



November 17, 2022

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dr. Greg Mosier, President  
Kansas City Kansas Community College  
7250 State Ave.  
Kansas City, KS 66112

Dear President Mosier:

This letter is formal notification of action taken by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Board of Trustees (“the Board”) concerning Kansas City Kansas Community College (“the Institution”). This action is effective as of the date the Board acted, November 3, 2022. 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 3.C (sufficiency of faculty and staff), 4.B (assessment of student learning), and 5.C (systematic and integrated planning and improvement) with concerns. The Institution is required to submit three Interim Reports, as outlined below, no later than December 31, 2023, December 31, 2024, and with its next Assurance Filing, respectively.

**Substantive Change:** HLC policy<sup>1</sup> states an institution removed from Probation shall be subject to additional requirements for substantive change for three (3) years following the removal of Probation.<sup>2</sup>

**Notification Program:** HLC policy<sup>3</sup> states that the Institution remains ineligible for the Notification Program for Additional Locations until it has completed ten (10) years in good standing as required for access.

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<sup>1</sup> INST.E.20.010, Probation.

<sup>2</sup> INST.F.20.040, Substantive Change.

<sup>3</sup> INST.E.20.010, Probation.

## **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:

Kansas City Kansas Community College now meets without concerns Criterion Three, Core Component 3.A, “the rigor of the institution’s academic offerings is appropriate to higher education,” for the following reasons:

- KCKCC has aligned the rigor of its academic offerings with its vision to “be a national leader in academic excellence....” Courses and programs are relevant and current. Faculty members design curricula using undergraduate education standards established by accrediting agencies, Kansas Board of Regents, and certified business and industry standards. Degrees and certificates awarded meet the expectations of employers and transfer institutions.
- KCKCC stakeholders can view requirements for each degree, course, and program from the college catalog. The Institution has a process for curriculum design, approval, and revision. The Institution uses an Academic Affairs Committee (AAC) to oversee these processes. Members of the AAC include faculty from each academic division, faculty senate, and student advising.
- A program review committee oversees regular review of existing courses and programs to maintain currency and appropriate rigor. KCKCC’s program quality and stated learning goals are the same across all modes of delivery and all locations because the latter are specific to courses and programs.

The Institution meets, but with concerns, 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:

- Over the past four semesters, the Institution has employed 172 full-time faculty and 283 part-time faculty and it currently maintains an overall student-teacher ratio of 12:1. Nearly 60% of the instruction at KCKCC is conducted by full-time faculty, whose length of service at KCKCC averages just over 11 years.
- Adjunct faculty also demonstrate longevity at the Institution, with an average of 7.5 years of service.
- KCKCC has documented a comprehensive onboarding process for new faculty that it first launched in fall 2021, including release time for new faculty to participate in the new faculty academy and mentoring program during their first year of employment.
- KCKCC has documented that transfer programs are required to hold a master’s degree or higher with at least 18 graduate credits in the teaching discipline and that many technical and developmental courses require a bachelor’s degree, certificate, and/or appropriate work experience.
- The Institution continues to show little diversity among its faculty and staff. Of particular concern is the underrepresentation of Hispanics among the faculty and staff and Black/African Americans among the faculty. KCKCC is working to close

this gap by advertising positions to diverse audiences and involving the new Center for Equity, Inclusion, and Multicultural Engagement director in fostering diverse and inclusive hiring practices.

- KCKCC recently approved a policy for qualifying faculty in their teaching fields that requires faculty to possess minimum qualifications that meet the guidelines and assumed practices of the Higher Learning Commission. Although this policy, and the forms used to document faculty credentials, were included in the Institution's Assurance Filing, no evidence was found of operational guidelines or full implementation of this policy.
- A new master contract now requires either a peer observation or supervisor observation as part of the evaluation for new faculty in their first three years, which will be implemented in fall 2022. In addition, it is unclear if this process will apply to dual credit faculty.

The Institution now meets Criterion Four, Core Component 4.A, "the institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings," for the following reasons:

- The Institution has made substantial progress in demonstrating responsibility for its programs and services through processes designed to promote continuous improvement. The Assessment Council coordinates the work of three committees that each have a defined scope. The Program Review Committee oversees the review of academic programs leading to degrees and certificates. The General Education Committee manages assessment of the general education program and courses that are part of the general education core. Finally, the Co-Curricular Committee oversees co-curricular assessment.
- KCKCC has demonstrated that the credit it awards, and the evaluation of incoming work, is properly managed by qualified faculty and staff in keeping with sound institutional policies and practices.
- The Institution maintains specialized accreditation for its occupational programs, including business and automotive programs and seven programs in the health professions.
- KCKCC tracks employment outcomes of its graduates through surveys, advisory group feedback, and individual outreach to ensure that students are appropriately prepared for the workforce. Tracking outcomes for transfer students has been more challenging. The Institution acknowledges that more work is needed to obtain disaggregated transfer data to inform program reviews for transfer programs.

