



**ACCREDITING  
COMMISSION  
for COMMUNITY and  
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

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June 29, 2007

Dr. Edward Valeau  
Superintendent/President  
Hartnell College  
156 Homestead Avenue  
Salinas, CA 93901

Dear President Valeau:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting on June 6-8, 2007, reviewed the institutional self study report and the report of the evaluation team which visited Hartnell College on Monday, March 12-Thursday, March 15, 2007. The Commission acted to place Hartnell College on **Probation**, effective immediately, and to require that the college submit two Progress Reports on **October 15, 2007**, and **March 15, 2008**. Each report will be followed by a visit of Commission representatives.

Probation is issued when the Commission finds that an institution deviates significantly from the Commission's eligibility criteria, standards, or policies, or fails to respond to actions and conditions imposed by the Commission. The accredited status of the institution continues during the probation period. However, the institution's accreditation will not be reaffirmed until the conditions which warranted probation are removed.

I also wish to inform you that under U.S. Department of Education regulations, institutions on sanction are expected to correct deficiencies in no more than a two-year period or the Commission must take action to terminate accreditation.

The Commission notes that several deficiencies at the college have the potential to significantly and negatively affect the long term ability of Hartnell College to carry out its educational mission. Some of these issues are long standing deficiencies and have been previously identified by teams visiting the college over the past decade and more. The college failed to resolve three of the recommendations given by the last comprehensive evaluation team in the year 2000; one of those recommendations, on effective governance, has been a troubling issue at the college for more than a decade. The faculty participation in the self study process for this 2007 accreditation visit was limited, as it was in the self study process for the 2000 accreditation visit. The Commission wishes to remind the college that the WASC membership requires an institution's continued commitment to meeting the Standards of Accreditation and to sound educational practice.

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The failure of the institution to demonstrate that all constituent groups – Trustees, Administration, Faculty and Students – are appropriately engaged in ongoing activities of institutional self assessment, and in planning and implementing improvements, is of significant concern to the Commission. I am therefore compelled to advise the college that should it not make immediate and significant progress in addressing the Commission's concerns noted below, it may face a further sanction of Show Cause at the Commission's next meeting.

The Commission wishes to note that the first **Progress Report of October 15, 2007** should demonstrate *resolution* of recommendation 7 and resolution of Commission Concern 1 below, and provide evidence of clear and significant institutional progress in resolving recommendations 1 – 6.

**Recommendation 7.** The team recommends that the Board of Trustees completes their Ethics Policy by developing procedures for sanctioning those who commit ethical violations, and that they develop a comprehensive trustee development plan that provides training focused upon appropriate board behavior, roles and responsibilities. (Standards IV.B.1.a; IV.B.1.e; IV.B.1.f; IV.B.1.g; IV.B.1.h)

The Commission wishes to express its significant concerns with the ethical behavior of the Board. It is essential the Governing Board fully understand the importance of its responsibility for "the quality, integrity, and financial stability of the institutions" (ER 3) and find the means to work as a unit for the good of the institution.

**Commission Concern 1:** The Commission asks Hartnell College to demonstrate the way in which it meets and commits to continuing to meet Eligibility Requirement 21 which requires the institution to "...comply with Commission requests, directives, decisions, and policies, and...make complete, accurate, and honest disclosure."

The second Progress Report of **March 15, 2008** should provide evidence of the institution's *resolution* of recommendations 1 – 6, below and Commission Concern 2.

**Recommendation 1.** The team recommends that the college develop a professional ethics code for all personnel and use it as a foundation for conducting an ongoing, collegial, self reflective dialogue about the continuous improvement of student learning and institutional processes, including the governance process. (Standards I.B.1; III.A.1.d; IV.A.1)

**Recommendation 2.** The team recommends that college constituencies agree upon and implement an ongoing, systematic, integrated process for program review, planning, budgeting and hiring, and that a means be developed to communicate decisions made in those arenas back to the campus at large. (Standards I.B.3; I.B.5; III.A.6; III.B.2.b; III.C.2; III.D.1.a; III.D.2; III.D.2.b)

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**Recommendation 3.** The team recommends that a planning process be completed that will address the needs for staffing and maintenance in new buildings and for technology support in both new and existing buildings. (Standards I.B.3; I.B.4; I.B.6; III.A.2; III.A.6; III.B.1.a; III.B.1.b; III.B.2; III.2.a; III.B.2.b; III.C.1.c; III.C.2)

**Recommendation 4.** The team recommends that the college engages in a broad-based dialogue that leads to:

- The identification of Student Learning Outcomes at the course and program levels; and
- Regular assessment of student progress toward achievement of these outcomes.  
(Standards II.A.1.c; II.A.2.a; II.A.2.b; II.A.2.e; II.A.2.f; II.A.2.g; II.A.2.h; II.A.2.i; II.A.3)

**Recommendation 5.** The team recommends that the college complete the review and revision of all course outlines and ensure that the catalog information regarding currently offered courses and programs is accurate. (Standard II.A.2.c; II.A.6.c).

**Recommendation 6.** The team recommends the creation of an enhanced long range fiscal stability/enrollment management effort, which utilizes the services of the Offices of Business and Finance, Instruction, Admissions and Records, Student Services, Outreach Services and other appropriate college resources. (Standards III.D.1.a; III.D.1.b; III.D.1.c; III.D.2.c)

**Commission Concern 2:** The Commission asks Hartnell College to demonstrate that it meets Eligibility Requirement 10 which requires the institution “defines and publishes for each program the program’s expected student learning and achievement outcomes. Through regular and systematic assessment, it demonstrates that students who complete programs, no matter where or how they are offered, achieve these outcomes.

A revised copy of the team report is attached. Additional copies may now be duplicated. The Commission requires you to give the team report and this letter dissemination to your college staff and to those who were signatories of your college self study report. This group should include campus leadership and the Board of Trustees. The Commission also requires that the team report and the self study report be made available to students and the public. Placing copies in the college library can accomplish this. Should you want the report electronically to place on your web site or for some other purpose, please contact Commission staff.

The recommendations contained in the evaluation team report represent the observations of the evaluation team at the time of the visit. The Commission reminds you that while an institution may concur or disagree with any part of the team report, the college is expected to use the report to improve the educational programs and services of the institution. All team recommendations are expected to be fully addressed by the time of the institution’s next comprehensive evaluation visit; some have been singled out for earlier resolution.

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All colleges are required to file a Midterm Report in the third year after each comprehensive evaluation. Hartnell College should submit the Midterm Report by March 15, 2010. Midterm Reports indicate progress toward meeting the evaluation team's recommendations. The report also includes a summary of progress on college-identified plans for improvement as expressed in the self study.

The college conducted a comprehensive self study as part of its evaluation. The Commission suggests that the plans for improvement of the institution included in that document be taken into account in the continuing development of Hartnell College. The next comprehensive evaluation of the college will occur during Spring 2013.

Finally, let me take this opportunity to remind you that federal legislation affecting accrediting agencies requires that accredited colleges conduct systematic assessment of educational outcomes (see especially Standards One and Two). A further requirement is that accrediting agencies pay close attention to student loan default rates.

On behalf of the Commission, I wish to express continuing interest in the institution's educational programs and services. Professional self-regulation is the most effective means of assuring integrity, effectiveness and quality.

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Beno, Ph.D.  
President

BAB/tl

cc: Dr. Allan M. Hoffman, Accreditation Liaison Officer  
Board President, Hartnell CCD  
Dr. Christopher McCarthy, Team Chair  
Evaluation Team Members  
Ms. Linda Henderson, U.S. DOE