

June 30, 2026

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dr. Michael Waide
President
Pierpont Community and Technical College
500 Galliher Drive
Fairmont, WV 26554

Dear President Waide:

This letter is formal notification of action taken by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Board of Trustees (“the Board”) concerning Pierpont Community and Technical College (“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 recent Notice visit, including, but not limited to: the Notice report the Institution submitted, the report from the Notice Visit team, the report of the Institutional Actions Council (IAC) Meeting Committee, and the institutional responses to these reports.

Summary of the Action: The Board determined that the Institution is no longer at risk of noncompliance with the Criteria for Accreditation and removed the Institution from Notice.

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:

Pierpont Community and Technical College (“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:

- Each member of the Institution’s Board of Governors, new or continuing, is provided professional development through a series of comprehensive training offered by the West Virginia Community and Technical College System, including sessions on Fiduciary Responsibility and Liability and Board Governance and the Law.
- The Institution has begun an annual evaluation process, which assesses the Institution's alignment with the pillars outlined in the current strategic plan.

The Institution now meets without concerns 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’s examination of strategies to address student success (retention, persistence, and completion) has led to several significant investments across academic and student support functions.
- The Institution’s most recent budget planning, development, and approval process resulted in prioritizing student success programs and initiatives for funding at the expense of other institutional needs.
- The Institution has implemented interventions to keep students enrolled and to link them to co-curricular and extra-curricular activities that enhance the quality of their educational experiences

The Institution now meets without concerns 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 hired a Director of Institutional Effectiveness, who partners with Academic Affairs and Student Services, which has helped provide the framework for assessment activities.
- The Institution has put structured and semester-based assessment practices into place, including co-curricular programs.
- The Institution’s assessment practices are well integrated into its strategic planning, curriculum development, and instructional development.

The Institution now meets without concerns Criterion Three, Core Component 3.G, “the institution’s student success outcomes demonstrate continuous improvement, taking into account the student populations it serves and benchmarks that reference peer institutions,” for the following reasons:

- The Institution has revised its goals for persistence, retention, and graduation in the Strategic Plan 2024-26 and these measurable goals are tracked by departments and across the institution.
- The Institution uses internal reports on these measures such as persistence, retention, and graduation during 5-year program reviews, annual program viability reviews, specialized accreditation, recruiting, and admissions efforts.

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:

- The Institution uses its strategic plan to guide policies and budgets, which assists with integrated planning.
- The Institution has implemented enrollment dashboards and an institutional data reporting calendar, which helps align reporting across operational divisions.

The Institution now meets without 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’s budgeting process is linked to the Strategic Plan 2024-26, and bi-weekly working sessions include input from both the Board of Governors and staff.
- The Institution’s budget process reflects a data-informed strategic budgeting process that is closely aligned to institutional priorities and serves as a planning mechanism that provides a method to prioritize requests aligned to the strategic plan.

The Institution now meets without 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’s planning processes include a restructured Five-year Program Review and Program Viability process that provide data points to allow the Institution to evaluate enrollment trends and program offerings.
- The Institution uses data points and evaluations to inform curricular revisions, staffing and resource decisions, and improvement plans.

The Board of Trustees of the Higher Learning Commission has determined based on the preceding findings and evidence in the record that the Institution has otherwise demonstrated that it is in compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation, Assumed Practices, and Federal Compliance Requirements and is not at risk of being out of compliance with the Criteria, and thus, should be removed from Notice.

Next Steps in the HLC Review Process

Comprehensive Evaluation: The Board maintained the Institution on the Standard Pathway with its next comprehensive evaluation (Year 4) in 2027-28.

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,¹ 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.

¹ 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. Linnea Stenson.

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, Pierpont Community and Technical College
Olivia Boltz, Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Pierpont Community and Technical College
Evaluation Team Chair
IAC Meeting Committee Chair
Sarah Armstrong Tucker, Chancellor, West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission and West Virginia Community and Technical College System
Linnea A. Stenson, Vice President of Accreditation Relations, Higher Learning Commission
Marla Morgen, Senior Vice President and General Counsel, Higher Learning Commission