



July 8, 2019

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

John Tafaro, President  
Chatfield College  
20918 State Route 251  
St. Martin, OH 45118

Dear President Tafaro:

This letter is formal notification of action taken by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Board of Trustees (“the Board”) Chatfield College (“the Institution”). This action is effective as of the date the Board acted, June 27, 2019. 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 determined that the Institution is no longer out of compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation and removed the Institution from Probation and assigned interim monitoring. The Institution meets Core Components 4.A, 4.B, and 4.C with concerns. The Institution is required to host a Focused Visit, as outlined below, no later than May 1, 2021.

### **Board Rationale**

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

The Institution now meets without concerns Criterion Two, Core Component 2.A, “the institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff,” for the following reasons:

- Adjunct and part-time faculty are no longer identified as independent contractors and their roles are delineated relative to curricular responsibilities, assessment, and institutional service.
- The Institution recognizes the need to uphold ethical standards and seeks to address these standards through the many codes, audits, and policies that affect faculty, staff, and the Board.

The Institution now meets Criterion Three, Core Component 3.C, “the institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services,” for the following reasons:

- There are a sufficient number of faculty members to fulfill instructional and non-instructional tasks. Specifically, all faculty, including adjuncts and part-time, are engaged in curriculum design, assessment, and institutional service commitments.
- A formal faculty observation process occurs as part of the faculty evaluation process.
- Professional development is available for faculty members through the learning management system or through in-person workshops. Faculty members utilize professional development funds to participate in professional organizations, while a few have used the funds to pursue additional higher education credentials.
- Faculty members are appropriately qualified, including those at the additional location and dual enrollment sites.

The Institution now meets without concerns Criterion Three, Core Component 3.D, “the institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching,” for the following reasons:

- The Institution provides a range of student support services to meet the needs of its student population, including the Library, Learning Resource Centers, academic advising, tutoring, mentoring, and financial aid counseling.
- Significant changes have been made to the advising program to allow for a structured model of providing services to students with regular follow-up and accountability. In addition, the Institution recently shifted advising duties from faculty to advisors with the adoption of a new advising model.
- A new Coordinator of Volunteers was hired to manage the tutoring service on the main campus and additional location. Peer tutors are paid through a grant and undergo training using a new training manual with mandatory exercises and training videos.

The Institution now meets, but with concerns, Criterion Four, Core Component 4.A, “the institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs,” for the following reasons:

- A new program review process was implemented in fall 2018, but there has not been enough time to complete a full cycle. It is also not yet clear if the program review process will provide measurable outcomes that can be assessed and utilized to make program improvements.
- While progress has been made relative to the evaluation of the success of graduates, there is still work to be done to ensure that appropriate data is collected and the process is sustainable.

The Institution now meets, but with concerns, Criterion Four, Core Component 4.B, “the institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning,” for the following reasons:

- A new institutional assessment plan was implemented in fall 2018 and there has been insufficient time to generate appropriate data and comprehensive

assessment strategies.

- Although a new administrative data system is in place to facilitate access to data appropriate for analysis and decision-making, the Institution has not yet demonstrated that its assessment process is sustainable and provides useful information for improving student learning.
- While 20 outcomes have been identified, less than three outcomes relate directly to assessing student learning. Also, it is not clear if the outcomes appropriately and fully measure student learning and provide sufficient data for informed decision-making.
- Faculty members have become more engaged and knowledgeable about the assessment process, but they still need additional professional development.
- Discussions relative to assessment of co-curricular activities have begun but have not yet been formalized.

The Institution now meets, but with concerns, Criterion Four, Core Component 4.C, “the institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs,” for the following reasons:

- While ambitious goals have been established for student persistence, retention, and completion, there are no documented strategies to achieve these goals.
- Sufficient human and fiscal resources have not been committed to achieving goals for student persistence, retention, and completion.
- Student persistence, retention, and completion goals are not reflected consistently across institutional planning efforts and do not appear to be guiding strategic initiatives.

The Institution now 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,” for the following reasons:

- The Institution is currently financially stable, as demonstrated by its CFI of 3.0 for FY2018, growth in its endowment from 2015 to 2017, and an increase in total assets for the past three years.
- Resources are not allocated to a superordinate entity.
- The Institution has adequate financial, technology, and human resources to support its operations whether online or face-to-face.

The Institution now meets without concerns Criterion Five, Core Component 5.C “the institution engages in systematic and integrated planning,” for the following reasons:

- A new three-year strategic plan was developed with faculty, staff, students, and the community. The Institution has linked an operational plan that further defined its goals to the strategic plan.
- Enrollment planning is attuned to the needs of the community and the reality of higher education in the geographic area, and the Institution has shifted its traditional focus to align appropriately.

- A systematic and integrated planning process is evident through a new strategic plan which links to the budget, evaluation, and enrollment management plan.

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

- The Institution’s Board is apprised of progress on key performance indicators including the College Scorecard.
- The Institution has taken actions to address operational measures through processes and plans designed to use data to make decisions.

The Institution has demonstrated that it is otherwise in compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation, Assumed Practices and Federal Compliance requirements, and can therefore be removed from Probation.

### Next Steps in the HLC Review Process

**Focused Visit:** The Board required that the Institution host a Focused Visit regarding Core Components 4.A, 4.B, and 4.C no later than May 1, 2021.

**Comprehensive Evaluation:** The Institution has been placed on the Standard Pathway with its next comprehensive evaluation for reaffirmation of accreditation 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.

Information about this action is provided to members of the public and to other constituents in several ways. In accordance with HLC policy,<sup>1</sup> 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<sup>2</sup> 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. John Marr.

---

<sup>1</sup> INST.G.10.010, Management of Commission Information

<sup>2</sup> COMM.A.10.010, Commission Public Notices and Statements

President Tafaro, July 8, 2019 5

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Gellman-Danley".

Barbara Gellman-Danley  
President

Enc: Public Disclosure Notice

Cc: Chair of the Board of Trustees, Chatfield College  
Loucretia Wylie, Coordinator of Institutional Assessment and Effectiveness, Chatfield  
College  
Evaluation Team Chair  
IAC Hearing Committee Chair  
Stephanie McCann, Associate Vice Chancellor, Program Development & Approval, Ohio  
Department of Higher Education  
John Marr, Vice President for Accreditation Relations, Higher Learning Commission  
Anthea Sweeney, Vice President for Legal and Governmental Affairs, Higher Learning  
Commission