PARTNERSHIP: KEY TO HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE

FOR THE LAST FEW YEARS,
there has been an ongoing discussion about the future of higher education quality, the role of accreditors in ensuring quality, and the nation’s need to improve the number of college completers and improve the competencies of graduates. This conversation often occurs in Washington through Congressional hearings and public statements of national leaders, but also through media where editorial viewpoints or new research and reports are published. The debate over higher education quality is providing a great deal of “push” for accreditors to be rigorous in their evaluations, and for institutions to be more accountable for student success.

It is not a comfortable time for American higher education, and accreditors are in the limelight precisely because the public expects more of higher education, and wants accreditors to help higher education to do more, and to do it better. This is a period of great pressure, and great opportunity to advance the higher education enterprise to better serve the nation’s interest, and the interests of students who are flocking to higher education institutions. It all makes for rough water but an exciting ride, with the potential for improvement to meet the many demands on and expectations of higher education.

Accreditation Basics: Accreditation is a process for quality assurance that is used by higher education in the United States. Higher Education has been privileged by the public confidence in peer evaluation and confidence in our system of self-regulation. Many other countries assure higher education quality through government agencies that conduct quality assurance procedures, using their staff or hired auditors to conduct the evaluations.

Higher education professionals set standards of quality for higher education institutions, they serve as evaluators that regularly review and comment on an institution’s quality (peer evaluators), and they serve as the decision-making body that decides an institution’s accredited status (Commissioners). The use of professional peers means the review is conducted by individuals who understand higher education in detail and in its complexity, rather than by hired evaluators, auditors, or government employees. The peer evaluators and the Commissioners are volunteers – they have no personal gain from participating in the work of accreditation, but view it as a professional activity that contributes to the collective good.

Regional Autonomy, Federal Oversight: Regional accrediting commissions have formed
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in six geographic regions of the United States, each with multiple states (a federal requirement) in their domain. Each regional accrediting commission’s domain, or list of states in which it operates, is approved by its own institutional membership and by the U.S. Department of Education. The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) WASC accredits community and junior colleges in the Western Region, which includes California, Hawaii, the Republic of Palau, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, territories of Guam and American Samoa, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia. The Senior College and University Commission of WASC accredits baccalaureate and graduate institutions in the Western Region.

Regional Accrediting Commissions, such as the ACCJC, are membership organizations formed by institutions that join together to create standards for quality. The institutions themselves contribute the ideas for accreditation standards and policies regarding quality. The institutions also contribute and elect individuals to serve on evaluation teams, and to serve on the Commission. The Commission is the group that makes accrediting decisions about institutions, and that adopts accreditation standards and other policies of the accrediting agency. ACCJC and other “regional” accrediting commissions accredit institutions by periodically evaluating each member institution to assure that it meets or exceeds accreditation standards and other requirements contained in policy and in federal regulatory language.

Accreditors are charged with granting accreditation only when an institution substantially meets accreditation standards. The purpose of limiting accreditation to those institutions that substantially meet or exceed accreditation standards is to ensure the public that an institution that is accredited meets standards of quality that are essential to quality education and to student success. Accreditors do not accredit substandard institutions, and they withdraw accreditation from formerly accredited institutions if their performance slips below thresholds of quality and is not quickly remediated. The actions of accreditors in granting, and denying, accreditation are designed to protect the public interest and students, as well as federal funds that may be provided to the institutions. Federal laws require that the actions taken by accrediting agencies to grant accreditation, with or without conditions, or to deny accreditation be made public as soon as an institution is informed. ACCJC posts notice of its actions and requires institutions to post the Commission’s action letter and the evaluation team report on the college website.

Every college is self-governing. Sound leadership at all levels of a college should be focused on ensuring that the institution’s educational quality is sufficient to meet accreditation standards at all times. Although an accrediting agency monitors institutions, it cannot operate the institutions – college leaders at all levels do that, or not. Accreditation standards set some expectations and guidance for college leadership and it is up to the institution and its leadership to assure that a college operates in a manner that meets accreditation standards, as well as state requirements, and other federal requirements.

Each member institution of an accrediting agency is provided with copies of all standards, policies and other requirements, is offered regular training on accreditation requirements, and is given access to print resources such as newsletters, manuals, an online course on the basics of accreditation, and other training materials, as well as invitations to training workshops and presentations. Each member institution can call the ACCJC to ask for assistance at any time.

