these data have not yet been "fully leveraged as part of a systematic evaluation effort." We understand that the College's "Track Team" will meet with the Strategic Planning Committee to discuss ways to integrate the institution's planning and assessment efforts to support MCC's goal to establish a "more thorough culture of assessment." We look forward to learning, in Fall, 2022, of Manchester Community College's progress in this matter, consistent with our standards on *Planning and Evaluation* (cited above and below) and *Educational Effectiveness*:

The institution regularly and systematically evaluates the achievement of its mission and purposes, giving primary focus to the realization of its educational objectives. Its system of evaluation is designed to provide valid information to support institutional improvement. The institution's evaluation efforts are effective for addressing its unique circumstances. These efforts use both quantitative and qualitative methods (2.6).

Assessment of learning is based on verifiable statements of what students are expected to gain, achieve, demonstrate, or know by the time they complete their academic program. The process of understanding what and how students are learning focuses on the course, competency, program, and institutional level. Assessment has the support of the institution's academic and institutional leadership and the systematic involvement of faculty and appropriate staff (8.3).

The results of assessment and quantitative measures of student success are a demonstrable factor in the institution's efforts to improve the learning opportunities and results for students (8.8).

Finally, as noted above, the student population at Manchester Community College has become increasingly diverse as the industrial city in which the institution is located is "home to growing communities of immigrants and refugees." The College engaged the services of a consultant to assist in the preparation of a four-part action plan to guide the institution's efforts to welcome and support a more diverse student body and diversify its workforce, and we understand that MCC is part of a system-wide initiative to review hiring processes to "ensure a stronger, more diverse pool of candidates is considered." The interim report submitted for consideration in Fall, 2022 will afford Manchester Community College an opportunity to update the Commission on its success in achieving "its own goals for the achievement of diversity among its faculty and academic staff" (6.5). Our standard on *Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure* is also relevant here:

The institution adheres to non-discriminatory policies and practices in recruitment, admissions, employment, evaluation, disciplinary action, and advancement. It fosters an inclusive atmosphere within the institutional community that respects and supports people of diverse characteristics and backgrounds (9.5).

The scheduling of a comprehensive evaluation in Fall, 2027 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 Manchester Community College and for the report submitted by the visiting team. The Commission also welcomed the opportunity to meet with you, Brian Bicknell, Vice President of Academic Affairs, and Kelly Chapman, Business Affairs Officer, as well as James Mabry, 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 Mr. Jeremy Hitchcock. 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.

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 P. Angel

DPA/sjp

Enclosures

cc: Mr. Jeremy Hitchcock  
Visiting team