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June 3, 2020

Dr. L. Rafael Reif
President
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139-4307

Dear President Reif:

I am pleased to inform you that at its meeting on April 23, 2020, the New England Commission of Higher Education took the following action with respect to Massachusetts Institute of Technology:

that Massachusetts Institute of Technology be continued in accreditation;

that the institution submit an interim (fifth-year) report for consideration in Fall 2024;

that, in addition to the information included in all interim reports, the institution give emphasis to its success in:

1. achieving its goals for the Stephen A. Schwarzman College of Computing;
2. achieving its diversity, equity, and inclusion goals while developing a culture that values risk-taking and open dialogue;
3. developing learning outcomes for all programs and assessing student learning including the General Institute Requirements;

that the next comprehensive evaluation be scheduled for Fall 2029.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology is continued in accreditation because the Commission finds the institution to be substantially in compliance with the *Standards for Accreditation*.

Along with the visiting team, the Commission commends Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) for its remarkable achievements as an institution and its continued commitment to education, research, and the sharing of knowledge. We appreciate MIT's introspection, openness, and transparency regarding its strengths and challenges. Particularly noteworthy is the establishment of the Stephen A. Schwarzman College of Computing, which will "reorient MIT to bring the power of computing and AI to all fields of study." MIT's educational model has "evolved considerably" and is "more interdisciplinary, more experiential, more digital, more computational, and more flexible." The Commission notes with favor that the Institute "aspires to solve complex problems" at both the global and local levels. Initiatives such as the Inclusive Innovation Challenge, the D-Lab, and MindHandHeart align with MIT's mission to apply technology "in service to society." We are gratified to learn from the report of the visiting team that financial resources are being invested in facilities to support both the educational and research missions of the Institute. In 2016, MIT launched its capital campaign, MIT Campaign for a Better World; by the end of 2018, the Institute raised \$4.96 billion of its \$6 billion goal. We take favorable note of the Institute's six-year graduation rate of 94%, a 3% increase since 2015. We are also pleased to learn that the number of students graduating with debt decreased from 49% in 2008 to 28% in 2018 and that median debt declined from \$15,188 to \$14,840 over that same period. It is clear that with the strong leadership of President Reif, an effective senior leadership team, and a committed faculty and staff, MIT will continue to "develop in each member of the MIT community the ability and passion to work wisely, creatively, and effectively for the betterment of humankind."

Commission policy requires an interim (fifth-year) report of all institutions on a decennial evaluation cycle. Its purpose is to provide the Commission an opportunity to appraise the institution's current status in keeping with the Policy on Periodic Review. In addition to the information included in all interim reports the Institute is asked, in Fall 2024, to report on three matters related to our standards on *Planning and Evaluation; Students; Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship; Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure; and Educational Effectiveness.*

As noted above, the Commission is pleased to learn of the establishment of the Stephen A. Schwarzman College of Computing. We concur with the visiting team that creating a College that serves as a connector across the Institute's five schools is a "bold move." Particularly noteworthy is the \$1.0 billion founding commitment from MIT to support the College of Computing, including a dedicated new building, a new dean, and a "near doubling of MIT's academic capability in computing." The Commission is gratified to learn that MIT expects to add 50 faculty positions, with half of those located fully in the new College and half having dual appointments with another MIT school. We look forward to learning, through the interim report, of MIT's success in "implementing the results of its planning" (2.5) for the College of Computing.

The Commission concurs with the visiting team that "MIT strives to have a deeply participatory culture of community engagement" that values risk-taking and open dialogue. We note with approval MIT's efforts to support "community, equity, inclusion, and diversity" across the Institute, including the addition of two new administrative positions: the Institute community and equity officer (ICEO), who oversees several faculty diversity programs, and an associate provost, who helps departments "create a more inclusive and diverse academic community." The Office of Admissions "emphasizes increasing the socioeconomic diversity of the undergraduate student body," and we appreciate learning that at the graduate level, the number of underrepresented minority students increased from 139 in 2008 to 222 in 2018. The Institute has also realized some progress with respect to faculty diversity: the percentage of female faculty increased from 20% in 2009 to 23% in 2018; underrepresented minority faculty increased from 6% to 8% during that same period. The Commission is gratified to learn that nine "community-focused" reports yielded 177 recommendations for improvements including enhancing policies, expanding training, and publishing diversity and climate dashboards, and we appreciate that while the Institute has acted on many of these recommendations it believes "important work remains." As guided by our

standards on *Students; Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship; and Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure*, the interim report will provide an opportunity for Massachusetts Institute of Technology to update the Commission on its success in further advancing its culture that values risk-taking and open dialogue and achieving its diversity, equity, and inclusion goals:

The institution addresses its own goals for the achievement of diversity among its students and provides a safe environment that fosters the intellectual and personal development of its students (*Students*, Statement of the Standard).

The composition of the faculty reflects the institution's mission, programs, and student body and is periodically reviewed (6.1).

The institution ... fosters an inclusive atmosphere within the institutional community that respects and supports people of diverse characteristics and backgrounds (9.5).

The Commission appreciates that MIT departments and schools “develop, assess, and update their learning outcomes based on a range of data” and note that visiting committees play a “vital role” in promoting educational effectiveness. While MIT’s Institutional Research Office created an online process to “collect and consolidate student learning outcomes and related assessment data” – a noteworthy accomplishment – we understand from the report of the visiting team that “there are not clear statements of learning outcomes for all programs.” As MIT acknowledges, while it is “committed to measuring what and how students learn, the Institute does not approach subject-level assessment systematically.” The Commission notes that the Institute has already taken several steps in this regard: the vice chancellor and director of the Teaching + Learning Lab will “begin a conversation with the provost and academic deans about improving how [MIT] measure[s] the effectiveness of an MIT education,” outreach to individual school deans to support programmatic outcomes development is underway, and there are plans to develop learning outcomes for the General Institute Requirements. We therefore anticipate being apprised, in Fall 2024, of MIT’s success in developing learning outcomes for all programs and assessing student learning, including the General Institute Requirements, as informed by our standard on *Educational Effectiveness*:

Assessment of learning is based on verifiable statements of what students are expected to gain, achieve, demonstrate, or know by the time they complete their academic program. The process of understanding what and how students are learning focuses on the course, competency, program, and institutional level. Assessment has the support of the institution’s academic and institutional leadership and the systematic involvement of faculty and appropriate staff (8.3).

The scheduling of a comprehensive evaluation in Fall 2029 is consistent with Commission policy requiring each accredited institution to undergo a comprehensive evaluation at least once every ten years.

You will 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.

The Commission expressed appreciation for the self-study prepared by Massachusetts Institute of Technology and for the report submitted by the visiting team. The Commission also welcomed the opportunity to meet with you, Martin Schmidt, Provost, Cindy Barnhart, Chancellor, Aaron Weinberger, Special Advisor to the President, and Jean-Lou Chameau, team chair, during its deliberations.

Dr. L. Rafael Reif
June 3, 2020
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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 Mr. Robert B. Millard. 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.

The Commission hopes that the evaluation process has contributed to institutional improvement. It appreciates your cooperation with 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, President of the Commission.

Sincerely,



David Quigley

DQ/jm

Enclosure

cc: Mr. Robert B. Millard
Visiting Team