



SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT/PRESIDENT

Melinda Nish, Ed.D.
Superintendent/President

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January 11, 2016

Dear Southwestern College Colleagues,

Happy New Year! As you recall before the break, we were providing weekly updates on where we were with our accreditation process. This letter is being sent to inform you of our most recent action to date.

Part of the reaffirmation process is the right to appear before the Commission prior to the ACCJC taking action. I formally requested to do so, and appeared before the Commissioners in closed session on January 7, 2016, in Sacramento. Accompanying me was Mr. Jim Austin, consultant for the district and assisting us with the Business and Financial Affairs Division while we have been in recruitment for our new Vice President.

While appearing before the Commissioners is not often requested by CEOs, I felt it was important to address several items in the preliminary and confidential report which I received last November. The Governing Board and I wanted the Commission to have an accurate picture of the state of the college at the time of the external evaluation team's visit. It was our opportunity to address any inaccuracies in the team report. This also allowed the Commissioners to ask questions.

Given that the report we have is preliminary and confidential, and given that the meeting on the 7th was a closed session, I cannot report to you any of the details of the report or the meeting. However, I can tell you that I believe my comments were carefully considered and that our attendance was generally well-received.

We anticipate the Commission's decision in late January or early February. If we receive their decision by Opening Day, I will most certainly include it in my Opening Day general session remarks.

I am excited to announce that leading our efforts this year will be Dean Linda Gilstrap as our new Accreditation Liaison Officer. This is a wonderful match for her, as accreditation is a critical component of Institutional Effectiveness. She and Dr. Rebecca Wolniewicz co-chaired the first Accreditation Oversight Committee meeting Friday, January 8. Among the discussion at the meeting was a plan similar to the one developed after receipt of the 2011 accreditation report. Depending upon the recommendations in the report, the AOC will develop specialized work groups to address the recommendations.

Until we all meet at opening day, I want to thank all the faculty, staff and administrators serving students during our short session, and look forward to seeing everybody back at school at the end of this month. If you would like to catch up on our previous Accreditation in Action Newsletters, you can find them on the website at www.swccd.edu/action.

Sincerely,

Melinda Nish, Ed.D.
Superintendent/President