



CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

To: Chancellors, Presidents and Accreditation Liaison Officers

From: Accreditation Task Force
Barbara Davis-Lyman, Board of Governors
Rich Hansen, Faculty Association of California Community Colleges
Nicki Harrington, Chief Executive Officers
Renee Kilmer, Chief Instructional Officers
Jane Patton, Academic Senate
Manuel Payan, California School Employees Association
Ron Norton Reel, Community College Association/California Teachers Association
Jack Scott, Chancellor

Subject: Accreditation

Date: January 13, 2010

You recently received a letter from Barbara Beno and Lurelean Gaines of the Accrediting Commission explaining their denial of the Consultation Accreditation Task Force request to present its recommendations to the entire Commission. We regret they chose to escalate this matter; we had hoped this discussion could be confined to the Accrediting Commission and the task force. After all, our request to appear before the Commission was simply in keeping with the Accreditation Handbook (pp. 133, 134).

Fortunately, the Commission reversed this decision and invited Chancellor Scott to address the Commission in closed session on Friday, January 8, 2010. Nicki Harrington, Past President of the CEO Board, and Jane Patton, State Academic Senate President, accompanied the Chancellor but did not speak. Rather than correct the inaccuracies in the letter you received, Chancellor Scott chose to focus his remarks on the more important matter of the recommendations formulated by the task force in its effort to improve the accreditation process. Incidentally, these recommendations have been approved by the CEO Board.

We have enclosed the remarks of Chancellor Scott before the Accrediting Commission on January 8, 2010. We have also enclosed the recommendations of the task force. As you may know, these were based upon a survey of California community college presidents and accreditation liaison officers.

We hope this information will be helpful as we all join together in affirming the importance of the accreditation process. At this point, we await a written response from the Accreditation Commission following its review of the task force recommendations at its March retreat. Any questions you have about this matter may be addressed to the members of the task force.

In the spirit of collaboration, and with the belief that accreditation is necessary and important, we provide the following recommendations to the ACCJC to enhance the process, especially as it applies to the California Community Colleges. We pledge our ongoing support to this effort to ensure the success of accreditation, the ACCJC and the California Community College System.

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 evidence of 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.