



November 14, 2022

Dr. Michael F. Collins
Chancellor and Senior Vice President for the Health Sciences
University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School
55 Lake Avenue North
Worcester, MA 01655-0112

Dear Chancellor Collins:

I am pleased to inform you that at its meeting on September 22, 2022, the New England Commission of Higher Education took the following action with respect to University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School:

that University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School be continued in accreditation;

that the institution submit an interim (fifth-year) report by January 15, 2027 for consideration in Spring 2027;

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

1. achieving its goals for diversity, equity, and inclusion;
2. enhancing its capacity for institutional research, evaluation, and assessment;
3. ensuring the continued sufficiency of financial resources to support planned growth of academic programs and other key initiatives;
4. supporting leadership development and broader succession planning;

that the next comprehensive evaluation be scheduled for Spring 2032.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its actions.

University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School (UMass Chan Medical School) is continued in accreditation because the Commission finds the institution to be in compliance with the *Standards for Accreditation*.

University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School is a world-class institution. We concur with the visiting team that the institution focuses both locally and

globally to advance its mission that is a “source of pride” for its staff, faculty, and students. The University is guided by *IMPACT 2025*, the institution’s strategic plan that sets clear priorities and annual objectives, and we note with favor the “climate of openness, self-reflection, and quality improvement” that exists to encourage community involvement in planning. Along with the visiting team, we recognize the institution’s faculty, whose effectiveness is demonstrated by their “outstanding, high-impact publications [and] impressive grant funding” and, equally, by their interactions with students as “mentors and research guides.” In addition, faculty-driven academic innovation such as the School of Medicine’s VISTA program, the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences’ redesigned Foundations course, and the Graduate School of Nursing’s Master’s in Nursing and Interprofessional Leadership have led to remarkable student success on measures such as examination pass rates, residency match rates, publications, and job placements. We also note with approval that UMass Chan Medical School is adept at evaluation and program review with strong quality assurance processes in place that constitute a “thoughtful actionable approach for using data to inform its practices.” The Commission acknowledges, too, that over the past five years UMass Chan Medical School has furthered its commitment to “diversity, inclusion, and equity in medical, biomedical, and nursing education” by opening enrollment to out-of-state students, increasing financial aid and scholarships, partnering with the Worcester Pipeline Collaboration, and launching the Population-based Urban and Community Health (PURCH) program in Springfield, Massachusetts. Financially, the institution has established a record of stable surpluses and diversified its revenue base through strong extramural grant funding, new clinical partnerships, and major philanthropic efforts including receipt of a transformational unrestricted gift of \$175 million that doubled the School’s total endowment. The institution’s “entrepreneurial business” model and new revenue sources will no doubt help to “bolster the school’s ability to continue to support and further invest in the teaching and research mission of the school” in the years ahead.

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 University is asked, in Spring 2027, to report on four matters related to our standards on *Planning and Evaluation; Students; Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship; Institutional Resources; Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure; and Organization and Governance*.

As reflected by the recent addition of a sixth pillar to the institution’s *IMPACT 2025* strategic plan, UMass Chan Medical School has set “aspirational” goals to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) throughout the University. Steps taken to date include the hiring of a Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion and the addition of a Vice Provost for Health Equity, the recruitment over the past year of twelve new faculty members from diverse backgrounds, and the launch of the DRIVE (Diversity, Representation, and Inclusion for Value in Education) initiative to “promote a representative and bias-free curriculum across learning environments.” As observed by the visiting team and acknowledged by the institution, UMass Chan Medical School now needs to create a “metric-driven approach” so that it can provide evidence of a “demonstrable record of success in implementing the results of its planning” (2.5). This includes tracking the success (e.g., retention, graduation, and career outcomes) of the institution’s students from under-represented backgrounds. We therefore note with approval that the University is in the process of developing departmental diversity and equity action plans that will include goals and metrics to assess their achievement. The Spring 2027 interim report will provide an opportunity for the institution to share its success in achieving its ambitions for diversity, equity, and inclusion as expressed in our standards on *Students; Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship; Institutional Resources; and Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure*:

The institution addresses its own goals for the achievement of diversity, equity, and

inclusion among its students and provides a safe environment that fosters the intellectual and personal development of its students (*Students*, Statement of the Standard).

