

June 7, 2019

Dr. Mark Colip  
President  
Illinois College of Optometry  
3241 South Michigan Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60616

Dear President Colip:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning Illinois College of Optometry by the Institutional Actions Council of the Higher Learning Commission at its meeting on June 4, 2019. The date of this action constitutes the effective date of the institution's new status with HLC.

**Action with Interim Monitoring.** IAC continued the accreditation of Illinois College of Optometry with the next Reaffirmation of Accreditation in 2028-29. In conjunction with this action, IAC required the following interim monitoring:

**Interim Report.** An Interim report on the assessment of student learning in the Bachelor of Science in Visual Studies (BSVS) program to be embedded in its four-year assurance review. This report should present a comprehensive assessment plan for student learning in the BSVS degree program, including the general education component. The assessment plan should include; a) a delineation of program goals and student learning outcomes encompassing the entire content of the program (e.g., didactic, clinical, other); and b) the incorporation of multiple methods and measures of evaluation.

Further, IAC voted to change the team's evaluation of Criterion 3.A, 3.B, and 4.A from "Met with Concerns" to "Met" and remove the requirement for monitoring on these core components. IAC also voted to remove the requirement of monitoring on course syllabi.

**Rationale:** The recommendation for monitoring on course syllabi is related to concerns about missing statements such as those concerning Title IX and ADA on the syllabi. Including such statements might be considered best practice but it is not a federal or HLC requirement. The institution addresses its responsibility to inform students of Title IX and ADA policies in other, sufficient ways.

The team evaluated Core Components 3.A, 3.B, 4.A and 4.B as all met with concerns and required monitoring on the basis of the Bachelor of Science in Visual Studies (BSVS) program. The BSVS degree is awarded to students who complete the first two years of the DO program successfully but who are admitted without a bachelor's degree. There are only a few such students each year. The team expected to find differentiated learning outcomes (3.A), a program of general education (3.B), a program review process (4.A), and an assessment program (4.B) for the BSVS program. The institution, in its response, agreed that monitoring with respect to Core Component 4.B is appropriate. Such a report will ensure that learning outcomes are fully developed, and data are collected and analyzed for program improvement. However, the institution argued that a specification of a program for general education is inappropriate for such a degree completion program in which all the general education courses are taken elsewhere. The institution also argued that a separate program review process for this program is inappropriate as the program review for the DO program encompasses all the aspects that would be part of a BSVS program.

review. The HLC staff liaison for the institution wrote a memo supporting the institution's analysis and noted that the monitoring report required for Core Component 4.B as required by IAC is sufficient to ensure that the concerns of the team with respect to this program are addressed.

IAC agreed with the institution and the HLC staff liaison that monitoring on Core Component 4.B was appropriate and that this monitoring would suffice to address the integrity of the awarding of this degree. IAC agreed that the concerns with respect to 3.A, 3.B, and 4.A, given the nature of this program as a small, degree completion program, did not rise to the level of a judgement of met with concerns nor is separate monitoring on these core components necessary or appropriate.

In two weeks, this action will be added to the *Institutional Status and Requirements (ISR) Report*, a resource for Accreditation Liaison Officers to review and manage information regarding the institution's accreditation relationship. Accreditation Liaison Officers may request the ISR Report on HLC's website at <https://www.hlcommission.org/isr-request>.

Within the next 30 days, HLC will also publish information about this action on its website at <https://www.hlcommission.org/Student-Resources/recent-actions.html>.

If you have any questions about these documents after viewing them, please contact the institution's staff liaison Tom Bordenkircher. Your cooperation in this matter is appreciated.

Sincerely,



Barbara Gellman-Danley  
President

CC: ALO