



# HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

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July 11, 2016

BY CERTIFIED MAIL

Dr. Joseph Stiefel, President  
National University of Health Sciences  
200 E. Roosevelt Rd.,  
Lombard, IL 60148-4539

Dear President Stiefel:

This letter is formal notification of action concerning National University of Health Sciences (“the University”) by the Higher Learning Commission (“HLC” or “the Commission”) Board of Trustees (“the Board”). At its meeting on June 30, 2016, the Board continued the accreditation of the University and placed the University on Notice because the University is at risk of being out of compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation and Core Components identified in the Board’s findings as outlined below. This action is effective as of the date action was taken. In taking this action, the Board considered materials from the most recent comprehensive evaluation team, including but not limited to the assurance argument the University submitted, the report from the comprehensive evaluation team, the report of the Institutional Actions Council (IAC) Hearing Committee, institutional responses to these reports, and other materials relevant to the evaluation.

The Board required that the University file a Notice Report no later than December 1, 2017 providing evidence that the University is no longer at risk for non-compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation and Core Components identified in this action and that it has ameliorated the issues that led to the Notice sanction. Included in this report should be evidence of the following:

- With regard to Core Components 4.A and 4.B: a fully documented assessment plan of student learning that includes: 1) student learning outcomes; 2) strategies to measure these learning outcomes; 3) data that has been gathered to address the outcomes; 4) analysis of these data; 5) changes that have been initiated to address any areas of concerns; 6) assessment of the outcomes to verify that changes have accomplished their intended purpose; and 7) faculty development, engagement, and assessment. A complete assessment plan must be developed for every degree being offered, including any new proposed offerings; and
- With regard to Core Component 5.C.: the connections between 1) a campus plan (e.g. enrollment, technology, campus deferred maintenance, facilities, program reviews, data, and how they lead to long-range plans); 2) evidence of institutional planning in systematic and integrated processes; and 3) a five-year planning model for budgeting showing ties to the other institutional plans.

The University is required to host a focused visit in winter of 2018 to validate the contents of the Notice Report.

The Board will review the Notice Report and related documents at its June 2018 meeting to determine whether the institution has demonstrated that it is no longer at risk for non-compliance

with the Criteria for Accreditation and Core Components identified in this action and whether Notice can be removed, or if the University has not demonstrated compliance, whether accreditation should be withdrawn or other action taken.

The Board placed the University on the Standard Pathway with its next comprehensive evaluation (Year Four) to take place in 2019-20 and its next evaluation for Reaffirmation of Accreditation in 2025-26.

The Board based its action on the following findings made with regard to the University:

The University is at risk of being out of compliance with Criterion Four, Core Component 4.A, “the institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs,” for the following reasons:

- The University demonstrates limited responsibility for the educational programs it delivers in terms of documenting evidence to use for program review and improvement;
- Multiple committees exist to examine the curriculum from a variety of perspectives, but there is no documented evidence of working across units to advance program review; and
- There is no information available to assess how prerequisites, course rigor, or expectations for student learning outcomes are determined or evaluated.

The University is at risk of being out of compliance with Criterion Four, Core Component 4.B, “the institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning,” for the following reasons:

- Information is collected for assessment of co-curricular activities, but it is unclear how this information is included in assessment of learning outcomes;
- The University collects data that is focused on test items and licensure pass rates, yet makes little connection of data to teaching and learning, both critical for effective assessment; and
- Processes and methods for assessing student learning are undocumented.

The University is at risk of being out of compliance with Criterion Five, Core Component 5.C, “the institution engages in systematic and integrated planning,” for the following reasons:

- The University has a long-range plan with many objectives, but many of these objectives have no budget amounts attached to them;
- The University has not fully completed integration of a documented comprehensive assessment plan linking student learning outcomes to technology, facilities, enrollment, budget, and other aspects of institutional operations.

The Board action resulted in changes to the affiliation of the University. These changes are reflected on the Institutional Status and Requirements Report. Some of the information on that document, such as the dates of the last and next comprehensive evaluation visits, will be posted to the Commission’s website.

Information about the sanction is provided to members of the public and to other constituents in several ways. Commission policy INST.G.10.010, Management of Commission Information,

anticipates that the Commission will release action letters related to the imposition of a sanction to members of the public. The Commission will do so by posting this action letter to its website. Also, the enclosed Public Disclosure Notice will be posted to the Commission's website not more than 24 hours after this letter is sent to you.

In addition, Commission policy COMM.A.10.010, Commission Public Notices and Statements, requires that the Commission prepare a summary of actions to be sent to appropriate state and federal agencies and accrediting associations and published on its website. The summary will include the Commission Board action regarding the University. The Commission will simultaneously inform the U.S. Department of Education of the sanction by copy of this letter.

At this time, the Commission will reassign the University from its liaison Dr. Linnea Stenson, to Dr. Anthea Sweeney. If you have any questions or concerns about the information in this letter, please contact Dr. Sweeney. Please be assured that Dr. Sweeney will work with Dr. Stenson to create a smooth transition.

Commission policy INST.E.10.010, Notice, subsection Disclosure of Notice Actions, requires that an institution inform its constituencies, including Board members, administrators, faculty, staff, students, prospective students, and any other constituencies about the sanction and how to contact the Commission for further information. The policy also requires that an institution on Notice disclose this status whenever it refers to its Commission accreditation. The Commission will monitor these disclosures to ensure they are accurate and in keeping with Commission policy. I ask that you copy Dr. Sweeney on emails or other communications regarding the sanction and provide her with a link to information on your website and samples of related disclosures.

If you have questions about any of the information in this letter, please contact Dr. Sweeney. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I thank you and your associates for your cooperation.

Sincerely,



Barbara Gellman-Danley  
President

Enclosure: Public Disclosure Notice

cc: Chair of the Board, National University of Health Sciences  
Randy L. Swenson, Accreditation Liaison Officer, National University of Health Sciences  
Linnea Stenson, Vice President for Accreditation Relations, Higher Learning Commission  
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