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

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October 31, 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 29, 2017, the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education considered the report submitted by Berklee College of Music and took the following action:

that the report regarding the College's plans to offer the M.A. in Music Business and the M.A. in Music Production in an online format be accepted, and the two online programs be included within the institution's accreditation, with an effective date of September 29, 2017;

that Berklee College of Music be granted general authority to offer distance education programs within the scope of its mission;

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 matters specified for attention in our letter of November 1, 2017, the Spring 2018 report provide an update on the College's success in ensuring that all courses offered in an online format are consistent with the Commission's policy on Credits and Degrees, and that policies and procedures are in place to authenticate the identity of online students.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

The report submitted by Berklee College of Music regarding its plans to offer the M.A. in Music Business and the M.A. in Music Production in an online format was accepted and the programs encompassed within the institution's accreditation because the Commission finds the activity to be substantially in compliance with the *Standards for Accreditation* and relevant Commission policies.

We commend Berklee College of Music for a well-conceived and cogent report documenting the thoughtful and integrated planning process used in the design of its 12-course, 36-credit online M.A. in Music Business and M.A. in Music Production programs. The College demonstrates through the report that a sound governance and oversight structure is in place; the digital environment at Berklee is well designed and appropriately staffed; faculty assigned to teach in the proposed online programs “were identified both for their expertise in the field and for their success as educators;” and academic and student services are sufficient to support the proposed online programs. Finally, based on anticipated enrollments of 55 students in each of the two programs each year, the College projects revenues of \$7,500 in year one, \$1.2 million in year two, and \$2.6 million in year three.

Berklee College of Music is granted general authority to offer distance education programs within the scope of its mission because the institution has demonstrated its capacity to offer high-quality academic programs in an online format. We acknowledge that Berklee has been offering online courses since 2003, and the College now enrolls over 900 students from 98 different countries through its online campus. In addition to the strengths mentioned above, we note with approval that Berklee conducts full program reviews every three years and uses the results of those assessments to improve programming and achieve its goal “to attract the most talented, creative, and motivated students in the world; to offer them a challenging and satisfying experience while they are students; and to give them the best possible platform for success as the next generation of leaders in every aspect of performing arts endeavor.”

We remind you that it is the responsibility of the institution to ensure compliance with state authorization and licensure regulations that relate to the delivery of distance education programming.

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 matters specified for attention in our letter of November 1, 2017, we look forward, in Spring 2018, to learning of the College’s success in implementing its online M.A. in Music Business and M.A. in Music Production programs and to receiving information about a matter related to our standard on *The Academic Program*.

The report assures, and we note with approval, that outcomes-based courses are comparable in content and rigor to similar courses offered on ground, and systems for assessing educational effectiveness and ensuring student achievement are in place. However, the report did not specify the protocols that are in place to ensure that online courses are developed and delivered in compliance with the Commission’s credit hour policy, nor was it clear that the identity-verification process for online students is consistent with the Commission’s policy on student verification. We therefore seek assurance, through the Spring 2018 interim report, that, consistent with Commission policies, “[c]redit awards are consistent with Commission policy and the course content, appropriate to the field of study, and reflect the level and amount of student learning” (4.34), and that “the student who registers for [an online] course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the program and receives the academic credit” (4.48).

The Commission expressed appreciation for the report prepared by Berklee College of Music and hopes its preparation contributed to institutional improvement. It appreciates your cooperation in 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 Ms. Susan

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Whitehead. 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David P. Angel".

David P. Angel

DPA/jm

Enclosure

cc: Ms. Susan Whitehead



COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

3 Burlington Woods, Suite 100, Burlington, MA 01803-4514

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Public Disclosure of Information About Affiliated Institutions

The following policy governs the release of information regarding the status of affiliated colleges and universities by institutions and by the Commission.

**1. Release of Information by Institutions Regarding Their Accreditation
Following Commission Action**

At the conclusion of the evaluation process institutions are encouraged to make publicly available information about their accreditation status including the findings of team reports and any obligations or requirements established by Commission action, as well as any plans to address stated concerns. Because of the potential to be misleading, institutions are asked not to publish or otherwise disseminate excerpts from these materials.

While the Commission does not ordinarily release copies of self-studies, progress reports, evaluation reports, or other documents related to the accreditation of individual institutions, it believes it to be good practice for institutions to make these materials available, in their entirety, after notification of Commission action.

The Commission will release information on actions of show cause or deferral. If such information is also released by the institution in question or is otherwise made public, the Commission will respond to related inquiries and may issue revised public statement.

If an institution releases or otherwise disseminates information which misrepresents or distorts its accreditation status, the institution will be notified and asked to take corrective action publicly correcting any misleading information it may have disseminated, including but not limited to the accreditation status of the institution, the contents of evaluation reports, and the Commission actions with respect to the institution. Should it fail to do so in an immediate and timely way, the Commission, acting through its President, will release a public statement in such form and content as it deems desirable providing correct information. This may include release of notification letters sent by the Commission to the institution, and/or a press release.

2. Published Statement on Accredited Status

The Commission asks that one of the following statements be used for disclosing on its website and in catalogues, brochures, advertisements, etc., that the institution is accredited.

