April 2, 2019

Interim President John Green
University of Akron
302 Buchtel Common
Akron, OH 44325-4702

Dear Interim President Green:

The interim report you submitted to our office has now been reviewed. The staff analysis of the report is attached.

On behalf of the Higher Learning Commission staff received the report on shared governance and communication. No further reports are required on this topic.

2023.

For more information on the interim report process contact Lil Nakutis, Accreditation Processes Manager, at lnakutis@hlcommission.org. Your HLC staff liaison is John Marr (jmarr@hlcommission.org); (800) 621-7440 x 104.

Thank you.

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

While the report acknowledges the disagreement and how it was derived, the document notes that the timing of program elimination decisions was critical, having both short and long-term financial, student enrollment, D Q public relations ´ L P S O L F D W L R Q V , W D S based on what can be inferred from the report, that the timing issue was the primary reason these determinations were not more broadly reviewed.

Conversely, every academic unit has had the opportunity to propose new/revised degree programs during the Three-Year Action Plan process, the report citing an example from the College of Engineering wherein a single Ph.D program would supplant three current doctoral programs in Engineering.

Here the report provides several examples of how shared governance ² and related issues in communication--has improved. These include recent efforts on the part of the current President to involve the campus community in decisions regarding the reorganization of some UA colleges. Another example is the decision of the Board of

APC Statement on APR and Share d Governance

At the November 2018 Senate meeting, Senators directed the APC to revise its statement on APR to focus on shared governance. The following document makes those revisions:

APC recommends that Faculty Senate vote to formally object to the procedures

of Trustees has responded positively to requests from various University constituent groups with regard to the President's Search Committee.

These are salutary actions on the part of the administration and the Board and, if continued in kind, should work to re-establish confidence in shared governance. However, agree or disagree, the posture on decisions related to critical program closure, will not, in the long run, serve the institution well as a precedent. While the administration/Board decisions made sense with regard to concerns about enrollment, finances and the fallout from negative publicity, they left remaining questions about their commitment to shared governance.

One remaining issue pertains to policies governing such decisions, as cited by the Academic Policy Committee of the Faculty Senate in its December 6, 2018 report. A question: Is there disagreement about what the policies actually mean and is therefore a matter of interpretation? A review of the policies is one possible initiative the University could undertake as a means to avoid future tension on related issues.

The Higher Learning Commission will not require additional reporting on this topic, but shared governance will require additional, continued attention on the part of the organization, as indicated in the Staff Finding section below. The University should assume that the HLC Peer Review Team conducting its AY2022-2023 Comprehensive Evaluation will examine carefully the institution's shared governance.

STAFF FINDING:

Note the relevant Criterion, Core Component(s) or Assumed Practice(s): Core Component 5.B pertaining to shared governance

Statements of Analysis (check one below)
_ Evidence demonstrates adequate progress in the area of focus.
X Evidence demonstrates that further organizational attention is required in the area of focus.
_ Evidence demonstrates that further organizational attention and HLC follow-up are required.
_ Evidence is insufficient and a HLC focused visit is warranted.