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

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June 8, 2010

Dr. J. Keith Motley
Chancellor
University of Massachusetts Boston
100 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02125

Dear Chancellor Motley:

I write to inform you that at its meeting on April 16, 2010, the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education considered the fifth year interim report submitted by University of Massachusetts Boston and voted to take the following action:

that the fifth-year interim report submitted by University of Massachusetts Boston be accepted;

that the comprehensive evaluation scheduled for Spring 2015 be confirmed;

that, in addition to the information included in all self-studies, the self-study prepared in advance of the Spring 2015 evaluation give emphasis to the institution's success in:

1. developing course and program assessment that provides evidence for revisions to the curriculum;
2. addressing the institution's goals for reducing dependence on part-time faculty and for increasing the number of tenure-track faculty;
3. continuing to improve enrollment, retention and graduation rates;
4. addressing challenges with funding, particularly in light of the institution's ambitious goals.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

The Commission commends University of Massachusetts Boston (UMB) for a well-written report and for its work in addressing each of the six areas of emphasis detailed in our letters of November 22, 2005 and

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<http://cihe.neasc.org>

December 22, 2008. The report also provided a detailed examination of each of the eleven standards, with evidence included in the narrative from the Commission's data forms. The report presented a focused university that has continued to live by its mission of educating students of moderate means. The University attained its enrollment goal of 15,000 students by 2010 (a year ahead of schedule), increased its first-to-second-year retention rate (from 70% for many years to the current 77%), and increased its six-year graduation rate (from 28% to 35% since the Fall 1996 cohort to the current 39% for the Fall 2004 cohort). From Fall 2005-2009 the institution increased income from student tuition and fees by 9.7%, from state support by 2.0%, and from grant activity by 9.6%, to realize total operating revenues of over \$178,136,000 in 2009. To adjust to the financial crisis the University secured \$26 million in federal stimulus funding. Finally, the diversity of students has increased to represent 45% of the student body.

The scheduling of a comprehensive evaluation in Spring 2015 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 The Academic Program, Faculty, Students, and Financial Resources.

The program review process has supported the assessment of student learning outcomes, as well as revisions to the curriculum. However, additional understanding of how particular assessment findings have led to curriculum revisions would strengthen the perceived value of assessment efforts. Faculty work groups continue to make progress in developing common learning outcomes for general education and capstone courses. Through the self-study for the Spring 2015 comprehensive evaluation, we look forward to learning about UMB's successes with these efforts, particularly in using the evidence to support curriculum revisions. Addressing the standard on The Academic Program should serve as a useful point of reference here:

The institution's approach to understanding student learning focuses on the course, program, and institutional level. Data and other evidence generated through this approach are considered at the appropriate level of focus, with the results being a demonstrable factor in improving the learning opportunities and results for students (4.45).

Expectations for student learning reflect both the mission and character of the institution and general expectations of the larger academic community for the level of degree awarded and the field of study. These expectations include statements that are consistent with the institution's mission in preparing students for further study and employment, as appropriate (4.46).

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 (4.47).

The institution's system of periodic review of academic programs includes a focus on understanding what and how students learn as a result of the program (4.48).

With significant increases in student enrollment, from Fall 2005 to 2009 non-tenure-track faculty increased 24.6% (451 to 562), part-time faculty increased 26% (368 to 463), and tenure-track faculty increased only 11% (362 to 402). Given the University's desire to reduce its dependence on part-time faculty and to increase its percentage of tenure-track faculty in becoming a research university, we look forward to learning how these goals get realized, given current financial constraints, as informed by our standard on Faculty:

Faculty assignments and workloads are consistent with the institution's mission and purposes. They are equitably determined to allow faculty adequate time to provide effective instruction, advise and evaluate students, contribute to program and institutional

scholarship, research, creative activities and service compatible with the mission and purposes of the institution. Faculty workloads are reappraised periodically and adjusted as institutional conditions change (5.7).

The institution avoids undue dependence on part-time faculty, adjuncts, and graduate assistants to conduct classroom instruction. Institutions that employ a significant proportion of part-time, adjunct, clinical or temporary faculty assure their appropriate integration into the department and institution and provide opportunities for faculty development (5.8).

In the self-study for Spring 2015, we welcome information about growth in enrollment as well as increases in retention and graduation rates. In this regard, we are particularly interested in understanding the impact on these indicators of Student Success Communities, the School of Management Achievement Program, on-line tutoring systems, and facilitated study groups. Furthermore, we look forward to learning about the success of the Division of Student Affairs program review process as well as the success of efforts in enabling co-curricular learning and student use of University resources. Our standards on The Academic Program (above) and Students (below) are useful in this regard:

The institution measures student success, including rates of retention and graduation and other measures of success appropriate to institutional mission. The institution's goals for retention and graduation reflect institutional purposes, and the results are used to inform recruitment and the review of programs and services. Rates of retention and graduation are separately determined for any group that the institution specifically recruits, and those rates are used in evaluating the success of specialized recruitment and the services and opportunities provided for the recruited students (6.6).

The institution systematically identifies the characteristics and learning needs of its student population and then makes provision for responding to them. The institution's student services are guided by a philosophy that reflects the institution's mission and special character, is circulated widely and reviewed periodically, and provides the basis on which services to students can be evaluated (6.7).

As the institution continues to address ongoing reductions in state support, and with federal stimulus funds ending in 2011, ensuring sufficient operating revenues will become even more challenging. We note that the system's Board of Trustees increased student fees by \$750 (16.5%) per semester, and allocated \$26 million to the general fund from funds realized through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. As part of the self-study for the 2015 comprehensive evaluation, we would like to learn how the institution has continued to address these funding issues in light of UMB's ambitious mission and goals. Our standard on Financial Resources guides us here:

The institution's financial resources are sufficient to sustain the achievement of its educational objectives and to further institutional improvement now and in the foreseeable future. The institution demonstrates through verifiable internal and external factors its financial capacity to graduate its entering class. The institution administers its financial resources with integrity (Statement of the Standard).

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The Commission expressed appreciation for the report submitted by University of Massachusetts Boston 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. Robert J. Manning. The institution is free to release information about the report and the Commission's action to others, in accordance with Commission policy.

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

Sincerely,

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Mary Jo Maydew

MJM/jm

Enclosure

cc: Mr. Robert J. Manning.

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 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. While the Commission does not release copies of self-studies, other institutional reports, evaluation reports, or notification letters, it believes it to be good practice for institutions to make these materials available after notification of action on their status. Because of the potential to be misleading, institutions are asked not to publish or otherwise disseminate excerpts only from these materials. 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.

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:

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

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 is not accreditation nor does it assure eventual accreditation. 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.

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 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. Also, adverse actions (placement of an institution on probation, denial of candidate status or accreditation, revocation of candidacy and termination of accreditation) are not communicated until the available appeals process is completed.

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.

The Commission does not release copies of self-studies, progress reports, evaluation reports, or other documents related to the accreditation of individual institutions, but institutions are encouraged to make these materials available, in their entirety, after notification of Commission action.

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