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COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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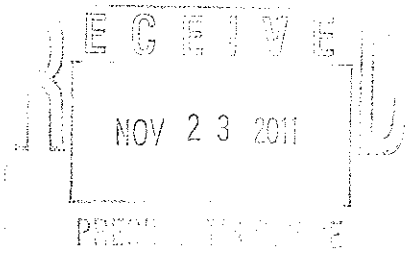
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November 21, 2011

Dr. Susan Herbst  
President  
University of Connecticut  
352 Mansfield Road, Unit 2048  
Storrs, CT 06269-2048



Dear President Herbst:

I am pleased to inform you that at its meeting on September 23, 2011, the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education considered the fifth-year interim report submitted by University of Connecticut and voted to take the following action:

that the fifth-year interim report submitted by the University of Connecticut be accepted;

that the comprehensive evaluation scheduled for Fall 2016, be confirmed;

that, in addition to the information included in all self-studies, the self-study prepared in advance of the Fall 2016 evaluation give emphasis to the institution's success in:

- 1) implementing the Academic Plan, with emphasis on goals for faculty hiring, student/faculty ratios, the number of tenure-track faculty, the gender and ethnic diversity among the faculty, and the effectiveness of teaching evaluation methods;
- 2) continuing to implement a comprehensive approach to the assessment of student learning, with emphasis on the assessment of general education, and on ensuring that all academic departments collect, analyze, and use assessment data for improvement;
- 3) achieving the institution's goal to reduce the graduation-rate gap between minority and non-minority students, and providing evidence of the success of initiatives to support the goal, with particular attention given to student advising;

- 4) continuing to ensure financial stability, with emphasis on the University's success in maintaining reserves and generating new revenue, including through private fundraising;
- 5) repairing or replacing buildings based on the UCONN 2000 plan.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

The fifth-year interim report submitted by University of Connecticut was accepted because it responded to the concerns raised by the Commission in its letter of October 12, 2007, and it also addressed each of the eleven standards.

The Commission commends the University for bringing more coherence to its Academic Plan through the adoption of integrated goals, strategies, and areas of excellence that are being implemented through resource reallocation and the generation of new revenues. The improved planning processes have led to a better alignment of human resources to insure that faculty replacement hires and new positions are targeted to areas identified in the Academic Plan. We note with favor that the institution has maintained financial stability in spite of decreased state appropriations and declining endowment income by implementing cost-cutting measures, retirement incentives, increases in tuition and fees, new revenue generating programs (on-line instruction and summer programming), increases in non-resident enrollment, and successful private fund raising.

The report provided detailed descriptions and appraisals for each of the eleven standards demonstrating how the institution addresses the standard and delineating specific concerns prompted by each of the standards. The data forms were carefully completed and provided relevant data for understanding the institution's fulfillment of the standards. Finally, assessments provided in the narrative materials were corroborated by the data forms.

The scheduling of a comprehensive evaluation in Fall 2016 is consistent with Commission policy requiring each accredited institution to undergo a comprehensive evaluation at least once every ten years. The items the Commission asks to be given special emphasis within the self-study prepared for the comprehensive evaluation are matters related to our standards on *Planning and Evaluation*, *The Academic Program*, *Faculty*, *Students*, *Financial Resources*, and *Physical and Technological Resources*.

As part of the self-study for the Fall 2016 comprehensive evaluation, we look forward to learning about the institution's continued success in implementing the Academic Plan, as evidence of its "demonstrable record of success in implementing the results of its planning" (2.4). We welcome an appraisal of processes and outcomes of the plan with particular emphasis on the University's goals for faculty hiring, student/faculty ratios, level of tenure-track faculty, and gender and ethnic diversity among the faculty. We are interested in how the institution has made improvements to the effectiveness of its teaching evaluation methods.

The Fall 2016 self-study will also afford an opportunity for the University to demonstrate its success in developing a comprehensive approach to the assessment of student learning, including systematic evaluation of general education and efforts of the Arts and Sciences and Fine Arts departments to extend their assessment efforts beyond developing learning goals and outcome methodologies to collecting and analyzing data and using the results for improvement. We understand that, to increase support for these efforts, the University intends to replace its current electronic monitoring and data retrieval system, OATS. This section of the self-study should be informed by our standards on *Planning and Evaluation* and *The Academic Program*:

Institutional research is sufficient to support planning and evaluation. The institution systematically collects and uses data necessary to support its planning efforts and to enhance institutional effectiveness (2.2).

The general education requirement is coherent and substantive. It embodies the institution's definition of an educated person and prepares students for the world in which they will live. The requirement informs the design of all general education courses, and provides criteria for its evaluation, including the assessment of what students learn (4.16).

The institution's approach to understanding student learning focuses on the course, program, and institutional level. Evidence is considered at the appropriate level of focus, with the results being a demonstrable factor in improving the learning opportunities and results for students (4.49).

