

**Statement about Hampshire College by
New England Commission of Higher Education**

February 18, 2019

On January 15, 2019, Hampshire College announced it would seek a partner to help the institution “achieve a thriving and sustainable future.” This difficult decision was made to ensure that students at Hampshire College can continue to receive the same high-quality education that has characterized the institution since its beginning nearly 50 years ago.

As the Commission noted in its May 4, 2018 letter to Hampshire College, concluding the comprehensive evaluation and citing the report of the visiting team, the institution’s many strengths include “the College’s mission which serves as a ‘powerful, unifying imperative,’ a Board of Trustees characterized by an ‘uncommon degree of commitment,’ a focus on student-centered learning, and its successful, participatory planning process.” In its self-study, the College was candid about its financial challenges, due principally to its significant reliance on tuition and the enrollment challenges now common to small under-resourced colleges. The Commission also asked for a report in Spring 2019 focusing on several areas requiring progress, finance and enrollment central among them. Hampshire’s willingness to forthrightly address these issues is central to its continuing accreditation.

The Commission appreciates the openness with which the College has undertaken the process of seeking a partner and the care it is taking to keep the interests of current and prospective students foremost in mind. The Commission also appreciates the open and regular communication with President Nelson and looks forward to working with her and Hampshire College as the process of seeking a partnership that will support and advance Hampshire’s innovative spirit and educational mission continues.