

February 17, 2019

Dr. Barbara Brittingham  
President  
New England Commission for Higher Education  
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100  
Boston, MA 02116

Dear Dr. Brittingham,

On behalf of the college community, I thank you for the report that was provided to us in your recent visit. The report was a helpful introduction to the rigors of the self-study. We learned much about the process collectively at our work and about our strengths and areas of challenge.

The Visiting Team chair, President Tim Crowley, visited with the campus community in April and immediately allayed concerns and energized us to complete our self-study.

We are grateful for the strengths they identified including placing students at the center of decision making, recognizing the investment made to upgrade teaching and learning spaces, and understanding the College's Foundation to the central mission of the College.

We want to update the Commission on our recent efforts related to the concerns that were cited in the report.

1. In some cases, courses that have the same title and course number may be taught by different faculty members. It would benefit students to have clearly defined outcomes for common courses of the same title and number.

We are grateful to the Visiting Team for pointing out this inconsistency in the delivery of our courses. In response, we have put in place measures to ensure consistency in our courses. We know that the transition to outcomes-based learning comes with challenge, and we are prepared to support faculty in meeting those challenges. We have offered professional learning opportunities as well as support for all faculty on strengthening instruction aligned with student learning outcomes. Faculty support has been a focus on the most salient issues in teaching and learning, and we are confident that framing our

based teaching as an equity issue, while providing a platform that resonates with our committed faculty.

2. *The College has made important steps forward in its efforts to utilize the data to enhance institutional effectiveness. That being said, the communication of the data gathered, and the processes being implemented and to be gathered would benefit from a more thorough review.*

Quality analysis of data across all areas of the College. Now that the College has secure processes for managing data, it is turning its attention to mentoring the campus community to interpret and apply the various data streams. We are offering opportunities for faculty and staff to collaborate on work with data to imagine how it could improve their work supporting students in the classroom, as advisors, in recruitment, in reviewing proposals and in innumerable other ways.

3. *The College has been effective in managing its budget in times of declining tuition revenue. However, the process to develop the budget was more inclusive and open.*

While we have found ways to make the budgeting process as engaging as it could be, this year we have introduced a new department with two prior years of actual spending (by spending category), the current year's budget and the opportunity to project for FY 21. We have also asked each department to provide information on special needs or programs for FY 21. Additionally, and possibly most importantly, we are asking each department to share goals and aspirations. To date, the majority of academic departments or programs have reviewed this data and met with their chairs. Similar meetings with Administrators, Finance and Student Affairs & Enrollment Management.

4. *Campus Committees would benefit from having clearly defined roles and responsibilities.*

The College identifies collaborative discussion last summer. Approximately 100 administrators have been working on an updated shared governance structure to be launched in Fall 2020. Instead of a multitude of committees and task forces, the College is moving toward a few key committees (e.g., planning and assessment, infrastructure, etc.), and each with a clear mission and laws. We are also developing a definition of shared governance.

5. *The College lacks development of its faculty development processes, procedures and training for the campus community utilizing technology.*

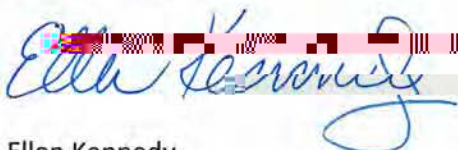
The College acknowledges that it has historically benefited its employees. The College's plan to address this omission includes efforts to date include the Director of Human Resources on searching for new hires/search committees and on bargaining new employees. These are in the final stages of a college-wide review.

spring. The Director of Human Resources has begun and will expect to be routing Human Resources forms by the fall of 2020. The college is embracing a culture of clarity and communication.

The College supports many efforts in the area of professional development in the Berkshire Leadership Program and New Faculty Development Program. The college's support to professional development has always been a priority and a component in annual planning. With the creation of a Dean of Teaching and Learning Innovation this year, we are making major strides in providing professional development on a consistent and intentional basis. By way of example, we are focusing on college-wide professional development issues around equity, technology, and learning outcomes. We are also providing more specific professional development for supervisors and managers to benefit from better understanding of the college's learning management system and utilizing software.

We wish to reiterate our gratitude for the efforts made by all of our faculty and staff. We are a resilient community with a sharp focus on the identified challenges and, also, recognizing our strengths and assets.

With kind regards,



Ellen Kennedy