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March 29, 2011

Dr. David M. Dooley  
President  
University of Rhode Island  
Green Hall, 35 Campus Avenue  
Kingston, RI 02881-1303

Dear President Dooley:

I write to inform you that at its meeting on March 3, 2011, the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education considered the report submitted by the University of Rhode Island and the report of the visiting team and took the following action:

that the report submitted by the University of Rhode Island be accepted;

that the fifth-year interim report scheduled for consideration in Fall 2012 be confirmed;

that, in addition to the information included in all interim reports, as well as the matters specified in our letter of April 3, 2008, the institution give emphasis, in the Fall 2012 report, to its success in:

1. implementing the new Academic Plan for 2010-2015 and integrating the plan's academic and capital priorities into the University's financial planning process;
2. implementing the new Academic Program Review process and using the results to improve academic programming;

that the comprehensive evaluation scheduled for Fall 2017 be confirmed.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

The report submitted by the University of Rhode Island (URI) was accepted because it was generally responsive to the concerns raised by the Commission in its letter of April 3, 2008. Along with the visiting team, the Commission commends URI for the progress it has made over the past three years on the three areas of focus identified by the Commission. While

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welcoming both a new president and a new provost, the University developed an integrated financial planning process with clear links to academic and capital priorities and, at the same time, redesigned the academic program review process by developing a three-level program review protocol. In addition, the new leadership assessed and decided not to pursue the changes to the relationship between the University and the State of Rhode Island that were under consideration at the time of the Fall 2007 comprehensive evaluation.

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 included in all fifth-year reports and the items specified for attention in the Commission's letter of April 3, 2008, the University is asked, in the report submitted for consideration in Fall 2012, to report on two matters related to our standards on *Planning and Evaluation* and *The Academic Program*.

URI is applauded for the transparent and inclusive process, led by the provost and involving faculty and students throughout the University, that was used to develop its *Academic Plan 2010-2015: Charting our Path to the Future: Toward a Renewed Culture of Achievement*. To further strengthen the link between planning and budgeting, the president established a University-wide Strategic Budgeting and Planning Council. The Commission notes favorably that the University is developing a standardized capital request rubric and a set of comprehensive metrics to annually assess progress made toward achieving the goals of its Academic Plan. The report submitted for consideration in Fall 2012 will provide an opportunity for the University to update the Commission on the implementation of its Academic Plan as well as the effectiveness of the systems it has put in place to ensure its academic and capital priorities are integrated into the University's financial planning process. Our standard on *Planning and Evaluation* guides us here:

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 has a demonstrable record of success in implementing the results of its planning (2.3).

The institution determines the effectiveness of its planning and evaluation activities on an ongoing basis. Results of these activities are used to further enhance the institution's implementation of its purposes and objectives (2.7).

The University has also made considerable progress over the past three years to implement a systematic process of academic program review. We note with favor the proposed evidence-based approach to program review that will include annual data reports produced by institutional research, biennial program data reports generated by individual departments, and intensive self-studies done every six years that will encompass an external review by a visiting team from a peer university as well as benchmarking data from peer institutions. Through the report submitted for consideration in Fall 2012, the Commission looks forward to learning about the University's success in implementing its three-level program review model, with emphasis given to the steps taken to link the results of the self-study processes to the use of other data/evidence collected to improve academic programming. This portion of the report should be informed by our standard on *The Academic Program*:

The institution develops, approves, administers, and on a regular cycle reviews its degree programs under effective institutional policies that are implemented by designated bodies with established channels of communication and control. Faculty have a substantive voice in these matters (4.8).

The institution undertakes academic planning and evaluation as part of its overall planning and evaluation to enhance the achievement of institutional mission and program objectives. These activities are realistic and take into account stated goals and available resources. The evaluation of existing programs includes an external perspective and assessment of their effectiveness. Additions and deletions of programs are consistent with institutional mission and capacity, faculty expertise, student needs, and the availability of sufficient resources required for the development and improvement of academic programs. The institution allocates resources on the basis of its academic planning, needs, and objectives (4.9).

Finally, the scheduling of a comprehensive evaluation in Fall 2017 is consistent with Commission policy requiring each accredited institution to undergo a comprehensive evaluation at least once every ten years.

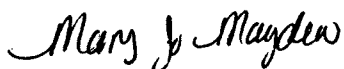
The Commission expressed appreciation for the report prepared by the University of Rhode Island and for the report submitted by the visiting team. The Commission also welcomed the opportunity to meet with you, Dr. Donald DeHayes, Provost, as well as team chair, Dr. Peter Nicholls, during its deliberations.

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 Mr. 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,



Mary Jo Maydew

MJM/jm

Enclosure

cc: Mr. Frank Caprio  
Visiting Team