



Founded in 1885

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

DAVID P. ANGEL, Chair (2018)
Clark University

DAVID QUIGLEY, Vice Chair (2018)
Boston College

G. TIMOTHY BOWMAN (2018)
Harvard University

THOMAS L. G. DWYER (2018)
Johnson & Wales University

JOHN F. GABRANSKI (2018)
Haydenville, MA

KAREN L. MUNCASTER (2018)
Brandeis University

CHRISTINE ORTIZ (2018)
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

JON S. OXMAN (2018)
Auburn, ME

ROBERT L. PURA (2018)
Greenfield Community College

ABDALLAH A. SFEIR (2018)
Lebanese American University

REV. BRIAN J. SHANLEY, O.P. (2018)
Providence College

HARRY E. DUMAY (2019)
College of Our Lady of the Elms

JEFFREY R. GODLEY (2019)
Groton, CT

COLEEN C. PANTALONE (2019)
Northeastern University

MARIKO SILVER (2019)
Bennington College

GEORGE W. TETLER (2019)
Worcester, MA

KASSANDRA S. ARDINGER (2020)
Trustee Member, Concord, NH

RUSSELL CAREY (2020)
Brown University

FRANCESCO C. CESAREO (2020)
Assumption College

RICK DANIELS (2020)
Cohasset, MA

DONALD H. DEHAVES (2020)
University of Rhode Island

PAM Y. EDDINGER (2020)
Bunker Hill Community College

THOMAS S. EDWARDS (2020)
Thomas College

KIMBERLY M. GOFF-CREWS (2020)
Yale University

THOMAS C. GREENE (2020)
Vermont College of Fine Arts

MARTIN J. HOWARD (2020)
Boston University

SUSAN D. HUARD (2020)
Manchester Community College (NH)

PETER J. LANGER (2020)
University of Massachusetts Boston

JEFFREY S. SOLOMON (2020)
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

President of the Commission
BARBARA E. BRITTINGHAM
bbrittingham@neasc.org

Senior Vice President of the Commission
PATRICIA M. O'BRIEN, SND
pobrien@neasc.org

Vice President of the Commission
CAROL L. ANDERSON
canderson@neasc.org

Vice President of the Commission
PAULA A. HARBECKE
pharbecke@neasc.org

Vice President of the Commission
TALA KHUDAIRI
tkhudairi@neasc.org

November 1, 2017

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 September 28, 2017, the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education considered the report submitted by Berkelee College of Music, as well as the report of the visiting team, and took the following action:

that the report regarding the implementation of the merger of Berkelee College of Music with Boston Conservatory be accepted and the inclusion of Boston Conservatory at Berklee within the institution's accreditation be confirmed;

that the interim (fifth-year) report scheduled for consideration in Spring 2018 be confirmed;

that, in addition to the information included in all interim reports, as well as the matter specified for attention in our letter of October 31, 2017, the Spring 2018 report provide an update on the College's success in continuing to integrate Boston Conservatory into Berklee College of Music with attention to:

1. implementing its new enterprise resource planning (ERP) system and establishing a timeline that specifies benchmarks throughout the implementation process;
2. evaluating the effectiveness of enrollment and financial systems and ensuring that student support services, including advising and guidance through the financial aid process, are sufficient to support programs across the institution;
3. unifying library system policies, processes, and responsibilities;
4. establishing a comprehensive approach to the assessment of academic programs across the institution;

5. ensuring that Boston Conservatory faculty are appropriately integrated into Berklee College of Music with attention to effective systems of communication, compensation models, educational processes, and workload.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

The Commission accepted the report submitted by Berklee College of Music regarding the implementation of the merger of Berkeley College of Music with Boston Conservatory and confirmed inclusion of Boston Conservatory at Berklee within the institution's accreditation because the report was responsive to the matters identified in our letter of June 30, 2016, and provided evidence that the College is implementing the merger with Boston Conservatory in a manner consistent with Commission standards and policies.

