March 13, 2019

BY CERTIFIED MAIL

Regina Favors, Interim President
Arkansas Baptist College
1600 Dr. Martin Luther King Drive
Little Rock, AR 72202

Dear President Favors:

This letter is formal notification of action taken by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Board of Trustees (“the Board”) concerning Arkansas Baptist College (“the Institution”). This action is effective as of the date the Board acted, February 28, 2019. In taking this action, the Board considered materials from the most recent focused visit, including, but not limited to: the focused visit report the Institution submitted, the report from the focused visit team, the report of the Institutional Actions Council (IAC) Hearing Committee, and the institutional responses to these reports.

Summary of the Action: The Institution has been placed on Probation because it is out of compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. The Institution meets Core Component 5.C with concerns. The Institution does not meet Core Component 5.A. The Institution is required to host a comprehensive evaluation no later than September 2020 to determine whether the Institution has ameliorated the findings that led to the imposition of the sanction.

Institutional Disclosure Obligation: HLC policy requires that an institution inform its constituencies, including Board members, administrators, faculty, staff, students, prospective students, and any other constituencies about the sanction and how to contact HLC for further information. The policy also requires that an institution on sanction disclose this status whenever it refers to its HLC accreditation. HLC will monitor these disclosures to ensure they are accurate and in keeping with HLC policy. The Institution must submit drafts of its planned disclosures to these various audiences to its HLC Staff Liaison in advance of transmission and provide the staff liaison with a link to relevant information on its website. At a minimum, an institution must: i) provide a copy of this Action Letter to its governing board, administration, and faculty, ii) provide a copy of the enclosed Public Disclosure Notice to its currently enrolled students, and iii) prominently display the Mark of Affiliation where accreditation status is described on its website. Once disclosures have been made, the Institution must submit copies of its disclosure documents as a single .pdf file to disclosures@hlcommission.org no later than 14 days following receipt of this Action Letter. HLC will retain this information as part of the Institution’s record.

1 INST.E.20.010, Probation.
Board Rationale

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

The Institution does not meet 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,” for the following reasons:

- The Institution continues to struggle to meet its current and future financial obligations.
- The Institution has yet to fully realize the benefits from recent improvements in its financial processes.
- The financial recovery plan is still in process and has not yet been internally reviewed by the academic community.
- Recent turnover in financial leadership and the lack of any succession plan for the current Chief Financial Officer could further derail the Institution’s financial goals.
- The enrollment plan anticipates ten percent increases each year for three years, but it is not clear how the Institution will meet those goals or what contingency plans are in place in the event those increases are not met.

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

- The strategic plan was developed in 2017 without institutional key performance indicators and, despite recent changes to the plan, there are few outcome measures to assess how the Institution is meeting its overall goals.
- Linkages between the strategic plan goals and departmental key performance indicators are lacking.
- There is no evidence that the strategic plan is being implemented.
- Evidence is not available to demonstrate how the results of the plan are being used to improve the Institution’s overall operations.

Next Steps in the HLC Review Process

Assurance Filing: The Board required that the Institution submit an Assurance Filing no later than July 1, 2020, or at least eight weeks prior to the comprehensive evaluation, providing evidence that the Institution has ameliorated the findings of noncompliance identified in this action that resulted in the imposition of Probation and the finding of Met with Concerns, and providing evidence that the Institution meets the Criteria for Accreditation, Federal Compliance Requirements, and the Assumed Practices.

Comprehensive Evaluation: The Institution will host a comprehensive evaluation no later than September 2020 to determine whether the Institution has ameliorated the findings of noncompliance that led to the imposition of Probation and whether the institution meets the Criteria for Accreditation, and to make a recommendation about whether to remove Probation or
take other action.

**Board Review:** The Board will review the documents associated with the evaluation at its February 2021 meeting to determine whether the Institution has ameliorated the findings of noncompliance and has demonstrated that it is now in compliance with all Criteria for Accreditation and thus whether Probation shall be removed, or if the Institution has not ameliorated the findings of noncompliance and demonstrated compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation, whether other action should be taken under HLC policy, up to and including withdrawal of accreditation.

**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.

Information about the sanction is provided to members of the public and to other constituents in several ways. In accordance with HLC policy, this Action Letter and the enclosed Public Disclosure Notice will be posted to HLC’s website not more than 24 hours after this letter is sent to the institution.

HLC policy 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. HLC will simultaneously inform the U.S. Department of Education of the sanction by copy of this letter.

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. Thomas Bordenkircher.

Sincerely,

Barbara Gellman-Danley
President

Enc: Public Disclosure Notice

Cc: Chair of the Board of Trustees, Arkansas Baptist College

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2 INST.G.10.010, Management of Commission Information
3 COMM.A.10.010, Commission Public Notices and Statements
Jerelyn Duncan, Director of Institutional Research, Arkansas Baptist College  
Evaluation Team Chair  
IAC Hearing Committee Chair  
Ann Clemmer, Senior Associate Director, Academic Affairs, Arkansas Department of Higher Education  
Thomas Bordenkircher, Vice President for Accreditation Relations, Higher Learning Commission  
Anthea Sweeney, Vice President for Legal and Governmental Affairs, Higher Learning Commission  
Herman Bounds, Accreditation and State Liaison, Office of Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education