Accreditation is granted for six years on the assumption that the institution will be self-correcting if it finds it has slipped below compliance, and quickly correct its performance. An institution
member’s responsibility is to maintain adherence to accreditation requirements at all times.

Each regional accrediting agency in the United States is reviewed by the U.S. Department of Education to assure that the agency meets the many federal regulatory requirements that are contained in Section 602 of the Higher Education Act (2008). The ACCJC was recently reviewed and its recognition extended by the U.S. Department of Education. These federal regulations create some of the expectations for the standards each recognized accrediting agency uses and enforces with institutions. The federal regulations also help to make accreditors across regions consistent on a number of issues of quality assurance. The federal regulations also require accreditors to grant only a limited time for an institution to come into full compliance with accreditation standards – that time is two years. This “two-year rule” is also designed to protect the public interest, preventing substandard institutions from continuing to operate.

Accreditor/College Collaboration: In reviewing institutional quality in the past few years, ACCJC has found the performance of several California Community Colleges has slipped to a substandard level, while many other institutions have maintained substantial compliance with standards or exceeded standards and pushed toward even higher quality. In all cases where the ACCJC review process has found substandard performance, the ACCJC has issued a letter describing its findings, provided peer evaluator recommendations for how the college can make needed improvements, and given time for institutions to turn around. In most cases, institutions have worked quickly to turn around the institution’s performance, and have come into compliance within the time-frame allotted by the Commission. Both the continuously compliant institutions, and those that have fallen below standards but quickly come into compliance, demonstrate that the accreditation standards are not unreasonable and that they are achievable.

Recently the ACCJC undertook a review of its accreditation standards and sought input from the member institutions and the public. Hundreds of persons from member institutions provided input in several venues. The most common theme was: Don’t change much, the standards may need some “tweaking” and adjustments, but there is nothing large or substantial that needs to change. There were dozens of ideas for “tweaks.” The ACCJC has considered all of the comments provided, and is currently vetting a draft of new Accreditation Standards that incorporates input from the field. The ACCJC also provides opportunity for comment on the Draft Standards through public hearings.

Partnership is critical in assuring educational quality: Accreditation Standards are created in collaboration between the Commission and its member institutions; standards are enforced by peer evaluators who uphold the ideals and principles of self-regulation for the higher education enterprise. To the degree that the higher education community is responsive to the new and sometimes urgent public demands placed on it and on its quality assurance system, its autonomy will be better preserved. ♦
**Federal Update**

- The U.S. Department of Education has initiated another round of **negotiated rulemaking on the topic of “state authorization”** after rules approved a few years ago were declared invalid by the courts due to USDE process errors. At the first session in March, the Department indicated its interest in keeping language allowing states to exempt certain institutions from state review. Specifically, institutions providing distance education in their state based on their (federally recognized) accreditation and years in operation. The final language will not be available until after the April negotiations. The Department also indicated its interest in retaining requirements for “active state review” of institutions, and if that position is unchanged, it could doom the longstanding California practice of exempting accredited institutions from state oversight.

- Senators Lamar Alexander, Barbara Mikulski, Richard Burr and Michael Bennet have created a **Task Force on Government Regulation of Higher Education**, comprised of higher education presidents and coordinated by the American Council on Education, to provide advice to Congress on **reducing regulations**. Accreditors are providing suggestions for reducing the regulation of accreditation through the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC) and through the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The Task Force recommendations will be finalized in late fall 2014.

- The **Higher Education Act**, is not likely to be reauthorized this year. However, the House Committee on Education and the Workforce held its last hearing April 1, and anticipates producing draft legislation by early summer. The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee has not yet indicated whether it will have more hearings.

The timeline below shows two things. Below the line, the dates for ACCJC recognition review are identified. Above the line, the dates for legislation and rulemaking are identified. Note that since 2008, the amount of federal regulatory activity between the years in which the Higher Education Act is authorized has increased significantly. You “had a feeling” there was more regulation, and right you were!

**Key Dates in Federal Regulation and ACCJC**
Trends in Deficiencies Leading to Sanction

Since 2009, the ACCJC has collected data regarding the deficiencies that lead to colleges being placed on sanction for non-compliance with Accreditation Standards. The data are reported annually in the ACCJC’s spring newsletter. The 2014 data show a significant drop in the number of institutions on a sanction, from 25 in spring 2013 to 16 in spring 2014.

