Higher Learning Commission

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November 6, 2024

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dr. Frank Weller
President
Great Lakes Christian College
6211 West Willow Highway
Lansing, MI 48917-1299

Dear President Weller:

This letter is formal notification of action taken by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Board of Trustees ("the Board") concerning Great Lakes Christian College ("the Institution"). This action is effective as of the date the Board acted, October 31, 2024. 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. This action also resulted in the Board continuing and reaffirming the Institution's accreditation. The Institution meets Core Components 5.B and 5.C with concerns. The Institution is required to submit an interim report, as outlined below, no later than September 1, 2026.

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

Notification Program: HLC policy[3] states that the Institution remains ineligible for the Notification Program for Additional Locations until it has completed three (3) years in good standing as required for access.

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[1] INST.E.20.010, Probation.
[2] INST.G.10.010, Substantive Change.
[3] 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:

Great Lakes Christian College ("the Institution") now meets without concerns Criterion Four, Core Component 4.C, "the institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs," for the following reasons:

- The Institution has implemented strategies to continuously monitor student progress, including strategies to intervene when appropriate to support students in need of services to promote persistence and academic success.
- The Institution has divided its activities for promoting persistence and academic success in such a way that these responsibilities now are spread among three different administrators in order to assure sufficient focus to enable the initiatives to be effective and sustainable.
- The Institution has implemented several initiatives to enhance enrollment, retention, and persistence, resulting in increased enrollment and a current retention rate of 78%, which exceeds the Institution's peer group average of 61% and the Institution's own goal of 70%.
- The Institution is using data to adjust its efforts, as exemplified by the refocusing of recruitment efforts on student athletes with higher GPAs and the hiring of a new recruiter who focuses on a new demographic market for the Institution.

The Institution now meets without concerns Criterion Five, Core Component 5.A, "through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the institution's leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission," for the following reasons:

- The Institution has identified and implemented training for its board members regarding their role and expectations, including focused training on finances, which is provided by a board member with extensive expertise in this area.
- The Institution has developed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which clearly identify the initiatives necessary to fulfill the institution's mission and demonstrate clear connections between the board's role in planning and decision-making.
- The Institution has engaged its board in the use of data via a "Trustee Dashboard," which tracks KPIs and is updated monthly.

The Institution now meets, but with concerns, Criterion Five, Core Component 5.B, "the institution's resource base supports its educational offerings and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future," for the following reasons:

- The Institution has made improvements in its financial position, including through a significant financial gift that enabled the repayment of internal debts; however, more time is needed for the measures adopted to ensure the long-term fiscal stability of the Institution.
- The Institution is expanding its donor base and has made improvements to its Composite Financial Index (CFI), but it will take time to demonstrate that these

efforts are successful and sustainable in the long term.
- The Institution has adopted a dynamic budgeting process that involves tracking variances from the budget on a monthly basis so that adjustments can be made and cash flow can be monitored and is also tracking the Institution's CFI scores as indictors of financial health, but it will take time to demonstrate that these efforts are successful and sustainable in the long term.

The Institution now meets, but with concerns, Criterion Five, Core Component 5.C, "the institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement," for the following reasons:
- Although the Institution's small size enables frequent and continuous discussions among its staff and administration, these processes should be formalized in order to become sustainable and consistently practiced in the long term.
- The Institution's strategic planning process is comprehensive and inclusive of all stakeholders of the Institution, but the Institution should continue to formalize these processes to include the linkage between budgetary decisions and the strategic plan.
- While the Institution has demonstrated an improved planning process that is inclusive of its board and relies on data, dashboards, and KPIs, the current process remains relatively informal; the institution should work to formalize these processes in order to become sustainable and consistently practiced in the long term.
- The Institution's strategic plan is in its first year and more time is needed for the Institution to document and institutionalize systematic planning for improvement.

The Board of Trustees of the Higher Learning Commission has determined based on the preceding findings and evidence in the record the Institution is otherwise in compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation 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 September 1, 2026, regarding Core Components 5.B and 5.C.[4]

Comprehensive Evaluation: The Institution has been placed on the Standard Pathway with its next comprehensive evaluation for reaffirmation of accreditation in 2028-29.

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

[4] Please note: Revisions to HLC's Criteria for Accreditation and Assumed Practices will go into effect on September 1, 2025. Institutions will be evaluated against these revised HLC requirements for all reviews conducted after that date, including reviews related to previously assigned monitoring. Institutional reports submitted on or after September 1, 2025, or institutional reports or Assurance Arguments for visits that will take place on or after September 1, 2025, should be written to the revised version of the Criteria or Assumed Practices as applicable. More information, including a crosswalk between the current and revised versions of the Criteria, is available on HLC's website at https://www.hlcommission.org/accreditation/policies/criteria/.

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,[5] 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. Andrew Lootens-White.

Sincerely,

Barbara Gellman-Danley
President

Enc: Public Disclosure Notice

Cc: Chair of the Board of Trustees, Great Lakes Christian College
John Nugent, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Great Lakes Christian College
Evaluation Team Chair
IAC Hearing Committee Chair
Andrew Lootens-White, Vice President of Accreditation Relations, Higher Learning Commission
Marla Morgen, Vice President and General Counsel, Higher Learning Commission
Jim Farhat, Departmental Specialist, Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Opportunity, Workforce Development, Postsecondary Schools

[5] COMM.A.10.010, Notice of Accreditation Actions, HLC Public Notices and Public Statements