November 17, 2016

Dr. Ray Barber, President
Oakland City University
138 N. Lucretia St.
Oakland City, IN 47660

Dear President Barber:

This letter is formal notification of action taken by the Higher Learning Commission (“HLC” or “the Commission”) Board of Trustees (“the Board”) concerning Oakland City University (“the University” or “the institution”). At its meeting on November 3, 2016, the Board voted to continue the accreditation of the University and scheduled the institution for monitoring. This action is effective as of the date action was taken. In taking this action, the Board considered materials from the University’s most recent comprehensive evaluation, including but not limited to: the Assurance Argument the University submitted, the report from the comprehensive evaluation team, the report of the Institutional Actions Council Hearing Committee, the institution’s responses to these reports, and other materials relevant to the evaluation.

The Board required that the University submit an Interim Report no later than December 1, 2017, specifically addressing the following:

- **Program Review.** The institution’s status of maintaining a practice of regular program review. The University should provide evidence of its revised program review template, evidence that reviews are being conducted university-wide, and evidence that results are being used. (Core Component 4.A)
- **Enrollment.** 2016-17 and 2017-18 enrollment across the University separated by undergraduate/graduate, degree-seeking/non-degree seeking, full-time/part-time, new students (both first time and transfers), and on-campus/off-campus. (Core Component 5.A)
- **Enrollment.** An enrollment plan for increasing on-campus full-time undergraduate enrollment, including an update of the financial aid matrix used to become more competitive with peer institutions and an update on progress toward such a plan. (Core Component 5.A)
- **Strategic Planning.** The strategic planning process used that documents inclusiveness of campus constituencies. (Core Component 5.C)
- **Strategic Planning.** A strategic plan that includes evidence of how the University links the results of assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting. (Core Component 5.C)
• Institutional Effectiveness. Evidence that data is being produced by the University’s operational areas and is being used to assist in decision-making at multiple levels of the University. (Core Component 5.D)

The Board also required that the University be scheduled for a focused evaluation no later than June 2018, to validate the contents of the interim report.

The Board based its action on the following findings made in regard to the University:

The University meets Criterion Four, Core Component 4.A, “the institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs,” but with concerns because program review is still in its initial stages at the institution, but a new Director of Assessment was hired to shepherd the process, establish a new schedule, and enforce compliance across the institution.

The University meets Criterion Five, Core Component 5.A, “the institution’s resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future,” but with concerns because the institution still operates with an operating deficit and with an ongoing decline in net assets; however, the institution has a new enrollment management plan and personnel, has adjusted its discount rate to be less onerous to its bottom line, and has experienced modest improvements in enrollment in fall of 2016, which will help improve its operating deficits.

The University meets Criterion Five, Core Component 5.C, “the institution engages in systematic and integrated planning,” but with concerns because the University’s new personnel in leadership positions (e.g., provost, assistant provost, dean of business, director of assessment, director of admissions, director of student life, and director of international recruiting) were newly hired but had already coalesced around writing a new strategic plan to be completed by December 2016 and were equipped to execute that plan.

The University meets Criterion Five, Core Component 5.D, “the institution works systematically to improve its performance,” but with concerns because the institution’s use of the data it collected was still ineffectively analyzed or used to improve the University in measurable ways, but it had implemented new processes toward that end since the visiting team left the campus in March 2016.

The Board maintained the University on the Standard Pathway, with its next comprehensive evaluation for Reaffirmation of Accreditation in 2021-22.

The Board action resulted in changes to the affiliation of the University. These changes are reflected on the Institutional Status and Requirements Report. Some of the information on that document, such as the dates of the last and next comprehensive evaluation visits, will be posted to the HLC website.
Commission policy COMM.A.10.010, Commission Public Notices and Statements, requires that HLC 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 HLC Board action regarding the University.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I thank you and your associates for your cooperation. Please contact your HLC Staff Liaison, Dr. Jeffrey Rosen, Vice President for Accreditation Relations and Director of the Open Pathway, if you have questions about any of the information in this letter.

Sincerely,

Barbara Gellman-Danley
President

cc:  Chair of the Board of Trustees, Oakland City University
     Katheryn Webb, Director of Assessment, Oakland City University
     Jeffrey Rosen, Vice President for Accreditation Relations and Director of the Open Pathway, Higher Learning Commission
     Karen Peterson Solinski, Executive Vice President for Legal and Governmental Affairs, Higher Learning Commission
     Teresa Lubber, Commissioner, Indiana Commission for Higher Education