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COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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June 8, 2010

Dr. Wayne M. Burton
President
North Shore Community College
One Ferncroft Road
Danvers, MA 01923-0840

Dear President Burton:

I am pleased to inform you that at its meeting on April 16, 2010, the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education took the following action with respect to North Shore Community College:

that North Shore Community College be continued in accreditation;

that the College submit a fifth-year interim report for consideration in Fall 2014;

that, in addition to the information included in all interim reports, the College give emphasis to its success in:

1. implementing its master improvement plan, with particular attention to plans for the Lynn campus;
2. assuring appropriate student support services for all students, including online students, with particular emphasis on library and information resources and services;
3. continuing to implement effective assessments of student learning and using assessment results for improvement;
4. implementing its plans to provide professional development for the Board of Trustees;
5. continuing to ensure the effectiveness of its governance structures;

that the next comprehensive evaluation be scheduled for Fall 2019.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

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North Shore Community College (NSCC) is continued in accreditation because the Commission finds the institution to be substantially in compliance with the *Standards for Accreditation*. We commend the College for its inclusive self-study process and the ways in which it has used the self-study as an effective tool for planning. We concur with the visiting team that the College is guided by a clearly stated, widely accepted mission and enjoys a culture of enthusiasm, collegiality, transparency, and student-centeredness. The College has a comprehensive program review process and well-developed mechanisms for the collection, analysis, and use of data, including data about student achievement. We note with approval the College's prudent stewardship of resources during difficult economic times and its commitment to maintaining the quality of its academic programs and student services. The College benefits from a strong, stable leadership team, a committed Board of Trustees, the support of the local community, and dedicated faculty and staff. We are pleased to learn of the steps taken by the College to address the areas of concern identified in the team report, including the development of succession and professional development plans.

Commission policy requires a fifth-year interim report of all institutions on a decennial evaluation cycle. Its purpose is to provide the Commission an opportunity to appraise the institution's current status in keeping with the policy on Periodic Review. In addition to the information included in all fifth-year reports the College is asked, in Fall 2014, to report on five matters related to our standards on *Physical and Technological Resources, Students, Library and Other Information Resources, The Academic Program, Planning and Evaluation, and Organization and Governance*.

The Commission concurs with the visiting team that the facilities at both the Danvers and Lynn campuses are strained by recent growth and that additional classroom, laboratory, and office space is needed in both locations. We note that the Lynn facility also needs renovation work as well as increased space for library and student services. We are pleased to learn that NSCC has developed a master facilities plan that outlines priority building projects and options for both campuses. Implementation of the plan depends upon receipt of state funding. The Fall 2014 report will afford the College an opportunity to update the Commission on its success in assuring that its "physical and technological resources, including classrooms, laboratories, network infrastructure, materials, equipment, and buildings and grounds, whether owned or rented, are commensurate with institutional purposes" (8.1) and that its "[s]tudents and faculty have access to appropriate physical, technological, and educational resources to support teaching and learning" (8.2).

The Commission commends NSCC for the comprehensive array of services it makes available to its students and for its efforts to assure that students at both campuses as well as those studying through distance education have appropriate access to these services and to library and information resources. However, as enrollment, including online enrollment, increases, assuring the continued availability and quality of services will require the institution's attention. We look forward to learning, through the Fall 2014 report, of the College's success in continuing to provide "an array of student services appropriate to its mission and the needs and goals of its students" (6.8) and "appropriate access to library and information resources and services for all students regardless of program location or mode of delivery" (7.9).

As noted in the team report, NSCC participates in a number of surveys and campus-wide assessments, including the CCSSE, PACE, LibQUAL, and the Student Campus Climate Survey, and implements an academic program review process that includes a focus on student learning outcomes. Additionally, we are pleased to learn that outcomes have been specified for general education and that academic departments have integrated these outcomes into their curricula. We concur with the appraisal offered by the College in its self-study that developing a closer

alignment between outcomes assessment and resource allocation and enhancing efforts to assess student learning in general education are important next steps for the College. We anticipate being apprized, in Fall 2014, of the College's success in this regard, in keeping with our standards on *The Academic Program and Planning and Evaluation*:

The institution's approach to understanding student learning focuses on the course, program, and institutional level. Data and other evidence generated through this approach are considered at the appropriate level of focus, with the results being a demonstrable factor in improving the learning opportunities and results for students (4.45).

Evaluation enables the institution to demonstrate through verifiable means its attainment of purposes and objectives both inside and outside the classroom. The results of evaluation are used systematically for improvement and to inform institutional planning, especially as it relates to student achievement and resource allocation (2.6).

The Commission is gratified to learn that the NSCC Board of Trustees will undergo a self-evaluation during the upcoming year and will implement a professional development program for new and continuing board members. The Fall 2014 report will provide an opportunity for the College to update the Commission on the results of the board's evaluation and to provide evidence that its board "systematically develops and ensures its own effectiveness" and "enhances its effectiveness through periodic evaluation" (3.4).

Finally, the Commission understands that since 2005, there have been a number of changes to NSCC's governance structures, including the introduction of new standing committees, the appointment of the governance subcommittee as a part of the Coordinating Council, and the initiation of a governance blog to improve campus communication. In addition, as noted in the self-study, changes to higher education governance at the state level are likely to have an impact on the College, as the institution responds to calls for collaboration and joint initiatives with K-12 educators. The Fall 2014 report will provide an opportunity for the College to assess the impact of these changes on institutional governance and to demonstrate that its system of governance "facilitates the accomplishment of its mission and purposes and supports institutional effectiveness and integrity" (*Organization and Governance*, statement of the standard).

The scheduling of a comprehensive evaluation in Fall 2019 is consistent with Commission policy requiring each accredited institution to undergo a comprehensive evaluation at least once every ten years.

You will note that the Commission has specified no length or term of accreditation. Accreditation is a continuing relationship that is reconsidered when necessary. Thus, while the Commission has indicated the timing of the next comprehensive evaluation, the schedule should not be unduly emphasized because it is subject to change.

The Commission expressed appreciation for the self-study prepared by North Shore Community College and for the report submitted by the visiting team. The Commission also welcomed the opportunity to meet with you, Dr. Paul Frydrych, Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Mr. William McIntyre, team representative, during its deliberations.

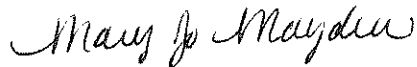
You are encouraged to share this letter with all of the institution's constituencies. It is Commission policy to inform the chairperson of the institution's governing board of action on its accreditation status. In a few days we will be sending a copy of this letter to Mr. Barry Ginsberg.

The institution is free to release information about the evaluation and the Commission's action to others, in accordance with Commission policy.

The Commission hopes that the evaluation process has contributed to institutional improvement. It appreciates your cooperation with the effort to provide public assurance of the quality of higher education in New England.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Jo Maydew".

Mary Jo Maydew

MJM/jm

Enclosure

cc: Mr. Barry Ginsberg
Visiting Team