



Founded in 1885

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

ELSA M. NUNEZ, Chair (2010)
Eastern Connecticut State University

MARY JO MAYDEW, Vice Chair (2011)
Mount Holyoke College

DORIS B. ARRINGTON (2009)
Capital Community College

GAI CARPENTER (2009)
Hampshire College

KIRK D. KOLENBRANDER (2009)
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

JAMES P. LEHENY (2009)
University of Massachusetts Amherst

PETER NESSEN (2009)
Boston, MA

KATHERINE H. SLOAN (2009)
Massachusetts College of Art and Design

KATHRYN T. SPOEHR (2009)
Brown University

STACY L. SWEENEY (2009)
The Art Institutes

REV. JEFFREY P. VON ARX, S.J. (2009)
Fairfield University

F. ROBERT HUTH (2010)
Middlebury College

HUBERT D. MAULTSBY (2010)
Norwich University

RICHARD L. PATTENAUDE (2010)
University of Maine System

RONALD V. GALLO (2011)
Cranston, RI

R. BRUCE HITCHNER (2011)
Tufts University

BRUCE L. MALLORY (2011)
University of New Hampshire

WILFREDO NIEVES (2011)
Middlesex Community College, CT

WALLACE NUTTING (2011)
Saco, ME

JAMES O. ORTIZ (2011)
Southern Maine Community College

JILL N. REICH (2011)
Bates College

CHRISTOPHER J. SULLIVAN (2011)
Concord, NH

DEBRA M. TOWNSLEY (2011)
Nichols College

Director of the Commission
BARBARA E. BRITTINGHAM
E-Mail: bbrittingham@neasc.org

Deputy Director of the Commission
PATRICIA M. O'BRIEN, SND
E-Mail: pobrien@neasc.org

Associate Director of the Commission
ROBERT C. FROH
E-Mail: rfroh@neasc.org

Associate Director of the Commission
LOUISE A. ZAK
E-Mail: lzak@neasc.org

Assistant Director of the Commission
JULIE L. ALIG
E-Mail: jalig@neasc.org

March 25, 2009

Mr. Ray M. Di Pasquale
President
Community College of Rhode Island
Knight Campus, Room 3328
400 East Avenue
Warwick, RI 02886

Dear President Di Pasquale:

I am pleased to inform you that at its meeting on March 5, 2009, the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education considered the fifth-year interim report submitted by Community College of Rhode Island and voted to take the following action:

that the fifth-year interim report submitted by Community College of Rhode Island be accepted;

that the comprehensive evaluation scheduled for Spring 2014 be confirmed;

that, in addition to the information included in all self-studies, the self-study prepared in advance of the Spring 2014 evaluation give emphasis to the institution's continued success with:

- 1) addressing its resource challenges in relation to reductions in state funding;
- 2) strengthening the engagement of faculty and staff and the use of data in planning and decision making processes;
- 3) analyzing and discussing data reported in the assessment and student success form.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its actions.

The Commission commends the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) for its steady progress in addressing the matters of special emphasis raised in our letter of June 7, 2007. We note with approval that the College has defined what it means by “the educated person” and has aligned learning outcomes, the general education curriculum, and periodic review at the program level in supporting this definition. We are pleased to note that the institution has incorporated more structure and participation in academic governance and has clarified the criteria used in faculty and staff evaluation.

The report provides evidence in relation to how CCRI addresses each of the eleven Standards, and we note in particular that the institution has provided additional resources for the library.

The scheduling of a comprehensive evaluation in Spring 2014 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 *Financial Resources, Planning and Evaluation, Organization and Governance, The Academic Program* and *Public Disclosure*.

The Commission takes favorable note of how CCRI has managed to absorb significant state budget cuts while assuring academic quality. However, we appreciate that the College will face continued challenges in providing sufficient capacity to continue meeting all of the Standards. As part of the self-study prepared for the 2014 comprehensive review, we would appreciate information regarding the success of the institution in addressing its resource challenges in accordance with our standard on *Financial Resources*:

The institution’s multi-year financial planning is realistic and reflects the capacity of the institution to depend on identified sources of revenue and ensure the advancement of educational quality and services for students. The governing board reviews and approves the institution’s financial plans (9.3).

The institution’s financial planning, including contingency planning, is integrated with overall planning and evaluation processes. The institution demonstrates its ability to analyze its financial condition and understand the opportunities and constraints that will influence its financial condition and acts accordingly. It reallocates resources as necessary to achieve its purposes and objectives. The institution implements a realistic plan for addressing issues raised by the existence of any operating deficit (9.8).

We note that the College continues to strengthen the engagement of faculty and staff, and the use of data, in planning and decision making processes. Through the comprehensive evaluation, we welcome an update regarding continued developments in this arena as supported by our standards on *Planning and Evaluation* and *Organization and Governance*:

Planning and evaluation are systematic, comprehensive, broad-based, integrated, and appropriate to the institution. They involve the participation of individuals and groups responsible for the achievement of institutional purposes. Results of planning and evaluation are regularly communicated to appropriate institutional constituencies. The institution allocates sufficient resources for its planning and evaluation efforts (2.1).

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

The institution's academic leadership is directly responsible to the chief executive officer, and in concert with the faculty is responsible for the quality of the academic program. The institution's organization and governance structure assure the integrity and quality of academic programming however and wherever offered (3.8).

Faculty have a substantive voice in matters of educational programs, faculty personnel, and other aspects of institutional policy that relate to their areas of responsibility and expertise (3.10).

The Commission recognizes the efforts undertaken by CCRI to address student success through the new forms provided for assessment of student learning and measuring student success. However, we request that the institution make more concerted efforts to describe the data reported in the forms, appraise its usefulness to the institution, and develop projections for the improvement of the learning experience and outcomes for students, and the continuing development of the institution's capacity to gather, analyze, and use data for improvement. This should be informed by our standards on *The Academic Program* and *Public Disclosure*:

The institution's principal evaluation focus is the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of its academic programs. Evaluation endeavors and systematic assessment are demonstrably effective in the improvement of academic offerings and student learning (4.51).

The institution has readily available valid documentation for any statements and promises regarding such matters as program excellence, learning outcomes, success in placement, and achievements of graduates or faculty (10.12).

The Commission expressed appreciation for the report submitted by Community College of Rhode Island 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 The Honorable Frank Caprio. The institution is free to release information about the evaluation 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,



Elsa M. Nuñez

EMN/slo
Enclosure

cc: The Honorable Frank Caprio