



Founded in 1885

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES, INC.
COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

MARY JO MAYDEW, Chair (2011)
Mount Holyoke College

RICHARD L. PATTENAUDE, Vice Chair (2013)
University of Maine System

TERRENCE A. GOMES (2011)
Roxbury Community College

R. BRUCE HITCHNER (2011)
Tufts University

BRUCE L. MALLORY (2011)
University of New Hampshire

WALLACE NUTTING (2011)
Soco, Maine

JILL N. REICH (2011)
Bates College

CHRISTOPHER J. SULLIVAN (2011)
Concord, NH

DORIS B. ARRINGTON (2012)
Capitol Community College

NEIL G. BUCKLEY (2012)
Emmanuel College

DAVID E.A. CARSON (2012)
Hartford, CT

PETER V. DEEKE (2012)
Roger Williams University

JUDITH B. KAMM (2012)
Bentley University

WILLIAM F. KENNEDY (2012)
Boston, MA

KIRK D. KOLENBRANDER (2012)
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

KATHERINE H. SLOAN (2012)
Massachusetts College of Art and Design

REV. JEFFREY P. VON ARX, S.J. (2012)
Fairfield University

JEAN A. WYLD (2012)
Springfield College

F. ROBERT HUTH (2013)
Middlebury College

MARTY W. KRAUSS (2013)
Brandeis University

LINDA S. WELLS (2013)
Boston University

Director of the Commission
BARBARA E. BRITTINGHAM
E-Mail: bbrittingham@neasc.org

Deputy Director of the Commission
PATRICIA M. O'BRIEN, SND
E-Mail: pobrien@neasc.org

Associate Director of the Commission
ROBERT C. FROH
E-Mail: rfroh@neasc.org

Associate Director of the Commission
PAULA A. HARBECKE
E-Mail: pharbecke@neasc.org

Associate Director of the Commission
LOUISE A. ZAK
E-Mail: lzak@neasc.org

Assistant Director of the Commission
JULIE L. ALIG
E-Mail: jalig@neasc.org

November 12, 2010

NOV 18 2010

Dr. John J. Neuhauser
President
Saint Michael's College
One Winooski Park
Colchester, VT 05439-0001

Dear President Neuhauser:

I am pleased to inform you that at its meeting on September 16, 2010, the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education took the following action with respect to Saint Michael's College:

that Saint Michael's College be continued in accreditation;

that the College submit a fifth-year interim report for consideration in Spring 2015;

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

1. implementing its strategic plan;
2. maintaining financial stability, with particular emphasis on the College's success in meeting its enrollment and fundraising goals;
3. assuring the effectiveness of its faculty governance model;
4. achieving its goals for the diversity of its faculty, staff, and student body;
5. implementing its new course credit model and revisions to the liberal studies curriculum;

that the next comprehensive evaluation be scheduled for Spring 2020.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

Saint Michael's College is continued in accreditation because the Commission finds the institution to be substantially in compliance with the

Celebrating 125 years 1885-2010

209 BURLINGTON ROAD, SUITE 201, BEDFORD, MA 01730-1433 | 781-271-0022 | FAX 781-271-0950

<http://cihe.neasc.org>

Standards for Accreditation. We commend the College for its candid self-study, which provides clear evidence of the institution's ongoing efforts to evaluate and improve the quality of its programs and services. The members of the campus community demonstrate a strong commitment to the mission and Edmundite tradition of the College and to undergraduate education in the liberal arts tradition. We take favorable note of the recently completed strategic planning process, which provides a candid assessment of the challenges facing the institution as well as the resources the College has assembled and plans to assemble to address those challenges. We concur with the visiting team that the dedicated faculty and staff and the "bright, engaged" students of the College are among its particular strengths, and we share their praise for the "impressive" senior leadership team and the "devoted and passionate advocates" who comprise the Board of Trustees.

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 2015, to report on four matters related to our standards on *Planning and Evaluation, Financial Resources, Organization and Governance, Faculty, and The Academic Program.*

As noted above, the College has recently completed a strategic planning process and is poised to begin implementation of Strategic Plan 2015. We are gratified to learn that the College has prepared an "implementation table" to guide this undertaking and has, in its self-study, acknowledged the need for "increasingly sophisticated data-gathering and assessment procedures to enable an informed prioritization of needs." The Spring 2015 interim report will provide an opportunity for Saint Michael's College to update the Commission on its progress in achieving the goals and objectives articulated in its strategic plan, as evidence of its "demonstrable record of success in implementing the results of its planning" (2.3).

The Commission commends Saint Michael's College for its prudent financial management, which has resulted in a \$3.3 million operating surplus at the end of FY2010. We understand that the FY2011 budget includes funding for almost all elements of the strategic plan slated for implementation during the year. We note as well that the College anticipates a small surplus during FY2011, driven by growth in enrollment, increases in annual giving, and ongoing management of expenses. We look forward to learning, through the Spring 2015 report, of the College's continued success in maintaining its financial stability, in keeping with our standard on *Financial Resources:*

The institution preserves and enhances available financial resources sufficient to support its academic and other activities. 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 (9.3).

