



Founded in 1885

Mount Holyoke College

FEB 06 2013

Office of the President

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES, INC.
COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

February 4, 2013

RICHARD L. PATTENAUDE, Chair (2013)
University of Maine

JEAN A. WYLD, Vice Chair (2015)
Springfield College

DAVID F. FINNEY (2013)
Champlain College

WILFREDO NIEVES (2013)
Capital Community College

LINDA S. WELLS (2013)
Boston University

ANDREW B. EVANS (2014)
Wellesley College

DAVID S. GRAVES (2014)
Laureate Hospitality, Art & Design

R. BRUCE HITCHNER (2014)
Tufts University

MARY ELLEN JUKOSKI (2014)
Mitchell College

DAVID L. LEVINSON (2014)
Norwalk Community College

BRUCE L. MALLORY (2014)
University of New Hampshire

PATRICIA MAGUIRE MESERVEY (2014)
Salem State University

CHRISTOPHER J. SULLIVAN (2014)
Concord, NH

DAVID E. A. CARSON (2015)
Hartford, CT

THOMAS L.G. DWYER (2015)
Johnson & Wales University

JOHN F. GABRANSKI (2015)
Haydenville, MA

WILLIAM F. KENNEDY (2015)
Boston, MA

JOHN S. OXMAN (2015)
Auburn, ME

JACQUELINE D. PETERSON (2015)
College of the Holy Cross

REV. BRIAN J. SHANLEY, O.P. (2015)
Providence College

Director of the Commission
BARBARA E. BRITTINGHAM
bbrittingham@neasc.org

Deputy Director of the Commission
PATRICIA M. O'BRIEN, SND
pobrien@neasc.org

Associate Director of the Commission
CAROL L. ANDERSON
canderson@neasc.org

Associate Director of the Commission
ROBERT C. FROH
rfroh@neasc.org

Associate Director of the Commission
PAULA A. HARBECKE
pharbecke@neasc.org

Dr. Lynn C. Pasquerella
President
Mount Holyoke College
50 College Street
South Hadley, MA 01075-1496

Dear President Pasquerella:

I am pleased to inform you that at its meeting on September 21, 2012, the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education considered the fifth-year interim report submitted by Mount Holyoke College and voted to take the following action:

that the fifth-year interim report submitted by Mount Holyoke College be accepted;

that the comprehensive evaluation scheduled for Fall 2017 be confirmed;

that, in addition to the information included in all self-studies, the self-study prepared in advance of the Fall 2017 comprehensive evaluation give emphasis to the institution's success with:

1. continuing to address the items specified for attention in the Fall 2012 interim report;
2. implementing its Strategic Plan with particular attention given to the success of efforts that strengthen the institution's financial position, reduce the tuition discount rate, and address deferred maintenance.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

The Commission commends Mount Holyoke College for engaging in healthy internal debate and critique – stimulated by the appointment of a new president in 2009-2010 – since its last comprehensive review in Fall 2007. We note with favor that the College has rechartered its Academic Priorities Committee and constituted a Faculty Workload Committee to measure and adjust faculty workload while encouraging curriculum innovation and review. The institution's solid retention rate (91.7%) and six-

year graduation rate (84.9%) have shown slight improvement, and we are gratified to learn that the College is committed to improving these rates to align with its peer institutions. Finally, the Strategic Plan has identified measures intended to strengthen Mount Holyoke's financial position by lowering cost structures, optimizing net tuition revenues, and finding new sources of revenue.

The report provided focused responses to each of the eleven standards and reflects an understanding throughout the institution of its commitment to the education of women both in terms of its past and its future. The third section of the report addressing "Assessment, Retention and Student Success" presented a richly detailed analysis of efforts emphasizing the quality of student learning with particular attention given to learning within the academic major. This section indicates that faculty have established learning goals for the major, and each department reports on student learning and its assessment annually.

The scheduling of a comprehensive evaluation in Fall 2017 is consistent with Commission policy requiring each accredited institution to undergo a comprehensive evaluation at least once every ten years. Mount Holyoke is asked, in the self-study prepared for the Fall 2017 comprehensive evaluation, to report on its continuing progress in addressing the items specified for attention in the Fall 2012 interim report. The Commission realizes that these are matters requiring sustained attention and effort; hence we ask for an update in Fall 2017. We further ask that the self-study address one additional matter related to our standards on *Planning and Evaluation, Physical and Technological Resources, and Financial Resources*.

Despite the economic downturn over the past few years, Mount Holyoke enjoys a solid financial position, and the Strategic Plan identifies measures intended to strengthen its financial position as noted above. These include focusing on such matters as reducing the tuition discount rate which reached 56% over the past two years, and continuing to address critical deferred maintenance needs. In the self-study prepared for the Fall 2017 comprehensive evaluation, we look forward to learning of the institution's continued success here as guided by our standards on *Planning and Evaluation, Physical and Technological Resources, and Financial Resources*:

The institution plans beyond a short-term horizon, including strategic planning that involves realistic analyses of internal and external opportunities and constraints. It plans for and responds to financial and other contingencies, establishes feasible priorities, and develops a realistic course of action to achieve identified objectives. Institutional decision-making, particularly the allocation of resources, is consistent with planning priorities (2.3).

The institution undertakes physical resource planning linked to academic and student services, support functions, and financial planning. It determines the adequacy of existing physical and technological resources and identifies and plans the specified resolution of deferred maintenance needs. Space planning occurs on a regular basis as part of physical resource evaluation and planning, and is consistent with the mission and purposes of the institution (8.4).

The institution preserves and enhances available financial resources sufficient to support its mission. It manages its financial resources and allocates them in a way that reflects its mission and purposes. It demonstrates the ability to respond to financial emergencies and unforeseen circumstances (9.1).

The institution and its governing board regularly and systematically review the effectiveness of the institution's financial aid policy and practices in advancing the institution's mission and helping to ensure that the institution enrolls and supports the student body it seeks to serve (9.5).

Dr. Lynn C. Pasquerella
February 4, 2013
Page 3

Opportunities identified for new sources of revenue are reviewed by the administration and board to ensure the integrity of the institution and the quality of the academic program are maintained and enhanced. The institution planning a substantive change demonstrates the financial capacity to ensure that the new initiative meets the standards of quality of the institution and the Commission's Standards (9.10).

The Commission expressed appreciation for the report submitted by Mount Holyoke College and hopes that its preparation has contributed to institutional improvement. It appreciates your cooperation in the effort to provide public assurance of the quality of higher education in New England.

You are encouraged to share this letter with all of the institution's constituencies. It is Commission policy to inform the chairperson of the institution's governing board of action on its accreditation status. In a few days we will be sending a copy of this letter to Ms. Mary Davis. The institution is free to release information about the report and the Commission's action to others, in accordance with Commission policy.

If you have any questions about the Commission's action, please contact Barbara Brittingham, Director of the Commission.

Sincerely,



Richard L. Pattenau

RLP/jm

Enclosure

cc: Ms. Mary Davis