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March 26, 2020

Dr. Peter Salovey  
President  
Yale University  
105 Wall Street, P.O. Box 208229  
New Haven, CT 06520-8229

Dear President Salovey:

I am pleased to inform you that at its meeting on March 6, 2020, the New England Commission of Higher Education took the following action with respect to Yale University:

that Yale University be continued in accreditation;

that the University submit an interim (fifth-year) report for consideration in Fall 2024;

that, in addition to the information included in all interim reports, the University give emphasis to its success in:

- 1) updating and evaluating the effectiveness of its Capital Planning Framework;
- 2) evaluating the effectiveness of the reorganization of the decanal structure of its Faculty of Arts and Sciences;
- 3) assessing student learning outcomes and using the results to make improvements with emphasis on assuring that expected learning outcomes are consistent with Yale's aspiration to be the research university "most committed to teaching;"
- 4) achieving its goals for faculty diversity;

that the next comprehensive evaluation be scheduled for Fall 2029.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

Yale University is continued in accreditation because the Commission finds the institution to be substantially in compliance with the *Standards for Accreditation*.

Along with the visiting team, we commend Yale University (Yale) on an outstanding self-study that documents the University's steadfast commitment to teaching and learning within the context of a global research university and highlights the many ways in which the University is fulfilling its mission by "improving the world today and for future generations through outstanding research and scholarship, education, preservation, and practice." Yale's dedicated and active Board of Trustees is notable, as is its inspirational president who, since assuming his role in 2013, has led the University through a period of significant change, including: leadership and organizational transitions; the development of priorities for academic investment; deepening engagement between the University's trustees and its administration; the expansion of its undergraduate population; a return to financial equilibrium following the 2008-09 financial crisis; and significant growth of the University's physical campus. We further support the judgment of the team that Yale's world class faculty, well-qualified and competent staff, exemplary academic programs, outstanding students, and "extraordinary array" of support services and resources is foundational to its enviable retention rates (99%) and six-year graduation rates (97%). Evidence of the University's strong financial position is found in the increase of its endowment from \$16.1 billion to \$29.4 billion over the last decade, and the \$85.0 million it has "reserved" for faculty development over the next five years. Finally, we share the institution's confidence that with its clear mission and strategic vision, its commitment to teaching and research, and its exceptionally vibrant academic culture, Yale is well positioned to continue achieving its mission well into the future.

Commission policy requires an interim (fifth-year) report of all institutions on a decennial evaluation cycle. Its purpose is to provide the Commission an opportunity to appraise the institution's current status in keeping with the Policy on Periodic Review. In addition to the information included in all interim reports the University is asked, in Fall 2024, to report on four matters related to our standards on *Institutional Resources; Planning and Evaluation; Organization and Governance; Educational Effectiveness; and Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship*.

The team noted in its report that Yale's Capital Planning Framework, last updated in 2009, is currently under review. We understand that Yale plans to expand its "footprint" in coming years; however, as a "campus with a city running through it, the University does not have vast tracks of land on which to build," and there are often "tax roll tensions" associated with purchasing existing buildings in New Haven and other areas in Connecticut and New Hampshire. We note that one option the University is considering is developing Yale-owned factory buildings north of the institution, which is desirable as there is a walkable trail between the proposed location and the main campus. To demonstrate that Yale "has sufficient and appropriate ... physical resources necessary for the achievement of its purposes ..." (7.21), and that it "has a demonstrable record of success in implementing the results of its planning" (2.5), we look forward, through the Fall 2024 interim report, to learning of the University's success in updating and evaluating the effectiveness of its Capital Planning Framework.

As documented in the self-study and confirmed by the visiting team, Yale has reorganized the decanal structure of its Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) – an FAS dean now reports to the provost alongside the deans of other schools, and an FAS faculty senate has been established. We also understand that this reorganization is intended to provide the deans of all schools with more time for curriculum development and student interaction. We will appreciate receiving, in the Fall 2024 interim report, an update on the University's success in evaluating the effectiveness of this new structure as evidence that Yale's "organization and governance structure assure the integrity and quality of academic programming however and wherever offered" (3.14) [and that through] "its system of ... internal governance, the institution ensures the appropriate

consideration of relevant perspectives; decision-making aligned with expertise and responsibility; and timely action on institutional plans, policies, curricular change, and other key considerations” (3.17).

As noted positively above, Yale boasts an impressive record of student success and achievement, and we appreciate learning of the wide range of assessment strategies that are consistently implemented across the University. We also concur with the judgment of the team that, while there are clearly pockets of excellence, there are also opportunities to strengthen assessment and evaluation activities in some areas, and better coordination would support Yale’s efforts to move to more data-informed planning and evaluation processes. We therefore ask that the interim report submitted for consideration in Fall 2024 include an update on the institution’s continued “success in using the results of its evaluation activities to inform planning, changes in programs and services, and resource allocation” (2.8) with emphasis on assuring that expected learning outcomes are consistent with Yale’s aspiration to be the research university “most committed to teaching.” We are further guided here by our standards on *Planning and Evaluation* and *Educational Effectiveness*:

The institution’s principal evaluation focus is the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of its academic programs. Evaluation endeavors and systematic assessment are demonstrably effective in the improvement of academic offerings, student learning, and the student experience. Systematic feedback from students, former students, and other relevant constituencies is a demonstrable factor in institutional improvement (2.7).

The results of assessment and quantitative measures of student success are a demonstrable factor in the institution’s efforts to improve the learning opportunities and results for students (8.8).

As Yale candidly acknowledges in its self-study, improving faculty diversity is one of the University’s “most vital current challenges and opportunities related to teaching, learning, and scholarship.” We therefore note with favor that the provost’s Office of Faculty Development and Diversity is actively working with liaisons in each of Yale’s schools who contribute to faculty diversity efforts. The Fall 2024 interim report will afford the University an opportunity to update the Commission on its success in “address[ing] its own goals for the achievement of diversity among its faculty and academic staff” (6.5).

The scheduling of a comprehensive evaluation in Fall 2029 is consistent with Commission policy requiring each accredited institution to undergo a comprehensive evaluation at least once every ten years.

You will note that the Commission has specified no length or term of accreditation. Accreditation is a continuing relationship that is reconsidered when necessary. Thus, while the Commission has indicated the timing of the next comprehensive evaluation, the schedule should not be unduly emphasized because it is subject to change.

The Commission expressed appreciation for the self-study prepared by Yale University and for the report submitted by the visiting team. The Commission also welcomed the opportunity to meet with you, Kim Goff-Crews, Secretary and Vice President for University Life, and Leah Rosovsky, team representative, during its deliberations.

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 of action on its accreditation status. In a few days we will be sending a copy of this letter to Ms. Catherine Bond Hill. The institution is free to release information about the evaluation and the Commission’s

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action to others, in accordance with the enclosed policy on Public Disclosure of Information about Affiliated Institutions.

The Commission hopes that the evaluation process has contributed to institutional improvement. It appreciates your cooperation with the effort to provide public assurance of the quality of higher education in New England.

If you have any questions about the Commission's action, please contact Barbara Brittingham, President of the Commission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Quigley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "David" and last name "Quigley" clearly distinguishable.

David Quigley

DQ/jm

Enclosure

cc: Ms. Catherine Bond Hill  
Visiting Team