July 9, 2018

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dr. Mark Tierno, President
MacMurray College
447 East College Avenue
Jacksonville, IL 62650

Dear President Tierno:

This letter is formal notification of action taken by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Board of Trustees (“the Board”) concerning MacMurray College (“the institution”). This action is effective as of the date the Board acted, June 28, 2018. 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. The institution meets Core Component 5.A with concerns. The institution is required to submit an interim report, as outlined below, no later than December 1, 2019.

Board Rationale

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

The institution has demonstrated that it now meets without concerns Criterion Two, Core Component 2.C, “the governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity,” for the following reasons:

• Through its committees the institution’s Board of Trustees is actively deliberating key priorities such as budgeting, enrollment planning and status, campus master planning, technology and infrastructure, faculty promotions and the strategic plan;
• The institution’s Board amended its bylaws, adopted a board succession plan and improved the trustee evaluation system based on consultation with representatives of the Association of Governing Boards; and
• The institution’s Board is now appropriately conducting oversight of the institution and delegating day-to-day management to the administration while leaving the faculty to oversee academic matters.

The institution has demonstrated that it now meets without 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:

• Faculty in all majors and the general education program have created programmatic learning outcomes linked to institutional learning outcomes that reflect the institution’s mission statement and core values;
• Assessment of student learning practices are aligned with the institution’s Assessment Guide and clearly inform improvements to courses and programs;
• The institution has been hiring staff with expertise in assessment as well as developing staff and faculty expertise in these areas through intentional investments in professional development and training;
• However, less than half of the syllabi submitted as part of the Federal Compliance review explicitly mapped course learning outcomes to programmatic learning outcomes.

The institution has demonstrated that it 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,” but with concerns for the following reasons:

• The institution provided evidence showing year-to-date improvement in net deposits for fall 2018 of 33.3% over the fall 2017 numbers;
• Fiscal year-to-date fundraising from 2017 to 2018 has risen from $565,981 to $1,259,946 for the annual fund and from $1,048,160 to $1,653,104 for overall fundraising in all gifts;
• The institution provided evidence that it has reduced its reliance on a small number of donors;
• While the institution’s U.S. Department of Education Composite Financial Index (CFI) Score increased to 1.9 for the fiscal year ended May 31, 2017, owing to increased utilization of external financing for capital improvements and repayment of internal debt, much uncertainty remains regarding whether the CFI score will remain at that level; and
• While the institution was released from the recent letter of credit requirement from the U.S. Department of Education, the institution’s own projections anticipate a return to CFI scores between 1.0 and 1.5, which may once again prompt a letter of credit requirement.
The institution has demonstrated that it now meets Criterion Five, Core Component 5.C, “the institution engages in systematic and integrated planning,” for the following reasons:

- The institution has developed a strategic plan titled “Build. Invest. Become. MacMurray College 2021” along with six supporting implementation documents in a collaborative process as testified by faculty and staff;
- The institution has engaged in environmental scanning that considered such factors as enrollment, demographic change, and the economy and state support;
- The institution has established specific, measurable goals that have associated metrics as well as responsible individuals and departments;
- The new strategic plan informs the budget process leading to proper allocation of resources; and
- Through its planning efforts the institution has developed and currently demonstrates a sound understanding of current capacity as well as market forces, demographics, competition and other key elements of the environment in which it operates.

The institution has demonstrated that it now meets Criterion Five, Core Component 5.D, “the institution works systematically to improve its performance,” because the institution now requires data-driven evaluations of operations of all departments; it documents this process and actively uses the results to inform budgeting, improve performance and plan for the future.

The institution has demonstrated that it is otherwise in compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation, Assumed Practices, and Federal Compliance requirements.

Next Steps in the HLC Review Process

Interim Report: The Board required that the institution submit an Interim Report no later than December 1, 2019, regarding Core Component 5.A. Included in this report should be evidence of the following:

Core Component 5.A
- The institution’s financial results for FY2018 and FY2019, which should be supported by audited financial statements and other relevant documentation.
- Continued progress in the areas of increasing unrestricted net revenues, strategic progress in fundraising, repayment of borrowing from the institution’s endowment, and repayment of other debt.
- Successful management of the institution’s finances that results in a CFI score that is “above the zone.”
- All recruiting records for all programs in fall 2018 and fall 2019.
- Funding for all parts of the institution’s strategic plan.
- An updated implementation plan for the institution’s strategic plan, with an emphasis on progress toward milestones on the strategic plan’s key goals.
Comprehensive Evaluation: The institution has been placed on the Standard Pathway with its next comprehensive evaluation for reaffirmation of accreditation in 2021-22.

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,¹ 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 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. John Marr.

Sincerely,

Barbara Gellman-Danley
President

Enc: Public Disclosure Notice

Cc: Chair of the Board of Trustees, MacMurray College
   Susan Eilering, Library Director, MacMurray College
   Evaluation Team Chair
   IAC Hearing Committee Chair
   Stephanie Bernoteit, Interim Deputy Director for Academic Affairs, Illinois Board 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

¹ INST.G.10.010, Management of Commission Information
² COMM.A.10.010, Commission Public Notices and Statements