Each college on sanction has one or more areas in which institutional practices do not meet the Accreditation Standards. The main deficiencies for the last five years have been related to the collection and use of data in Program Review, and to Integrated Planning, Board Roles and Responsibilities, Internal Governance and Financial Management or Stability. New to the chart are deficiencies in Student Learning Outcomes Implementation and Employee Evaluation.

Common Deficiencies Leading to Sanction
For the 16 colleges on sanction as of January 2014
Each Institution has one or more areas of deficiency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deficiency</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Review</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Using Assessment Results</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Roles and Responsibilities</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Governance</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Management or Stability</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Learning Outcomes Implementation</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Evaluation</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous other conditions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration and staff capacity</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student support services adequacy</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development services</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library and learning support services adequacy</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrity in relations to ACCJC</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic integrity</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission, financial integrity, faculty capacity</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus climate, institutional research capacity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy reviews, pedagogy related to student needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology upgrades, maintenance of complaint file</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource allocation model</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Delineation of college and district roles</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy on distance education and correspondence education</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Deficiencies are added to the chart when more than four institutions are cited for that deficiency.
Trends in Deficiencies Leading to Sanction, continued from page 6

Understanding Sanctions as of January 2014

The data show that:

- There has been a significant drop in the proportion of sanctioned institutions that have difficulties with governing board roles and responsibilities, down from 68% (N=17) in 2013 to 38% (N=6) in 2014.
- A large proportion of the institutions on sanction, 87.5%, are not integrating their assessment, program review and planning efforts.
- Three quarters of institutions on sanction were placed on sanction for issues related to Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment, and almost two thirds of those on sanction were so placed for issues related to Employee Evaluations.
- 13 of 16 institutions (81%) have 3 or more deficiencies.

The institutions on sanction differ from year to year. Some make improvements and come off of sanction, but others may go on sanction as the result of performance problems identified through an accreditation evaluation.

The Commission awards accreditation or reaffirms accreditation when an institution meets or exceeds all Accreditation Standards. Sanctions are imposed when an institution fails to meet Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards or Commission policies. The Policy on Actions on Institutions can be found in the ACCJC Accreditation Reference Handbook found on the Publication and Policies page of the ACCJC website at www.accjc.org/publications-policies.

The Commission has published data summarizing the deficiencies leading to sanction since 2009. ACCJC newsletters conveying this information can be found on the ACCJC website at: www.accjc.org.

ACCJC NEWS/UPDATES

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) is pleased to announce the continued recognition of ACCJC by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE). On January 28, 2014, senior USDE official Brenda Dann-Messier, Acting Assistant Secretary of Education, issued a formal decision to continue the ACCJC’s status as a USDE recognized accreditor. The decision followed the recommendations of both the USDE’s Accreditation Division and of the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI) to continue the ACCJC recognition. Recognition is for one year, and ACCJC is requested to provide a follow up report in Spring 2015 on a number of items demonstrating implementation of new policies or practices. All regional accrediting commissions, and the majority of all accrediting commissions, have been required to submit a follow up report since the new Higher Education Act regulations were adopted in 2008.
The current Accreditation Standards were approved in 2002. Among the significant changes in those Standards were a heightened emphasis on student learning, assessment, and improvement, and on data-based decision making. Five years later, in 2007, a Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness was circulated to the field, describing levels of implementation for the linked processes of institutional planning, program review, and student learning outcomes (SLO) assessment.

In 2009, the field was notified that the Commission would expect institutions to be at the Proficiency level of SLO implementation by fall 2012, and that member institutions should operate at the Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement levels thereafter. In February 2012, the Commission announced it would request a report from each college to evaluate attainment of the Proficiency level across the region. The colleges were divided into two reporting groups, with half reporting by October 15, 2012, and the remainder by March 15, 2013.

In accordance with ACCJC practice for monitoring annual self-reports from member institutions, staff reviewed the 2012-2013 College Status Report on Student Learning Outcomes Implementation and prepared a composite report on the results for review by the Commission. Each college’s report was also retained for inclusion with annual reports, annual fiscal reports, audits, and other college materials for external evaluation teams when conducting a review of the institution.

The 2012-2013 SLO reports completed by all institutions provided a means for gaining understanding of progress across the Western Region in the implementation of student learning outcomes assessment. The Commission based this report on the Proficiency implementation level on the Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness, Part III (Rubric), as that had become very familiar to individuals at the campuses who worked with SLOs. Moving forward, colleges are reminded they must demonstrate the Accreditation Standards on student learning outcomes are met.

