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June 29, 2012

**Dr. Cathryn L. Addy**  
**President**  
**Tunxis Community College**  
**271 Scott Swamp Road**  
**Farmington, CT 06032-3187**

Dear President Addy:

I am pleased to inform you that at its meeting on April 20, 2012, the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education took the following action with respect to Tunxis Community College:

that Tunxis Community College be continued in accreditation;

that the College submit a report for consideration in Fall, 2013 that provides an update regarding:

1. the impact on the institution's operations of the reorganization of higher education governance by the State of Connecticut;
2. its success in assuring the sufficiency of resources to support its programs and services;

that the College submit a fifth-year interim report for consideration in Fall, 2016;

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

1. continuing to assure that resources are adequate to support programs and services;
2. providing adequate numbers of full-time faculty and professional and support staff;
3. analyzing measures of student success, including graduation rates, and using the results for improvement;
4. addressing the institution's goals to increase diversity among faculty and staff;

that the next comprehensive evaluation be scheduled for Fall, 2021.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its actions.

Tunxis Community College (TCC) is continued in accreditation because the Commission finds the institution to be substantially in compliance with the *Standards for Accreditation*. We commend TCC for its strong leadership and the enthusiastic and innovative commitment of faculty and staff to the mission of the college. We also take favorable note of the College's Ability-Based Education program (supported by a Title III grant of \$1.8 million in 2003) which has supported a robust general education program focused on abilities and relevant assessment. This has also contributed to a strong culture of planning and assessment which includes a schedule for program and discipline reviews. The College has benefited significantly from capital funding of \$35 million which supported much-needed buildings, including the library and a classroom/office building. This has increased the size of the campus by 40%, with another building construction project scheduled to begin in the current academic year. We concur with the visiting team that Tunxis Community College appears to be well positioned to build on the accomplishments of the past decade and to address the challenges of the future.

The items the institution is asked to report on in Fall, 2013 are related to our Standards on *Organization and Governance* and *Financial Resources*.

The Commission understands that public higher education governance in Connecticut is undergoing a major reorganization. At the time of the comprehensive visit, the state of Connecticut was in the process of appointing a new Board of Regents. We appreciate that the impact of these changes for the campus is not yet fully known, and we look forward to receiving an update on this matter in Fall 2013. Our standard on *Organization and Governance* is relevant here:

In multi-campus systems organized under a single governing board, the division of responsibility and authority between the system office and the institution is clear. Where system and campus boards share governance responsibilities or dimensions of authority, system policies and procedures are clearly defined and equitably administered (3.11).

We appreciate the College's candid acknowledgment that it "faces significant financial challenges." Over the past three years, TCC's unrestricted net assets have declined by \$1.5 million, from a surplus of \$625,000 to a current deficit of (\$826,000). In FY2011, the College realized a \$700,000 reduction to its direct state appropriation, and a system-mandated revenue-sharing plan compelled a transfer of \$900,000 back to the state. Furthermore, we understand that a state hiring freeze has prevented the College from filling several vacant full-time faculty positions and prevented the institution from addressing staffing needs in student-support departments. We anticipate being apprised, through the Fall 2013 report, of the College's success in continuing to assure the sufficiency of resources to support its programs and services. Our standards on *Organization and Governance* and *Financial Resources* inform us here:

... The chief executive officer assures that the institution employs staff sufficient in role, number, and qualifications appropriate to the institution's mission, size, and scope (3.8).

The institution preserves and enhances available financial resources sufficient to support its mission. It manages its financial resources and allocates them in a way that reflects its mission and purposes. It demonstrates the ability to respond to financial emergencies and unforeseen circumstances (9.1).

The institution's multi-year financial planning is realistic and reflects the capacity of the institution to depend on identified sources of revenue and ensure the advancement of educational quality and services for students. The governing board reviews and approves the institution's financial plans based on multi-year analysis and financial forecasting. (9.3).

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, we ask that the report submitted for consideration in Fall 2016 give emphasis to four matters related to our Standards on *Students, Faculty, Financial Resources, and Integrity*.

The College is asked, in the Fall 2016, report to provide an update about its continued success in assuring the sufficiency of resources to support its programs and services. The Commission recognizes that these significant resource challenges will take time to resolve and asks that the Fall 2016 fifth-year interim report provide evidence of the institution's continued success in addressing this matter. The standard on *Financial Resources* (as cited above) will continue to be pertinent here.

More specifically, we note that TCC faces challenges in providing adequate numbers of full-time faculty and professional and support staff, as cited above. Currently the college has 64 full-time and 235 adjunct faculty. Through the Fall 2016 report, we would appreciate an update regarding how the College has been able to address its staffing needs to assure the continued quality of its programs with particular focus on the degree to which the College has addressed the stated system goal to have full-time faculty teach 60 percent of classes. The standards on *Faculty* (cited below) and *Financial Resources* (cited above) should inform this effort:

There are an adequate number of faculty whose time commitment to the institution is sufficient to assure the accomplishment of class and out-of-class responsibilities essential for the fulfillment of institutional mission and purposes. Responsibilities of teaching faculty include instruction and the systematic understanding of effective teaching/learning processes and outcomes in courses and programs for which they share responsibility; additional duties may include such functions as student advisement, academic planning, and participation in policy-making, course and curricular development, research, and institutional governance (5.3).

The Commission appreciates the College's candid acknowledgment of the need to address low graduation rates. Presently, academic program review addresses student success at the program level, and the college-wide departmental annual planning process provides an opportunity for institutional focus on student success strategies. We look forward to learning, in Fall 2016, of the College's success with further analysis of measures of student achievement, including graduation rates, and how these data have been used for institutional improvement. Our standard on *Students* is informative here:

The institution measures student success, including rates of retention and graduation and other measures of success appropriate to institutional mission (6.6).

The institution's goals for retention and graduation reflect institutional purposes, and the results are used to inform recruitment and the review of programs and services (6.8).

Data on retention, graduation, and other measures of student success are regularly reviewed within the institution, with the results being used for planning, resource allocation, and improvement (6.9).

The self-study states that “staff diversity ... still needs to be addressed—particularly in the ranks of faculty. Accordingly, the college will continue its efforts to seek and retain minority faculty members.” We are pleased to learn that TCC also intends to continue efforts to increase diversity of staff to more closely reflect the student population. We look forward to learning, through the Fall 2016 report, about the College’s success in achieving its goals to increase diversity among faculty and staff. Relevant here are our standards on *Faculty and Integrity*:

The institution employs an open and orderly process for recruiting and appointing its faculty. Faculty participate in the search process for new members of the instructional staff. The institution ensures equal employment opportunity consistent with legal requirements and any other dimensions of its own choosing, compatible with its mission and purposes, it addresses its own goals for the achievement of diversity among its faculty ... (5.4).

The institution adheres to non-discriminatory policies and practices in recruitment, admissions, employment, evaluation, disciplinary action, and advancement. It fosters 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 Fall, 2021 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 Tunxis Community College and for the report submitted by the visiting team. The Commission also welcomed the opportunity to meet with you, and Dr. Charles Wall, 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 Dr. Robert Kennedy. 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.

Dr. Cathryn L. Addy  
June 29, 2012  
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Jo Maydew".

Mary Jo Maydew

MJM/sjp

Enclosure

cc: Dr. Robert Kennedy  
Visiting team