



**ACCREDITING
COMMISSION
for COMMUNITY and
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

*Western Association
of Schools and Colleges*

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February 7, 2014

Dr. Mark Zacovic, President
Cuyamaca College
900 Rancho San Diego Parkway
El Cajon, CA 92019

Dear President Zacovic:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting on January 8-10, 2014, considered the Institutional Self Evaluation Report and the Report of the External Evaluation Team that visited Cuyamaca College October 14-17, 2013.

The Commission took action to **reaffirm accreditation** with the requirement that the College complete a **Follow-Up Report** that must be submitted by **October 15, 2014**,¹ addressing recommendations 6, 7 and 8 noted below. The Report will be followed by a visit of Commission representatives. Reaffirmation with a Follow-Up Report is granted when an institution is found to substantially meet or exceed the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies, but has recommendations on a small number of issues of some urgency which, if not addressed immediately, may threaten the ability of the institution to continue to meet the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies. The Report should demonstrate, and the visiting team will verify, that the institution has addressed the recommendation noted below, resolved the deficiencies, and now meets Accreditation Standards.

Need to Correct Deficiencies

The Accreditation Standards, as an integrated whole, represent indicators of academic quality and institutional effectiveness. Deficiencies in any Standard will impact quality at an institution, and ultimately the educational environment and experiences of students. The Commission found Cuyamaca College deficient in meeting the following Accreditation Standard: II.A.2.e, III.A.1.c, III.A.2, III.A.4.b, III.A.6, IV.B.3.c. Please note that under U.S. Department of Education regulations, when an institution is out of compliance with any Standards, the Commission "must immediately initiate adverse action against the institution or require the institution to take appropriate action to bring itself into compliance with the agency's standards within a time period that must not exceed...two years." Cuyamaca College and the Grossmont/Cuyamaca Community College District should fully resolve the noted deficiencies by October 2015.

College Recommendations:

Recommendation 6:

Curriculum Review

In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends that the College implement an ongoing, systematic review process of course outlines to ensure currency and relevancy for all disciplines (II.A.2.e.).

Recommendation 7:

Staffing Plans

In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends that the College assess and analyze the level and diversity of its full-time faculty and staff. It further recommends that the College use the results of that assessment to develop, adopt, fund, and implement long-range staffing and resource allocation plans that will ensure a sufficient number of qualified, diverse, full-time faculty and staff to foster the institution's mission and purposes, assure the integrity and quality of its programs, and maintain services to students (Standard III.A.2, III.A.4.b, III.A.6, IV.B.3.c).

College and District Recommendation:

Recommendation 8:

Human Resources

In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends that the District and the College include, as a required component of the formal evaluations of faculty and others directly responsible for student progress toward achieving stated student learning outcomes, a means to evaluate effectiveness in producing those outcomes (Standard III.A.1.c).

Improvement of Institutional Effectiveness

Recommendations have also been made for Cuyamaca College and the Grossmont/Cuyamaca Community College District to improve institutional effectiveness. Recommendations for improvement may be made to highlight areas for continuing or expanding excellent practices. Recommendations for improvement may also be made when an institution is currently in compliance with Standards, but additional levels of effort should be demonstrated in the future. In the Commission's experience, these recommendations may provide indicators of possible future noncompliance if left unattended by the institution. The College should plan to fully address all improvement recommendations in the Midterm Report.

College Recommendations:

Recommendation 1:

Planning and Decision Making Process

In order to improve effectiveness, the team recommends the College clarify and strengthen the review, assessment, planning, and communication roles between and among the planning and decision-making entities to better inform the college community and align the governance decision-making structures with resource allocation decisions (Standard I.B.6, IV.A.5).

Recommendation 2:

Distance Education

In order to improve effectiveness, the team recommends that student learning outcomes results and student achievement performance for courses and programs offered in a distance education modality be regularly and systematically assessed in the Program Review process (Standards II.A.1.a, II.A.2.a).

Recommendation 3:

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

In order to improve effectiveness, the team recommends that the College disaggregate Student Learning Outcomes assessment results by instructional modality to support institutional planning and provide evidence of student achievement of those outcomes (Standard II.A.1.c, II.A.2, II.A.2.e).

Recommendation 4:

Course Outlines

In order to improve effectiveness, the team recommends that the College consistently ensure student learning outcomes from the institution's officially approved course outlines are clearly identified on each course syllabus, and are distinguished from course objectives (Standard II.A.6).

Recommendation 5:

Learning Support Services

In order to improve effectiveness, the team recommends that the College provide coordinated planning and assessment of tutoring and learning support services to ensure adequate access to the library, tutoring, and other learning support services, regardless of their location or means of delivery (Standard II.C.1.c).

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College and District Recommendation:

Recommendation 9:

Leadership and Governance

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends the District and the Governing Board regularly evaluate its policies and practices, and revise them as necessary along established timelines (IV.B.1.e).

Cuyamaca College conducted an educational quality and institutional effectiveness review as part of its self evaluation. The Commission suggests that the plans for improvement of the institution included in its self evaluation efforts be taken into account in the continuing improvement of the College.

The External Evaluation Report that was sent to the institution provides details of the team's findings with regard to each Eligibility Requirement and Accreditation Standard and should be read carefully and used to understand the team's findings.

The recommendations contained in the External Evaluation Report represent the best advice of the peer evaluation team at the time of the visit, but may not describe all that is necessary to come into compliance. Institutions are expected to take all action necessary to comply with Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies. The Commission wishes to remind you that while an institution may concur or disagree with any part of the Report, Cuyamaca College is expected to use the External Evaluation Report to improve educational programs and services and to resolve issues identified by the Commission.

A **final** copy of the External Evaluation Team Report is attached. Additional copies may now be duplicated. The Commission requires that the College give the Institutional Self Evaluation Report, the External Evaluation Team Report, and this letter appropriate dissemination to College staff and to those who were signatories of the College Self Evaluation Report. This group should include the Chancellor, campus leadership, and the Board of Trustees.

The Commission also requires that the College's Institutional Self Evaluation Report, the External Evaluation Team Report, and this Commission action letter be made available to students and the public by placing a copy on the College website. *Please note that in response to public interest in disclosure, the Commission now requires institutions to post accreditation information on a page no more than one click from the institution's home page.*

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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 educational quality.

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Beno, Ph.D.
President

BAB/tl

¹Institutions preparing and submitting Midterm Reports, Follow-Up Reports, and Special Reports to the Commission should review *Guidelines for the Preparation of Reports to the Commission*. It contains the background, requirements, and format for each type of report and presents sample cover pages and certification pages. It is available on the ACCJC website under College Reports to ACCJC at: (<http://www.accjc.org/college-reports-accjc>).