In order to gather a snapshot of SLO implementation across the region, a scoring rubric was used to pull together elements from the submitted reports. The rubric was based on the information provided by colleges in their reports as it related to the Proficiency level. The rubric elements captured the largest aspects of practice and majority of reported items; however, some unique responses from colleges were included and scored to give benefit to the institution.

This article presents a summary of the results of the College Status Reports on SLO Implementation. A complete report has been posted to the ACCJC website, at:


Summary of Results

The analysis of institutional status reports found that 80% of member institutions met or exceeded expectations for Proficiency level SLO implementation by March, 2013. Of that percentage, six member institutions exceeded expectations for Proficiency level SLO implementation, and 36 colleges solidly met or exceeded the expectations overall, with limited areas for needed improvement. The rest met expectations, but were not fully established in the areas of expected effective practice. 20% of the member institutions did not fully meet the expectations for the Proficiency level, some of them with significant deficiencies.
The Numbers for Ongoing Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

At the time of the 2012-2013 College Status Reports (Status Reports), quantitative information on SLO implementation had been collected in Annual Reports for six years. The 2012-2013 expectation was that student learning outcomes were being assessed regularly in all venues where students are learning. The scoring of numerical responses took into account variations at colleges of how certain activities were conducted or defined. As colleges were expected to have completed the definition of SLOs for all courses and programs, the quantitative analysis of the Status Reports focused on assessment.

About 40% of member institutions report ongoing assessment in at least 90% of both courses and programs. Another 25% of member institutions solidly met the expectation that ongoing assessment of SLOs be in place for their courses, and 12% meet implementation expectations for ongoing program assessment. Ten colleges had ongoing assessment in less than 40% of their courses, and ten colleges were assessing SLOs for less that 30% of programs. The low or modest levels of ongoing assessment at some colleges had significant implications for the institutional planning and program review processes and the use of assessment results in decision-making at the campus.

Student and learning support services, on the whole, had strong levels of assessment implementation. Sixty-three percent of institutions reported ongoing assessment in 95 to 100% of student and learning support services. The implementation levels for ongoing assessment of institutional learning outcomes fell largely to extremes: most colleges have ongoing assessment for 90% or more of the institutional outcomes. However, more than 20 colleges were not assessing institutional outcomes at all.

Narrative Responses

Colleges were asked to provide eight narrative responses that were correlated with the following Proficiency Rubric statements:

1. **Proficiency Rubric Statement 1**: Student Learning outcomes and Authentic Assessments are in Place for Courses, Programs, Support Services, Certificates and Degrees.
2. **Proficiency Rubric Statement 2**: There is a widespread institutional dialogue about assessment results and identification of gaps.
3. **Proficiency Rubric Statement 3**: Decision making includes dialogue on the results of assessment and is purposefully directed toward aligning institution-wide practices to support and improve student learning.
4. **Proficiency Rubric Statement 4**: Appropriate resources continue to be allocated and fine-tuned.
5. **Proficiency Rubric Statement 5**: Comprehensive assessment reports exist and are completed and updated on a regular basis.
6. **Proficiency Rubric Statement 6**: Course student learning outcomes are aligned with degree student learning outcomes.
7. **Proficiency Rubric Statement 7**: Students demonstrate awareness of goals and purposes of courses and programs in which they are enrolled.

**Self-Assessment on Level of Implementation**: What Level of SLO Implementation would you assign your College? Why? What Efforts Have you planned to Address Needed Improvements?
SLO Implementation, continued from page 9

The responses for the first proficiency statement, dealing with having outcomes and assessments in place, demonstrated implementation across the region at near the expected level. The analysis of responses for the other proficiency statements found a more mixed level of implementation. For some reporting institutions, the focus was on the mechanics of defining and assessing outcomes more so than the use of SLO assessment results for influencing decisions at all levels, for improvement, and for improving student success.

Conclusion

The College Status Report on SLO Implementation provided a valuable snapshot of student learning outcomes implementation levels across the Western Region. The analysis found an overall level of meeting expectations of effective practice, but not necessarily at a fully implemented level. However, among the respondents are 42 colleges (nearly a third of the ACCJC membership) which have reached a level of fully meeting or exceeding expected levels of performance within the Proficiency implementation elements. These institutions have much to share with other colleges across the field.

