



NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES, INC.
COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**Joint Statement by
Gordon College and the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, NEASC
April 25, 2015**

At its meeting on April 23, 2015, the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, NEASC, considered a report submitted by Gordon College regarding the outcomes of its discernment process. This report was previously planned for September 2015; at the College's request, because it had completed the previously described process, the Commission reviewed the report at its April meeting.

The Commission found that the report from the College describes a careful and extensive process of engagement and reflection regarding Gordon's issues of sexual orientation and gender identity. It is clear to the Commission that the College has taken seriously the process of examining their success in supporting LGBTQ students. The report outlines fourteen initiatives the institution plans to take to further enhance its support for LGBTQ students. About half of these initiatives have already been launched, including trainings for residential assistants and student leaders, mandatory training for senior student life staff, student initiated support group, and establishment of a 'Life Together' taskforce. Additional steps to be taken in the coming year include improved protocols for supporting students when they declare as LGBTQ, guidelines for campus programming around sexuality, the addition of a dedicated part-time staff member to support students grappling with their sexuality, stronger anti-bullying policies, and the establishment of a biennial survey on well-being as it relates to sexuality and identity. The Commission commends the College for its extensive process, the continuing focus on its mission, its candor in addressing the issues before it, and for the commitments it is making to improve student care around LGBTQ issues.

"The Commission was duly impressed with the scope of activity undertaken by Gordon's leadership and their campus community," said Barbara Brittingham, Commission President. "It is clear Gordon College has handled this important matter with serious intention and appropriate action."

Gordon College remains accredited in good standing by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, NEASC. As part of the College's Spring 2017 fifth year interim report, a report required of all accredited institutions, the Commission looks forward to receiving an update on the initiatives that the institution proposes to undertake to strengthen its support for LGBTQ students, and more generally the results of its follow up on the process of discernment described in the April 2015 report to the Commission.

"We are pleased to have satisfactorily addressed the concerns the Commission raised last fall and, working with NEASC, to bring closure to this matter," said Gordon College President D. Michael Lindsay. "This is an outcome we expected, and we appreciate the outstanding working relationship Gordon has maintained with NEASC. The thoughtful and comprehensive dialogue on our campus has been tremendously beneficial, and I have no doubt this process has made us stronger. I am confident that these initiatives will enhance our ability to care for all Gordon students while remaining faithful to the College's distinctive Christian educational mission."