



November 19, 2019

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Tim Hood, President  
Highland Community College  
2998 W. Pearl City Rd.  
Freeport, IL 61032

Dear President Hood:

This letter is formal notification of action taken by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Board of Trustees (“the Board”) concerning Highland Community College (“the Institution”). This action is effective as of the date the Board acted, November 7, 2019. In taking this action, the Board considered materials from the recent Notice Visit, including, but not limited to: the Notice report the Institution submitted, the report from the Notice Visit team, the report of the Institutional Actions Council (IAC) Hearing Committee, and the institutional responses to these reports.

**Summary of the Action:** The Board determined that the Institution is no longer at risk of noncompliance with the Criteria for Accreditation and removed the Institution from Notice.

### **Board Rationale**

The Board based its action on the following findings made with regard to the Institution:

The Institution now meets without concerns Criterion Three, Core Component 3.A, “the institution’s degree programs are appropriate to higher education,” for the following reasons:

- The Institution has developed program outcomes for each academic program and posts them appropriately.
- The Institution has created a system that provides all faculty the ability to contribute to program assessment.

The Institution now meets without concerns Criterion Four, Core Component 4.B, “the institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning,” for the following reasons:

- The Institution has made significant progress related to direct measures of assessment.
- The Institution is making data-driven decisions based on assessment results.
- The Institution is assessing general education in all areas and usable data is being generated.

The Institution now meets without concerns Criterion Four, Core Component 4.C, “the institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs,” for the following reasons:

- The Institution has implemented a strategic enrollment plan.
- The Institution has specific goals defined for student retention, persistence and completion.
- The Institution has developed plans for making improvements as warranted based on the data.

The Institution now meets without concerns Criterion Five, Core Component 5.D, “the institution works systematically to improve its performance,” for the following reason:

- The Institution has improved processes to assess performance and implement changes for continuous improvement.

The Institution has demonstrated that it is in compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation and is no longer at risk of noncompliance with the Criteria, and thus should be removed from Notice without interim monitoring.

### **Next Steps in the HLC Review Process**

**Comprehensive Evaluation:** The Board maintained the Institution on the Standard Pathway with its next comprehensive evaluation (Year 4) in 2021-22.

### **HLC Disclosure Obligations**

The Board action resulted in changes that will be reflected in the Institution’s Statement of Accreditation Status as well as the Institutional Status and Requirements Report. The Statement of Accreditation Status, including the dates of the last and next comprehensive evaluation visits, will be posted to the HLC website.

In accordance with HLC policy,<sup>1</sup> information about this action is provided to members of the public and to other constituents in several ways. This Action Letter and the enclosed Public Disclosure Notice will be posted to HLC’s website not more than 24 hours after this letter is sent to the Institution. Additionally, a summary of Board actions will be sent to appropriate state and federal agencies and accrediting associations. The summary also will be published on HLC’s website. The summary will include this HLC action regarding the Institution.

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<sup>1</sup> INST.G.10.010, Management of Commission Information; COMM.A.10.010, Commission Public Notices and Statements

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, thank you in advance for your cooperation. If you have questions about any of the information in this letter, please contact your HLC Staff Liaison, Dr. Stephanie Brzuzy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Gellman-Danley".

Barbara Gellman-Danley  
President

Enc: Public Disclosure Notice

Cc: Chair of the Board of Trustees, Highland Community College  
Christian Kuberski, Executive Vice President, Highland Community College  
Evaluation Team Chair  
IAC Hearing Committee Chair  
Brian Durham, Executive Director, Illinois Community College Board  
Stephanie Brzuzy, Vice President for Accreditation Relations, Higher Learning Commission  
Anthea Sweeney, Vice President for Legal and Governmental Affairs, Higher Learning Commission