



December 4, 2023

Dr. Sunil Kumar
President
Tufts University
Ballou Hall, 2nd Floor
Medford, MA 02155-5555

Dear President Kumar:

I am pleased to inform you that at its meeting on November 17, 2023, the New England Commission of Higher Education took the following action with respect to Tufts University:

that Tufts University be continued in accreditation;

that inclusion of the University's additional instructional location in Phoenix, Arizona within the institution's accreditation be confirmed;

that the report regarding the Tufts University Prison Initiative of Tisch College (TUPIT) program be accepted and inclusion of the TUPIT program within the institution's accreditation be confirmed;

that the institution submit an interim (fifth-year) report by January 15, 2028, for consideration in Spring 2028;

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

- 1) developing and implementing its strategic plan and its corresponding capital plan;
- 2) implementing its plans for new master's and certificate programs;
- 3) achieving its diversity goals for faculty, staff, and students;

that the next comprehensive evaluation be scheduled for Spring 2033.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its actions.

Tufts University is continued in accreditation because the Commission finds the institution to be in compliance with the *Standards for Accreditation*.

The Commission thanks Tufts University (Tufts) for its detailed and reflective self-study developed through an inclusive process that ensured "diverse representation," "engag[ed] the breadth of the university population," and yielded a "thorough, insightful, and transparent assessment" of the University and its aspirations. Along with the visiting team, we commend Tufts for its

commitment to a culture that embraces its dual identity “as a liberal arts institution and as a growing R1 research University.” We note with favor the creation of a University Faculty Senate that will, as it evolves, play a critical role in the “advancement of the university’s strategic and academic missions.” The Commission is further pleased to acknowledge that the “Tufts as an Anti-Racist Institution initiative” has “permeated” all aspects of the University; Tufts hired a director of anti-racist initiatives and a Vice Provost of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice, and has also committed \$25 million in resources over five years to support this work. With its committed faculty and staff and strong leadership team, Tufts University is well-positioned to continue to provide “transformational experiences for students and faculty in an inclusive and collaborative environment” well into the future.

The Commission confirms inclusion of the instructional location in Phoenix, Arizona within the institution’s accreditation because the self-study was responsive to the concerns raised in our letter of May 3, 2022, and provided evidence that the institution is implementing the instructional location in a manner consistent with Commission standards and policies. We understand that the Doctor of Physical Therapy program in Phoenix (DPT-Phoenix), designed as an accelerated hybrid program, began enrolling students in Summer 2022. As noted in the report of the visiting team, DPT-Phoenix was awarded “Candidate for Accreditation” status from the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), with a final accreditation decision expected in Fall 2024. We also appreciate learning that DPT-Phoenix has “contracts with 230 clinical education sites” and that all students were successfully placed in their first clinical experience.

The Commission also accepted the report submitted by Tufts University and confirmed inclusion of the Tufts University Prison Initiative of Tisch College program within the institution’s accreditation because the report was responsive to the concerns raised in our letter of December 22, 2021 and provided evidence that the institution is implementing the program in a manner consistent with Commission standards and policies. The Commission commends Tufts University for its work with incarcerated students which began in partnership with Bunker Hill Community College in 2019. Students can earn an associate degree from Bunker Hill and then continue on to earn a Bachelor of Arts in Civics Studies from Tufts. We are gratified to learn that eleven of the twelve students from the first cohort continued into the baccalaureate program after earning their associate degree. The Commission notes with favor that students “feel supported by faculty and staff” and that faculty appear “fully invested” in the program.

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 2028, to report on three matters related to our standards on *Planning and Evaluation*; *Students*; *Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship*; and *Institutional Resources*.

The Commission understands that Tufts University recently completed its “Tufts the Next Ten Years (T10)” strategic plan and that the plan’s four strategic themes served as the “underpinning for many of the transformational initiatives” undertaken at the institution. We are delighted to learn that, under its new presidential leadership, the University will begin the development of a new strategic plan that will guide it moving forward. The Commission further appreciates that Tufts has “invested close to \$1 billion in a combination of major construction projects” over the past decade. We concur with the visiting team, however, that the development of an “integrated, comprehensive plan” for investing in the University’s infrastructure and facilities maintenance that supports Tufts’ strategic plan and priorities will be beneficial. In keeping with our standard on *Planning and Evaluation*, the Commission looks forward to learning, as part of the Spring 2028

interim report, of Tufts University's success in "implementing the results of its planning" (2.5) for its strategic and corresponding capital plans. Our standard on *Planning and Evaluation* provides this additional guidance:

The institution plans beyond a short-term horizon, including strategic planning that involves realistic analyses of internal and external opportunities and constraints. The results of strategic planning are implemented in all units of the institution through financial, academic, enrollment, and other supporting plans (2.3).

We are pleased to learn that Tufts "seeks to expand master's programs" and understand that it is also adding certificate programs as "alternatives" to full-scale master's degrees. The Commission concurs with the assessment of the visiting team that these efforts will have "clear benefits" to the University. As guided by our standard on *Planning and Evaluation* (cited above) the Spring 2028 interim report will provide an opportunity for Tufts to apprise the Commission on its success in implementing its plans for new master's and certificate programs.

Tufts University's focus on expanding the racial and ethnic diversity of its student population is particularly noteworthy. The Commission is gratified to learn that each school "works to enroll a diverse student body from the pool of qualified applicants." We further note with favor the institution's continued efforts to diversify the composition of its faculty and staff and appreciate that "increasing the compositional diversity of the student body and of the faculty is a major goal" for Tufts. We anticipate being apprised, through the Spring 2028 interim report, of Tufts University's success in these matters. This section of the report will be informed by our standards on *Students; Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship; and Institutional Resources*:

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).

Through a program of regular and systematic evaluation, the institution assesses the effectiveness of its efforts to achieve an equitable educational experience for all of its students and the appropriateness and effectiveness of its student services to advance institutional purposes. Information obtained through this evaluation is used to revise these efforts and services and improve their achievement (5.20).

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...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 scheduling of a comprehensive evaluation in Spring 2033 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.

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The Commission expressed appreciation for the self-study prepared by Tufts University and for the report submitted by the visiting team. The Commission also welcomed the opportunity to meet with you, Dawn Geronimo Terkla, Associate Provost, and Jessica Sears, Director of Academic Planning and Accreditation, during its deliberations. The Commission further expressed appreciation for the report prepared by Tufts University regarding the TUPIT program and the report of the evaluator and hopes that the evaluation process has contributed to institutional improvement. It appreciates your cooperation in the effort to provide public assurance of the quality of higher education.

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 Peter Dolan. 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.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Russell Carey", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Russell Carey

RC/sjp

cc: Peter Dolan
Visiting team

Enclosure: Public Disclosure of Information about Affiliated Institutions