An institution may wish to include within its website, catalogue or other material a statement which will give the consuming public a better idea of the meaning of regional accreditation. When that is the case, the Commission requests that the following statement be used in its entirety:

____ College (University) is accredited by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.

Accreditation of an institution of higher education by Commission indicates that it meets or exceeds criteria for the assessment of institutional quality periodically applied through a peer review process. An accredited college or university is one which has available the necessary resources to achieve its stated purposes through appropriate educational programs, is substantially doing so, and gives reasonable evidence that it will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. Institutional integrity is also addressed through accreditation.

Accreditation by the Commission is not partial but applies to the institution as a whole. As such, it is not a guarantee of every course or program offered, or the competence of individual graduates. Rather, it provides reasonable assurance about the quality of opportunities available to students who attend the institution.

Inquiries regarding the accreditation status by the Commission should be directed to the administrative staff of the institution. Individuals may also contact:

Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
New England Association of Schools and Colleges
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100, Burlington, MA 01803-4514
(781) 425 7785
E-Mail: cihe@neasc.org

The shorter statement that an institution may choose for announcing its accredited status follows:

_____ College (University) is accredited by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.

Inquiries regarding the accreditation status by the Commission should be directed to the administrative staff of the institution. Individuals may also contact:

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E-Mail: cihe@neasc.org

Accreditation by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education has reference to the institution as a whole. Therefore, statements like “fully accredited” or “this program is accredited by the Commission” or “this degree is accredited by the Commission” are incorrect and should not be used.

3. **Published Statement on Candidate Status**

An institution granted Candidate for Accreditation status must use the following statement whenever it makes reference to its affiliation with the New England Association:

_____ College (University) has been granted Candidate for Accreditation status by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc. Candidacy for Accreditation is a status of affiliation with the Commission which indicates that the institution has achieved initial recognition and is progressing toward accreditation.

Candidacy is not accreditation nor does it assure eventual accreditation.

Inquiries regarding the status of an institution affiliated with the Commission should be directed to the administrative staff of the college or university. Individuals may also contact:

**Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
New England Association of Schools and Colleges
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100, Burlington, MA 01803-4514
(781) 425 7785**

E-Mail: cihe@neasc.org

4. Public Disclosure of Information about Affiliated Institutions by the Commission

The Commission publishes the following information about member and candidate institutions on its website:

- Name of the institution
- The date of initial accreditation and/or when candidacy was granted
- Accreditation status (member or candidate)
- Address
- Phone and fax numbers
- CEO name and title
- Degree levels awarded
- Dates of initial accreditation (or candidacy), last review and next review
- Locations of off-campus instructional sites
- The basis for Commission action affecting candidacy or accreditation status
- The date and nature (comprehensive or focused) of the most recent on-site evaluation and subsequent Commission action on the institution's accredited status
- The date and nature (comprehensive or focused) of the next scheduled on-site evaluation
- Submission date and action taken on the most recent written report required by the Commission
- The date and nature of any show-cause for denial of candidacy or accreditation, probation, or withdrawal of candidacy or accreditation status
- The extent of, or limitations on, the status of affiliation
- In cases of adverse action (denial or withdrawal of candidacy or accreditation, placing an institution on probation), the Commission's reasons for that status and, in the case of probation, its plans to monitor the institution. The Commission, in consultation with the institution, will prepare a written statement incorporating the above information. The Commission reserves the right to make the final determination of the nature and content of the statement. The institution will also be offered the opportunity to make its official comment; if the institution does make

an official comment, the comment will be made available by the Commission

- For institutions whose candidacy or accreditation has been withdrawn, the date of, and reasons for, withdrawal.

The Commission recognizes that, to be fully understood, information about the accredited status of institutions must be placed within the context of the policies and procedures of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. In responding to inquiries, the Commission will endeavor to do so.

The Commission may also publish on its website a public statement about an action taken regarding a member or candidate institution when further information about the action and the Commission's reasons for taking the action would be helpful to members of the public.

Adverse actions (placement of an institution on probation, denial of candidate status or accreditation, and withdrawal of candidacy or accreditation) are communicated when the decision becomes final (i.e., when the institution does not appeal or when the appeals process is completed and the decision is upheld). The Commission, at its discretion, may make the adverse action public before the decision is final or the appeal is completed. In so doing, the Commission will provide information about the appeal process.

5. Public Disclosure of Institutional Actions

Within 30 days after the action on accreditation status is taken, the Commission will notify the Secretary of Education, New England state higher education officers, appropriate accrediting agencies, and the public. The Commission will also make public on its website the basis for these decisions. Such actions include:

A final decision to:

Grant candidacy or accreditation

Continue an institution in accreditation

Deny or withdraw the candidacy or accreditation of an institution

Place an institution on probation

Approve substantive change (e.g., moving to a higher degree level)

A decision by an accredited or candidate institution to voluntarily withdraw from affiliation with the Commission.

Per federal regulation, within 60 days of a final decision to take an adverse action (probation or withdrawal of accreditation), the Commission will submit a copy of the final decision letter to the Secretary of Education. The Secretary will make the letter public.

November 1998

September 2001

April 2010

September 2011

Editorial Changes, March 2014

April 2015

April 2017