



Founded in 1885

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

PATRICIA MAGUIRE MESERVEY, Chair (2017)
Salem State University

DAVID P. ANGEL, Vice Chair (2018)
Clark University

JEFFERY R. GODLEY (2016)
Groton, CT

JAY V. KAHN (2016)
Keene State College

WILFREDO NIEVES (2016)
Capital Community College

LINDA S. WELLS (2016)
Boston University

KASSANDRA S. ARDINGER (2017)
Concord, NH

THOMAS S. EDWARDS (2017)
Thomas College

THOMAS CHRISTOPHER GREENE (2017)
Vermont College of Fine Arts

MARY ELLEN JUKOSKI (2017)
Three Rivers Community College

PETER J. LANGER (2017)
University of Massachusetts Boston

DAVID L. LEVINSON (2017)
Norwalk Community College

HAROLD O. LEVY (2017)
Trustee Member

LYNN C. PASQUERELLA (2017)
Mount Holyoke College

G. TIMOTHY BOWMAN (2018)
Harvard University

THOMAS L. G. DWYER (2018)
Johnson & Wales University

JOHN F. GABRANSKI (2018)
Haydenville, MA

KAREN L. MUNCASTER (2018)
Brandeis University

CHRISTINE ORTIZ (2018)
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

JON S. OXMAN (2018)
Auburn, ME

JACQUELINE D. PETERSON (2018)
College of the Holy Cross

ROBERT L. PURA (2018)
Greenfield Community College

DAVID QUIGLEY (2018)
Boston College

ABDALLAH A. SFEIR (2018)
Lebanese American University

REV. BRIAN J. SHANLEY, O.P. (2018)
Providence College

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

Senior Vice President of the Commission
PATRICIA M. O'BRIEN, SND
pobrien@neasc.org

Vice President of the Commission
CAROL L. ANDERSON
canderson@neasc.org

Vice President of the Commission
PAULA A. HARBECKE
pharbecke@neasc.org

Vice President of the Commission
TALA KHUDAIRI
tkhudairi@neasc.org

February 10, 2016

Dr. Joseph Bertolino
President
Lyndon State College
1001 College Road, P.O. Box 919
Lyndonville, VT 05851

Dear President Bertolino:

I am pleased to inform you that at its meeting on November 19, 2015 the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education considered the interim (fifth-year) report submitted by Lyndon State College and voted to take the following action:

that the interim (fifth-year) report submitted by Lyndon State College be accepted;

that the comprehensive evaluation scheduled for Fall 2020 be confirmed;

that, in addition to the information included in all self-studies, the self-study prepared in advance of the Fall 2020 evaluation give emphasis to the institution's success in:

- 1) continuing to implement its integrated enrollment management plan;
- 2) assuring sufficient resources, faculty, and staff to support its academic programs and student services to enhance retention and persistence to graduation.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

The interim (fifth-year) report submitted by Lyndon State College was accepted because it responded to the concerns raised by the Commission in its letters of April 7, 2011 and November 7, 2013, addressed each of the eleven standards, and included a reflective essay on student learning and success.

The Commission commends Lyndon State College (LSC) for its thorough, candid interim report that provides evidence of the College's commitment to its mission "to prepare every student for personal and professional success" during a time of significant change and challenge for the institution. We note that, since the comprehensive evaluation, LSC has experienced changes in

senior leadership, including the appointment of a new president and the retirement or resignation of the provost, dean of administration, dean of advancement, and registrar. The College also experienced a significant downturn in enrollment, and lost TRIO funding after 30 consecutive years of such support. We commend Lyndon State College for its “Yankee ingenuity” in responding to these challenges. We take favorable note of the establishment of an Enrollment Management Task Force, the appointment of an Associate Dean/Associate Provost for Enrollment Management and Institutional Research, the realignment of faculty assignments, and the reorganization of Student Affairs to offer comprehensive services including admissions, financial aid, and the First-Year Experience program. We note that the College is appealing the loss of its TRIO funding and that it also committed to a fundraising campaign to underwrite the ongoing support for student services should the appeal not be successful. We are pleased to learn of the progress that has been made with respect to the assessment of learning outcomes in the general education unit and appreciate LSC’s candid discussion of the challenges that have arisen during this process. We understand the College anticipates stability in the senior administration and enhancements to technology will enable further progress in the future.

