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January 31, 2014

Dr. Jack R. Bermingham
President
Highline Community College
2400 South 240th Street
Des Moines, WA 98198-9800

Dear President Bermingham. *Jack*

On behalf of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, I am pleased to report that the accreditation of Highline Community College has been reaffirmed on the basis of the Fall 2013 Year Seven *Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability* Evaluation.

In reaffirming accreditation, the Commission requests that the College expand its Fall 2016 Mid-Cycle Self-Evaluation Report to include an addendum to address Recommendation 1 of the Fall 2013 Year Seven Peer-Evaluation Report. In making this request, the Commission finds that Recommendation 1 of the Fall 2013 Year Seven Peer-Evaluation Report is an area where Highline Community College is substantially in compliance with Commission criteria for accreditation, but in need of improvement.

Moreover, the Commission added a second recommendation which addresses external financial audits. Recommendation 2 states:

The evaluation committee recommends that for each year of operation, the College undergo an external financial audit and that the results from such audits, including findings and management letter recommendations, be considered in a timely, appropriate and comprehensive manner by the Board of Trustees (Eligibility Requirement 19 and Standard 2.F.7).

The Commission requests that the College address Recommendation 2 of the Fall 2013 Year Seven Peer-Evaluation in an Ad Hoc Report in Fall 2014. The Commission determined that Recommendation 2 of the Fall 2013 Year Seven Peer-Evaluation Report is an area where Highline Community College does not meet the Commission's criteria for accreditation. According to U.S. Department of Education Regulation 34 CFR 602.20 and Commission Policy, *Commission Action Regarding Institutional Compliance Within Specified Period*, the Commission requires that Highline Community College take appropriate action to ensure that Recommendation 2 of the Fall 2013 Year Seven Peer-Evaluation Report is addressed and resolved within the prescribed two-year period. A copy of the Recommendations and the Commission Policy are enclosed for your reference.

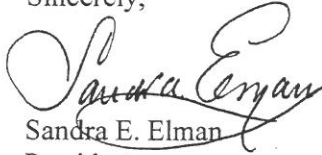
Lastly, on the basis of the Fall 2013 Peer-Evaluation, the Commission encourages the institution to consider regular inspections of facilities housing hazardous or toxic materials.

President Jack R. Bermingham
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The Commission commends the College's faculty and staff for their high level of sensitivity and commitment to their students; facilities personnel for their dedication in improving and renovating an aging physical plant located on a difficult setting; the library personnel for developing and maintaining a research-friendly website; and the administration and Board of Trustees for setting the future direction of the institution through involved, active engagement in the campus and surrounding community. Further, the Commission finds laudable the College's stewardship in creating financial reserves policies that help ensure financial strength and fiduciary integrity. The Commission applauds the College for embedding the core themes seamlessly into the planning and decision-making processes of the institution. The Commission finds noteworthy the College's long-standing commitment to and success in integrating diversity, globalism and student leadership into the curriculum to prepare students to work in a diverse workforce.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best wishes for a peaceful and fulfilling New Year.

Sincerely,

Sandra E. Elman
President

SEE:rb

Enclosures: Recommendations
Commission Policy, *Commission Action Regarding Institutional Compliance
Within Specified Period*

cc: Mr. Jeff L. Wagnitz, Vice President for Academic Affairs ✓
Mr. Bob Roegner, Chair, Board of Trustees
Mr. Marty Brown, Executive Director, Washington State Board for Community
and Technical Colleges

Year Seven *Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability* Evaluation
Fall 2013
Highline Community College
Recommendations

1. In the spirit of continuous improvement as contemplated by the Standards, the evaluation committee recommends that the College gather and maintain evidence that the depth, breadth, coherence, content and sequence of programs are appropriate (Standard 2.C.4 and 2.C.5).
2. The evaluation committee recommends that for each year of operation, the College undergo an external financial audit and that the results from such audits, including findings and management letter recommendations, be considered in a timely, appropriate and comprehensive manner by the Board of Trustees (Eligibility Requirement 19 and Standard 2.F.7).

Commission Action Regarding Institutional Compliance Within Specified Period Policy

If the Commission determines that an institution it accredits is not in compliance with a Commission standard for accreditation or an eligibility requirement, the Commission will immediately initiate adverse action against the institution or require the institution to take appropriate action to bring itself into compliance within a time period that shall not exceed: (1) twelve months, if the longest program offered by the institution is less than one year in length; (2) eighteen months, if the longest program offered by the institution is at least one year, but less than two years, in length; or (3) two years, if the longest program offered by the institution is at least two years in length.

The Commission may extend the period for compliance noted above should it reasonably expect that, based upon the institution's progress toward meeting the Commission's standard for accreditation or eligibility requirement, the institution will come into full compliance within a reasonable timeframe. Should an institution deem that as a result of mitigating circumstances it is not able to comply with the standard for accreditation or eligibility requirement within the specified period of time, the institution may submit a written request to the Commission for additional time to come into compliance with the standard for accreditation or eligibility requirement. The request is to be submitted prior to the time limit for corrective action set forth by the Commission, provide a detailed explanation of the reasons why the institution cannot comply with the standard for accreditation within the designated time period, and demonstrate that the institution is making good progress in meeting the standard for accreditation. Following a review of the request, the Commission will make a determination as to whether the institution has based its request on valid reasons. If the Commission determines that the institution has substantiated good cause for not complying within the specified time period and is making good progress to come into compliance, the Commission will extend the period for achieving compliance and stipulate requirements for continuing oversight of the institution's accreditation during the extension.

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