



March 10, 2014

Dr. Dana Grove, President
Morton College
3801 S. Central Ave.
Cicero, IL 60804-4398

Dear President Grove:

This letter is formal notification of action taken concerning Morton College (“the College”) by the Higher Learning Commission Board of Trustees (“the Board”). At its meeting on February 27, 2014, the Board removed the sanction of Notice from the College. The Board determined that the removal of the sanction was warranted based on evidence provided by the College, including the Notice Report, the report of the visiting team, the staff analysis, and the College’s responses to these reports. In addition, the Board maintained the placement of the College on the Standard Pathway. The College will host a review for Reaffirmation of Accreditation in 2016-17.

The Board based its actions on the following findings made with regard to the College:

Morton College (“the College”) has demonstrated that it has resolved the Commission’s concerns related to 2005 Criteria for Accreditation Criterion One, “the institution operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students,” particularly Core Component 1.d, “the institution’s governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission,” and Core Component 1.e, “the institution upholds and protects its integrity,” for the following reasons:

- the College has provided evidence that it has updated policies related to governance, roles and responsibilities of the President and Board, and conflict of interest;
- the College has demonstrated that it adheres to recruiting and hiring practices that appropriately take nepotism and conflict of interest into account and ensure proper separation of roles between the Board and senior administration in the hiring process;
- the College has clarified the organizational chart of the College with respect to consultants, and roles have been modified to ensure direct accountability to the College through the President or a senior administrator rather than to the Board; and
- the College Board has demonstrated appropriate engagement in College issues and appears to be supportive of the President.

The College has demonstrated that it has resolved the Commission’s concerns related to 2005 Criterion Two, “the institution’s allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of

its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities,” particularly Core Component 2.c, “the institution’s ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement,” and Core Component 2.d, “all levels of planning align with the institution’s mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission,” for the following reasons:

- the College has developed a strategic plan with input from internal and external constituencies and ensures that the implementation of the plan remains on schedule;
- the College presented evidence that the strategic plan is linked to assessment, budgeting, and programming; and
- integration of planning processes at the College is improving, as the program review process which informs planning and budgeting has demonstrated, and assessment data informs decisions about budgeting.

The College has demonstrated that it has resolved the Commission’s concerns related to 2005 Criterion Three, “the institution provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission,” particularly Core Component 3.a, “the institution’s goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible,” Core Component 3.c, “the institution creates effective learning environments,” and Core Component 3.d, “the institution’s learning resources support student learning and effective teaching,” for the following reasons:

- the College has articulated student learning outcomes for courses and programs, and those outcomes are sufficiently specific to allow for meaningful measurement and assessment of student achievement;
- the College has provided professional development funds in areas related to assessment, assigned a faculty member to supervise specific course outcomes for each liberal arts course, and has developed systems and processes to help create a culture of assessment among faculty and staff;
- the College Curriculum Committee reviews course outcomes for specificity and measurability, and an Assessment Planning Committee has developed processes and documents to help ensure consistency in assessment terminology and assessment activity; and
- several programs have used assessment data and analysis to make changes and improvements to curriculum and programs.

The Board action resulted in changes to the affiliation of the College determined by the Board. These changes are reflected on the Statement of Affiliation Status (SAS). Some of the information from the SAS, such as the dates of the last and next comprehensive evaluation visits, will be posted to the Commission’s website along with information from the Organizational Profile (OP).

At this time, the Commission will reassign Morton College from its liaison Vice President Anthea Sweeney to Vice President Linnea Stenson. If you have any questions or concerns about this information, please contact her. Please be assured that Dr. Sweeney will work with Dr. Stenson to assure a smooth transition.

Information about notifying the public of this action is available at <http://ncahlc.org/Information-for-Institutions/institutional-reporting-of-actions.html>. In addition, Commission policy COMM.A.10.010, Commission Public Notices and Statements, requires that the Commission prepare a summary of actions to be sent to appropriate state and federal agencies and accrediting associations, and published on its website. The summary will include the Commission Board action regarding the College. The College may choose to prepare a statement to its constituencies regarding this action; I ask that you copy Dr. Stenson on any such communication.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I thank you and your associates for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sylvia Manning".

Sylvia Manning
President

cc: Keith McLaughlin, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, Morton College
Linnea Stenson, Vice President for Accreditation Relations, Higher Learning Commission
Anthea M. Sweeney, Vice President for Accreditation Relations, Higher Learning Commission
Karen L. Solinski, Vice President for Legal and Governmental Affairs, Higher Learning Commission
Charles J. Mula, Accreditation and State Liaison, Office of Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education