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

November 14, 2016

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Dr. Carlee Rader Drummer  
President  
Quinebaug Valley Community College  
742 Upper Maple Street  
Danielson, CT 06239

Dear President Drummer:

I am pleased to inform you that at its meeting on September 22, 2016 the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education considered the interim (fifth-year) report submitted by Quinebaug Valley Community College and voted to take the following action:

that the interim report submitted by Quinebaug Valley Community College be accepted;

that the College submit a report for consideration in Fall 2018 that gives emphasis to the institution's success in:

- 1) implementing the Board of Regents Transition and Articulation Program (TAP);
- 2) continuing to assess educational effectiveness, including the assessment of student learning in TAP and other academic programs;
- 3) achieving its goals to improve retention and graduation rates;

that the comprehensive evaluation scheduled for Fall 2021 be confirmed;

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

The interim (fifth-year) report submitted by Quinebaug Valley Community College was accepted because it responded to the concerns raised by the Commission in its letters of April 2, 2014, May 14, 2014 and October 10, 2014 and addressed each of the nine standards, including a reflective essay for Standard 8: *Educational Effectiveness* on student learning and success.

The Commission commends Quinebaug Valley Community College (QVCC) for submitting a comprehensive interim report that documents the institution's accomplishments over the last five years. We are gratified to

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learn of recent permanent appointments in senior leadership, including a new President and Dean of Academics and Student Services, as well as the reconfiguration of the administration at its Willimantic Center. QVCC's "relatively autonomous" local governance and operations continue, with local fiscal responsibility and control and planning aligned with the goals and metrics established by the Connecticut Board of Regents. We understand that, with the Fall 2016 opening of the new Advanced Machine Manufacturing Technology Center on the Danielson campus, the College will no longer use the instructional site at Ellis Technical High School. We note favorably that the College has enhanced its oversight of College Career Pathways, its dual enrollment program, to ensure that all courses are taught by qualified faculty who are provided with appropriate support and supervision.

The College's new mission statement, adopted in May 2016, continues to stress the institution's role to provide "exceptional opportunities" for northeast Connecticut residents to become "fully engaged citizens." We note with approval the participatory process that led to the development of a strategic plan, "2020 Vision," that articulates five over-arching goals for the College. We understand the institution is engaged in reviewing its academic programs, particularly those where enrollment and marketability have declined. Through prudent budgeting and cost management, the College has achieved "breakeven" results from operations for the past three years. We note favorably the completion of several significant facilities improvements and deferred maintenance projects in the last five years at the Danielson campus and Willimantic Center.

In its reflective essay, Quinebaug Valley Community College notes that work undertaken by the College to assess student learning, which has taken place in a "context of change" over the past fifteen years, has been "slow and steady." The essay provided examples of QVCC's use of institutional and Board of Regents data to track graduates' success in securing employment after graduation and describes the success of the Early Childhood Education department to engage in assessment that provides "useful evidence of learning on multiple levels."

The items the institution is asked to report on in Fall 2018 are related to our standards on *The Academic Program, Educational Effectiveness, and Integrity, Transparency and Public Disclosure*.

The Commission understands that Quinebaug Valley Community College is engaged in the implementation of the Connecticut Board of Regents Transfer and Articulation Program (TAP). The program, which has been designed "to make curriculum planning more coherent" and to facilitate student transfer and completion, will enable the College to "collect and use meaningful data" to improve teaching, learning, and student advancement. We further understand that TAP will also facilitate QVCC's ability to provide students and prospective students with "a new level of information" on its website. We look forward to learning, through the Fall 2018 report, of QVCC's continued progress in implementing TAP. Our standards on *The Academic Program, Educational Effectiveness, and Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure* are relevant here:

The institution protects academic quality and integrity in the acceptance of transfer credit and seeks to establish articulation agreements with institutions from which and to which there is a significant pattern of student transfer. Such agreements are made available to those students affected by them (4.39).

The institution defines measures of student success and levels of achievement appropriate to its mission, modalities and location of instruction, and student body, including any specifically recruited populations. These measures include rates of progression, retention, transfer, and graduation; default and loan repayment rates; licensure passage rates; and employment (8.6).

The results of assessment and quantitative measures of student success are a demonstrable factor in the institution's efforts to improve the learning opportunities and results for students (8.8).

The institution publishes ... requirements and procedures and policies related to admission and the transfer of credit; a list of institutions with which it has articulation agreements ... (9.19).

The institution publishes statements of its goals for students' education and the success of students in achieving those goals. Information on student success includes rates of retention and graduation and other measures of student success appropriate to institutional mission (9.24).

The Commission appreciates QVCC's candid acknowledgment that, until recently, its access to "broad and deep data about graduates" was limited. We are pleased to learn that the state is now providing additional resources to support these efforts. We also note with approval that a set of learning competencies has been developed through the TAP initiative, and the College has developed plans to further enhance its assessment of these learning outcomes. The Fall 2018 report will afford the institution an opportunity to provide an update on its progress in assessing student learning in TAP and the College's other academic programs. Our standards on *The Academic Program* and *Educational Effectiveness* (cited above and below) provide guidance here:

The institution develops, approves, administers, and on a regular cycle reviews its academic programs under institutional policies that are implemented by designated bodies with established channels of communication and control. Review of academic programs includes evidence of student success and program effectiveness and incorporates an external perspective. Faculty have a substantive voice in these matters (4.6).

Assessment of learning is based on verifiable statements of what students are expected to gain, achieve, demonstrate, or know by the time they complete their academic program. The process of understanding what and how students are learning focuses on the course, competency, program, and institutional level. Assessment has the support of the institution's academic and institutional leadership and the systematic involvement of faculty and appropriate staff (8.3).

We note with favor that QVCC is addressing its acknowledged "challenges" with respect to retention and graduation rates through a combination of institutional and state-wide initiatives. These include "transitional strategies" courses in math and English to assure students' readiness for collegiate-level work, as well as improvements in scheduling, advising, and student orientation. We welcome further information in the Fall 2018 report with regard to the College's success in achieving its goals for retention and graduation rates, as specified in our standard on *Educational Effectiveness* (cited above).

The scheduling of a comprehensive evaluation in Fall 2021 is consistent with Commission policy requiring each accredited institution to undergo a comprehensive evaluation at least once every ten years.

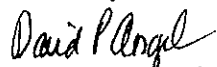
The Commission expressed appreciation for the report submitted by Quinebaug Valley Community College and hopes that its preparation has contributed to institutional improvement. It appreciates your cooperation in the effort to provide public assurance of the quality of higher education in New England.

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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. Matt Fleury. 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 Barbara Brittingham, President of the Commission.

Sincerely,



David P. Angel

DPA/sjp

Enclosures

cc: Mr. Matt Fleury