The Commission commends Berklee College of Music (Berklee) for its thorough and well-written report documenting the implementation of the merger with Boston Conservatory (the Conservatory). The visiting team confirmed that integration groups representing academics, operations, culture, and volunteer leadership facilitated the merger in a deliberate and thoughtful manner, and the campus community is generally positive and motivated by the College's commitment to create "one of the world's most comprehensive and dynamic educational institutions for music, dance, musical theater, and related professions." We note with favor that the President's Cabinet and the President's Council have each been augmented with top leaders from the Conservatory, and that the eight legacy trustees of the Conservatory who have been added to the Board of Trustees of Berklee participate in the ten trustee committees. We are also pleased to learn that the academic curriculum and policy committees for Berklee and the Conservatory have largely been integrated, as have the departments of Liberal Arts and Music Education. In addition, we note that more than 250 courses have been opened for dual-listing and cross-registration for students at Berklee and the Conservatory, which is further evidence of the College's commitment to strengthen synergies and provide enhanced experiences for students. Finally, the visiting team verified that program reviews across the institution will take place on a three-year cycle, and the enhancement of the faculty evaluation process will bring equity to the expectations of faculty members and help ensure consistent academic quality across the institution.

Commission policy requires an interim report of all institutions on a decennial evaluation cycle. Its purpose is to provide the Commission an opportunity to appraise the institution's current status in keeping with the Policy on Periodic Review. In addition to the information provided in all interim reports, as well as the matter specified for attention in our letter of October 31, 2017, we look forward, in Spring 2018, to learning of the College's success in continuing to integrate the Conservatory with Berklee College of Music and to receiving information about five matters related to our standards on *Institutional Resources; Students; Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship; Planning and Evaluation; The Academic Program; and Organization and Governance*.

As Berklee candidly acknowledges in its report, updating business processes and systems is "essential to support an institution that is growing and increasingly complex." The team confirmed that, at the time of the visit, the College was in final negotiations with an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system vendor, and the new system, once fully implemented, will cover the merged institution. The team also noted that implementing a new ERP system is a complicated process, and it could be several years before the College achieves the capacity to meet the expectations of students and faculty members. Therefore, we ask that the Spring 2018 interim report include an update on the College's progress in implementing its new ERP system and establishing a timeline that specifies benchmarks throughout the implementation process as evidence that "[t]he institution uses information technology sufficient to ensure its efficient ability to plan, administer, and evaluate its program and services" (7.26).

According to the visiting team, now that Berklee and the Conservatory have merged, there are about 5,000 undergraduate students and 300 graduate students at the institution. We note with favor that there has been a considerable effort to integrate the two legacy institutions with respect to all areas of enrollment and engagement, student services, academic advising, and co-curricular offerings, and a new position, Dean of Student Advising and Success, has been created. However, we also note that, to date, there continue to be two separate systems for enrollment and financial aid, and we therefore concur with the judgment of the team that more integration of these core services will be critical to achieving the target enrollments and financial aid models necessary to chart the future of the merged institution. We further concur that it will be important to track the degree of coordination among these units and to assess students' experiences in having their needs met, especially with the wider academic opportunities now available. In accordance with our standards on *Students and Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship*, we look forward, in the Spring 2018 interim report, to learning of the institution's continued progress in evaluating the effectiveness of its enrollment and financial aid systems with emphasis on ensuring that student support services, including advising and guidance through the financial aid process, are sufficient to support programs across the institution:

The institution ensures a systematic approach to providing accessible and effective programs and services designed to provide opportunities for enrolled students to be successful in achieving their educational goals. The institution provides students with information and guidance regarding opportunities and experiences that may help ensure their educational success (5.7).

The institution provides advising and academic support services appropriate to the student body. The institution's faculty and professional staff collectively have sufficient interaction with students outside of class to promote students' academic achievement and provide academic and career guidance (5.10).

Student financial aid is provided through a well-organized program. Awards are based on the equitable application of clear and publicized criteria (5.13).

The institution's system of academic advising meets student needs for information and advice compatible with its educational objectives. The quality of advising is assured regardless of the location of instruction or the mode of delivery (6.19).