We understand that the institution's Retention and Graduation Task Force presented findings to the University Senate indicating that retention and graduation rates for underrepresented minority students are lower than those for majority students. A comparison of six-year graduation rates for the Fall 2000 and Fall 2004 cohorts shows improvement (74% overall and 69% for minority students in 2000; 81% overall and 72% for minority students in 2004) but also indicates a growing gap between students overall and minority students. We are pleased to learn that a Senate subcommittee has been convened to address this issue. We look forward to learning through the Fall 2016 self-study about the University's success in achieving its goals with respect to retention and graduation rates, with emphasis on the success of efforts to enhance student advising. Our standards on *Faculty* and *Students* provide guidance here:

The institution has in place an effective system of academic advising that meets student needs for information and advice and is compatible with its educational objectives. Faculty and other personnel responsible for academic advising are adequately informed and prepared to discharge their advising functions. Resources are adequate to ensure the quality of advising for students regardless of the location of instruction or the mode of delivery (5.19).

Measures of student success, including rates of retention and graduation, are separately determined for any group that the institution specifically recruits, and those rates are used in evaluating the success of specialized recruitment and the services and opportunities provided for the recruited students (6.7).

The Commission notes that the state's FY2012 budget results in a decrease in the University's permanent base budget of approximately \$46 million. We understand that the institution intends to address this by making reductions in academic and non-academic areas, generating revenue enhancements through increases in tuition, room and board, and expanded summer school offerings and reallocating \$10 million of one-time monies from the FY2011 budget to cover cuts to FY2013. The Fall 2016 comprehensive evaluation will afford the institution the opportunity to demonstrate that it "preserves and enhances available financial resources sufficient to support its mission" and "manages its financial resources and allocates them in a way that reflects its mission and purposes" (9.1).

The report submitted by University of Connecticut acknowledges recent challenges in implementing the "exceptional \$2.3 billion UCONN 2000 capital projects construction program," specifically the need to redirect funds to code remediation and construction inflation not sufficiently accounted for in the initial planning and timing of projects. We understand that building renovation projects have been extended for an additional three years, to 2018, and that

UCONN 2000 Phase III legislation appropriated \$864 million to develop a new research park in Storrs and an expanded Health Center in Farmington. We look forward to learning, in Fall 2016, of the institution's success in prioritizing and implementing its capital projects, as informed by our standard on *Physical and Technological Resources*:

The institution's physical and technological resources, including classrooms, laboratories, network infrastructure, materials, equipment, and buildings and grounds, whether owned or rented, are commensurate with institutional purposes. They are designed, maintained, and managed at both on- and off-campus sites in a manner that serves institutional needs. Proper management, maintenance, and operation of all physical facilities, including student housing provided by the institution, are accomplished by adequate and competent staffing (8.1).

Classrooms and other facilities are appropriately equipped and adequate in capacity. Classrooms and other teaching spaces support teaching methods appropriate to the discipline. Students and faculty have access to appropriate physical, technological, and educational resources to support teaching and learning (8.2).

The Commission expressed appreciation for the report submitted by University of Connecticut 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.

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 Mr. Lawrence McHugh. 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,



Mary Jo Maydew

MJM/dmc

Enclosure

cc: Mr. Lawrence McHugh



**NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES  
COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

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**Public Disclosure of Information  
About Affiliated Institutions**

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The following policy governs the release of information regarding the status of affiliated colleges and universities by institutions and by the Commission.

**1. Release of Information by Institutions Regarding Their Accreditation  
Following Commission Action**

At the conclusion of the evaluation process institutions are encouraged to make publicly available information about their accreditation status including the findings of team reports and any obligations or requirements established by Commission action, as well as any plans to address stated concerns. Because of the potential to be misleading, institutions are asked not to publish or otherwise disseminate excerpts from these materials.

While the Commission does not release copies of self-studies, progress reports, evaluation reports, or other documents related to the accreditation of individual institutions, it believes it to be good practice for institutions to make these materials available, in their entirety, after notification of Commission action.

While the Commission does not initiate public release of information on actions of show cause or deferral, if such information is released by the institution in question, the Commission will respond to related inquiries.

If an institution releases or otherwise disseminates information which misrepresents or distorts its accreditation status, the institution will be notified and asked to take corrective action publicly correcting any misleading information it may have disseminated, including but not limited to the accreditation status of the institution, the contents of evaluation reports, and the Commission actions with respect to the institution. Should it fail to do so, the New England Association, acting through its Chief Executive Officer, will release a public statement in such form and content as it deems desirable providing correct information.

## 2. Published Statement on Accredited Status

The Commission asks that one of the following statements be used for disclosing on its website and in catalogues, brochures, advertisements, etc., that the institution is accredited.

