



Higher Learning Commission
A commission of the North Central Association

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December 9, 2013

Mark S. James, Chancellor
Metropolitan Community College-Kansas City
3200 Broadway Blvd
Kansas City, MO 64111-2429

Dear Chancellor James,

I write on behalf of the Higher Learning Commission to thank you for your participation in the development of the Open Pathway for reaffirmation of accreditation.

The project is not yet over, but it has reached a significant milestone: twelve of the fourteen institutions in the first cohort of “Pioneers” have now completed the process and been reaffirmed, and the final gathering of all three cohorts took place last month. We will continue to learn and to improve both the Open and Standard Pathways, but with your help we have now learned enough to feel confident as the new pathways are fully launched next year.

We asked a lot of you and your staff. We said that we were asking them to fly the plane with us as together we built it. The metaphor isn’t original, but it has been very apt. You took risk, even though we selected Metropolitan Community College-Kansas City for participation because we knew that it is a strong institution we don’t really need to worry about. More than that, though, Metropolitan Community College-Kansas City gave us the time and the wisdom of all who participated, from those who came to meetings and responded to inquiries to others on your campus whose contributions were not visible to us. All of you helped our staff think through the seemingly endless new questions that arose as we took a general idea and a few principles and developed them into a fully elaborated process. You tested, you critiqued, and you tested again. You worked on something called a Quality Initiative with no models as guide. You were down in the weeds with the Assurance System. You were good critics and good sports.

Please accept the gratitude of the Commission to you and all the colleagues who were involved in your part of the project. Many other institutions will benefit from your commitment and the extra effort you gave to improving accreditation.

Sincerely,

Sylvia Manning

Sylvia Manning
President

cc: Kristy Bishop, Director of Research and Institutional Assessment
Paul Long, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs & Technology
Cynthia Proctor, Physics Instructor