

March 3, 2026

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dr. Allen Moss
President
Mesalands Community College
911 South Tenth Street
Tucumcari, NM 88401

Dear President Moss:

This letter is formal notification of action taken by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Board of Trustees (“the Board”) concerning Mesalands Community College (“the Institution”). This action is effective as of the date the Board acted, February 26, 2026. 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 4.B and 4.C with concerns. The Institution is required to submit an interim report, as outlined below, no later than April 30, 2028.

Substantive Change: HLC policy¹ 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 policy³ 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.

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:

Mesalands Community College (“the Institution”) now meets without concerns Criterion Two, Core Component 2.A, “actions taken by the institution’s governing board, administration, faculty and staff demonstrate adherence to established policies and procedures,” for the following reasons:

- The Institution has made significant progress in stabilizing its leadership including through the recent appointment of a new president as well as a new board chair, who possesses relevant background in city planning and management.
- The Institution has reviewed and revised, as appropriate, its policies and procedures to align with good practice and to set forth clear expectations for ethical behavior and effective practice, and it now has mechanisms for overseeing adherence to these policies and procedures.
- The Institution has implemented new policies related to financial management and spending and has established an oversight process to ensure ongoing compliance with these policies.

The Institution now meets without concerns Criterion Two, Core Component 2.C, “in discharging its fiduciary duties, the institution’s governing board is free from undue external influence and empowered to act in the best interests of the institution, including the students it serves,” for the following reasons:

- The Institution has developed and implemented policies for its board of directors that delineate the separation of duties between the Institution’s administration and the board, affirm the president’s role overseeing the day to day operations of the Institution, and define the board’s role in providing financial oversight and hiring and evaluating the performance of the president.
- New and existing board members recently completed professional training and development to further reinforce the board’s role in governing the Institution.
- As noted under Core Component 2.A, a new board chair was recently appointed who has relevant experience and expertise, and through the leadership of the board chair, the Institution’s board has demonstrated a commitment to its structure, membership, and oversight role.

The Institution 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:

- The Institution has recently hired several new staff members in areas deemed necessary, including three in student services positions and two in information technology.
- The Institution has also hired a new faculty member in business due to increased enrollment in certain programs and will continue to hire adjunct faculty as needed depending on enrollment growth.

- The Institution has implemented several measures to address staff workload, including cross-training in critical areas, documenting responsibilities and tasks for training purposes, and updating job descriptions for all faculty and staff.

The Institution now meets without concerns Criterion Four, Core Component 4.A, “the institution’s administrative structures are effective and facilitate collaborative processes such as shared governance; data-informed decision making; and engagement with internal and external constituencies as appropriate,” for the following reasons:

- With the appointment of a permanent president, the Institution’s leadership has been sufficiently stabilized to ensure effective administration and operations.
- The board of directors has also stabilized under the leadership of a new chair, and is fulfilling its duties as delineated in the Institution’s bylaws and written policies.
- The Institution provided evidence of established operating structures that demonstrate a commitment to shared governance and effective and data-informed decision making.
- The Institution’s Staff Senate and Faculty Senate provide ongoing mechanisms for information flow, shared governance, and conflict resolution.

The Institution continues to meet with concerns Criterion Four, Core Component 4.B, “the institution’s financial and personnel resources effectively support its current operations. The institution’s financial management balances short-term needs with long-term commitments and ensures its ongoing sustainability,” for the following reasons:

- The Institution has completed financial audits for FY2023 and FY2024, and anticipates that the FY2025 audit will be completed in spring 2026.
- The Institution has demonstrated progress in meeting its expected 3% reserve balance, but will continue to be under monitoring by the New Mexico Higher Education Department until required benchmarks are met.
- The Institution now has four full-time employees in its business office, including an acting Chief Financial Officer; the Institution is currently seeking a permanent CFO, with expectations of hiring for the position by the end of FY2026.
- The Institution has made substantial progress in establishing standard business and financial policies and practices on campus, including regular budget to actual reporting, systematic oversight of expenditures, and financial projections.
- Because its efforts to establish processes and practices are recent and still developing, the Institution has yet to provide sufficient evidence regarding its ability to submit timely audits and to sustain its policies and practices into the future.

The Institution meets, but with concerns, Criterion Four, Core Component 4.C, “the institution engages in systematic strategic planning for quality improvement. It relies on data, integrating its insights from enrollment forecasts, financial capacity, student learning assessment, institutional operations and the external environment,” for the following reasons:

- The Institution has a plan and vision for intentional strategic growth and program development and continues to engage in planning to meet the needs of its community, including through its offering of several educational programs that are critical to the local economy.

- The Institution has demonstrated that it now uses data from its program review and student learning assessment processes to allocate new program spending with identified needs.
- While the Institution has plans for growth and a vision for the future, its emphasis on stabilizing its financial position and operations has limited the Institution's ability to develop and adopt a comprehensive strategic plan that ties planning to resource allocation.

The Institution now meets Assumed Practice D.3, "the institution has future financial projections addressing its long-term financial sustainability," for the following reasons:

- The Institution now engages in processes to develop future financial projections and address its long-term financial stability.

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, 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 April 30, 2028, regarding Core Components 4.B and 4.C.

Comprehensive Evaluation: The Institution has been placed on the Standard Pathway with its next comprehensive evaluation for reaffirmation of accreditation in 2029-30.

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,⁴ 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.

⁴ COMMA.10.010, Notice of Accreditation Actions, HLC Public Notices and Public Statements

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. Jamie Stanesa.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara Gellman-Danley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Barbara Gellman-Danley
President

Enc: Public Disclosure Notice

Cc: Chair of the Board of Trustees, Mesalands Community College
Stephen Edwards, Professor of History, Mesalands Community College
Evaluation Team Chair
IAC Hearing Committee Chair
Stephanie Rodriguez, Cabinet Secretary, New Mexico Higher Education Department
Jamie Stanesa, Vice President of Accreditation Relations, Higher Learning Commission
Marla Morgen, Senior Vice President and General Counsel, Higher Learning
Commission