

March 4, 2025

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dr. Wanda Parisien
Acting President
Turtle Mountain College
10145 BIA Road 7
P.O. Box 340
Belcourt, ND 58316

Dear President Parisien:

This letter is formal notification of action taken by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Board of Trustees (“the Board”) concerning Turtle Mountain College (“the Institution”). This action is effective as of the date the Board acted, February 27, 2025. 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 continued and reaffirmed the accreditation of the Institution. The institution meets Core Component 2.C with concerns. The Institution is required to host a focused visit, as outlined below, during spring 2027.

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:

Turtle Mountain College (“the Institution”) meets, but with concerns, Criterion Two, Core Component 2.C, “the governing board of the institution is autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution in compliance with board policies and to ensure the institution’s integrity,” for the following reasons:

- The Institution has approved revisions to its Bylaws to address previous issues with respect to the independence of the Board of Directors (BOD) to make decisions autonomously in the best interests of the Institution.
- The Institution’s revised Bylaws removed prior language requiring “concurrence” with its Board of Trustees (BOT) and revised internal procedures to ensure the independence of the BOD in its decision making on behalf of the Institution.
- The Institution has begun to implement the changes contemplated by the revised Bylaws in current practice, starting in December 2024. However, the Institution’s

implementation of new policy and procedures resulting from the revised Bylaws are not yet fully implemented. The Institution expects such implementation to continue.

- The Institution intends to recruit and hire a new president in 2025, which will help to ensure that the BOD, BOT, and president of the Institution operate within the defined scope of their respective roles.

Next Steps in the HLC Review Process

Focused Visit: The Board required that the Institution host a focused visit regarding Core Component 2.C to occur during spring 2027.¹

Comprehensive Evaluation: The Institution has been maintained on the Standard Pathway with its next comprehensive evaluation (Year 4) 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 of Accreditation Status, including the dates of the last and next comprehensive evaluation visits, will be posted to the HLC website.

HLC policy² 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.

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,



Barbara Gellman-Danley
President

¹ 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/>.

² COMM.A.10.010, Notice of Accreditation Actions, HLC Public Notices and Public Statements

Cc: Ace Charette, Director of Research, Assessment & Accreditation, Turtle Mountain
College
Evaluation Team Chair
IAC Hearing Committee Chair
Jamie Stanesa, Vice President of Accreditation Relations, Higher Learning Commission
Marla Morgen, Vice President and General Counsel, Higher Learning Commission