An institution may wish to include within its website, catalogue or other material a statement which will give the consuming public a better idea of the meaning of regional accreditation. When that is the case, the Commission requests that the following statement be used in its entirety:

\_\_\_\_\_ College (University) is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc. through its Commission on Institutions of Higher Education.

Accreditation of an institution of higher education by the New England Association indicates that it meets or exceeds criteria for the assessment of institutional quality periodically applied through a peer review process. An accredited college or university is one which has available the necessary resources to achieve its stated purposes through appropriate educational programs, is substantially doing so, and gives reasonable evidence that it will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. Institutional integrity is also addressed through accreditation.

Accreditation by the New England Association is not partial but applies to the institution as a whole. As such, it is not a guarantee of every course or program offered, or the competence of individual graduates. Rather, it provides reasonable assurance about the quality of opportunities available to students who attend the institution.

Inquiries regarding the accreditation status by the New England Association should be directed to the administrative staff of the institution. Individuals may also contact:

**Commission on Institutions of Higher Education**  
**New England Association of Schools and Colleges**  
**209 Burlington Road, Suite 201**  
**Bedford, MA 01730-1433**  
**(781) 271-0022**  
**E-Mail: [cihe@neasc.org](mailto:cihe@neasc.org)**

The shorter statement that an institution may choose for announcing its accredited status follows:

\_\_\_\_\_ College (University) is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc., through its Commission on Institutions of Higher Education.

Inquiries regarding the accreditation status by the New England Association should be directed to the administrative staff of the institution. Individuals may also contact:

**Commission on Institutions of Higher Education  
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E-Mail: [cihe@neasc.org](mailto:cihe@neasc.org)**

Accreditation by the New England Association has reference to the institution as a whole. Therefore, statements like “fully accredited” or “this program is accredited by the New England Association” or “this degree is accredited by the New England Association” are incorrect and should not be used.

### 3. **Published Statement on Candidate Status**

An institution granted Candidate for Accreditation status must use the following statement whenever it makes reference to its affiliation with the New England Association:

\_\_\_\_\_ College (University) has been granted Candidate for Accreditation status by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc. through its Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. Candidacy for Accreditation is a status of affiliation with the Commission which indicates that the institution has achieved initial recognition and is progressing toward accreditation.

Candidacy is not accreditation nor does it assure eventual accreditation.

Inquiries regarding the status of an institution affiliated with the New England Association should be directed to the administrative staff of the college or university. Individuals may also contact:

**The Commission on Institutions of Higher Education  
New England Association of Schools and Colleges  
209 Burlington Road, Suite 201  
Bedford, MA 01730-1433  
(781) 271-0022  
E-Mail: [cihe@neasc.org](mailto:cihe@neasc.org)**

**4. Public Disclosure of Information About Affiliated Institutions by the Commission**

Upon inquiry, the Commission will release the following information about affiliated institutions:

- The date of initial accreditation and/or when candidacy was granted;
- The date and nature (comprehensive or focused) of the most recent on-site evaluation and subsequent Commission action on the institution's accredited status;
- The date and nature (comprehensive or focused) of the next scheduled on-site evaluation;
- Submission date and action taken on the most recent written report required by the Commission;
- The extent of, or limitations on, the status of affiliation;
- In cases of adverse action (denial or termination of candidacy or accreditation, placing an institution on probation), the Commission's reasons for recommending that status and, in the case of probation, its plans to monitor the institution. The Commission, in consultation with the institution, will prepare a written statement incorporating the above information. The Commission reserves the right to make the final determination of the nature and content of the statement. The institution will also be offered the opportunity to make its official comment; if the institution does make an official comment, the comment will be made available by the Commission.
- For institutions whose candidacy or accreditation has been terminated, the date of, and reasons for, termination.

The Commission does not provide information about deferments of action on candidate or accreditation status, or show-cause orders. However, if such information is released by the institution in question, the Commission will respond to related inquiries.

Adverse actions (placement of an institution on probation, denial of candidate status or accreditation, revocation of candidacy, and termination of accreditation) are communicated after the available appeals process is completed. The Commission, at its discretion, may make the adverse action public before an appeal is completed. In so doing, the Commission will provide information about the appeal process.



The Commission recognizes that, to be fully understood, information about the accredited status of institutions must be placed within the context of the policies and procedures of the Commission and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. In responding to inquiries, the Commission will endeavor to do so.

#### **5. Public Disclosure of Institutional Actions**

Within 30 days after the action on accreditation status is taken, the Commission will notify the Secretary of Education, New England state higher education officers, appropriate accrediting agencies, and the public. Such actions include:

A final decision to:

Grant candidacy or accreditation

Continue an institution in accreditation

Deny or terminate the accreditation of an institution

Place an institution on probation

Approve substantive change (e.g., moving to a higher degree level)

A decision by an accredited or candidate institution to voluntarily withdraw from affiliation with the Commission.

*November 1998*

*September 2001*

*April 2010*

*September 2011*