



March 8, 2017

Rev. Robert Niehoff, S.J., President
John Carroll University
1 John Carroll Boulevard
University Heights, OH 44118

Dear President Niehoff:

This letter is formal notification of action taken by the Higher Learning Commission (“HLC” or “the Commission”) Board of Trustees (“the Board”) concerning John Carroll University (“the University” or “the institution”). During its meeting on February 23, 2017, the Board removed the sanction of Notice from the University. This action is effective as of the date the action was taken. The Board determined that the removal of the sanction was warranted based on evidence provided by the University, including the Notice Report, the report of the visiting team, the staff analysis of the sanction, and the University’s responses to these reports.

The Board maintained the University of the Standard Pathway with its next comprehensive evaluation (Year 4) in 2018-19 and its comprehensive evaluation for Reaffirmation of Accreditation in 2024-25. In addition, the Board required that the University provide an embedded Interim Report in its next Assurance Filing, focused on the area of reducing endowment drawdowns.

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

The University has demonstrated that it now meets Criterion Three, Core Component 3.A, “the institution’s degree programs are appropriate to higher education,” for the following reasons:

- The University has developed and published sufficiently differentiated academic learning goals for both undergraduate and graduate programs, as well as for student affairs and co-curricular programs; and
- The University has devised thorough assessment plans that describe measurable goals that are assessable through both direct and indirect measures at the program level, in addition to the course level for all its program majors, as well as for minor and interdisciplinary concentrations.

The University has demonstrated that it now meets Criterion Four, Core Component 4.A, “the institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs,” for the following reasons:

- The University has established a regular five-year program review process for its academic programs that ensures faculty inclusion and regular use of data to inform curricular improvements; and

- Since the onset of the Notice period, the University has demonstrated a regular practice noted as a profound institutional change in its use of assessment data, as well as the consistent review of all academic programs.

The University has demonstrated that it now meets 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:

- The University has committed significant fiscal resources to its assessment system infrastructure and processes, including establishing an Office of Academic Assessment and Office of Institutional Effectiveness both of which oversee University assessment and evaluation activities;
- The University has made significant progress, and is on target, with its continuing evaluation of its core curriculum; and
- The University’s data collection and analysis systems and processes are now well-developed as compared to their still emergent nature at the time the sanction of Notice was first imposed.

The University has demonstrated that it now meets 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,” because the University has maintained a steady pattern of tuition discount rates relative to the net tuition per student, and supplemental endowment drawdowns are being systematically reduced by \$500,000 per year over the next five years, with the ultimate goal of reaching zero by 2019-20.

The University has demonstrated that it now meets 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 reasons:

- The University has enhanced the role of its Faculty Council and Staff Council in fomenting greater communication and enhancing transparency across the University’s governance structures; and
- The University has made significant progress in increasing understanding and collaboration among key leadership committees and implementing several Engagement Initiatives over the last two years.

The University has demonstrated that it now meets Criterion Five, Core Component 5.C, “the institution engages in systematic and integrated planning,” for the following reasons:

- The University has developed a robust and significantly refined strategic plan through 2020;
- The University has successfully demonstrated evidence that it has linked its strategic planning with budgeting, assessment of student learning, and academic program review;
- The University now relies on three-year financial models to identify the impact of specific steps of the University’s strategic plan on its finances; and
- Data is now routinely incorporated into the strategic planning process while implementation groups work to operationalize the goals of the plan.

The University has demonstrated that it now meets Criterion Five, Core Component 5.D, “the institution works systematically to improve its performance,” because the University has now clearly demonstrated a sufficient track record of engaging in robust analysis of data from campus-wide SWOT analyses to support the development of goals and objectives to improve its performance as an institution.

At this time, the Commission will reassign the University from its liaison Vice President Anthea Sweeney to Vice President Jeffrey Rosen. Please be assured that Dr. Sweeney will work with Dr. Rosen to create a smooth transition.

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 HLC website.

Information 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 HLC will release action letters 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 HLC’s website not more than 24 hours after this letter is sent to you.

Commission policy COMM.A.10.010, Commission Public Notices and Statements, requires that HLC 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 HLC Board action regarding the University.

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

Sincerely,



Barbara Gellman-Danley
President

Enclosure: Public Disclosure Notice

cc: Chair of the Board of Trustees, John Carroll University
Nicholas Santilli, Associate Provost for Accreditation and Institutional Effectiveness, John Carroll University
Stephanie Davidson, Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs, Ohio Department of Higher Education
Evaluation team chair
Jeffrey Rosen, Vice President for Accreditation Relations and Director of the Open Pathway, Higher Learning Commission
Anthea Sweeney, Vice President for Accreditation Relations, Higher Learning Commission
Karen Peterson Solinski, Executive Vice President for Legal and Governmental Affairs, Higher Learning Commission