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November 17, 2014

Dr. David A. King
President
Malone University
2600 Cleveland Avenue NW
Canton, OH 44709-3897

Dear President King:

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

On behalf of the Commission, staff accepts the report on outcomes of strategic planning. No further reports are required. The Standard Pathway Comprehensive Evaluation is scheduled for 2016 – 2017. The institution's next reaffirmation of accreditation is scheduled for 2022 – 2023.

Also enclosed is a copy of the institution's Statement of Affiliation Status, which reflects the actions taken by the Commission. For more information on the interim report process contact Lil Nakutis, Accreditation Processes Specialist, at lnakutis@hlcommission.org. Your HLC staff liaison is Karen Solomon (ksolomon@hlcommission.org); (800) 621-7440 x 127.

Thank you.

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

STAFF ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONAL REPORT

DATE: November 17, 2014

STAFF: Karen Solomon

REVIEWED BY: Steven Kapelke

INSTITUTION: Malone University, Canton, OH

EXECUTIVE OFFICER: David King, President

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTION RE: REPORT: An interim report due 11/1/2014 on outcomes of strategic planning.

ITEMS ADDRESSED IN REPORT: The office of the Commission received the institution's report on the above topic on 10/30/2014.

STAFF ANALYSIS: Malone University hosted a comprehensive evaluation visit in September, 2012. The visiting team recommended two interim reports: A progress report identifying the constituencies that would be involved in the process; the planning format to be employed; and a timeline for completion of the document. This report was due on November 1, 2013. The report was submitted by the institution in timely fashion and accepted by the Commission.

The 2012 visiting team also recommended submission of a second report--a monitoring report—as a follow up to the progress report, to include the comprehensive strategic plan and a description of the ongoing planning processes undertaken by the university following plan approval. This analysis addresses the second of the two interim reports.

The interim report is structured in four parts: 1) a brief recap of the internal processes that resulted in the final, approved, plan; 2) An outline of the plan itself, which employs the Thriving Scorecard strategic model; 3) a discussion of the institution's ongoing strategic efforts; and 4) what the report refers to as "evidence" that the Commission's criteria are met. (This last section refers to the former core components 2C and 2D, which were cited in the visiting team's report as areas that needed to be addressed by the institution.) In addition, the report provides detailed information in the appendices (A through I) that include the Strategy Map and Measures Charts showing how the various strategic initiatives are to be enacted and evaluated.

Planning Processes: The report offers a brief encapsulation of the internal actions taken by the university in the development of the plan, including the preliminary articulation of planning goals, input from a range of constituent groups, the formation of a strategic planning committee and plan approval by the university's Board of Trustees.

Strategic Plan Framework: To assist in the development of the plan, and in particular the Thriving Scorecard format, Malone University hired Credo Higher Education Consulting. One of the staples of the Thriving Scorecard format is the creation of a graphic outline of the plan. Using this format, the institution, in collaboration with its outside consultant, identified four “Key Frameworks for Success” and three “key themes” of the plan. The Key Frameworks, which are represented on a vertical axis on the scorecard, are these:

1. Organizational Capacity
2. Internal Processes
3. Financial Resources
4. Student Stakeholders

The Key Themes, represented on a horizontal axis on the scorecard:

1. Visibility
2. Viability
3. Vibrancy

Each of the three themes has four strategic objectives, aligning with the key frameworks. For example, the four objectives under Visibility are: (1) clarify brand promise, (2) develop marketing focus, (3) invest in marketing expertise, and (4) increase awareness, each one paired with one of the four key frameworks. This same system was employed for the themes of Viability and Vibrancy as well, resulting in 12 strategic objectives. The framework, themes and objectives are represented graphically in the report’s Appendix A.

Specific initiatives were developed for each theme and assigned measures and projected budgets. These are outlined in Appendix C of the institution’s interim report. These initiatives (or action items) are tracked using proprietary software and the resulting data is aggregated and entered in the database. The data is then analyzed and converted into dashboard indicators for use by appropriate campus individuals, groups or offices.

Ongoing Strategic Planning Efforts: The report describes how, following board approval of the strategic plan, the president led discussions with each college and school in the university to discuss how each would play a role in the implementation of the plan; these meetings took place in December of 2013 and January of 2014. In addition, meetings with the strategic planning consultant in January, March and August of 2014 centered on a) updating the Thriving Scorecard template, (b) working with “theme teams” to further develop initiatives and measurements for evaluating effective implementation of each initiative, (c) training university staff in use of the Thriving Scorecard software system, and (d) development of a set of “dashboard indicators” for visualizing progress and keeping the university on track in fulfilling identified initiatives. To ensure continuing oversight of the plan, it was determined that the University Collegium would replace the Strategic Planning Steering Committee in monitoring plan progress.

The report continues by describing changes to the budget planning and hiring processes for FY2015 to ascertain that these align with the strategic plan. In this regard, every line item in the operating budget is linked to one of the three planning themes and to specific planning initiatives. In the same manner, all hiring decisions must also align with planning goals.

To demonstrate ongoing progress with the plan, the report provides examples of how the plan is being implemented within the structure that's been created. The examples given are in the areas of Admissions, Marketing, Advancement and Academic Affairs. In Academic Affairs, several measures were enacted to address efficiency and sustainability in academic programming. These efforts led to the creation and submission of the "Academic Cost Containment Proposal," which includes recommendations for program reductions and revisions, among other items.

Also, in alignment with initiatives in the strategic plan and to address specific fiscal challenges the Board of Trustees, at their February, 2014, meeting developed six directives "designed to position the University to weather economic and enrollment uncertainties and to build capacity for future institutional development..." These directives addressed such issues as tuition dependency and cost of instruction and took into account factors relating to enrollment issues, such as declining high school graduation rates in the Midwest and Northeast and the "public uncertainty" about the value of higher education.

Staff Comment: Malone University has approached the strategic planning process systematically and thoughtfully. The report indicates that the Thriving Scorecard format has enabled the institution to craft a plan that is broad in scope and also to identify specific actions or initiatives that are salutary in nature. The report is thorough and provides evidence that the planning and implementation process was inclusive; that the institution continues to employ the plan as a lens for institutional improvement; and that measures are in place to ensure the plan will be monitored carefully. The university is to be commended for its efforts.

STAFF ACTION: Accept the report on outcomes of strategic planning. No further reports are required. The Standard Pathway Comprehensive Evaluation is scheduled for 2016 – 2017. The institution's next reaffirmation of accreditation is scheduled for 2022 – 2023.

STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

Malone University
2600 Cleveland Avenue NW
Canton, OH 44709-3897

Affiliation Status: Candidate: 06/01/1962 - 04/06/1964
Accreditation: 04/07/1964

Nature of Organization

Control: Private NFP
Degrees Awarded: Bachelors, Masters, Certificate

Conditions of Affiliation:

Stipulations on Affiliation Status: Programs at Kansas City, Missouri are limited to the Master of Arts in Christian Ministry.

Approval of New Additional Locations: Prior Commission approval required.

Approval of Distance and Correspondence Courses and Programs: Approved for distance education courses and programs. The institution has not been approved for correspondence education.

Accreditation Activities: Standard Pathway, Comprehensive Evaluation: 2016 - 2017

Summary of Commission Review

Year of Last Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2012 - 2013

Year for Next Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2022 - 2023

Last Date of Information Change: 11/17/2014

Accreditation Note:
None.

Name Change:

STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

Malone College to Malone University (2008)

