

**EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE AT 3 PM PDT 3/14/2014**

**Subject: Thunderbird Update on HLC**

Dear Thunderbird Community

On September 15, 2013, Thunderbird submitted a proposal to the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) for a change of structure related to a planned strategic alliance with Laureate, under which Thunderbird would remain independent and a jointly-owned service provider would be formed. On March 12, 2014, HLC informed Thunderbird that the HLC board did not approve the proposed plan, as presented, based on specific elements of the strategic alliance.

Thunderbird has been given the option to submit a new application addressing HLC's concerns. HLC reiterated that Thunderbird's accreditation remains intact, and noted that Thunderbird is scheduled to host its next evaluation for Reaffirmation of Accreditation in 2022-23. Thunderbird is continuing conversations with HLC. The School's Board of Trustees is also exploring various strategic alternatives, including models of collaboration with Laureate, which would respond to the specific concerns expressed by HLC.

Sincerely,

Larry Edward Penley

President

Ann Iverson

Chairman of the Board