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

July 18, 2016

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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 April 21, 2016, the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education considered the report submitted by Lyndon State College regarding its plans to offer distance education programming and took the following action:

that the report on distance education submitted by Lyndon State College be accepted, and the proposed online Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education program be included within the institution's accreditation, with an effective date of April 21, 2016;

that approval for distance education be limited to the Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education, the Associate of Applied Science, and the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, and the College be reminded that plans to offer additional programs through distance education need to be submitted to the Commission for approval prior to implementation.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

The report submitted by Lyndon State College was accepted and the proposed distance education programming encompassed within the institution's accreditation because the Commission finds the activity to be substantially in compliance with the *Standards for Accreditation* and relevant Commission policies.

The Commission commends Lyndon State College (LSC) for submitting a detailed and thoughtful proposal that outlines its plans to offer an online Bachelor of Science degree in Early Childhood Education (ECE). The proposed program supports Lyndon State's mission and strategic initiatives to better serve the institution's nontraditional student population through coursework that will be 90% online and offered in an "adult student-friendly, fast-track method." Further, the ECE program supports recently passed legislation in the State of Vermont that requires pre-school teachers to possess a baccalaureate degree in Early Childhood Education. Consistent with

a “2+2 model,” students who possess an Associate degree in Early Childhood Education from a Vermont Community College can seamlessly transfer general education and other applicable courses into the ECE program at Lyndon State. We note with approval that the proposed program is fully integrated into the institution’s governance structure and, under the leadership of the Chief Academic Officer, the “primary” ECE faculty member, who is also a Quality Matters certified peer reviewer for online courses, has been assigned to oversee the program. The report assures that assessment protocols are in place to ensure that online courses are equivalent in content and rigor to similar courses offered on the main campus, and well-qualified faculty who teach in LSC’s traditional ECE program will also teach in the online program. We note with approval that those faculty members who have not previously taught online will be required to complete a course in online teaching and pedagogy through the Community College of Vermont. Budget projections that are based on 20 students in year one with anticipated revenues of \$215,620, increasing to 38 students and \$421,649 by year three, appear to be sufficient to support the B.S. in Early Childhood Education program.

Lyndon State College’s approval for distance education is limited to the programs listed above because the College lacks extensive experience offering programs for which 50% or more of the credits can be earned online. It is typically the case that before granting general approval for distance education, the Commission expects to see developed capacity for this learning modality and success with the initial programs. We remind you that any plans to offer additional online programs will need to be reviewed by the Commission, consistent with our policy on Substantive Change.

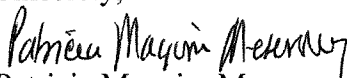
We remind you that, in the event Lyndon State College enrolls online students from beyond the borders of Vermont, it is the responsibility of the institution to ensure compliance with state authorization and licensure regulations that relate to the delivery of distance education programming.

The Commission expressed appreciation for the report submitted by Lyndon State College and hopes its preparation has contributed to institutional improvement. We appreciate your cooperation with 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 evaluation and the Commission’s action to others, in accordance with the enclosed policy on Public Disclosure of Information about Affiliated Institutions.

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



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

3 Burlington Woods, Suite 100, Burlington, MA 01803-4514
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**Public Disclosure of Information
About Affiliated Institutions**

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 or is otherwise made public, the Commission will respond to related inquiries and may issue a public statement.

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 Commission, acting through its President, will release a public statement in such form and content as it deems desirable providing correct information. This may include release of notification letters sent by the Commission to the institution, and/or a press release.

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

Inquiries regarding the accreditation status by the Commission 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
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100, Burlington, MA 01803-4514
(781) 425 7785
E-Mail: cihe@neasc.org

Accreditation by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education has reference to the institution as a whole. Therefore, statements like “fully accredited” or “this program is accredited by the Commission” or “this degree is accredited by the Commission” 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 Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc. 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 Commission should be directed to the administrative staff of the college or university. Individuals may also contact:

Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
New England Association of Schools and Colleges
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100, Burlington, MA 01803-4514
(781) 425 7785
E-Mail: cihe@neasc.org

4. Public Disclosure of Information about Affiliated Institutions by the Commission

The Commission publishes the following information about member and candidate institutions on its website:

- For institutions whose candidacy or accreditation has been withdrawn, the date of, and reasons for, withdrawal.

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 on Institutions of Higher Education. In responding to inquiries, the Commission will endeavor to do so.

The Commission does not generally 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 and may issue its own statement.

Adverse actions (placement of an institution on probation, denial of candidate status or accreditation, and withdrawal of candidacy or accreditation) are communicated when the decision becomes final (i.e., when the institution does not appeal or when the appeals process is completed and the decision is upheld). The Commission, at its discretion, may make the adverse action public before the decision is final or the appeal is completed. In so doing, the Commission will provide information about the appeal process.

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 withdraw the candidacy or 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

Editorial Changes, March 2014

April 2015