The move to SLO assessment over the past ten years has represented a significant change within the region, and the impact has not yet been fully realized. It is expected that future monitoring and institutional evaluation reports will provide many examples of how improvement efforts arising from SLO assessment have increased student learning and achievement, and the academic quality and institutional effectiveness of the colleges.

Please go to http://www.accjc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/2013_Status_on_SLO_Implementation_at_Member_Institutions.pdf to read the complete report, which has a more detailed analysis of the narrative responses for each proficiency statement, along with examples of successful strategies implemented by member institutions and future plans. ♦
Receiving Broad Input, Commission Continues Review of Standards

Since 2012, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) has been engaged in a review of its Accreditation Standards & Processes. At its January 2014 meeting, ACCJC approved for first reading revised Accreditation Standards. Anticipating final approval and adoption of revised Standards at its June 2014 meeting, the Commission is conducting public hearings within its region to solicit input on the draft of revised Standards. This final stage in the process of reviewing and revising the 2002 Standards follows comprehensive work by the Commission, informed by extensive, broad-based input from the field. That review has included many opportunities for input at Commission hearings, via email, and through discussions with small groupings of different constituencies of the member colleges. The ACCJC has heard from more than 500 persons over the past two years.

In addition, the ACCJC received many comments on its accreditation practices, and with that commentary, many very good ideas for changes to practice. The Commission will continue to consider a number of proposed changes to the accreditation process.

Most recently, the ACCJC conducted a Standards Hearing on Tuesday, March 11, 2014 at the Hyatt Regency Waikiki, Honolulu, Hawaii, prior to conducting its annual Commission Development Workshop, March 12-14, 2014. Individuals from the Western Pacific and Hawaiian colleges attended the hearing and provided insightful comments and suggestions. Following the workshop the Commission announced the following:

1. The new Standards will be the basis for comprehensive institutional evaluations for reaffirmation of accreditation beginning spring 2016. All colleges going through the first semester of implementation will receive greater than usual support for the transition from the current standards, and the ACCJC will use the spring 2016 implementation as an opportunity to study implementation of the revised accreditation process and standards.

2. The new Standards will, for all other purposes, be effective upon adoption, and may be used by institutions wishing to develop a baccalaureate degree.

3. The ACCJC will adopt an accreditation cycle of 7 years, beginning with the institutions undergoing review in 2016. The ACCJC will adjust the comprehensive evaluation schedule of some institutions in the shift to the new cycle.

Review of Standards, continued on page 12
4. There will be several changes proposed to the Policy on Actions on Institutions, scheduled for a first reading in June 2014.

- The Commission has agreed in principle to adopt definitions for sanctions shared among the regional accreditors and proposed by the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC) after a study of practices across all regions.

- In addition, the Commission has agreed to work on a new definition of “reaffirmation of accreditation” that will distinguish the high performing institutions that meet and exceed standards.

- The Commission is considering a method to allow those institutions that have a small number of issues to come into compliance within one year while being reaffirmed.

There will be more changes to come. Please continue to participate in the ACCJC’s review process, and plan to offer comments via email/fax/mail and at public hearings.

ACCJC is Seeking Oral and Written Comments

ACCJC will provide opportunity for oral and written input on the first reading revisions to the Eligibility Requirements and Standards at two upcoming public hearings:

April 28, 2014 – Los Angeles Mission College
April 30, 2014 – MTI College

In addition, the Commission invites individuals to provide written comment by using the Suggestion Form available on the website www.accjc.org.

Comments are invited through April 30, 2014.
# January 2014 Commission Actions on Institutions

At its January 8-10, 2014 meeting, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, took the following institutional actions:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reaffirmed Accreditation</th>
<th>Removed from Probation and Reaffirmed Accreditation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cabrillo College</td>
<td>College of the Redwoods</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cañada College</td>
<td>Modesto Junior College</td>
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<tr>
<td>College of San Mateo</td>
<td>Victor Valley College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cuyamaca College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grossmont College</td>
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<td>MTI College</td>
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<td>Salvation Army College</td>
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<td>for Officer Training at Cresmont</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skyline College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Issued Warning</td>
<td>Removed from Warning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sierra College</td>
<td>Yuba College</td>
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<tr>
<th>Continued on Warning</th>
<th>Removed from Probation and Issued Warning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Woodland Community College</td>
<td>College of the Sequoias</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Removed from Warning and Reaffirmed Accreditation</th>
<th>Removed from Show Cause and Issued Warning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Columbia College</td>
<td>Northern Marianas College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cuesta College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Honolulu Community College</td>
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<td>Solano Community College</td>
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POLICIES APPROVED FOR FIRST READING:

◆ Policy and Procedures for Evaluation of Institutions in Multi-College/Multi-Unit Districts or Systems
  The proposed revision eliminates a section related to team reports and recommendations that is more accurately addressed elsewhere in policy and procedure dealing generally with teams.

