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February 4, 2021

Dr. Christina H. Paxson
President
Brown University
1 Prospect Street
Providence, RI 02912

Dear President Paxson:

I am pleased to inform you that at its meeting on November 20, 2020 the New England Commission of Higher Education considered the distance education expedited review report submitted by Brown University and took the following action:

that the report submitted by Brown University be accepted, and the institution be granted approval to offer its current courses and academic programs via distance education through Spring 2023;

that the institution be reminded that any plans to offer new programs 50% or more online need to be submitted to the Commission for approval prior to implementation;

that the Spring 2023 interim report be confirmed and, in addition to the matters specified in our letter of October 22, 2018, the report provide an update on the institution's success in offering its current courses and academic programs via distance education.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

The distance education expedited review report submitted by Brown University was accepted and the institution granted approval to offer its current courses and academic programs via distance education through Spring 2023 because the Commission finds the proposed activity to be in compliance with the *Standards for Accreditation* and relevant Commission policies.

The Commission thanks Brown University (Brown) for its thoughtful, comprehensive distance education expedited review report and commends the institution for its successful, rapid transition to distance education in Spring 2020. The Commission appreciates that the University's Digital Learning & Design Group took a "leading role in supporting faculty" in course redesign efforts. We note with favor Brown's "extensive and sustained effort" to reconfigure classrooms to "engage remote learners." The Commission

is gratified to learn that, in addition to providing student support services remotely, a dedicated fund was established to provide financial assistance for students to transition to remote learning. Particularly noteworthy is the creation of an Academic Innovation Team to lead the University's "overall strategy for online education." Lastly, we appreciate Brown's "ongoing effort to evaluate its success and develop strategies for improvement."

Given Brown University's limited experience in offering courses and programs via distance education, we remind you that any plans to offer new programs 50% or more online need to be submitted to the Commission for approval prior to implementation, in keeping with the Commission's Policy on Substantive Change.

The Commission confirms the interim report scheduled for Spring 2023 and asks that, in addition to the information included in all interim reports and the matters specified in our letter of October 22, 2018, the report provide an update on the institution's success in offering its current courses and academic programs via distance education. The Spring 2023 interim report will provide Brown an opportunity to update the Commission on its "success in implementing the results of its planning" (2.5) as it continues to "offer a robust and rigorous academic program through online, remote, hybrid, and traditional forms of instruction."

The Commission expressed appreciation for the report submitted by Brown University and hopes its preparation has contributed to institutional improvement. We appreciate your cooperation with the effort to provide public assurance of the quality of higher education in New England.

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 Samuel Menco. The institution is free to release information about the evaluation 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,



George W. Tetler

GWT/sjp

Enclosure

cc: Samuel Menco