

June 30, 2026

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Zora Mulligan
Chancellor
Missouri State University-West Plains
128 Garfield Ave.
West Plains, MO65775

Dear Chancellor Mulligan:

This letter is formal notification of action taken by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Board of Trustees (“the Board”) concerning Missouri State University-West Plains (“the Institution”). This action is effective as of the date the Board acted, June 25, 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 Component 4.C with concerns. The Institution is required to submit an embedded interim report, as outlined below, with its next Assurance Filing.

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:

Missouri State University-West Plains (“the Institution”) now meets without concerns Criterion Three, Core Component 3.A “the institution maintains learning goals and outcomes that reflect a level of rigor commensurate with college-level work, including by program level and the content of each of its educational programs,” for the following reasons:

- The Institution has engaged in conversations with its China program, dual credit faculty, and dual credit partners to ensure that courses are aligned with the main campus’s courses.
- The Institution assesses courses offered off campus with the same rigor as courses being offered on campus.
- The Institution continues to develop common assignments used to measure course outcomes that link to programmatic and institutional outcomes.
- The Institution’s program faculty and staff preload master syllabi with outcomes for adjunct faculty, making the assessment process easier to follow.

The Institution now meets Criterion Three, Core Component 3.E, “the institution improves the quality of educational programs based on its assessment of student learning,” for the following reasons:

- The Institution has the leadership, capacity, and resources to continue significant improvements in assessment and strengthen its culture of assessment.
- The Institution has established a robust, durable system of assessment, which is improving academic programming.
- The Institution has made improvements in numerous areas such as the freshman seminar, nursing pass rates on licensure exams, and improved advising practices across academic programs.
- The Institution has hired a Director of Assessment.
- The Faculty Senate of the Institution has its own assessment committee to facilitate best practices.

The Institution now meets without concerns Criterion Three, Core Component 3.F, “the institution improves its curriculum based on periodic program review,” for the following reasons:

- The Institution leverages program review to advance improvement and strengthen processes.
- The Institution emphasizes the relationship between assessment and program review in its processes.
- The Institution uses program review to allow for more efficacious budget analysis and better-informed budget requests.
- The Institution can identify trends that require short-term or longer-term responses.
- The Institution facilitates internal conversations between and among programs to foster budget prioritization.

The Institution continues to meet 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 initiated improvements including the revision of the mission and vision, and the establishment of working groups to identify resource needs and strategic planning priorities.
- The Institution uses an inclusive process for planning. Implementation of the plan will follow guidance from the working teams.
- Given the trajectory of work regarding strategic planning at the Institution, final systems and products to validate the Institution’s progress are not yet available.

The Board of Trustees of the Higher Learning Commission has determined based on the preceding findings and evidence in the record that 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 embedded interim report with its next Assurance Filing regarding Core Component 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 COMM.A.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. Thomas Bordenkircher.

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, Missouri State University-West Plains
Alexandra Graham, Director of Assessment and Accreditation, Missouri State University-
West Plains
Evaluation Team Chair
IAC Hearing Committee Chair
Thomas Bordenkircher, Vice President of Accreditation Relations, Higher Learning
Commission
Marla Morgen, Senior Vice President and General Counsel, Higher Learning
Commission
Ben Boggs, Commissioner, Missouri Department of Higher Education & Workforce
Development