We are gratified to learn that Berklee has made commendable progress in aligning the library and information technology functions with unified policies, processes, and responsibilities, and staff of the two libraries have been integrated and reorganized under the leadership of the Dean of Library and Learning Resources of Berklee College of Music. We also understand that plans to create a unified library that has a clear strategic direction for the future are still in the initial implementation phase. Therefore, we look forward, in the Spring 2018 interim report, to learning of the institution's continued progress in this area as evidence that "[t]he institution provides access to library and information resources, services, facilities, and qualified staff sufficient to support its teaching and learning environments and its research and public service mission as appropriate" (7.22).

According to the institution's report, and we note with favor, Berklee has strengthened its Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. For example, the College has established a data governance council and hired a senior vice president of technology resources to improve the institution's technology infrastructure in support of its focus on data and assessment. We further appreciate Berklee's candid acknowledgment that "[e]valuation, particularly curricular review, will play an increased role in our successful planning and operation as a merged institution ... and data analysis as an integral part of our formative and summative evaluation processes will be key to elevating our effectiveness in both planning and evaluation." As guided by our standards

on *Planning and Evaluation* and *The Academic Program*, we look forward, in the Spring 2018 interim report, to an update on the College's success in establishing a comprehensive approach to the assessment of academic programs across the institution:

The institution's principal evaluation focus is the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of its academic programs. Evaluation endeavors and systematic assessment are demonstrably effective in the improvement of academic offerings, student learning, and the student experience. Systematic feedback from students, former students, and other relevant constituencies is a demonstrable factor in institutional improvement (2.7).

The institution undertakes academic planning and evaluation as part of its overall planning and evaluation to enhance the achievement of institutional mission and program objectives. These activities are realistic and take into account stated goals and available resources. Additions and deletions of programs are consistent with institutional mission and capacity, faculty expertise, student needs, and the availability of sufficient resources required for the development and improvement of academic programs. The institution allocates resources on the basis of its academic planning, needs, and objectives (4.7).

We concur with the judgment of the visiting team that, while Berklee has made impressive progress in the initial implementation of its merger plans, the visit occurred just eight months into the merger. For example, plans to fully integrate faculty from the Conservatory into the Berklee faculty personnel system were scheduled to be completed in Fall 2017, and at the time of the visit it was too soon for the team to evaluate the integration of such things as faculty compensation models, educational processes, faculty workload, and the level of communication between faculty and key constituents at the institution. Therefore, in keeping with our standards on *Organization and Governance* and *Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship*, the Spring 2018 interim report will afford the College an opportunity to update the Commission on the institution's continued success in this area as evidence that "[t]he institution's internal governance provides for the appropriate participation of its constituencies, promotes communications, and effectively advances the quality of the institution" (3.13), and that "[f]aculty assignments and workloads are reappraised periodically and adjusted as institutional conditions change" (6.7). Our standard on *Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship* provides this additional guidance:

Salaries and benefits are set at levels that ensure the institution's continued ability to attract and retain appropriately qualified faculty and academic staff whose profiles are consistent with the institution's mission and purposes. Faculty and academic staff are provided with substantial opportunities for continued professional development throughout their careers (6.6).

In a handbook or in other written documents that are current and readily available, the institution defines the responsibilities of faculty and other members of the instructional team; the criteria for their recruitment, appointment, retention, evaluation, promotion, and, if applicable, tenure; and policies for resolving grievances (6.8).

The institution has a statement of expectations and processes to ensure that faculty act responsibly and ethically, observe the established conditions of their employment, and otherwise function in a manner consistent with the mission and purposes of the institution (6.9).

The Commission expressed appreciation for the reports prepared by Berklee College of Music and the visiting team and hopes that the evaluation process 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.

Mr. Roger H. Brown
November 1, 2017
Page 5

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 Ms. Susan Whitehead. The institution is free to release information about the evaluation 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/jm

Enclosure

cc: Ms. Susan Whitehead
Visiting Team