The Commission joins the visiting team in congratulating Saint Michael's College on its highly participatory governance model, but we also share the team's judgment that the College would benefit from an evaluation of governance to ensure its overall effectiveness and, in particular, to provide greater clarity about the role of faculty in governance, faculty workloads, and the expectations for faculty scholarship, including research. We are pleased to learn that the College

has already begun work on this review and anticipate being apprized, in Spring 2015, of the institution's success with this endeavor. Our standards on *Organization and Governance* and *Faculty* provide guidance here:

The authority, responsibilities, and relationships among the governing board, administration, faculty, and staff are clearly described in the institution's by-laws, or an equivalent document, and in a table of organization that displays the working order of the institution. The board, administration, staff, and faculty understand and fulfill their respective roles as set forth in the institution's official documents and are provided with the appropriate information to undertake their respective roles. The institution's organizational structure, decision-making processes, and policies are clear and consistent with its mission and support institutional effectiveness. The institution's system of governance involves the participation of all appropriate constituencies and includes regular communication among them (3.1).

Faculty exercise an important role in assuring the academic integrity of the institution's educational programs. Faculty have a substantive voice in matters of educational programs, faculty personnel, and other aspects of institutional policy that relate to their areas of responsibility and expertise (3.10).

Faculty assignments and workloads are consistent with the institution's mission and purposes. They are equitably determined to allow faculty adequate time to provide effective instruction, advise and evaluate students, contribute to program and institutional assessment and improvement, continue professional growth, and participate in scholarship, research, creative activities and service compatible with the mission and purposes of the institution. Faculty workloads are reappraised periodically and adjusted as institutional conditions change (5.7).

All faculty pursue scholarship designed to ensure they are current in the theory, knowledge, skills, and pedagogy of their discipline or profession. The institution defines the scholarly expectations for faculty consistent with its mission and purposes and the level of degrees offered. Scholarship and instruction are integrated and mutually supportive (5.19).

We understand that increasing diversity is a "major objective" for Saint Michael's College, and we are gratified to learn of steps taken by the College to support achievement of its goals in this regard and of the initial success of those efforts. We note that the College hired an associate director of admissions and multicultural recruitment in 2008 and has two active diversity committees, one for faculty and students and one for staff. Of the five faculty members hired last year, two are underrepresented minorities, and the proportion of ALAHNA students in the entering class increased from four to eight percent from 2008 to 2009 and held steady at eight percent in 2010. The Spring 2015 report will afford the opportunity for the College to update the Commission on its progress in achieving its goals for diversity, in keeping with our standards on *Faculty, Students, and Integrity*:

The institution employs an open and orderly process for recruiting and appointing its faculty ... [c]ompatible with its mission and purposes, it addresses its own goals for the achievement of diversity of race, gender, and ethnicity (5.4).

Consistent with its mission, the institution enrolls a student body that is broadly representative of the population the institution wishes to serve (6.1).

The institution ... fosters an atmosphere within the institutional community that respects and supports people of diverse characteristics and backgrounds (11.5).

Finally, the Commission is pleased to learn that the College's new course-credit model (a 4/4 system) and its new liberal studies curriculum were approved by the faculty in Spring 2010 and the institution's Board of Trustees in June 2010. As noted in the self-study and the report of the visiting team, implementation of these initiatives will require a complete review of all majors, minors, and courses as well as the development of assessment plans for each department and for the liberal studies curriculum. As the College undertakes this review, we remind you that the Commission anticipates its revised standards will likely include statements on the credit hour, based on forthcoming federal regulations. We anticipate being apprized, through the Spring 2015 report, of the College's progress in these endeavors, as informed by our standard on *The Academic Program*:

The award of credit is based on policies developed and overseen by the faculty and academic administration Credit awards are consistent with the course content, appropriate to the field of study, and reflect the level and amount of student learning (4.33).

The institution implements and supports a systematic and broad-based approach to the assessment of student learning focused on educational improvement through understanding what and how students are learning through their academic program and, as appropriate, through experiences outside the classroom. This approach is based on a clear statement or statements of what students are expected to gain, achieve, demonstrate, or know by the time they complete their academic program. The approach provides useful information to help the institution understand what and how students are learning, improve the experiences provided for students, and assure that the level of student achievement is appropriate for the degree awarded. Institutional support is provided for these activities (4.44).

The institution's approach to understanding student learning focuses on the course, program, and institutional level. Data and other evidence generated through this approach are considered at the appropriate level of focus, with the results being a demonstrable factor in improving the learning opportunities and results for students (4.45).

The scheduling of a comprehensive evaluation in Spring 2020 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 Saint Michael's College and for the report submitted by the visiting team. The Commission also welcomed the opportunity to meet with you and Mr. Joseph P. Garrity, Chair of the Board of Trustees, as well as Dr. Barry Mills, 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

Dr. John J. Neuhauser
November 12, 2010
Page 5

accreditation status. In a few days we will be sending a copy of this letter to Mr. Joseph P. Garrity. 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. Joseph P. Garrity
Visiting team