



March 4, 2020

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dirk Pantone, President
College for Financial Planning, Inc.
9000 E. Nichols Ave., #200
Centennial, CO 80112

Dear President Pantone:

This letter is formal notification of action taken by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Board of Trustees (“the Board”) concerning College for Financial Planning, Inc. (“the Institution”). This action is effective as of the date the Board acted, February 27, 2020. 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 3.A, 4.A, and 4.B with concerns.¹ The Institution is required to submit an Interim Report, as outlined below, no later than January 31, 2022.

Board Rationale

The Board based its action on the following findings made with regard to the Institution, as well as the entire record before the Board:

The Institution meets, but with concerns, Criterion Three, Core Component 3.A, “the institution’s degree programs are appropriate to higher education,” for the following reasons:

- The Institution previously relied on an evaluative framework external to the Institution to validate course rigor and learning outcomes for the Certified Financial Planner (CFP) program. The Institution recently discontinued this practice, and faculty have begun using Bloom’s Taxonomy to verify rigor appropriate for master’s level offerings.

¹ The Core Components cited herein reflect those as stated in the Criteria for Accreditation effective on February 27, 2020. Please note that as of September 1, 2020, HLC’s Revised Criteria for Accreditation will be effective. As such, since the Institution’s next review will take place after this date, the Institution must ensure that it appropriately addresses the underlying concerns cited in this Action Letter in the context of the Revised Criteria for Accreditation. HLC has published a Criteria for Accreditation Crosswalk, which is available on the HLC website, to assist institutions.

- The Institution is now clearly in charge of assessment of its CFP program. However, more time is needed to demonstrate progress and the sufficiency of these efforts.

The Institution 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:

- The Institution has a program review requirement and provides guidelines to the academic programs on how to conduct these reviews. However, implementation of the review process has been slow and off schedule.
- The Institution is making progress with its overall program review processes; scheduling; and data usage to inform curriculum revisions, strategic planning, budget decisions, and student learning. However, more time is needed to demonstrate progress and the sufficiency of these efforts.

The Institution 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:

- The Institution demonstrates a commitment to student educational achievement through its goals for student learning at the course, program, and institutional level. However, the Institution does not use assessment information as part of an institutional process.
- The Institution is developing several core activities that include creation of an Assessment Committee, delivery of an assessment workshop for its faculty, redesign of the monthly assessment newsletter, and training of academic leadership on assessment. However, more time is needed to demonstrate progress and the sufficiency of these efforts.

Next Steps in the HLC Review Process

Interim Report: The Board required that the Institution submit an Interim Report no later than January 31, 2022, regarding Core Components 3.A, 4.A, and 4.B.

Comprehensive Evaluation: The Institution has been maintained on the Standard Pathway with its next comprehensive evaluation (Year 4) in 2023-24.

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 policy² 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. Eric Martin.

Sincerely,

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

Barbara Gellman-Danley
President

Cc: Jesse Arman, Professor, Accreditation Liaison Officer, College for Financial Planning, Inc.
Evaluation Team Chair
IAC Hearing Committee Chair
Eric Martin, Vice President and Chief of Staff, Higher Learning Commission
Anthea Sweeney, Vice President of Legal and Regulatory Affairs, Higher Learning
Commission

² COMM.A.10.010, Commission Public Notices and Statements