



April 1, 2024

Dr. Leslie Wong  
Interim President  
Connecticut College  
270 Mohegan Avenue  
New London, CT 06320-4125

Dear President Wong:

I write to inform you that at its meeting on March 1, 2024, the New England Commission of Higher Education considered the report submitted by Connecticut College and took the following action:

that the report submitted by Connecticut College be accepted;

that the comprehensive evaluation scheduled for Spring 2028 be confirmed;

that, in addition to the information included in all self-studies, as well as the matters specified in our letter of April 4, 2023, the institution give emphasis, in the Spring 2028 self-study, to its success in:

- 1) ensuring its revised governance structures are effective and inclusive;
- 2) achieving its goals to diversify the College's revenue streams.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

The report submitted by Connecticut College was accepted because it was responsive to the concerns raised by the Commission in its letter of April 4, 2023.

The Commission commends Connecticut College for its thorough and well-written report. We appreciate the candor with which the College described its current period of "significant institutional transition" and are pleased to learn that the institution has made extensive efforts to improve both the climate on campus as well as its financial and governance foundation in preparation for the expected March 2024 appointment of its next president. The Commission notes with favor that Connecticut College's current enrollment of 1,995 students is the largest student body in its history and is the result of two consecutive large incoming classes – 630 in Fall 2022 and 555 in Fall 2023. For Fall 2024, the College has projected an enrollment of 550 students with a 45% discount rate (down slightly from discount rates of 48.4% in Fall 2022 and 46.2% in Fall 2023). We appreciate learning that in June 2023 Connecticut College successfully completed its Defy Boundaries campaign, with \$317.5 million raised thereby exceeding its goal of \$300 million. We further note with favor that Moody's Investors Service has revised Connecticut College's outlook from negative to stable and reaffirmed the institution's A2 debt rating. The Commission is gratified to learn that the College's Equity Inclusion Action Plan "continues to serve as a general roadmap" and that all director positions in

the Division of Equity and Inclusion are filled and the division is “almost completely staffed.” Lastly, we appreciate learning that a newly appointed Presidential Task Force has been convened to focus on “student support and equity compliance, faculty and staff retention, and campus climate and communication.”

The scheduling of a comprehensive evaluation in Spring 2028 is consistent with Commission policy requiring each accredited institution to undergo a comprehensive evaluation at least once every ten years. In addition to the information included in all comprehensive self-studies and the items specified for attention in the Commission’s letter of April 4, 2023, Connecticut College is asked, in the Spring 2028 self-study, to give emphasis to its success in addressing two matters related to our standards on *Organization and Governance*, *The Academic Program*, and *Institutional Resources*.

The Commission understands that Connecticut College has changed the structure of its monthly faculty meetings, which were previously convened and led by the president, to a “faculty-only” meeting in order to provide “a space where faculty alone could deliberate fully and candidly on faculty and College matters.” In addition, the All-College Meeting, jointly convened by the chair of the Staff Council, the chair of the Faculty Steering and Conference Committee, and the president, “provides a formal venue for disseminating critical College news and reports as well as a shared forum for discussion of these matters for all College employees.” The Commission is pleased to note that the College understands the “need for ongoing assessment and monitoring” of these two bodies and therefore seeks assurance, through the Spring 2028 self-study, of the effectiveness and inclusivity of these revised governance structures. This request is in keeping with our standard on *Organization and Governance*:

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 (3.2).

In accordance with established institutional mechanisms and procedures, the chief executive officer and senior administrators consult with faculty, students, other administrators, and staff, and are appropriately responsive to their concerns, needs, and initiatives. The institution’s internal governance provides for the appropriate participation of its constituencies, promotes communications, and effectively advances the quality of the institution (3.13).

The effectiveness of the institution’s organizational structure and system of governance is improved through regular and systematic review (3.19).

The Commission appreciates learning that Connecticut College is engaged in planning to “diversify revenue streams and relieve pressure on [its] tuition-based financial model.” We understand that, in summer 2023, the institution launched four residential pre-college programs with plans to add a fifth program in summer 2025. Additionally, the College is evaluating the market potential for new targeted undergraduate and graduate programs and is analyzing opportunities to provide continuing education courses “that are desirable to local business and industry.” We look forward to learning, through the self-study prepared in advance of the Spring 2028 comprehensive evaluation, of Connecticut College’s success in diversifying its revenue streams. We remind you of our standards on *The Academic Program* and *Institutional Resources*:

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.

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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 (4.7).

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 (7.6).

The Commission expressed appreciation for the report submitted by Connecticut College and hopes that its preparation has contributed to institutional improvement. It appreciates your cooperation with the effort to provide public assurance of the quality of higher education.

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. Debo P. Adegbile. The institution is 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.

If you have any questions about the Commission's action, please contact Lawrence M. Schall, President of the Commission.

Sincerely,



Russell C. Carey

RCC/jm

cc: Mr. Debo P. Adegbile

Enclosure: Public Disclosure of Information about Affiliated Institutions