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January 26, 2021

Dr. Kymberly Pinder  
Acting President  
Massachusetts College of Art and Design  
621 Huntington Avenue  
Boston, MA 02115

Dear President Pinder:

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 Massachusetts College of Art and Design and took the following action:

that the report submitted by Massachusetts College of Art and Design be accepted, and the institution be granted approval to offer its current courses and academic programs via distance education through Spring 2022;

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 Massachusetts College of Art and Design submit a report for consideration in Spring 2022 that gives emphasis to 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 Massachusetts College of Art and Design was accepted and the institution granted approval to offer its current courses and academic programs via distance education through Spring 2022 because the Commission finds the proposed activity to be in compliance with the *Standards for Accreditation* and relevant Commission policies.

The Commission thanks Massachusetts College of Art and Design (MassArt) for its comprehensive distance education expedited review report. We appreciate learning that MassArt had a robust infrastructure in place to support its low residency MFA program prior to the pandemic and that during the pandemic, all online courses have been guided by best practices in remote/online education, including providing synchronous and asynchronous components; having a strong faculty presence in the online classroom; offering individualized attention and feedback for each student; building community-focused work into syllabi; and employing a pedagogical approach that engages students in problem-solving strategies that "encourage retention and commitment through the trajectory of the course." We further note with favor that MassArt has established faculty development programs related to pedagogy, studio arts, and technology, and

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faculty will be presenting “what they learned, what they will continue, and how they assessed student learning in the remote/hybrid environment” at the College’s annual Teaching and Learning conference.

Given Massachusetts College of Art and Design’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.

Massachusetts College of Art and Design is asked to submit a report for consideration in Spring 2022 that gives emphasis to the institution’s success in offering its current courses and academic programs via distance education. We are guided here by our standards on *The Academic Program* and *Educational Effectiveness*:

The institution offering programs and courses for abbreviated or concentrated time periods or via distance or correspondence learning demonstrates that students completing these programs or courses acquire levels of knowledge, understanding, and competencies equivalent to those achieved in similar programs offered in more traditional time periods and modalities. Programs and courses are designed to ensure an opportunity for reflection and for analysis of the subject matter (4.45).

The institution defines measures of student success and levels of achievement appropriate to its mission, modalities and locations of instruction, and student body, including any specifically recruited populations. These measures include rates of progression, retention, transfer, and graduation; default and loan repayment rates; licensure passage rates; and employment (8.6).

The Commission expressed appreciation for the report submitted by Massachusetts College of Art and Design 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 and the head of the state system on its accreditation status. In a few days we will be sending a copy of this letter to Nancy Saragoni and Carlos Santiago. 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: Nancy Saragoni  
Carlos Santiago