



New England Commission  
of Higher Education

January 14, 2019

Dr. Richard S. Lapidus  
President  
Fitchburg State University  
160 Pearl Street  
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Dear President Lapidus:

I am pleased to inform you that at its meeting on November 16, 2018, the New England Commission of Higher Education considered the report submitted by Fitchburg State University regarding its plans to offer general education courses through a contractual arrangement with AUIA International School in Shanghai, China, and took the following action:

that the report be accepted and the general education courses offered through a contractual arrangement with AUIA International School in Shanghai, China, be encompassed within the institution's accreditation, with an effective date of November 16, 2018;

that a visit to assess implementation of the general education courses offered through a contractual arrangement with AUIA International School be scheduled for Summer 2020;

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

The report submitted by Fitchburg State University was accepted and the general education courses offered through a contractual arrangement with AUIA International School encompassed within the institution's accreditation because the Commission finds the activity to be substantially in compliance with the *Standards for Accreditation* and relevant Commission policies.

The Commission commends Fitchburg State University (FSU) for submitting a thoughtful, well-documented proposal that outlines the institution's plans to develop a contractual arrangement with AUIA International School in Shanghai, China. In addition to providing greater name recognition for FSU in the international market, the intent of the AUIA partnership is to help recruit international students and provide a cross-cultural teaching opportunity for faculty. Beginning in Summer 2019, international students who are matriculated in programs at universities in the United States and who are interested in earning general education course credits during summer break will be able to enroll in FSU's courses at the Shanghai University of Finance and Economics. We understand that AUIA will be responsible for

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recruiting students; hiring FSU faculty on a separate summer school contract; and providing housing, classrooms, and office space for faculty. The proposed program will be integrated into FSU's governance and assessment structures, and we are particularly gratified to learn that the University will oversee the curriculum and assess the program and student success annually. According to the budget projections included in the proposal, the University anticipates enrollment of 80 students generating \$33,500 in net revenue for FSU in year one of the program, increasing to 150 students generating \$68,500 in net revenue for FSU by year five. Finally, the report assures that "AUIA offers academic tutoring and support, dormitory space, airport pick-ups, and weekend activities for each student who registers in the program."

In keeping with Commission policy, an on-site evaluation to assess implementation of the partnership with AUIA International School will be scheduled for Summer 2020. A copy of the relevant procedural statement is enclosed for your information and use.

The Commission expressed appreciation for the report submitted by Fitchburg State University hopes its preparation has contributed to institutional improvement. We appreciate your cooperation with the effort to provide public assurance of the quality of higher education in New England.

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 state system of action on its accreditation status. In a few days we will be sending a copy of this letter to Mr. Donald Irving and Dr. Carlos Santiago. The institution is free to release information about the report and the Commission's action to others, in accordance with the enclosed policy on Public Disclosure of Information about Affiliated Institutions.

If you have any questions about the Commission's action, please contact Barbara Brittingham, President of the Commission.

Sincerely,

  
David Quigley

DQ/jm

Enclosures

cc: Mr. Donald Irving  
Dr. Carlos Santiago