The Institution now meets, but with concerns, Criterion Four, Core Component 4.B, "the institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students," for the following reasons:

- KCKCC has developed processes to assess student learning at the course, program, general education, institution, and co-curricular levels. Learning outcomes have been identified at each level and processes designed to measure the extent to which outcomes have been achieved.

- As noted under Core Component 4.A above, KCKCC has developed a process of program review; a first cohort completed reviews in 2020 using the newly developed forms and process. It is expected that KCKCC will be able to conduct the additional cycles of program review as designated in its schedule.
- KCKCC has modified the processes it uses to assess its General Education Learning Outcomes and its Institutional Learning Outcomes, in part as a response to the 2020 recommendations and in part as a result of its ongoing work in the Assessment Academy. The Institution acknowledges that this is an area that needs further attention. Because these processes are new as of 2021 or are still in development, only a few of these outcomes have been through a complete assessment cycle; additional time is needed for these processes to be fully implemented.
- The Institution developed and piloted a process for co-curricular assessment in 2017-18. A schedule for data collection has been implemented and actionable data is being collected.
- Preliminary findings indicate that where assessment data has been collected it has been used to improve learning. The strategic planning and budget processes provide space for the inclusion of future assessment data to support allocation of resources. As the processes for assessment become fully implemented, it is anticipated that the connections between assessment and budget will be strengthened.

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

- The Institution now articulates a clear vision for integrated planning, including an academic master plan and a strategic enrollment management plan that are informed by the mission and drive the facility and technology master plans.
- KCKCC has established a standard process for developing operating budgets that include linkages to the Institution’s mission and strategic goal areas. Current tools make reference to strategic linkages and managers are encouraged to use information from assessment of learning outcomes and potential impacts on student learning in their proposing, prioritization, and advocacy of operational and budgetary changes. The budget process will require commentary on strategic alignment, with supporting data, in the FY 2023 budget development process. The president’s cabinet utilizes data and strategic plan connections as a lens for considering priorities and approvals.
- KCKCC’s academic and enrollment plans are newly completed and do not yet include a linkage to assessment data. The technology plan is in draft form, while the facilities master plan has been delayed until fall 2022. Once the academic and enrollment plans are solidified, efforts to complete the facilities and technology plans will commence in earnest.
- The strategic planning process engages a broad range of college stakeholders, with the opportunity for open and iterative feedback. Internal and external stakeholders have reported their engagement and confidence in KCKCC’s strategic planning process. Additionally, community partners have expressed a clear understanding of the

Institution's highest-profile efforts directed toward serving at-risk populations in the downtown Kansas City and Leavenworth areas.

- The Institution has demonstrated a clear understanding of enrollment and property tax trends, the primary drivers of institutional resources, and an ability to leverage resources flexibly to minimize negative operational impact. While the Institution has experienced a roughly 17% decline in enrollment due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has utilized federal Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds to hold programs harmless while it realigns resources to address anticipated post-pandemic changes. KCKCC cites optimistic spring 2022 enrollment as an indication of new stability but remains cognizant of a likely budget reduction of approximately 1.5% that would be necessary in FY 2024. While the Institution does not have a fully articulated strategy for addressing this anticipated reduction, institutional leaders have begun taking the operational steps necessary, including systematic reviews of vacancies and fully justified budget details, to ensure that operating budgets are efficient and that operations are being continually assessed within that context.

The Board of Trustees of the Higher Learning Commission determined based on the preceding findings and evidence in the record that the Institution demonstrated that it is otherwise in compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation and Federal Compliance requirements and can be removed from Probation.

### Next Steps in the HLC Review Process

**Interim Reports:** The Board required that the Institution submit an Interim Report no later than December 31, 2023, regarding Core Component 3.C. The Board also required that the Institution submit an Interim Report no later than December 31, 2024, regarding Core Component 4.B.

**Embedded Report:** The Board required that the Institution submit an embedded Interim Report with its next Assurance Filing regarding Core Component 5.C.

**Comprehensive Evaluation:** The Institution has been placed on the Standard Pathway with its next comprehensive evaluation for reaffirmation of accreditation in 2026-27, with the visit to occur in fall 2026.

### 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.

In accordance with HLC policy,<sup>4</sup> information about this action is provided to members of the public and to other constituents in several ways. This Action Letter and the enclosed Public Disclosure Notice will be posted to HLC's website not more than one business day after this letter is sent to the Institution. Additionally, a summary of Board actions will be sent to appropriate state and federal agencies and accrediting associations. This summary 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.

Sincerely,



Barbara Gellman-Danley  
President

Enc: Public Disclosure Notice

Cc: Chair of the Board of Trustees, Kansas City Kansas Community College  
Jerry Pope, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Kansas City Kansas Community College  
Evaluation Team Chair  
IAC Hearing Committee Chair  
John Marr, Vice President of Accreditation Relations, Higher Learning Commission  
Anthea Sweeney, Vice President of Legal and Regulatory Affairs, Higher Learning  
Commission  
Karla Wiscombe, Director, Kansas Board of Regents

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<sup>4</sup> COMM.A.10.010, Notice of Accreditation Actions, HLC Public Notices and Public Statements