



**ACCREDITING
COMMISSION
for COMMUNITY and
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

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January 6, 2010

Urgent and Important

**To: Chancellors, Superintendents and Presidents of California
Community Colleges, ALOs**

From: Barbara Beno, President *Barbara A Beno*
Lurelean Gaines, Commission Chair

Subject: The ACCJC's Public Meeting Today

We are writing to you on behalf of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges about an unprecedented and very serious set of events that are occurring and that concern your institutional interests in accreditation. We are writing to ensure that as the CEO of a member institution(s), you are kept fully apprised of the events that are occurring, and the reasons for the Commission's responses to those events.

The ACCJC has been approached by the California Community College Chancellor with suggestions for "improvement" of accreditation. These suggestions were developed by the Chancellor's shared governance body, the Consultation Council, apparently as reflection of the results of a survey that the Chancellor's Office administered in the summer. The Chancellor did not share the survey results or response rate with the Commission.

In August, the Chancellor indicated his desire to share these suggestions with the Commission, and was offered the opportunity to come to the January 2010 public meeting. He insisted he was unwilling to do so, and requested that the Commission convene in private to hear from him and the Council. In deference to the Chancellor's desire to share these suggestions with the Commission and his expressed desire to do so in private, the Commission sent four Commissioners to meet with four members of the Consultation Council in late October. The Commission expressly stated that its agreement to an informal private meeting would be in lieu of scheduling the Chancellor to come to the public meeting to address the Commission. In a meeting that lasted approximately four hours, the Chancellor and the members of the Consultation Council explained what they meant by the seven suggestions. The members of the Commission responded with some questions and some information. The Commission stated before and during that meeting that Commission representatives would take the conversation contents to the entire Commission for a private discussion during its January 2010 meeting and then provide a written response following the meeting.

The Chancellor and the Consultation Council have now requested in writing to speak at the public meeting of the Commission about the same matter, before the Commission has had a chance to internally discuss the October meeting and respond to it, and after the Commission agenda had been set. The request to appear at the Commission's public meeting has been politely declined in accordance with Commission policy. The Commission policies permit comment from persons who attend the public meeting of the Commission on matters that are on the public meeting agenda. The Commission has not placed the Chancellor's suggestions on its public meeting agenda. It is our understanding that the Chancellor and/or his Consultation Counsel members will appear at today's meeting and request time to speak about these same seven suggestions nevertheless.

As you know, the Commission is a membership organization; its members are the individual institutions that are accredited. By policy, the Commission communicates with member institutions through the institutional CEO. The Consultation Council has written a letter purporting to represent the California Community Colleges, as a group, and the CEOs. By policy, the Commission cannot accept the representations of a third party as a substitute for voice of its member institutions and their CEOs. There are 137 individual institutional members of the ACCJC; each institution has an equal voice.

Given this situation, we want you to know that the Commission will operate in alignment with its policies developed in collaboration with its member institutions, in alignment with federal regulations that govern recognized accrediting bodies, and as a regional quality assurance agency to enforce the Standards of Accreditation adopted in 2002.

The Commission will provide a written response to the Chancellor following its meeting this month, and we will send a copy of that response to you.

We remind you that as member institutions it is your responsibility to communicate to us directly on any issue of concern. The Commission welcomes your input and appreciates the opportunity to engage in dialogue with its members.

BAB

From: Chief Executive Officers [mailto:CEO-ALL@LISTSERV.CCCCO.EDU] **On Behalf Of** Scott Lay
Sent: Wednesday, January 06, 2010 9:38 AM
To: CEO-ALL@LISTSERV.CCCCO.EDU
Subject: ACCJC Meeting Today

Date: January 6, 2010
To: Chief Executive Officers
From: Scott Lay
Re: ACCJC Meeting Today

You received a memo this morning from Barbara Beno and Lurlean Gaines regarding today's commission meeting and efforts to communicate the position of the Chief Executive Officers of the California Community Colleges and other organizations about recommendations to strengthen our peer accreditation system.

Nicki Harrington represents the CEOCCC on the Chancellor's Consultation Council Task Force on Accreditation, and with me, is here to represent the positions of the CEO board. While the Commission has concluded that we are unable to represent you as member institutions, it's important to note that the chief executive officers of all California's community colleges democratically elect representatives to the CEO board to create a statewide voice that would otherwise be ineffective. This body endorsed the seven recommendations unanimously with the abstention of one member, who serves on both the CEO board and ACCJC.

I don't intend to escalate the many issues that our colleges have been discussing regarding accreditation or the efforts of the task force, but feel that ensuring that the ability of the CEO board to collect information and make policy recommendations on behalf of its CEO members to organizations like ACCJC be maintained.

From: Chief Executive Officers [mailto:CEO-ALL@LISTSERV.CCCCO.EDU] **On Behalf Of** Scott Lay
Sent: Wednesday, January 06, 2010 10:05 AM
To: CEO-ALL@LISTSERV.CCCCO.EDU
Subject: ACCJC Recommendations

CEOs-

Some of you have inquired about the recommendations developed by Chancellor Scott's task force and endorsed by the CEO board and referenced in the messages from Barbara Beno and me. More information is included in the December CEO board agenda (<http://www.ccleague.org/files/public/CEO12-09ag.pdf> - pages 106-7). Here are the seven recommendations:

Recommendations to ACCJC

1. Develop a means for colleges to provide periodic feedback to ACCJC on the accreditation processes and their experiences, including both commendations for what went well and identification of what needs improvement.
2. Strengthen standards-based training of both visiting-team members and ALOs. Consider instituting an annual multi-day statewide California Community College conference to provide training and information to all interested constituencies. This could be co-presented with the Academic Senate and the CC League at the November annual CCC conference. Colleges could also present their best practices.
3. Review the ACCJC visiting-team selection process and consider means to involve a wider cross-section of the individuals in our system who desire to participate. Team participation should be treated as a professional development opportunity.
4. Scale accreditation expectations of Western Region colleges to benchmarks formulated relative to best practices documented in all of the accrediting regions in the country.
5. Consider lengthening the cycle of accreditation to 8-10 years.
6. Employ cooperative ways to have accreditation result in improvement rather than just compliance. Also, develop more non-public ways to communicate to campuses their need for improvement.
7. Avoid recommendations that encroach on negotiable issues.