◆ Policy on Institutional Degrees and Credits
  The work on this policy was primarily to increase readability by moving regulation citations to footnotes. In addition, the definition of “program,” was clarified; general education and, if offered, pre-collegiate preparatory courses of study are defined as programs of the institution. References for baccalaureate degrees were included to align with federal requirements.

◆ Policy on Complaints Against the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
  The policies of other regional accreditors were used as reference points in revising the Commission's policy, and references were inserted about other processes available for raising questions or concerns related to the accreditation standards, processes, or actions on institutions.

◆ Policy on Closing an Institution
  This policy was revised to provide for flexibility in the current requirement of a Closure Report from all institutions placed on the sanction of Show Cause. With the revision, institutions ordered on Show Cause may be required to complete a Closure Plan, or may be required to develop a preliminary closure plan, or make other preparations for closure. Other clarifying revisions were also made.

◆ Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions
  This policy was revised to eliminate an older requirement for two years to pass before an institution can proceed with seeking accreditation upon denial of candidacy or initial accreditation. Additional revisions clarify language concerning the application of the two-year rule in relation to Commission actions on institutions.

Comment on First Reading Policies is invited through April 15, 2014.

ADOPTED INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES:

◆ Policy on Monitoring Institutional Performance

◆ Policy on Direct Assessment of Learning (formerly Policy on Credit for Prior Experiential Learning in Undergraduate Programs)

◆ Policy on the Rights and Responsibilities of the Commission and Member Institutions
ADOPTED ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS:

- Policy on Access to Commission Meetings
- ACCJC Bylaws

ELIMINATED POLICIES:

- Policy and Procedures for Joint Accreditation Process between ACCJC and ACSCU of WASC
- Policies and Procedures for Joint Accreditation Process Between ACCJC and ACS of WASC
- Coordinating Guidelines for the WASC Accrediting Commissions

EDITS TO POLICY AND CHANGES FOR ALIGNMENT WITH REGULATIONS:

- Policy on Commission Good Practice in Relations with Member Institutions
- Policy on Public Disclosure and Confidentiality in the Accreditation Process
- Policy on Relations with Government Agencies
- Policy on Relations with Accrediting Agencies
- Policy on Conflict of Interest for Commissioners, Evaluation Team Members, Consultants, Administrative Staff, and Other Commission Representatives
- Policy on Substantive Change

The policies and more detailed explanations of the actions on policies were sent to CEOs and ALOs of member institutions for circulation to the colleges. They can also be found online at www.accjc.org. All first reading policies have been sent to the field for comment and can be accessed on the ACCJC website. Adopted policies can also be accessed on the ACCJC website and in the Accreditation Reference Handbook, which is updated and published annually in July.
Regional Workshops Fall 2014

This spring, the ACCJC began a new regional workshop series on “Institutional Internal Quality Assurance and Student Learning Outcomes Assessment” with two successful workshops. The series will continue in the fall with dates and locations to be announced on the ACCJC website. Attendees will have the opportunity to engage with ACCJC staff, Commissioners, and Dr. David W. Marshall, Associate Director of Tuning USA from the Institute for Evidence Based Change. Dr. Marshall will share his expertise in student learning outcomes during his presentation “Elements of Design: Definitions of Learning Outcomes, Measures of Learning, Summarizing Learning Outcomes Data, and Using Assessment Data,” setting the stage for a successful day of training.

Expanding on the opening presentations, representatives from member institutions will showcase effective methods for educational quality improvement. Working together with the presenters, participants will have an opportunity to discuss their own success stories, assessment results, and challenges their college may face. The closing plenary session will include a strengths summary of the model practices introduced earlier in the day and conclude with small group discussions and a question and answer session with the presenters. Participants will take away practical tools for improving institutional effectiveness.

