July 9, 2018

BY ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dr. Elizabeth Burns, President
Marygrove College
8425 W. McNichols Rd.
Detroit, MI 48221

Dear President Burns:

This letter is formal notification of action taken by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Board of Trustees (“the Board”) concerning Marygrove 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 recent Show-Cause Evaluation, including, but not limited to: the Show-Cause Report, the report of the visiting team, the Board Committee Hearing transcript, and the institution’s responses to these reports.

Summary of the Action: The Board determined that the institution is in compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation, Assumed Practices, and Federal Compliance Requirements and removed the Show-Cause Order from the institution. The institution meets Core Component 5.A with concerns. The institution is required to submit an Interim Report, as outlined below, no later than January 31, 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 Criterion One, Core Component 1.A, “the institution’s mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations,” for the following reasons:

- There is a clear understanding and embracing of the institution’s proposed mission by multiple constituencies;
- The institution engaged in activities to accurately reflect and align critical operations with the proposed mission as a graduate institution; and
- Mission integration is a core value and requirement of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (SSIHM) sponsorship and an integral component of the institution’s operations.
The institution has demonstrated that it now meets Criterion One, Core Component 1.B, “the mission is articulated publicly,” for the following reasons:

- The Board of Trustees of the College approved a new mission statement reflecting a graduate-only institution following an inclusive and collaborative process with the institution’s community; and
- The proposed mission statement accurately identifies the nature, scope and intended constituents of the institution’s programs and outreach initiatives. In addition, the mission clearly states the institution’s emphasis on graduate and professional studies toward career enhancement and social responsibility, value-based leadership, innovation, and service to the City of Detroit.

The institution has demonstrated that it now meets without concerns Criterion One, Core Component 1.D, “the institution’s mission demonstrates commitment to the public good,” for the following reasons:

- Commitment to the public good and education are shared values of the community partnerships in which the institution engages, as delineated in the current and proposed mission/vision statements; and
- The institution successfully documented evidence of its past and continuing commitment to the public good and responsiveness to the needs of the northwest Detroit community.

The institution has demonstrated that it 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:

- The policies guiding institutional integrity are codified in the Amended Articles of Incorporation, By-laws of the Board of Trustees, Faculty Policy Manual, Faculty Assembly Constitution, Employee Policy Manual, and Graduate Catalog; and
- The institution’s leadership has facilitated a culture of transparency and engagement with all stakeholders.

The institution has demonstrated that it now meets Criterion Two, Core Component 2.B, “the institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships,” for the following reason:

- The institution accurately and clearly presents itself to students and the public both virtually and in print materials.
The institution has demonstrated that it now meets 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:

- Deliberations by the governing board revealed consistent effort to preserve the institution even as financial exigency was declared;
- There are no external entities that exert undue influence on the governing board or senior leadership; and
- Daily management of the institution is delegated to the administration, and the faculty oversees curriculum and academic matters.

The institution has demonstrated that it 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 has been a slight increase in the number of full-time and part-time faculty and adjunct faculty to maintain an adequate ratio of students to faculty;
- The shared governance model and Faculty Policy Manual delineate the responsibilities of the core faculty with primary responsibility for the curriculum and its implementation, establishment of requirements for degrees, evaluation of the effectiveness of academic programs and setting of standards for status and performance;
- Faculty scholarship is supported with Faculty Development Awards, travel awards, and sabbaticals;
- The institution updated its policy on faculty qualifications to align with current HLC policy; and
- Processes for peer-based formative and summative evaluation on teaching, service, and scholarship, as well as promotion and tenure processes, are considered effective by the faculty.

The institution has demonstrated that it 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 has consolidated its graduate support services to provide ease of coordinating and monitoring their effectiveness and of navigation for working professionals;
- Delivery of academic and student support services has been reconfigured to reflect a coaching/mentoring model delivered in collaboration with faculty advisors to meet the ongoing needs of the graduate student population and increase the effectiveness of retention/persistence efforts;
- The Library has realigned its collection to increase support of the graduate programs and developed a 15-hour online information literacy course for graduate students; it regularly provides library and research skills training in classes across the on-campus
and online programs. In addition to the four full-time librarians at the institution, a 24/7 chat service is provided through a consortium of librarians throughout Michigan; and

- The institution has a well-developed and supported technological structure for delivery of its online programs and support of campus needs.

