



November 11, 2020

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dr. Harold Nolte, President
Dodge City Community College
2501 N. 14th Ave.
Dodge City, KS 67801

Dear President Nolte:

This letter is formal notification of action taken by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Board of Trustees (“the Board”) concerning Dodge City Community College (“the Institution”). This action is effective as of the date the Board acted, November 5, 2020. In taking this action, the Board considered materials from the recent Notice visit, including, but not limited to: the Notice report the Institution submitted, the report from the Notice visit team, the report of the Institutional Actions Council (IAC) Meeting Committee, and the institutional responses to these reports.

Summary of the Action: The Board determined that the Institution is no longer at risk of noncompliance with the Criteria for Accreditation and removed the Institution from Notice.

Board Rationale

The Board based its action on the following findings made with regard to the Institution as well as the entire record before the Board:

Dodge City Community College now meets without concerns Criterion Two, Core Component 2.A, “the institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff,” for the following reason:

- The Institution has updated and implemented policies and procedures across the Institution in the last two years to reflect integrity across the academic, personnel and auxiliary functions. The Institution has made organizational and procedural changes that have addressed the lack of oversight, including retaining a new audit firm and the board adopting Ethics Point – a “whistleblower” software program with very broad accessibility.

The Institution now meets without concerns Criterion Two, Core Component 2.C, “the governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity,” for the following reason:

- The Institution has addressed concerns relating to internal conflicts and strife amongst the board. Six of the board members are new since 2017 and the board chair was re-elected in 2018. The board members follow procedures and protocols, working through the board chair. The board demonstrates that it understands its fiduciary responsibilities and its role as being focused on oversight as opposed to management. Board members receive ongoing training on their roles in governance.

The Institution now meets without concerns Criterion Five, Core Component 5.A, “the institution’s resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future,” for the following reason:

- The Institution has cut expenditures, refinanced bonds, re-negotiated contracts, and outsourced services where appropriate. The Institution has created a budget model that allows for significant debt repayment and installed new management software that provides for increased fiscal information.

The Institution now meets without concerns Criterion Five, Core Component 5.B, “the institution’s governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission,” for the following reason:

- The Institution has policies in place to protect against undue influence and board training is on-going. The board has taken an active role in the oversight and approval of the Institution’s budget. The board has established subcommittees to assist with legal, fiduciary and general governance duties.

The Institution has otherwise demonstrated that it is in compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation, Assumed Practices, and Federal Compliance Requirements and is not at risk of noncompliance with the Criteria, and thus, should be removed from Notice.

Next Steps in the HLC Review Process

Comprehensive Evaluation: The Board maintained the Institution on the Standard Pathway with its next comprehensive evaluation (Year 4) in 2022-23.

HLC Disclosure Obligations

The Board action resulted in changes that will be reflected in the Institution’s Statement of Accreditation Status as well as the Institutional Status and Requirements Report. The Statement of Accreditation Status, including the dates of the last and next comprehensive evaluation visits, will be posted to the HLC website.

In accordance with HLC policy,¹ information about this action is provided to members of the public and to other constituents in several ways. This Action Letter and the enclosed Public Disclosure Notice will be posted to HLC's website not more than one business day after this letter is sent to the Institution. Additionally, a summary of Board actions will be sent to appropriate state and federal agencies and accrediting associations. This summary also will be published on HLC's website. The summary will include this HLC action regarding the Institution.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, thank you in advance for your cooperation. If you have questions about any of the information in this letter, please contact your HLC Staff Liaison, Dr. Stephanie Brzuzy.

Sincerely,



Barbara Gellman-Danley
President

Enc: Public Disclosure Notice

Cc: Chair of the Board of Trustees, Dodge City Community College
Evaluation Team Chair
Stephanie Brzuzy, Vice President of Accreditation Relations, Higher Learning Commission
Anthea Sweeney, Vice President of Legal and Regulatory Affairs, Higher Learning
Commission

¹ INST.G.10.010, Management of Commission Information; COMM.A.10.010, Commission Public Notices and Statements