



November 15, 2018

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dr. Kendra Bogges, President
Concord University
P.O. Box 1000
Vermillion Street
Athens, WV 24712

Dear President Bogges:

This letter is formal notification of action taken by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Board of Trustees (“the Board”) concerning Concord University (“the Institution”). This action is effective as of the date the Board acted, November 1, 2018. In taking this action, the Board considered materials from the most recent comprehensive evaluation, including, but not limited to: the Assurance Filing the Institution submitted, the report from the comprehensive evaluation team, the report of the Institutional Actions Council (IAC) Hearing Committee, and the institutional responses to these reports.

Summary of the Action: The Board reaffirmed the accreditation of the Institution. The Institution meets Core Components 5.B, 5C, and 5.D with concerns. The Institution is required to host a Focused Visit, as outlined below, no later than April 2020.

Board Rationale

The Board based its action on the following findings made with regard to the institution:

The Institution meets Criterion Five, Core Component 5.B, “the institution’s governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission,” but with concerns for the following reasons:

- At present, there are problems with shared governance. Although it appears that the institution has policies and procedures in place to engage internal constituencies, it is also apparent that these mechanisms need to be reviewed, updated, or better communicated, so that they are effective.
- Shared governance also needs to be demonstrated in cooperation between on-campus committees of faculty and administrators to advance the best interests of the institution; at present, it appears that faculty and administrators operate independently of each other, and evidence needs to demonstrate both coordination and mutual respect.

- The Institution needs to improve the campus culture, focusing on faculty who need to air grievances and the appropriate administrative response, and on improving existing structures that may impede communication.

The Institution meets Criterion Five, Core Component 5.C, “the institution engages in systematic and integrated planning,” but with concerns for the following reasons:

- Strategic planning does occur on campus, but is not coordinated among all campus stakeholders, where each sector has a voice, nor is it shared, so that multiple voices or constituencies or committees contribute effectively to advance the institution’s mission; consequently, planning has been chiefly fiscal and activated in response to recent budgetary crises, but has not been truly proactive and in particular, has not been attentive to the institutional mission or the expressed needs of campus faculty in terms of executing a forward-looking strategic plan.

The Institution meets Criterion Five, Core Component 5.D, “the institution works systematically to improve its performance,” but with concerns for the following reasons:

- Although the Institution does utilize student evaluative data to address how best to marshal effective student services and academic decisions, the potential effectiveness of these data are hampered by ineffective governance structures.
- Systematic improvement campus-wide is inhibited by the Institution’s lack of information and deep awareness about the actual campus climate affecting all stakeholders; therefore, mechanisms should be instituted to gather awareness on how best to improve communications campus-wide, to manage expectations, particularly around the budget and the pace of change, and to improve the overall campus culture of working together across all employee sectors. These and related elements should be gathered and results used to improve the performance of the institution overall.

Next Steps in the HLC Review Process

Focused Visit: The Board required that the Institution host a Focused Visit regarding Core Components 5.B, 5.C, and 5.D no later than April 2020.

Comprehensive Evaluation: The Institution has been placed on the Standard Pathway with its next comprehensive evaluation (Year 4) in 2022-23.

HLC Disclosure Obligations

The Board action resulted in changes that will be reflected in the Institution’s Statement of Accreditation Status as well as the Institutional Status and Requirements Report. The Statement of Accreditation Status, including the dates of the last and next comprehensive evaluation visits, will be posted to the HLC website.

HLC policy¹ requires that a summary of Board actions be sent to appropriate state and federal agencies and accrediting associations. It also will be published on HLC's website. The summary will include this HLC action regarding the Institution.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, thank you in advance for your cooperation. If you have questions about any of the information in this letter, please contact your HLC Staff Liaison, Dr. Jeffrey Rosen.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Barbara Gellman-Danley".

Barbara Gellman-Danley
President

Cc: Kathy Liptak, Associate Provost, Concord University
Evaluation Team Chair
IAC Hearing Committee Chair
Jeffrey Rosen, Vice President for Accreditation Relations and Director of the Open Pathway,
Higher Learning Commission
Anthea Sweeney, Vice President for Legal and Governmental Affairs, Higher Learning
Commission

¹ COMM.A.10.010, Commission Public Notices and Statements