



November 30, 2021

Mr. Edward D. Klonoski
President
Charter Oak State College
55 Paul J. Manafort Drive
New Britain, CT 06053-2142

Dear President Klonoski:

I am pleased to inform you that at its meeting on September 23, 2021, the New England Commission of Higher Education took the following action with respect to Charter Oak State College:

that the interim (fifth-year) report submitted by Charter Oak State College be accepted;

that the report regarding Charter Oak State College's Master of Science programs in Healthcare Administration and Health Informatics be accepted and inclusion of the programs within the institution's accreditation be confirmed;

that the institution be reminded that its accreditation at the master's level is limited to the Master of Science programs in Organizational Effectiveness and Leadership; Healthcare Administration; and Health Informatics and that any plans to offer additional programs at the master's level should be submitted to the Commission, in keeping with the Policy on Substantive Change;

that the comprehensive evaluation scheduled for Fall 2026 be confirmed;

that, in addition to the information included in all self-studies, the Fall 2026 self-study give emphasis to the institution's success in:

1. implementing the priorities articulated in the "Institutional Plans" section of its interim report;
2. offering the M.S. programs in Healthcare Administration and Health Informatics, with attention to the institution's success in meeting the enrollment and financial goals for these programs.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

The interim (fifth-year) report submitted by Charter Oak State College (COSC) was accepted because it responded to the concerns raised by the Commission in its letter of May 2, 2017 and addressed each of the nine standards, including a reflective essay for Standard 8: *Educational Effectiveness* on student learning and success.

The Commission thanks Charter Oak State College for its thorough and well written report. We are pleased to learn that in the period between Fall 2016 and Fall 2020 COSC has experienced enrollment growth of 3.2% and that the percentage of full-time students has increased from 20% to 25% of the total student population over the same time period. The College has moved from a net deficit of \$947,737 in 2018 to positive net income in 2020 of \$1.27 million. We note with favor that beginning in FY2022, COSC will “segregate a portion of its operating cash account into a management contingency reserve.” We understand that work on developing the strategic plan, Students First: Realigning for the 21st Century, commenced in 2017 and achieved 85% staff participation in the planning process. The strategic plan was approved in August 2018 and includes six objectives: enrollment growth and retention; program rationalization; resource alignment; process improvement; internal and external communication improvement; and leveraging technology. We appreciated the numerous specific and detailed examples of ways in which the College has implemented and assessed the plan.

We are pleased to learn from the reflective essay of the ways in which Charter Oak State College makes extensive use of qualitative and quantitative data to assess what students gain as a result of their education. We appreciate that student learning outcomes for all courses and programs are easily accessed through the College’s website, and employment outcomes are tracked using the Clearinghouse and Connecticut Department of Higher Education databases. We are gratified to learn that program completion has a positive impact on graduates’ earning potential, with average monthly earnings increasing between 26% and 47% for those who completed a certificate or associate degree. We acknowledge the College’s efforts to understand racial and ethnic disparities in retention and graduation rates by examining “performance differentials in early gateway and general education courses.” The Commission also notes with favor that, based on a 69% response rate to its graduation survey, 96-97% of students were satisfied or very satisfied with Charter Oak State College, and 99% would recommend the College to others.

The Commission accepted the report submitted by Charter Oak State College and confirmed inclusion of the Master of Science programs in Healthcare Administration and Health Informatics within the institution’s accreditation because the report was responsive to the concerns raised in our letter of July 24, 2018 and provided evidence that the College is implementing the programs in a manner consistent with Commission standards and policies.

In 2020, Charter Oak State College enrolled its first students in the Healthcare Administration and Health Informatics programs; the launch of both programs was delayed because of the pandemic. We are pleased to learn from the evaluator’s report that students spoke highly of “the connection between courses, continuity of the curriculum thus far, and the real world learning activities and assignments within the courses.” All faculty teaching in the programs undergo an orientation and have professional development opportunities available to them in addition to an online faculty resource center. We understand that although assessment of student learning for the programs is “still in development,” the College has used data from its current courses to inform changes in the curriculum, “such as requiring the consistent use of rubrics for discussion board feedback.”

We remind you that, consistent with our Policy on Substantive Change, the Commission will wish to review any plans the institution may develop to offer additional programs at the master’s level. It is generally the case that before granting general approval at the higher degree level within the institution’s range of academic offerings, the Commission

expects to see developed capacity at the higher degree, success with initial programs, and, as appropriate, the development of an institutional culture supporting academic programming at the higher degree.

The scheduling of a comprehensive evaluation in Fall 2026 is consistent with Commission policy requiring each accredited institution to undergo a comprehensive evaluation at least once every ten years. In addition to the information provided in all self-studies we look forward, in Fall 2026, to receiving updates about two matters related to our standards on *Planning and Evaluation*, *Students*, and *Institutional Resources*.

In the “Institutional Plans” section of its interim report, the College articulates several “challenges and opportunities” for the next five years: creating an enrollment management plan; becoming involved in workforce initiatives in the state; implementing an equity plan; enhancing financial stability; and creating a formalized academic plan. The Commission looks forward, through the Fall 2026 self-study, to learning about the College’s success in addressing these challenges and opportunities as evidence that the College “has a demonstrable record of success in implementing the results of its planning” (2.5).

We also anticipate being apprised, in Fall 2026, of the College’s continued success in offering the Master of Science programs in Healthcare Administration and Health Informatics. We understand Charter Oak State College is pursuing multiple strategies to increase enrollment in the programs. In addition to expanding out-of-state marketing and implementing a Customer Relation Management tool to manage and focus recruiting efforts, COSC has increased the number of open houses and virtual fairs and conferences it attends. The Fall 2026 comprehensive self-study will provide the College an opportunity to update the Commission on the institution’s progress in achieving enrollment and financial goals for the programs. We remind you of our standards on *Students* and *Institutional Resources*:

The institution demonstrates its ability to admit students who can be successful in the institution’s academic program, including specifically recruited populations. The institution’s goals for retention and graduation reflect institutional purposes, and the results are used to inform recruitment and the review of programs and services (5.6).

The institution’s multi-year financial planning is realistic and reflects the capacity of the institution to depend on identified sources of revenue and ensure the advancement of educational quality and services for students (7.6).

The Commission expressed appreciation for the reports submitted by Charter Oak State College and the evaluator and hopes the evaluation process 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 Matt Fleury and Terrence Cheng. 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.

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If you have any questions about the Commission's action, please contact Lawrence M. Schall, President of the Commission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George Tetler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "G" and "T".

George W. Tetler

GWT/sjp

cc: Matt Fleury
Terrence Cheng
Visiting evaluator

Enclosure: Public Disclosure of Information about Affiliated Institutions