2014 Trustees Conference

The 2014 Trustees Conference, hosted by the Community College League of California (CCLC), will be held May 2-4, 2014 at the Newport Beach Marriott Hotel and Spa. Governing board members have requested a workshop that presents the skills applicable to their governance role. In collaboration with the California Community College Trustees, ACCJC will participate in the pre-conference workshop “Panel on Tools for Trustees for Successful Accreditation Process,” on Friday, May 2, 2014. In addition to the pre-conference workshop, ACCJC will participate in a panel titled “Trends in Accreditation,” on Saturday, May 3, 2014. More information on the 2014 Trustees Conference is available at www.ccleague.org.

Degree Qualification Profile Project (DQPP) Conference

The 2014 DQPP Conference, for colleges which have been participating in the ACCJC’s Degree Qualifications Profile Project over the past year, will be held May 1-3, 2014 at the Sheraton San Diego Hotel & Marina. College representatives will present the results of their projects using the DQP as a framework for examining degree program-level student learning outcomes and assessment and associated effective practices to improve outcomes for students. Guest presenter Dr. Paul Gaston (co-author of the DQP) will discuss recent developments in the use of degree-level outcomes across the nation. Dr. Natasha Jankowski (Researcher and Assistant Director of the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment) will provide information about other projects and ongoing efforts to improve outcomes for students. Information about the conference has been sent to participating colleges. Project information is available at www.dqpp.org.

In its newly published report “Knowing What Students Know and Can Do: The Current State of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment in US Colleges and Universities,” the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) provided information on the expansion of assessment practices across American Higher Education Institutions. NILOA conducted research on the state of assessment in 2009, and again in 2013. From 2009 to 2013, the use of rubrics to assess learning outcomes rose from about 23% of institutions sampled to about 69%; the use of portfolios rose from about 9% to about 41%, the use of employer surveys from 21% to 49%, and external performance assessments from 9% to 40%. Institutions are developing varieties of assessment strategies. These findings and more will be discussed at the DQPP Conference. NILOA publications are available at http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org.
The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) is seeking nominations and applications from individuals who wish to be considered for election as Commissioners to the ACCJC.

Commissioners are elected for a three-year term, and are eligible for re-election to a second three-year term. The composition of the Commission membership can be found in the Commission Bylaws, Article III, Section 1; the process for electing Commissioners can be found in Sections 2 and 3, on the ACCJC website: http://www.accjc.org/accjc-bylaws-wasc-constitution.

The ACCJC is seeking nominations and applicants for the following positions:

- **One Commission member representing the institutions in the Pacific Postsecondary Education Council.**
  The incumbent of this position, Dr. Patrick Tellei, has completed two terms on the Commission and is not eligible for re-election.

- **One Commission member representing the public.**
  The incumbent of this position, Dr. Sharon Whitehurst-Payne, has completed two terms on the Commission and is not eligible for re-election.

- **One Commission member representing the California Community Colleges’ Chancellor’s Office.**
  The incumbent of this position, Dr. Barry Russell, has changed positions and therefore is not eligible for re-election.

In addition, the ACCJC announces four other Commission positions, each of which has an incumbent who is eligible for election to a second three-year term.

- **One Commission member representing faculty.**
  The incumbent of this position, Dr. Timothy Brown, is eligible for a second three-year term.

- **One Commission member representing Senior Colleges and Universities accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.**
  The incumbent of this position, Dr. Eleanor Siebert, is eligible for a second three-year term.

- **One Commission member representing Independent Institutions.**
  The incumbent of this position, Dr. John Zimmerman, is eligible for a second three-year term.

- **One Commission member representing Administration.**
  The incumbent of this position, Dr. Raúl Rodríguez, is eligible for a second three-year term.

ACCJC is currently accepting nominations for the above noted Commission positions. Nominations may be sent via a letter that names the nominee, his or her contact information, the specific Commission vacancy for which the individual is being nominated, and should be signed and dated by the individual making the nomination. Persons may self-nominate. Nomination letters may be sent by mail, email, or fax and must arrive at the ACCJC office by April 15, 2014.

All nominees will be contacted by the Commission, be asked to agree to be nominated, and asked to complete a Commissioner Application and data form.

The Nominating Committee of the ACCJC will meet before April 30 to nominate a slate of candidates for election to the Commission. Ballots will be mailed to each institutional CEO by early May, and the election results will be announced at the June 2014 Commission meeting.

