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January 28, 2015

Dr. Patricia McKeown
President
Bellingham Technical College
3028 Lindbergh Avenue
Bellingham, WA 98225-1599

Dear President McKeown: *Patricia*

On behalf of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, I am pleased to report that the accreditation of Bellingham Technical College has been reaffirmed on the basis of the Fall 2014 Year Seven *Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability* Evaluation which was expanded to include the onsite evaluation of Standards Two, Three, Four and Five. In addition, the College was to address Recommendations 1 and 2 of the Fall 2011 Year One Peer-Evaluation Report as well as to include an executive summary indicating the institution's compliance with Eligibility Requirements 2 through 21. The Commission finds that its expectations with regard to the executive summary indicating compliance with Eligibility Requirements 2 through 21 have been met. However, with regard to Recommendations 1 and 2 of the Fall 2011 Year One Peer-Evaluation Report, the Commission determined that its expectations still have not been met.

In reaffirming accreditation, the Commission requests that the College expand its Fall 2015 Year One *Mission and Core Themes* Report to again address Recommendations 1 and 2 of the Fall 2011 Year One Peer-Evaluation Report. In addition, the Commission requests that the College address Recommendations 1, 2, and 4 of the Fall 2014 Year Seven Peer-Evaluation Report in its Fall 2015 Year One *Mission and Core Themes* Report. Moreover, the Commission requests that the College prepare an Ad Hoc Report without a visit in Spring 2016 to address Recommendation 3 of the Fall 2014 Year Seven Peer-Evaluation Report. A copy of the Recommendations is enclosed for your reference.

In making these requests, the Commission finds that Recommendations 1 and 2 of the Fall 2011 Year One Peer-Evaluation Report and Recommendations 1, 2, and 4 of the Fall 2014 Year Seven Peer-Evaluation Report are areas where Bellingham Technical College is substantially in compliance with Commission criteria for accreditation, but in need of improvement. However, the Commission determined that Recommendation 3 of the Fall 2014 Year Seven Peer-Evaluation Report 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* (enclosed), the Commission requires that Bellingham Technical College take appropriate action to ensure that Recommendation 3 of the Fall 2014 Year Seven Peer-Evaluation Report is addressed and resolved in the prescribed two-year period.

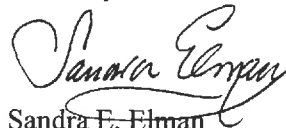
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The Commission commends Bellingham Technical College, and particularly the Student Services staff, for the design and availability of the robust and student-centered websites, as well as services focused on enrollment, registration, orientation, financial aid, and other related services. In addition, the Commission commends the College for the innovative and effective approach in researching, obtaining, and managing grants that further the mission of the institution. Moreover, the Commission applauds the College's library and media services staff for providing outstanding technology support services to students and faculty. Lastly, the Commission finds laudable the responsiveness of the College Foundation to the needs of students and the institution through philanthropic activities.

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: Ms. RaeLyn Axlund McBride, Director of Institutional Research & Planning ✓
Mr. Jim Groves, Board Chair
Mr. Marty Brown, Executive Director, Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges

Year Seven *Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability* Evaluation
Fall 2014
Bellingham Technical College
Recommendations

1. The evaluation committee recommends that the institution continue to implement an effective and widely understood system of governance with clearly defined authority, roles, and responsibilities; and implement decision-making structures and processes that make provision for the consideration of the views of faculty, staff, administrators, and students on matters in which they have a direct and reasonable interest (Standard 2.A.1).
2. The committee recommends that in the area of human resources, the institution employ qualified personnel to maintain and support the operational functions of the College (Standard 2.B.1).
3. The 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).
4. The committee recommends that the institution move beyond the gathering of data and use the results of its evaluation, on a regular basis, to support its cycle of planning, practices, resource allocation, application of institutional capacity, and assessment of results to make changes, as necessary, for improvement and strategic planning (Standard 5.B.2).

Recommendations 1 and 2 of the Fall 2011 Year One Peer-Evaluation Report:

1. Although the College has gathered significant data, the evaluation committee did not find sufficient evidence to support that the campus has fully completed the assessment cycle by “closing the loop” to demonstrate that student learning has been achieved as stated. The evaluation committee recommends that the College continue to make progress in this area (Standard 4.A.3).
2. The College has made several changes to its core themes since its first-year evaluation, resulting in redefined core themes that are much clearer and better connected to the institution’s strategic plan. It was noted that the College made a significant effort to connect goals to performance, outcomes, and baselines. The evaluation committee commends the College on its successful efforts. However the evaluation committee did not find sufficient evidence that the College made adequate improvement in connecting mission – core themes and strategic planning – to the allocation of resources. The evaluation committee recommends that the College continue to make progress in this area (Standards 1.A.2 and 2.F.3).

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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