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June 29, 2023

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Amber Knoettgen
President
Cloud County Community College
2221 Campus Dr.
Concordia, KS 66901-1002

Dear President Knoettgen:

This letter is formal notification of action taken by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Board of Trustees (“the Board”) concerning Cloud County Community College (“the Institution”). This action is effective as of the date the Board acted, June 22, 2023. In taking this action, the Board considered materials from the most recent comprehensive evaluation, including, but not limited to: the Assurance Filing the institution submitted, the report from the comprehensive evaluation team, the report of the Institutional Actions Council (IAC) Hearing Committee, and the institutional responses to these reports.

Summary of the Action: The Board determined that the Institution is no longer out of compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation and removed the Institution from Probation. This action also resulted in a reaffirmation of the Institution’s accreditation, as outlined below.

Substantive Change: HLC policy¹ states an institution removed from Probation shall be subject to additional requirements for substantive change for three (3) years following the removal of Probation.²

Notification Program: HLC policy³ states that the Institution remains ineligible for the Notification Program for Additional Locations until it has completed ten (10) years in good standing as required for access.

Board Rationale

The Board based its action on the following findings made with regard to the Institution as well as the entire record before the Board:

Cloud County Community College (“the Institution”) now meets without concerns Criterion Three, Core Component 3.A, “the rigor of the institution’s academic offerings is appropriate to higher education,” for the following reasons:

¹ INST.E.20.010, Probation.

² INST.F.20.040, Substantive Change.

³ INST.E.20.010, Probation.

- The Institution has addressed all of the previous concerns related to this Core Component and has worked diligently to ensure the rigor of its offerings across all modalities by developing strong outcomes and assessment processes, including program, department, and co-curricular reviews.

The Institution now meets without concerns Criterion Four, Core Component 4.A, “the institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings,” for the following reasons:

- The Institution has addressed all of the previous concerns related to this Core Component and has enacted improvements including updating the program review process, developing student learning outcomes, establishing policies and procedures for program assessment and review, conducting annual reviews for all departments, and adding staff to support these activities.

The Institution now meets Criterion Four, Core Component 4.B, “the institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students,” for the following reasons:

- The Institution has addressed all of the previous concerns related to this Core Component and has implemented ongoing assessment of student learning outcomes at all levels including course, program, general education, and institutional outcomes.
- The Institution has completed assessment cycles each term for the past year and will move to an annual cycle of assessment to continue “closing the assessment loop.”
- The Institution has increased faculty assessment participation from 30% to 94%, with 100% established as the goal moving forward.
- The Institution’s processes and methodologies to assess student learning are now clearly defined, universally understood, and involve all faculty, including part time and concurrent faculty, as well as relevant staff and administration.

The Institution now meets without concerns Criterion Four, Core Component 4.C, “the institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve retention, persistence and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs,” for the following reasons:

- The Institution has addressed all of the previous concerns related to this Core Component and has implemented processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on retention, persistence, and completion that reflect good practice.
- The Institution’s efforts of using data for continuous improvement have resulted in the redesign of courses, enhancement of the institution’s “early alert” system, and the establishment of several positions to support these activities such as a retention specialist, a Director of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness and Planning, and a Director of Student Accessibility and Mental Health Services.

The Institution now meets without concerns Criterion Five, Core Component 5.B, “the institution’s resource base supports its educational offerings and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future,” for the following reasons:

- The Institution has addressed all of the previous concerns related to this Core Component and aligned its Strategic Plan with the budgeting process, which

systematically integrates student learning assessment and program review in addition to operations and capital improvement decisions.

- The Institution has incorporated budget forecasting as a natural part of its planning discussions, including risk assessments and scenario planning to help anticipate future financial needs and potential revenue shortfalls.

The Board of Trustees of the Higher Learning Commission has determined, based on the preceding findings and evidence in the record, the Institution has demonstrated it is in compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation and Federal Compliance requirements.

Next Steps in the HLC Review Process

Comprehensive Evaluation: The Institution has been placed on the Standard Pathway with its next comprehensive evaluation for reaffirmation of accreditation in 2026-27.

HLC Disclosure Obligations

The Board action resulted in changes that will be reflected in the Institution's Statement of Accreditation Status as well as the Institutional Status and Requirements Report. The Statement of Accreditation Status, including the dates of the last and next comprehensive evaluation visits, will be posted to the HLC website.

In accordance with HLC policy,⁴ information about this action is provided to members of the public and to other constituents in several ways. This Action Letter and the enclosed Public Disclosure Notice will be posted to HLC's website not more than one business day after this letter is sent to the Institution. Additionally, a summary of Board actions will be sent to appropriate state and federal agencies and accrediting associations. This summary also will be published on HLC's website. The summary will include this HLC action regarding the Institution.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, thank you in advance for your cooperation. If you have questions about any of the information in this letter, please contact your HLC Staff Liaison, Dr. Andrew Lootens-White.

Sincerely,



Barbara Gellman-Danley
President

Enc: Public Disclosure Notice

Cc: Chair of the Board of Trustees, Cloud County Community College
Brandon Galm, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Cloud County Community College

⁴ COMMA.10.010, Notice of Accreditation Actions, HLC Public Notices and Public Statements

Evaluation Team Chair

IAC Hearing Committee Chair

Andrew Lootens-White, Vice President of Accreditation Relations, Higher Learning Commission

Anthea M. Sweeney, Vice President of Legal and Regulatory Affairs, Higher Learning Commission

Karla Wiscombe, Director of Academic Affairs, Kansas Board of Regents