

November 3, 2015



Dr. Barbara E. Brittingham  
President of the Commission  
New England Association of Schools and Colleges Commission on Institutes of Higher Education  
3 Burlington Woods Dr., Suite 100  
Burlington, MA 01803-4514

Dear Dr. Brittingham,

The Massachusetts Library System (MLS) is a state-supported collaborative of approximately 1,550 libraries across the Commonwealth, including 128 academic library members. Our mission is to promote equitable access to excellent library services and resources for all who live, work, or study in Massachusetts. We are writing because many of our academic library members have expressed concern that the proposed revision of NEASC-CIHE Standards will have a negative impact on their services.

While we appreciate the Commission's goal to better integrate information literacy throughout the Standards and to focus more on outcomes than inputs, we believe that the 2015 draft NEASC-CIHE Standards do not fully represent the unique contributions of the library to higher education outcomes. Academic librarians have played a leading role in developing, delivering, and assessing information literacy programs on Massachusetts campuses, and they will continue to do so throughout the next decade. Further, our libraries provide access to scholarly databases, books, journals, and other materials that students and faculty rely on for their learning, teaching, and research, and that are often not accessible through other means.

By understating the critical role of libraries and information resources in the new Standards, the Commission will unintentionally deprive our academic library members of an important tool in advocating for necessary financial resources and effective participation in the learning and teaching process.

We understand that several other library organizations, including the Association of College and Research Libraries/New England Chapter (ACRL/NEC) and MCCLPHEI, have shared specific suggestions for strengthening the emphasis on library staff and resources in the draft Standards. We encourage you to consider implementing these recommendations. We also encourage you to continue to engage academic librarians in the accreditation process.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide feedback on the 2015 draft NEASC-CIHE Standards on behalf of our members.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gregory Pronevitz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G" and "P".

Gregory Pronevitz  
Executive Director  
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