



**ACCREDITING
COMMISSION
for COMMUNITY and
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

*Western Association
of Schools and Colleges*

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July 3, 2013

Dr. Joel Kinnamon
President
College of the Desert
43-500 Monterey Avenue
Palm Desert, CA 92260

Dear President Kinnamon:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting June 5-7, 2013, reviewed the Follow-Up Report and Special Report submitted by the College and the reports of the two evaluation teams which visited on April 12, and 23, 2013. The Commission took action to require the College to complete a **Follow-Up Report** in conjunction with the **Midterm Report** by **March 15, 2014**. The Report will be followed by a visit of Commission representatives.¹

The Follow-Up Report should demonstrate that the institution has addressed Recommendations 1 and 5 noted below, fully resolved the deficiencies, and meets Eligibility Requirements and Accreditation Standards.

Recommendation 1: In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that the college complete the implementation of the comprehensive planning process by responding to the analysis of assessment results to ensure improvement in student learning. Such a process integrates the various college plans; is informed by quantitative and qualitative data and analysis; systematically assesses outcomes within both instruction and non-instructional services; and provides for an ongoing and systematic cycle of goal setting, resource allocation, implementation, and evaluation (I.B.1; I.B.2; I.B.6; I.B.7).

With regard to Recommendation 1, the College has initiated a College Planning Council and the Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (PIE) process. However the implementation of "Think Tanks" at the College to facilitate a broad-based dialogue on the state fiscal crisis interrupted the implementation of the PIE process. Additionally the assessment of student learning was not consistent for all programs, and the process to fund resource requests was unclear. A culture of evidence or research capacity did not appear to be sufficient. As a result, planning appeared to be a work in progress rather than an accomplished process.

Recommendation 5: In order to meet Standards, the team recommends that the district develop and implement appropriate policies and procedures that incorporate effectiveness in producing student learning outcomes into the evaluation process of faculty and others directly responsible for student progress toward achieving student learning outcomes (III.A.1.c).



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Regarding Recommendation 5, the process used to assess student learning in the faculty evaluation process was not sufficient to address student learning or faculty involvement in the process. The College is still in the process of negotiating draft language for evaluation with the respective bargaining units.

The Follow-up Report will also address the findings related to the Special Report. The College has implemented actions to ensure the accuracy of its financial reporting systems. A new organizational structure has been developed for Fiscal Services to enhance the accuracy and accountability of this function. The Financial Crisis Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) is currently conducting an analysis of these processes and enrollment management. FCMAT is also conducting a comprehensive internal control review. The Report should address the steps the College has implemented to address the revised FCMAT recommendations to ensure fiscal accountability and accuracy. At present, the College and the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office have not yet come to agreement on the amount of excess apportionment to be repaid by the College. The terms of any final agreement and the process used by the College to repay this obligation and remain financially stable will need be reported by the College when this agreement is completed.

Institutions are expected to meet Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies at all times during the six-year review cycle. In accordance with U.S. Department of Education regulations, institutions are expected to have fully resolved all deficiencies within two years of when they were first identified to the College, and to have addressed all recommendations. At the time of the next regularly scheduled visit, the evaluation team will examine evidence in order to confirm that the College's described changes and steps taken to achieve full compliance with Standards have been sustained.

The Follow-Up Report submitted March 27, 2013, and the Special Report submitted April 1, 2013, will become part of the accreditation history of the College. The Commission requires that you give the Reports, the evaluation team reports, and this letter appropriate dissemination to your College staff and to those who were signatories of your College Report. This group should include campus leadership and the Board of Trustees.

The Commission also requires that the Follow-Up Report, the Special Report, the evaluation team reports, 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 farther than one click from the institution's home page.* If you would like electronic copies of the Reports, please contact Commission staff.

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All colleges are required to file a **Midterm Report** in the third year after each comprehensive evaluation. College of the Desert should submit the Midterm Report by **March 15, 2014**. A Midterm Report indicates resolution of any team recommendations made for improvement, includes a summary of progress on College-identified plans for improvement as expressed in the Self Evaluation Report, and forecasts where the College expects to be by the time of the next comprehensive evaluation.¹

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

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Beno, Ph.D.
President

BAB/tl

cc: Dr. James Berg, Accreditation Liaison Officer
President, Board of Trustees
Dr. Kindred Murillo, President, Lake Tahoe Community College, Special Report Team Chair
Dr. Henry Shannon, Superintendent/President, Chaffey College, Follow-Up Report Team Chair

¹ Institutions 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>).