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January 8, 2010

Dr. H. Kim Bottomly
President
Wellesley College
106 Central Street
Wellesley, MA 02481-8203

Dear President Bottomly:

I am pleased to inform you that at its meeting on November 20, 2009, the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education took the following action with respect to Wellesley College:

that Wellesley College be continued in accreditation;

that the College submit a fifth-year interim report for consideration in Spring 2014;

that, in addition to the information included in all interim reports, the College give emphasis to its success in:

1. implementing its plans to provide the best liberal arts education in the 21st century, supported by clarity in learning goals and the assessment of student learning;
2. reorganizing academic leadership to follow a provost model;
3. continuing the College's commitment to support a diverse faculty, staff, and student body;

that the next comprehensive evaluation be scheduled for Spring 2019.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

Wellesley College is continued in accreditation because the Commission finds the institution to be substantially in compliance with the *Standards for Accreditation*. The Commission commends Wellesley College for producing a self-study that is, in the words of the team, "notable for its openness and candor," reflective of the spirit of the institution and for using the self-study process in support of the concurrent academic planning, to the advantage of the institution. The College's goal of offering the best liberal arts education in the 21st century is realistically

ambitious, given the excellence already attained, the resources available, and the dedication of the College's talented community of administrators, faculty, and staff. The College's financial stewardship, based on sophisticated budget models and robust fundraising, has allowed the College to navigate the current financial landscape with considerable success providing the basis for which it can pursue its ambition of educational excellence and support its long-standing commitment to diversity.

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 the College is asked, in Spring 2014, to report on three matters related to our standards on *Mission and Purposes*, *The Academic Program*, *Organization and Governance*, *Students*, and *Integrity*.

The goal of providing the best liberal arts education in the 21st century is both realistic for Wellesley College and daunting in its ambition. The fifth-year report will afford the College an opportunity to update the Commission on its success in this area, by further clarifying the distinguishing features of such an education, the student learning goals that would characterize it, and the institution's success in measuring student learning and achievement, using the results for further improvement. Our standards on *Mission and Purposes* and *The Academic Program* provide this guidance:

The mission and purposes of the institution are accepted and widely understood by its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students. They provide direction to the curricula and other activities and form the basis on which expectations for student learning are developed. Specific objectives, reflective of the institution's overall mission and purposes, are developed by the institution's individual units (1.4).

Expectations for student learning reflect both the mission and character of the institution and general expectations of the larger academic community for the level of degree awarded and the field of study. These expectations include statements that are consistent with the institution's mission in preparing students for further study and employment, as appropriate (4.46).

The institution's approach to understanding what and how students are learning and using the results for improvement has the support of the institution's academic and institutional leadership and the systematic involvement of faculty (4.47).

The Commission appreciates the College's intention to move toward a provost model of academic leadership, allowing a better integration of strategic and financial planning and providing a clearer opportunity to delineate the roles of various academic administrators in support of the academic program and services for students. We note with favor the team's observation that the College's academic leadership is strong and widely respected, providing a solid foundation for the anticipated model. We look forward to learning, through the interim report, of the success of this arrangement to ensure that an "appropriate administrative structure effectively manages the institution so as to fulfill its purposes and objectives" (3.7).

Finally, as noted by the team and reflected in the self-study, Wellesley has a strong and abiding commitment to diversity among its faculty, staff, and students. We take favorable note of the institution's investments of financial resources to support this aim and of the acknowledgement of challenges, including recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty and staff in an expensive location, reflecting students' evolving understanding of diversity, and supporting differences

without encouraging fragmentation of the student body. We look forward to the interim report as an update on how the College continues to “[address] its own goals for the achievement of diversity” (5.4), “[enroll] a student body that is broadly representative of the population the institution wishes to serve” (6.1), and “[foster] an atmosphere within the institutional community that respects and supports people of diverse characteristics and backgrounds” (11.5).

The scheduling of a comprehensive evaluation in Spring 2019 is consistent with Commission policy requiring each accredited institution to undergo a comprehensive evaluation at least once every ten years.

You will note that the Commission has specified no length or term of accreditation. Accreditation is a continuing relationship that is reconsidered when necessary. Thus, while the Commission has indicated the timing of the next comprehensive evaluation, the schedule should not be unduly emphasized because it is subject to change.

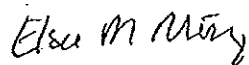
The Commission expressed appreciation for the self-study prepared by Wellesley College and for the report submitted by the visiting team. The Commission also welcomed the opportunity to meet with you and Dr. Robert A. Oden, team chair, during its deliberations.

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 Ms. Alecia DeCoudreaux. 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,



Elsa M. Nuñez

EMN/jm

Enclosure

cc: Ms. Alecia DeCoudreaux
Visiting Team