



December 5, 2016

SENT VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Bettie Truitt, President  
Black Hawk College

Dear President Truitt:

As you know, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) contacted you earlier this year because of the lack of basic funding from the State of Illinois. At that time, HLC requested information regarding your institution's plans to continue operations without a state appropriation, as the budget impasse raised serious concerns related to accreditation. Shortly after this request, the state provided two stop-gap funding measures. These measures, however, are set to expire at the end of this month and the General Assembly has concluded its current sessions with no future sessions scheduled at this time.

In response, HLC reviewed financial and enrollment data from the Illinois Community College Board regarding your institution and are contacting institutions that had a twenty percent (or greater) state appropriation in proportion to its fiscal year 2015 budget and/or a ten percent (or greater) enrollment drop from fall 2015 to fall 2016. While some institutions we are contacting may have previously provided or are in the process of providing information about their financial situation to an HLC evaluation team, we also regularly monitor an institution's ongoing financial situation. This information is being requested pursuant to HLC's obligation for ongoing monitoring of an institution's finances.

While HLC understands that the budget crisis is not of your making and that your institution has done everything it could to avoid this situation, HLC nevertheless has a responsibility to students and the public to understand your institution's current situation. HLC must also ensure that the institution continues to meet the Criteria for Accreditation as it struggles to deal with the consequences of the loss of basic funding and the loss of student scholarship money (MAP funds).

HLC must monitor whether or not your institution continues to meet the Criteria for Accreditation while it remains open. As a means to document compliance, I am asking that you prepare a brief report, no more than ten pages in length, on the current availability of financial, physical, and human resources required to support the institution (See Core Component 5.A.). In particular, this report should candidly explain:

1. Your current cash situation and the specific financial challenges you may be immediately or shortly facing relative to payroll, vendors, and other essential expenses and services;
2. Any cuts in full-time, part-time, or adjunct faculty or staff you have recently made or plan to make in the immediate future and the effect of such cuts on classes next term;

3. The impact of the financial situation on the availability of textbooks, supplies, and related educational materials that support the curriculum and on maintenance and safety on campus and at other institutional locations;
4. Your data and expectations for next term's enrollment in light of concerns prospective students may have about the stability of higher education in the state; and
5. Any other information that is necessary for HLC to know. This report should also address how your institution is handling the lack of MAP funding.

As of the date of this letter, the State of Illinois has not acted to provide funding to institutions beyond this calendar year though some emergency funds may be made available. While HLC understands that this situation may change by the end of the year or early in the next, HLC has an obligation to request and review this information, as there is no guarantee that appropriations will be made. In the event that appropriations are made, HLC asks that you still submit the aforementioned information, even if such appropriations are made before the deadline stated below.

Furthermore, HLC policy allows the HLC President to call for a specialized visit, known as an Advisory Visit, in order to conduct an on-site review of whether an institution still meets HLC's Criteria for Accreditation or whether its capacity may be at risk such that it should be placed on sanction. If your report raises questions about your current or future financial capacity with a possible effect on academic quality, I may decide to schedule an Advisory Visit.

Please send your report to the attention of Zach Waymer, Manager for Legal & Governmental Affairs – State Relations & Institutional Complaints ([zwaymer@hlcommission.org](mailto:zwaymer@hlcommission.org)) no later than **December 20, 2016**. You should also contact Mr. Waymer if you have questions about this letter.

We appreciate your cooperation at this critical time for public higher education in Illinois.

Sincerely,



Barbara Gellman-Danley  
President

Cc: Kathleen Malcolm, Director of Planning & Institutional Effectiveness, Black Hawk College  
U.S. Department of Education  
Illinois Community College Board  
Barbara Johnson, Vice President for Accreditation Relations, Higher Learning Commission