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May 18, 2018

Dr. James H. Page
Chancellor
University of Maine System
267 Estabrooke Hall
15 Estabrooke Drive
Orono, ME 04469

Dear Chancellor Page:

I write to inform you that at its meeting on April 20, 2018 the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education considered the report submitted by the University of Maine System and voted the following:

that the report submitted by the University of Maine System be accepted;

that the University of Maine System submit a report by February 1, in:

- 1) resolving the issue of the reporting relationships for the Chief Business Officer for each University in the System by having a direct reporting relationship to the President of the respective University;
- 2) developing collaborative academic programs, supported by policies consistent with Commission standards, including information on the extent of cross-listed courses available to students by home and host institution;

that until otherwise specified, the congruence with Commission standards of the reporting relationships for the Chief Business Officer and the collaborative academic programs be addressed in the comprehensive evaluations and interim reports of each of the six accredited Universities, and other reports as may be specified by Commission action.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

The report was accepted because it was responsive to the request in the Commission's letter August 24, 2017. The Commission compliments the University of Maine System for seeking innovative solutions to the financial

and demographic challenges facing the state of Maine and therefore its public universities. Having a rationalized budgeting and financial operation and making as many educational opportunities as possible available to residents of Maine are central to the mission and quality of public higher education.

At the same time, because the Commission separately accredits the six Universities in the System, the Commission seeks assurance that the new structures and processes are congruent with its standards and policies. While much work has been done in both of the areas specified above, neither of the issues is resolved; hence the Commission asks for a report of further progress to be considered at its March 2019 meeting.

Previously the Commission has expressed concern that the reporting relationships of the Chief Business Officer (CBO) was not consistent with the Commission's standard on *Institutional Resources* because while that position has a direct reporting relationship with the System, it has only an indirect reporting relationship with the institution's Chief Executive Officer. The Commission understands the importance of having a System-wide rationalized approach to overseeing the finance and budgeting of the separately accredited institutions and therefore the need for a clear and direct relationship and communication between the Universities and the System in financial matters. We are pleased to note that the Chief Business Officer for each institution is located on the University campus and assume that arrangement will continue. The Commission's standards require that the "institution ensures that it has sufficient professionally qualified finance staff, led by a chief financial officer whose primary responsibility to the institution is reflected in the organizational chart." (7.11) We understand that while the System intends to have a "dual reporting relationship" for the CBOs, who will report directly to both the respective University President and the System, the change had not been made at the time the report was submitted. The System reports that it plans to coordinate training, entitled "Working in a Matrix," later in March for relevant financial personnel from the Universities and the System, after which it will seek Board guidance, with the goal for the "reporting relationships to be amended" by July 1, 2018. The report due for consideration in March 2019 will afford the System an opportunity to report on the implementation and early success of the dual reporting relationship.

To provide as many educational opportunities as possible to the people of Maine, the System is working with the six Universities to develop collaborative programs, to be offered by two or more institutions, and anticipates that there will be significant cross-listing of courses developed and offered by one institution available as part of a degree program to students at other institutions. The Commission is pleased to note that cross-listed courses will identify the institution of origin in the catalog, course schedule, and transcript. We ask that in the report due for consideration at our March 2019 meeting, the system include information on the extent of cross-listed courses available to students by home and host institution. The sharing of coursework between separately accredited institutions to the extent contemplated by the University of Maine System is innovative and can potentially enrich and enhance educational opportunities for students. At the same time, we seek assurance that the separately accredited institutions can continue to meet the Commission's standards. These matters are related to our standards on *Organization and Governance* and *The Academic Program*:

The institution's chief academic officer is directly responsible to the chief executive officer, and in concert with the faculty and other academic administrators, 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. Off-campus, continuing education, distance education, correspondence education, international, evening, and weekend programs are clearly integrated and incorporated into the policy formation, academic oversight, and evaluation system of the institution (3.14).

Students complete at least one-fourth of their undergraduate credits, including substantial advanced work in the major or concentration, at the institution awarding the degree (4.36).

Through its system of academic administration and faculty participation, the institution demonstrates an effective system of academic oversight, assuring the quality of the academic program wherever and however it is offered (4.5).

The institution develops, approves, administers, and on a regular cycle reviews its academic programs under institutional policies that are implemented by designated bodies with established channels of communication and control. Review of academic programs includes evidence of student success and program effectiveness and incorporates an external perspective. Faculty have a substantive voice in these matters (4.6).

The institution demonstrates its clear and ongoing authority and administrative oversight for the academic elements of all courses for which it awards institutional credit or credentials. These responsibilities include course content, the specification of required competencies, and the delivery of the instructional program; selection, approval, professional development, and evaluation of faculty; admission, registration, and retention of students; evaluation of prior learning; and evaluation of student progress, including the awarding and recording of credit. The institution retains, even with contractual, dual enrollment, or other arrangements, responsibility for the design, content, and delivery of courses for which academic credit or degrees are awarded. The institution awarding a joint, dual, or concurrent degree demonstrates that the program is consistent with Commission policy and that the student learning outcomes meet the institution's own standards and those of the Commission (4.32).

As noted above, the Commission will monitor these developments through the report requested of the University of Maine System, through its comprehensive and interim reviews of the six accredited Universities, and through other reports that may be specified.

The Commission asks that the University of Maine System submit the requested information by February 1, 2019. Please send four paper copies and one electronic copy (single, searchable pdf file) to the Commission offices.

You are encouraged to share this letter with all of the System and Universities' constituencies. It is Commission policy to inform the governing board chairperson of action on the accreditation status of affiliated institutions and, as in this case, action taken with respect to a system as it affects affiliated institutions. The System and Universities are free to release information about the report and the Commission's action to others, in accordance with the enclosed policy on Public Disclosure of Information about Affiliated Institutions.

You are encouraged to work closely with Commission staff on the above matters and future developments related to accreditation as the system pursues its One University initiative.

Dr. James H. Page
May 18, 2018
Page 4

If you have questions about the Commission's action, please contact Barbara Brittingham,
President of the Commission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "David Angel".

David Angel

DPA/sjp

Enclosure

cc: Mr. James R. Erwin, University of Maine System, Board Chair
Dr. Kathryn A. Foster, President, University of Maine at Farmington
Dr. Susan J. Hunter, President, University of Maine
Dr. Karen Kimball, Head of Campus and VP Academic Affairs, University of Maine at Machias
Dr. Raymond Joseph Rice, Interim President, University of Maine at Presque Isle
Dr. John Short, President, University of Maine at Fort Kent
Dr. Rebecca Wyke, President, University of Maine at Augusta
Dr. Glenn Cummings, President, University of Southern Maine