



Received

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Office of the President
Northern Vermont University

October 28, 2019

Dr. Elaine Collins
President
Northern Vermont University
337 College Hill
Johnson, VT 05656-9898

Dear President Collins:

I am pleased to inform you that at its meeting on September 19, 2019, the New England Commission of Higher Education considered the report submitted by Northern Vermont University regarding the merger of Johnson State College and Lyndon State College as Northern Vermont University, as well as the report of the evaluator, and took the following action:

that the report regarding the merger of Johnson State College and Lyndon State College as Northern Vermont University be accepted and the University be continued in accreditation;

that the comprehensive evaluation scheduled for Fall 2023 be confirmed.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

The Commission accepted the report regarding the merger of Johnson State College and Lyndon State College as Northern Vermont University and continued the University in accreditation because the report was responsive to the concerns raised in our letter of December 7, 2017 and provided evidence that, following the merger, the University is operating in a manner consistent with Commission standards and policies.

We thank Northern Vermont University (NVU) for submitting a detailed report that updates the Commission on the merger of Johnson State College and Lyndon State College as Northern Vermont University. We appreciate that there is an expectation of equal participation by both campuses in NVU's governance structures and a "spirit of cooperation" regarding governance issues. The Commission is pleased to learn that NVU developed its first Strategic Plan 2018-2023 that is framed by four pillars: (1) Vibrant Thriving Campuses; (2) Transformative Student Experience; (3) Innovative Professional and Liberal Arts Education; and (4) Exceptional Community Leadership. The University is also working to "restructure" academic departments to help break down academic and intellectual silos. We note that NVU is implementing a number of new initiatives to achieve enrollment goals

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P. MICHAEL LAHAN (2022)
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including text messaging, Saturday visits and open houses, and digital advertising. The University reduced budget expenditures in FY2017 and ended FY2018 with a surplus of \$985,000. We concur with the evaluator that the Northern Vermont University faculty and staff are “focused on creating a supportive and engaging learning community for the students.”

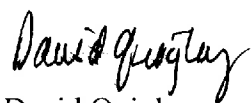
The scheduling of a comprehensive evaluation in Fall 2023 is consistent with Commission policy requiring each accredited institution to undergo a comprehensive evaluation at least once every ten years. We refer you to our letters of May 23, 2019 and December 7, 2017 which specify items to receive emphasis in the self-study prepared for the comprehensive evaluation, including continued success in addressing the matters related to the merger specified for attention in the Spring 2019 report. We agree with the University that it will be important to “monitor the continued success of the New Faculty Council...” We also appreciate learning that NVU’s Associate Academic Dean is working to develop an annual assessment process for the University. Lastly, the Commission understands that while the University ended FY2018 with a budget surplus as noted above, deficits are projected for FY2019 through FY2021. The University expects that these deficits may be “mitigated” by increased enrollment resulting from new marketing approaches as well as the receipt of major grants. We look forward, in Fall 2023, to an update on the institution’s efforts in each of these areas.

The Commission expressed appreciation for the reports prepared by Northern Vermont University and the evaluator and hopes that the evaluation process 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 and the head of the system of action on its accreditation status. In a few days we will be sending a copy of this letter to Mr. Churchill Hindes and Mr. Jeb Spaulding. 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,



David Quigley

DQ/jm

cc: Mr. Churchill Hindes
Mr. Jeb Spaulding
Evaluator