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June 7, 2007

Mr. Ray M. DiPasquale
President
Community College of Rhode Island
400 East Avenue
Warwick, RI 02886

Dear President DiPasquale:

I am pleased to inform you that at its meeting on April 20, 2007, the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education took the following action with respect to Community College of Rhode Island:

that the report submitted by Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) be accepted;

that the fifth-year interim report scheduled for submission in Spring 2009 be confirmed;

that, in addition to the matters included in all interim reports, the report submitted in Spring 2009 give emphasis to the College's success in:

- 1) ensuring that every academic program includes an appropriate program of general education and that outcomes for general education are assessed and the results used for improvement;
- 2) implementing a governance system that supports good communication and planning across the College's four campuses;
- 3) implementing its faculty evaluation system;

that the comprehensive evaluation scheduled for Spring 2014 be confirmed.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its actions.

The report submitted by Community College of Rhode Island was accepted because it was basically responsive to the concerns previously raised by the Commission. We take favorable note of the approval of the College's new mission statement by the Rhode Island Board of Higher Education, of the substantial work undertaken by the General Education Committee, and of steps taken to enhance the effectiveness of governance structures and to develop an effective faculty evaluation system. We are gratified to learn that the College will begin a strategic planning process in Fall 2007 and has hired an assessment coordinator to oversee the development and implementation of a comprehensive evaluation system. Finally, we note with approval the successful opening of the attractive, well-managed Newport campus, which is providing the region with much-needed programs in a number of fields, including allied health.

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 provided in all interim reports, the College is asked to report on three other matters related to our standards on *The Academic Program, Organization and Governance, and Faculty*.

The Commission recognizes that these matters, which were addressed in the Fall 2006 report, do not lend themselves to rapid resolution and will require the institution's continued attention over time. Thus, we are asking for further information in the fifth-year report.

The Commission takes favorable note of the progress made by CCRI in implementing its multi-step plan to create a common general education core based on its definition of an educated person. We concur with the visiting team, however, that substantial work lies ahead, including the development of measurable learning outcomes, the adoption of consistent assessment methods, and the implementation of a plan to disseminate assessment results and use these results for improvement. We look forward to learning, through the Spring 2009 report, of the College's success in completing its work on general education. We remind you of our standard on *The Academic Program*:

The general education requirement is coherent and substantive. It embodies the institution's definition of an educated person and prepares students for the world in which they will live. The requirement informs the design of all general education courses, and provides criteria for its evaluation, including the assessment of what students learn (4.15).

The general education requirement in each undergraduate program ensures adequate breadth for all degree-seeking students by showing a balanced regard for what are traditionally referred to as the arts and humanities, the sciences including mathematics, and the social sciences. General education requirements include offerings that focus on the subject matter and methodologies of these three primary domains of knowledge as well as on their relationships to one another (4.16).

The institution ensures that all undergraduate students complete at least the equivalent of forty semester hours in a bachelor's degree program, or the equivalent of twenty semester hours in an associate's degree program in general education (4.17).

Graduates successfully completing an undergraduate program demonstrate competence in written and oral communication in English; the ability for scientific and quantitative reasoning, for critical analysis and logical thinking; and the capability for continuing learning, including the skills of information literacy. They also demonstrate knowledge and understanding of scientific, historical, and social phenomena, and a knowledge and appreciation of the aesthetic and ethical dimensions of humankind (4.18).

The Commission is pleased to learn that a model for a revised governance system, developed through a participatory process involving faculty and staff from the College's four campuses, was submitted to

the president's council this spring. The model will be discussed by members of the campus community, with the goal of implementing a new governance system during the Fall 2007 semester. The Spring 2009 report will provide the College with an opportunity to update the Commission on its success in ensuring that "the institution's organizational structure, decision-making processes, and policies are clear and consistent with its mission and support institutional effectiveness. The institution's system of governance involves the participation of all appropriate constituencies and includes regular communication among them" (3.1).

Finally, the Commission is gratified to learn that the Community College of Rhode Island is poised to implement a common faculty evaluation system that includes evaluation of faculty by peers and department chairs as well as faculty assessment of department chairs. We look forward to learning, in Spring 2009, of the success of this initiative, consistent with our standard on *Faculty*:

Faculty are demonstrably effective in carrying out their assigned responsibilities. The institution employs effective procedures for the regular evaluation of faculty appointments, performance, and retention. The evaluative criteria reflect the mission and purposes of the institution and the importance it attaches to the various responsibilities of faculty, e.g., teaching, advising, assessment, scholarship, creative activities, research, and professional and community service. The institution has equitable and broad-based procedures for such evaluation applying to both full- and part-time faculty, in which its expectations are stated clearly and weighted appropriately for use in the evaluative process (5.10).

The scheduling of a comprehensive evaluation in Spring 2014, is consistent with Commission policy requiring each accredited institution to undergo a comprehensive visit at least once every ten years.

The Commission expressed appreciation for the report prepared by Community College of Rhode Island and for the report submitted by the visiting team. The Commission also welcomed the opportunity to meet with you and Mr. Timothy Donovan, team chair, 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 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.

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,



Judith R. Gordon

JRG/slo
Enclosure

cc: The Honorable Frank Caprio
Visiting Team