The institution ensures equal employment opportunity consistent with legal requirements and any other dimensions of its choosing. Compatible with its mission and purposes, it addresses its own goals for the achievement of diversity, equity, and inclusion among its faculty and academic staff and assesses the effectiveness of its efforts to achieve those goals (6.5).

The institution employs sufficient and qualified personnel to fulfill its mission. It addresses its own goals for the achievement of diversity, equity, and inclusion among its personnel and assesses the effectiveness of its efforts to achieve those goals (7.1).

The institution adheres to non-discriminatory policies and practices in recruitment, admissions, employment, evaluation, disciplinary action, and advancement. It fosters an inclusive atmosphere within the institutional community that respects and supports people of diverse characteristics and backgrounds (9.5).

As noted above, it is evident that UMass Chan Medical School is committed to the success of its students and to ongoing program improvement. As a partner in this process, the Commission joins the visiting team in commending the work of the “highly productive” Institutional Research, Evaluation, and Assessment Office (IREA). Particularly in light of the institution’s plans for continued growth, we understand that a working group has been formed to explore the development of a centralized data warehouse that would support a “cohesive institutional data collection, reporting, analysis, and application system” across the institution’s three schools. We welcome further information, in the Spring 2027 interim report, on the progress made by UMass Chan Medical School to enhance its capacity for institutional research, evaluation, and assessment to demonstrate that its “[i]nstitutional research is sufficient to support planning and evaluation” (2.2).

The Commission notes with favor that UMass Chan Medical School had unrestricted net assets of approximately \$369.5 million at the end of FY2020, and we are pleased to learn that the School has a “robust” system of financial planning and monitoring and that its resources are aligned with institutional priorities through the annual budget process. We also take note that the University’s strategic plan includes “aggressive” plans for growth and thus agree with the visiting team that “ongoing attention to financial stewardship” will be needed. Enrollment growth across the schools is expected to generate increased revenue of between 3.1% and 5.7%, and new facilities, financed with additional debt, are planned to support the institution’s research and patient services. Through the Spring 2027 interim report, we anticipate being apprised of the institution’s success to ensure the continued sufficiency of its financial resources to support its planned growth and other key initiatives. Our standards on *Planning and Evaluation* and *Institutional Resources* provide this guidance:

The institution plans for and responds to financial and other contingencies, establishes feasible priorities, and develops a realistic course of action to achieve identified objectives. Institutional decision-making, particularly the allocation of resources, is consistent with planning priorities (2.4).

The institution preserves and enhances available financial resources sufficient to support its mission. It manages its financial resources and allocates them in a way that reflects its mission and purposes (7.4).

Over the past 15 years, UMass Chan Medical School has had the benefit of exceptionally strong

and stable leadership. We share the judgment of the visiting team that, to enable the University to retain its prominent role in academic medicine and to “ensure the next generation is able to take the institution to the next level,” leadership development and broader succession planning that includes middle management “should be part of the short-term [] goals of the leadership team.” In keeping with our standard on *Organization and Governance*, we ask that the Spring 2027 interim report give emphasis to the institution’s efforts to “... assure[] appropriate attention is given to succession planning for institutional leadership ...” (3.7).

The scheduling of a comprehensive evaluation in Spring 2032 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 University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School and for the report submitted by the visiting team. The Commission also welcomed the opportunity to meet with you and Evelyn Anthony, team chair, during its deliberations.

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 and the head of the system of action on its accreditation status. In a few days we will be sending a copy of this letter to Stephen Karam and Martin T. Meehan. 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.

If you have any questions about the Commission’s action, please contact Lawrence M. Schall, President of the Commission.

Sincerely,



Russell Carey

RC/sjp

cc: Stephen Karam
Martin T. Meehan
Visiting team

Enclosure: Public Disclosure of Information about Affiliated Institutions