



Office of the President
3801 South Central Avenue – Cicero, IL 60804

Higher Learning Commission
230 S. LaSalle St. Suite 7-500
Chicago, IL 60604

June 9, 2020

Members of the HLC Institutional Actions Council:

Morton College acknowledges the diligence, experience, and expertise of the two Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Peer Reviewers, who visited the College in March, 2020, and their thoughtful and insightful Focused Visit Report that followed. The College values the hard work, dedication, and professionalism they brought to the task. Morton College also recognizes the continued value of the HLC's general accreditation processes for fostering a culture of organizational development and continuous improvement. The institution benefits from transparency and external audits and evaluations.

Morton College specifically recognizes that HLC's Focused Visit process offers stakeholders important opportunities to strengthen areas of institutional weakness. Sustained analysis by dedicated and unbiased peers on the subject of governance provide the institution perspectives on areas of concern that may require continued institutional focus. Notwithstanding the need for further progress in board development, we affirm the extraordinary progress made in realigning the relationship between the Board of Trustees and the President of the College in the year or so leading up to the visit. It was unfortunate that the Focused Visit occurred just as the COVID-19 pandemic was rapidly spreading and two board members with significant health concerns were not able to participate in person.

As the Focused Visit Report notes, Morton College's Board of Trustees enacted a number of important reforms since the HLC put the College "On Notice." First, the Board of Trustees collaborated with the administration in a comprehensive review of board policies. This, in turn, led to the Board's adoption of more explicit policies related to communication between the President, the Board of Trustees, and the District's varied constituencies, including vendors, the College's law firm, and the College's employees. Second, the Board specifically addressed ongoing concerns of presidential turnover at Morton College. As a formal expression of the Board's support for sustainable reforms in its governing practices and to demonstrate a vote of confidence in the current president's leadership, the Board unanimously approved a four-year contract extension for the President. Third, the Board supported the President's decision to eliminate long-standing no-bid, politically connected financial, marketing, and fundraising vendor contracts. Fourth, the Board endorsed the College's creation of the College Council – a campus-wide shared governance team comprised of members from all college employee groups, as well as



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student representation. The College Council has been meeting regularly and has worked collaboratively for over two years.

Morton College is committed to continuously improve and sustain best practices in governance. It will implement the suggestions it has received in the Focused Visit Report of 2020. The College wishes to stress that the Board is on the right path forward and looks forward to providing further evidence of such during the 4-year Standard Pathway visit in early 2022.

Sincerely,
Morton College

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. Fields', written over a horizontal line.

Stanley S. Fields, Ph.D.
President