NECHE
New England Commission of Higher Education

November 9, 2026

Grace J. Wang, Ph.D.
President
Worcester Polytechnic Institute
100 Institute Road
Worcester, MA 01609-2280

Dear President Wang:

I am pleased to inform you that at its meeting on September 24, 2026, the New England Commission of Higher Education considered the interim report submitted by Worcester Polytechnic Institute and voted to take the following action:

that the interim report submitted by Worcester Polytechnic Institute be accepted.

The Commission will monitor Worcester Polytechnic Institute's future progress through the following reports and other requests:

that the Fall 2031 comprehensive evaluation be confirmed;

that, in addition to the information included in all self-studies, the self-study prepared in advance of the Fall 2031 evaluation give emphasis to the institution's success in:

1. evaluating and ensuring the viability of its graduate online degree and certificate programs;

2. consistently assessing student learning and success across all graduate programs;

3. ensuring sufficient financial resources to implement planned strategic investments and maintain student affordability;

4. developing technological infrastructure and policies to achieve intended improvements.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its actions and monitoring.

The interim (fifth-year) report submitted by Worcester Polytechnic Institute was accepted because it responded to the concerns raised by the Commission in its letter of April 7, 2022 and addressed each of the five standards, including a reflective essay for Standard 4: *Educational Effectiveness and the Success of All Students*.

The Commission commends Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) for:

- thoughtful and comprehensive responses to the areas of emphasis outlined by the Commission in its April 7, 2022 letter. Progress has been made with respect to evaluating enrollment growth in the context of campus resources, services, and culture; managing finances including debt and student cost of attendance; and reviewing graduate programs. The report was reflective and candid as to work still in progress.

- remaining on the cutting edge of research and innovation. Beyond its distinctive WPI Plan and pre-college STEM pipeline programs, the Institute has embraced a comprehensive approach to artificial intelligence (AI) and launched new academic programs in AI and cybersecurity. WPI's recent R1 Carnegie classification further validates the institution's success in these areas.

- promoting the health and well-being of its campus community. WPI has made considerable progress in developing a coordinated, institution-wide approach to campus mental health and overall well-being with measurable results in terms of service utilization and sense of belonging indicators.

- advancing the effectiveness of shared governance. Deans' roles in their respective schools and as members of the Provost's Council have helped to clarify responsibilities, and the Staff Council provides for non-union staff to participate more fully in institutional decision-making. Increasing attention has also been given to assessing governance effectiveness with dashboards and analytics leading to improved decision support at all levels.

In the Fall 2031 comprehensive evaluation, in addition to the information included in all self-studies, the Commission asks Worcester Polytechnic Institute for an update on the following areas identified for development:

1. **Evaluating and ensuring viability of its graduate online degree and certificate programs (1.14, 2.10, 3.3).** Reviewing the Institute's 45 graduate online degree and certificate programs will demonstrate that "the institution reviews its academic programs on a regular cycle, incorporates external perspectives when applicable, and uses the results for program improvement" (2.10). Making resource allocation decisions about current and potential programs in high-demand fields will provide evidence that the institution "aligns institutional resources with strategic priorities" (1.14) and "manages…and allocates" resources in ways that "reflect[] its mission and purposes" (3.3).

2. **Consistently assessing student learning and success across all graduate programs (*Educational Effectiveness and the Success of All Student*s, Statement of the Standard; 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5).** WPI has prioritized the implementation of learning outcomes, assessment plans, review cycles, and improvement plans across all its graduate programs. Succeeding in these efforts will enrich the institution's culture of assessment and reinforce that WPI "employs comprehensive quality assurance processes to demonstrate and continually improve institutional effectiveness and student learning and success" (*Educational Effectiveness and the Success of All Student*s, Statement of the Standard).

3. **Ensuring sufficient financial resources to implement planned strategic investments and maintain student affordability (3.1, 3.2, 3.5).** WPI successfully held its outstanding debt at FY2021 levels (approximately $400 million) while adding significant assets to include building Unity Hall, an investment of $83 million. In addition, WPI also moderated its net student cost between FY2021 and FY2026 to approximately $47,000, thus closing the affordability gap in comparison to its closest peers. Continuing to manage the institution's debt, generate significant operating surpluses, and grow philanthropic support will enable the institution to further its strategic goals, such as those related to R1 research infrastructure, and "demonstrate[] its ability to analyze its financial condition and understand…opportunities and constraints" (3.5).

4. **Developing technological infrastructure and policies to achieve intended improvements (*Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure*, Statement of the Standard; 3.12, 5.2).** Implementing improvement plans related to data governance and infrastructure; analytics and data dashboards; and online content, presence, and usability will facilitate and enhance internal and external communication to ensure that WPI "provides accurate, timely, and accessible information to all constituents" (*Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure*, Statement of the Standard).

The Commission expressed appreciation for the interim report prepared by Worcester Polytechnic Institute and hopes its preparation 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 William A. Fitzgerald. The institution is free to release information about the evaluation and the Commission's action to others, in accordance with the attached 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,

Christine Siegel

Christine Siegel
Commission Chair

CS/mrc

cc: William A. Fitzgerald

Attachment: Public Disclosure of Information about Affiliated Institutions