



October 25, 2023

Dr. Javier Reyes
Chancellor
University of Massachusetts Amherst
181 Presidents Drive
Amherst, MA 01003-9313

Dear Chancellor Reyes:

I am pleased to inform you that at its meeting on September 21, 2022, the New England Commission of Higher Education considered the interim (fifth-year) report submitted by University of Massachusetts Amherst and voted to take the following action:

that the interim (fifth-year) report submitted by University of Massachusetts Amherst be accepted;

that the substantive change visit to evaluate the master's degree in Nursing offered through a collaboration with the Baystate Medical Center Midwifery Education Program scheduled for Spring 2024 be confirmed;

that the comprehensive evaluation scheduled for Fall 2028 be confirmed.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

The interim (fifth-year) report submitted by University of Massachusetts Amherst was accepted because it responded to the concerns raised by the Commission in its letters of June 11, 2019, November 30, 2021, and January 17, 2023, and addressed each of the nine standards, including a reflective essay for Standard 8: *Educational Effectiveness* on student learning and success.

The Commission commends University of Massachusetts Amherst (UMass Amherst) for its comprehensive, reflective interim report. We are gratified to learn of the reorganization of University Analytics and Institutional Research and the Office of Academic Planning & Assessment under an associate provost along with the launch of Flagship Analytics to increase campus-wide "availability and accessibility of data." We appreciate UMass Amherst's success in "recruiting more women and underrepresented minority faculty." The University developed a Mount Ida Campus (MIC) Strategic Plan designed to help MIC meet its mission and vision; resources have been allocated to enhance collaborative efforts between MIC and the Amherst campus and to "deepen[] relationships with key industry and community partners in the Boston area." The Commission further notes positively that undergraduate enrollment at the University increased 3.9% and master's degree enrollment increased 22.6% over the past five years. The institution's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and belonging is commendable; efforts to

Chancellor Reyes

October 25, 2023

Page 2

date include the creation of an Office of Equity and Inclusion and the UMass Amherst Flexible Learning Initiative. We concur with the University's assessment that the transition to new leadership "is a significant milestone in the UMass Amherst story" as Chancellor Reyes begins to operationalize his vision for University of Massachusetts Amherst.

The Commission further commends UMass Amherst for its "multifaceted and holistic" approach to educational effectiveness that includes analysis of direct and indirect evidence of student learning, high impact practices (HIP), and student career outcomes. We note with favor the institution's participation in the VALUE Institute to assess critical thinking and written communication and its "in-house adaptation" of the VALUE rubrics to compare artifacts from rising seniors and first-year students. We appreciate the disaggregation of HIP participation seniors data to support efforts to ensure equitable access to these practices and acknowledge departments' development of Equity Action Plans to promote "inclusion and fairness across the university."

The Spring 2024 substantive change visit to assess the implementation of the master's degree in Nursing program offered through a collaboration with the Baystate Medical Center Midwifery Education Program is confirmed. We refer you to our letter dated January 17, 2023, which specifies matters to receive attention in the report prepared in advance of the visit.

The scheduling of a comprehensive evaluation in Fall 2028 is consistent with Commission policy requiring each accredited institution to undergo a comprehensive evaluation at least once every ten years.

The Commission expressed appreciation for the report submitted by University of Massachusetts Amherst and hopes its preparation has contributed to institutional improvement. It appreciates your cooperation in the effort to provide public assurance of the quality of higher education.

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 and the head of the system of action on its accreditation status. In a few days we will be sending a copy of this letter to Stephen Karam and Martin Meehan. 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 Lawrence M. Schall, President of the Commission.

Sincerely,



Russell Carey

cc: Steven Karam
Martin Meehan

Enclosure: Public Disclosure of Information about Affiliated Institutions