Focus on Quality

EFFECTIVE TRUSTEESHIP
The Community College league of California (CCLC) and the California Community College Trustees (CCCT) held the annual Effective Trustee Workshop January 24-26, 2014, in Sacramento, California. This workshop serves as the best overview of responsibilities required for both new and experienced board members of California community colleges. On Saturday, January 25, Barbara Beno (President, ACCJC), Peter Garcia (President, Diablo Valley College), Deborah Blue (Chancellor, State Center CCD), Scott Lay (President/CEO, The League), Mojdeh Mehdizadeh (Vice Chancellor, Education & Technology, Contra Costa CCD), Patrick Perry (Vice Chancellor, Technology, Research & Information Systems, Chancellor’s Office), and Beth Smith (President, ASCCC), provided a comprehensive overview of governing board roles and responsibilities. Topics included local decision-making, accreditation history, process and updates, as well as the ACCJC and district perspectives of the accreditation cycle and the board’s role throughout the cycle. The Accreditation PowerPoint presentation “Accreditation and Effective Trusteeship,” is available online at: www.accjc.org/events.

ACADEMIC SENATE ACCREDITATION INSTITUTE
The theme for the eighth annual Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC) held February 7-8, 2014 in La Jolla, CA was “Effective and Sustainable Accreditation Practices.” Partners with the ASCCC for the Accreditation Institute were the ACCJC and the Community College League of California (CCLC).

The collective goal was to provide a forum for collaborative learning about Accreditation Standards and Quality Assurance Practices for all academic leaders—faculty administrators, CEOs and trustees. Dr. Susan B. Clifford, ACCJC Vice President, represented the ACCJC. Dr. Clifford’s welcome address spoke to one of the key principles of accreditation—accreditation is a process of quality assurance and improvement conducted by peers who volunteer their professional expertise, time and energy to the various activities associated with accreditation. The two day institute provided training to academic leaders on how to prepare for upcoming federal reviews of their college, as well as to set outcomes and self-study materials for their campus.

ACCREDITATION LIAISON OFFICER’S WORKSHOP
A workshop for new and experienced Accreditation Liaison Officers (ALOs) was held on February 21, 2014 at Rio Hondo College in Whittier, CA. Over 55 participants from 45 colleges in the ACCJC, WASC region attended.

The purpose of the workshop was to train the ALOs on their leadership and communication responsibilities in promoting educational quality and institutional effectiveness. It began with a briefing session about specific topics including U.S. Department of Education regulations regarding distance education and correspondence education, monitoring and follow-up of data indicators, integrity regarding student visas, substantive change and Commission policy revisions. The workshop also reviewed the purposes of accreditation, the Accreditation Standards, program review and integrated planning and ACCJC publications and resources such as the Accreditation Basics online course. Interactive sessions throughout the day provided time for experienced ALOs to share with new ALOs “lessons from the field.”
Future Comprehensive External Evaluation Visits

Under current U.S. Department of Education regulations, ACCJC must provide opportunity for third-party comment regarding the institutional qualifications for accreditation. The institutions noted below are scheduled to undergo comprehensive external evaluation visits in the spring of 2014, the fall of 2014, and the spring of 2015 and review by the Commission at its June 2014, January 2015, and June 2015 meetings, respectively. Third-party comment on these institutions should be made to the ACCJC President, Dr. Barbara A. Beno, at 10 Commercial Blvd. Suite 204, Novato, CA 94949. For consideration, such comment must be made in writing, signed, accompanied by return address and telephone number, and received no later than five weeks before the scheduled Commission meeting. This information is also available on the Future Comprehensive External Evaluation Visits page of ACCJC’s website www.accjc.org.

FALL 2014
(for January 2015 Commission Review)

- American Samoa Community College
- College of the Canyons
- Contra Costa College
- Crafton Hills College
- Cuesta College
- Diablo Valley College
- El Camino College
- Long Beach City College
- Los Medanos College
- Rio Hondo College
- San Bernardino Valley College
- Santa Ana College
- Santiago Canyon College

SPRING 2015
(for June 2015 Commission Review)

- Berkeley City College
- Butte College
- College of Alameda
- College of the Marshall Islands
- Laney College
- Merritt College
- Palomar College
- Pasadena City College
- Santa Rosa Junior College

FALL 2015
(for January 2016 Commission Review)

- American River College
- Chabot College
- Citrus College
- Cosumnes River College
- Folsom Lake College
- Las Positas College
- Napa Valley College
- Sacramento City College
- Santa Barbara City College
- Southwestern College
- Taft College