

2004 Interim Report Letter of Acceptance

Letter from the [Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges](#)

April 28, 2005

Dr. Susan Hockfield
President
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139-4307

Dear President Hockfield:

It is my pleasure to inform you that at its meeting on March 3, 2005, the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education took the following action with regard to Massachusetts Institute of Technology:

that the fifth-year interim report submitted by Massachusetts Institute of Technology be accepted;

that the institutional report on distance education programming submitted by MIT be accepted and the System Design & Management (SDM) and the Singapore-MIT Alliance (SMA) programs offered through distance education be included within the institutions' accreditation;

that the comprehensive evaluation scheduled for Fall 2009 be confirmed.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

The Commission finds laudable MIT's purposeful action in addressing each of the three issues identified for improvement in the last comprehensive review. The report describes in detail both the process undertaken to address these issues, and the results of the quality improvement efforts. We take favorable note of the many measures taken and find no further needs for specific emphasis prior to the next comprehensive evaluation scheduled for Fall 2009.

We commend MIT for producing two high quality, well thought out, and strategically targeted distance education programs, the System Design & Management (SDM) program jointly sponsored by the School of Engineering and the Sloan School of Management, and the Singapore-MIT Alliance (SMA). There is significant faculty involvement and control, and the institution works closely with its key constituencies and partners to continuously assess and improve these programs. SDM's distance education program provides virtually the same experience as the on-campus offerings. However, the Institute faces special challenges with the requirement of one semester in residence which make this program more expensive for sponsoring companies than programs that rely solely on distance education alone. SMA students receive masters' or doctoral degrees from Singapore institutions in the Alliance, and an MIT certificate, and there are plans to expand the program to lead to an MIT masters' degree with a one semester residential requirement.

The Commission finds praiseworthy MIT's Open Courseware program, which puts on line for free the course materials used in teaching the majority of its undergraduate and graduate courses. This initiative has as its objective the highest ideals of education for all, and a free exchange of knowledge.

The scheduling of a comprehensive evaluation in Fall 2009, is consistent with Commission policy requiring each accredited institution to undergo a comprehensive visit at least once every ten years. Please 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.

You are encouraged to share this letter with all of the Institute'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 Mr. Dana Mead. The Institute is free to release information about the evaluation and the Commission's action to others, in accordance with Commission policy.

The Commission hopes that 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 in New England.

if you have any questions about the Commission's action, please contact Barbara Brittingham, Interim Director of the Commission.

Sincerely,

Terrence J. MacTaggart

TJM/slo

Enclosure

cc: Mr. Dana Mead