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COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

June 30, 2016

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Mr. Roger H. Brown
President
Berklee College of Music
1140 Boylston Street, MS-1140 OP
Boston, MA 02215-3693

Dear President Brown:

I am pleased to inform you that at its meeting on April 22, 2016, the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education considered the report submitted by Berklee College of Music regarding its plans to merge with Boston Conservatory and took the following action:

that the report be accepted and the plans to merge with Boston Conservatory be approved, with an effective date of April 22, 2016;

that a site visit to assess initial implementation of the merger be scheduled for Spring 2017;

that, when the merger has been finalized, Boston Conservatory submit a letter to the Commission relinquishing its accreditation.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

The report submitted by Berklee College of Music (Berklee) was accepted and its plans to merge with Boston Conservatory approved because the Commission finds the activity to be substantially in compliance with the *Standards for Accreditation* and relevant Commission policies.

The Commission commends Berklee College of Music for its thoughtful and well-designed plans to effect a merger with Boston Conservatory. The goal of the merger, through which Berklee will remain the "surviving organization" and the Conservatory will become The Boston Conservatory at Berklee (TBCB), is to increase "global leadership in the performing arts" and enhance opportunities and services for students. The merger is consistent with the missions of both institutions, and an inclusive process is planned to develop a new mission statement that will be submitted to the Berklee governing board for approval in May 2017. Eight current members of the Conservatory's Board of Trustees will join the Berklee Board, and the position of Conservatory president will transition into Executive Director of TBCB and will report to the Berklee president. Other TBCB "key leadership

positions" will be integrated into the Berklee leadership and reporting structure. As noted in the proposal, all academic programs currently offered by both institutions will continue to be offered post-merger. We appreciate the institution's candid acknowledgment that integration of the programs and the creation of "interesting synergies" will be "complex" and will take "several years" and note with favor the establishment of an academic integration committee to oversee the process. The proposal outlines the plans to integrate Conservatory faculty into Berklee, a transition that is expected to take until September 2017, as well as plans to ensure that students are provided with appropriate resources and services, including academic advising and access to financial aid. It is expected that, post-merger, there will be a "unified library" for the institution that will leverage the strengths of the current individual libraries, and the technology teams of both institutions are working together to align policies, processes, and responsibilities. The proposal notes that the merger should be "fairly straightforward" from a facilities perspective and outlines plans for a joint master planning exercise to identify opportunities to enhance the use of space on the campus. We acknowledge the financial strength of both Berklee College of Music and Boston Conservatory and note with approval the well-developed plans to integrate the financial and development operations of the two institutions to ensure "long-term financial stability."

The scheduling of a site visit in Spring 2017 to assess initial implementation of the merger is consistent with Commission policy. A copy of the relevant procedural statement is enclosed for your information and use.

We understand Berklee College of Music expects to "complete the merger legally" by June 1, 2016. We ask that, when the process has been finalized and the Boston Conservatory is no longer a separately accreditable institution, the Conservatory submit a letter to the Commission relinquishing its accreditation.

We remind you that the *Standards for Accreditation* have been revised, and the new standards go into effect on July 1, 2016. Therefore, the update prepared by Berklee College of Music in advance of the Spring 2017 evaluation should reference the 2016 standards.

The Commission expressed appreciation for the report submitted by Berklee College of Music and hopes its preparation has contributed to institutional improvement. We appreciate your cooperation with the effort to provide public assurance of the quality of higher education in New England.

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. Jeff Shames. 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,


Patricia Maguire Meservey

PMM/jm

Enclosures

cc: Mr. Jeff Shames
Mr. Richard Ortner