The institution has demonstrated that it now meets Criterion Three, Core Component 3.E, “the institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment,” for the following reasons:

- The new mission statement focuses on curricular and co-curricular programming for graduate and professional students, whether on-campus or online; and
- All programs provide enriching co-curricular and field-based experiences to supplement learning.

The institution has demonstrated that it now meets 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:

- The institution systematically collects and uses retention, persistence and completion data for educational improvement through the annual assessment process;
- The Enrollment Management and Retention Plan defines goals for retention and completion; and
- Persistence and completion data is collected and analyzed and subsequently strategies and action steps are designed to demonstrate responsiveness to the student population.

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

- While the institution has the capacity to support its new mission and current programs, and while it has strategic goals and plans and is implementing critical structures for achieving sustainability, long-term sustainability remains a concern. Specifically, attention is needed in the following areas:
  - Sustained improvement in CFI scores to meet the minimum criteria for demonstrated fiscal health;
  - Completion of financial audits in a timely manner to support fiscal decision making and address any required corrective action;
  - Progress on meeting strategic goals and annual benchmarks for enrollment growth and net enrollment revenue; and
Progress of strategic goals and annual benchmarks for financial viability with decreasing reliance on grant-funding from partner organizations or individual donors to balance operating budgets.

The institution has demonstrated that it now meets Criterion Five, Core Component 5.B, “the institution’s governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission,” for the following reasons:

- The institution has established governance and administrative structures that effectively support the new mission and are grounded in transparency and collaboration;
- Shared governance is a collaborative process in which the Board of Trustees, the SSIHM, the President and administration, and the faculty share responsibility for the welfare of the institution and for ensuring its success in carrying out its mission;
- Collaboration with faculty occurs through faculty representatives appointed by the Faculty Assembly who serve on all Board committees except executive, compensation, and trustees and honors; and
- The Board provides oversight of the institution’s financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

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 is driving its planning processes and has successfully developed its own internal capacity to engage in systemic, integrated, well-informed strategic planning and to allocate resources to achieve plan goals;
- In addition to inclusive and representative structures for strategic planning (i.e., the college-wide Resources and Planning Committee and the Board’s Long Range Planning Committee), the institution has begun regular community meetings to bring the entire institutional community together for shared planning and progress reports, as evidenced in minutes of the committees and confirmed by interviews with faculty, staff, administration and the Board; and
- Implementation of the Enrollment Management and Retention Plan has assisted in ensuring that the institution’s budgeting is optimized and calibrated to achieve enrollment targets rather than the prior model of the budget projection driving enrollment needs.

The institution has demonstrated that it now meets without concerns Criterion Five, Core Component 5.D, “the institution works systematically to improve its performance,” for the following reasons:

- The institution works systematically to document and improve the performance of the institution against the appropriate plan goals in all areas; and
• There is a systematic pattern of institutional improvement embedded in the institutional culture in addition to academic program review and assessment activities.

The institution has otherwise demonstrated that it is 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 January 31, 2019, regarding Core Component 5.A. Included in this report should be evidence of the following:

Core Component 5.A
- Three-year budget (proposed, current and previous fiscal years);
- Audited financial statements for 2017-18 and audit/communication letter/audit management letter;
- Interim financial statements for 2018-19 delineating cash flow and expenses;
- Enrollment for fall 2018 and winter/spring 2019 including a trend analysis;
- An update on the institution’s search for a permanent Chief Financial Officer; and
- Materials related to any significant changes in the institution’s strategic plan, planning processes, and/or leadership since the time of this action.

**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.

HLC policy\(^1\) 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. HLC will simultaneously inform the U.S. Department of Education of the removal of Show-Cause by copy of this letter.

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. Barbara Johnson.

---

\(^1\) COMM.A.10.010, Commission Public Notices and Statements
Sincerely,

Barbara Gellman-Danley
President

Enc: Public Disclosure Notice

Cc: Chair of the Board of Trustees, Marygrove College
Sally Welch, Provost, Marygrove College
Evaluation Team Chair
Michael Beamish, Manager, Private Postsecondary Education, Licensing Division, Bureau of Commercial Services, Proprietary School Licensing, Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs
Herman Bounds, Accreditation and State Liaison, Office of Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education
Barbara Johnson, Vice President for Accreditation Relations, Higher Learning Commission
Anthea Sweeney, Vice President for Legal and Governmental Affairs, Higher Learning Commission