The reflective essay submitted by Lyndon State College discusses student success as reflected in placement rates, retention efforts, and the assessment of student learning. We take favorable note of LSC’s overall high placement rate – 94% of graduates are either working or continuing their education six months after graduation – and the “consistently strong to excellent” licensure passage rates of graduates in the College’s education and exercise science programs. Graduation rates of baccalaureate students increased from 30% in 2011 to 40% in 2014, whereas the rates for associate degree students have been more “sporadic,” 42% in 2012, 18% in 2013 and 40% in 2014. We understand that assessment of student learning is conducted cyclically under the Vermont State College system-wide Program Review and Continuous Improvement Process; the first five-year cycle is scheduled for completion in AY2016. LSC faculty are engaged in a variety of pedagogical innovations aimed at effective learning such as the flipped classroom, experiential education, and varying time blocks for course delivery. The College can take pride in its focused attention to first-generation and under-prepared students; notable initiatives include the Red Flag Committee, a “cross-unit, collaborative system” to assist students with the registration process, the Early Promise Program, and the comprehensive services provided by the Academic Support Center.

The scheduling of a comprehensive evaluation in Fall 2020 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 *Students*, *Financial Resources*, and *Faculty*.

We are pleased to learn of LSC’s cohesive enrollment management system with the commitment that “everyone at Lyndon is an enrollment manager.” The College’s report highlights strategies the institution will implement to address its enrollment challenges, including initiatives to increase enrollment and enhance retention. The Fall 2020 self-study will afford the institution an opportunity to update the Commission on its continued success in implementing its enrollment management plan, as expressed in our standard on *Students*:

Consistent with its mission, the institution sets and achieves realistic goals to enroll a student body that is broadly representative of the population the institution wishes to serve and addresses its own goals for the achievement of diversity among its students (6.1).

The institution demonstrates its ability to admit students who can be successful in the institution’s academic program, including specifically recruited populations. It ensures a

systematic approach to providing accessible and effective programs and services designed to provide opportunities for enrolled students to be successful in achieving their academic goals. The institution provides students with information and guidance regarding opportunities and experiences that may help ensure their academic success (6.5).

We appreciate the College's candid discussion of its enrollment challenges and acknowledge the "resilience, adaptive management and prioritized investment" that have characterized the institution's response to those challenges. We understand LSC has adopted a "flexible budgeting strategy" and an inclusive budget planning process to inform the campus community and solicit ideas. We are gratified to learn that the College has been able to allocate funds in FY2015 to hire five new faculty, improve student financial services, renovate facilities, improve the technology infrastructure, and implement recommendations from program reviews. We look forward to learning, in Fall 2020, of the College's continued success in securing sufficient resources to support its academic programs and services to enhance student retention and persistence to graduation. This section of the report should be informed by our standards on *Financial Resources, Students and Faculty*:

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 offers an array of student services appropriate to its mission and the needs and goals of its students, recognizing the variations in services that are appropriate at the main campus, at off-campus locations, and for programs delivered electronically as well as the differences in circumstances and goals of students pursuing degrees. In all cases, the institution provides academic support services appropriate to the student body. The institution's faculty and professional staff collectively have sufficient interaction with students outside of class to promote students' academic achievement and provide academic and career guidance. In providing services, in accordance with its mission and purposes, the institution adheres to both the spirit and intent of equal opportunity and its own goals for diversity (6.11).

There are an adequate number of faculty whose time commitment to the institution is sufficient to assure the accomplishment of class and out-of-class responsibilities essential for the fulfillment of institutional mission and purposes. Responsibilities of teaching faculty include instruction and the systematic understanding of effective teaching/learning processes and outcomes in courses and programs for which they share responsibility; additional duties may include such functions as student advisement, academic planning, and participation in policy-making, course and curricular development, research, and institutional governance (5.3).

The Commission expressed appreciation for the report submitted by Lyndon State 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. Martha O'Connor. The institution is free to release information about the report and the Commission's action to others, in accordance with the enclosed policy on Public Disclosure of Information about Affiliated Institutions.

Dr. Joseph Bertolino
February 10, 2016
Page 4

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

Sincerely,


Patricia Maguire Meservey

PMM/sjp

Enclosures

cc: Ms. Martha O'Connor