



**ACCREDITING
COMMISSION
for COMMUNITY and
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

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January 31, 2011

Ms. Denise Whittaker
Interim Superintendent/President
Southwestern College
900 Otay Lakes Road
Chula Vista, CA 91910

Dear President Whittaker:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting January 11-13, 2011, reviewed the Follow-Up Report submitted by Southwestern College and the report of the evaluation team which visited Monday, November 15, 2010. The purpose of this review was to assure that the recommendations made by the evaluation team were addressed by the institution.

The Commission acted to **continue** Southwestern College on **Probation**. The Follow-Up Report that is required of the College in March 2011 has been modified to require the College to report on the recommendations specified below. The March 15, 2011 report will be followed by a visit of Commission representatives.

Probation is issued when the Commission finds that an institution deviates significantly from the Commission's Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, or policies or fails to respond to conditions imposed upon it by the Commission. The accredited status of the institution continues during the probation period. Probation is being continued for deficiencies identified in the team report and identified in the January 2010 Action Letter.

In addition to the requirement outlined in the January 29, 2010 Commission Action Letter to report on Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, and 8, the Commission requires that the March 15, 2011 Follow-Up Report demonstrate the institution's resolution of the deficiencies associated with the recommendations noted below:

Recommendation 6: As previously identified in the 1996 and 2003 ACCJC/WASC Accreditation Reports, the team recommends that the college implement a Technology Plan that is integrated with the Strategic Plan and college goals; relies on Program Review; and provides reliable budgetary process for renewing technology and for providing appropriate technology staffing, support, and training college wide. (Standards II.C.1.a, III.C.1.a, and III.C.1.c)

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Recommendation 7: The team recommends that the college plan and conduct professional development activities to meet the needs of its personnel and implement a formal evaluation process of the activities. (Standards III.A.5, III.A.5.a, and III.A.5.b)

Recommendation 9: As previously identified in the 2003 ACCJC/WASC Accreditation Report, the team recommends the Governing Board adhere to its role as a policy-making body and not interfere with the authority and responsibility of the Superintendent/President for college operations. The team further recommends that the Governing Board act as a whole once it reaches a decision and as an advocate for the college. (Standards IV.B.1.a and IV.B.1.j)

Recommendation 10: The team recommends that the Governing Board establish and implement a formal procedure for handling potential conflict of interest and ethics policy violations and document adherence to the protocol. (Standard IV.B.1.h and IV.B.1.i)

I wish to inform you that under U.S. Department of Education regulations, institutions out of compliance with standards or on sanction are expected to correct deficiencies within a two-year period or the Commission must take action to terminate accreditation. Southwestern College should resolve the deficiencies noted by October 2011 or the Commission will be compelled to act. The deficiencies noted above are significant and need to be fully resolved if the institution is to remain accredited.

Commission Reminder: The Commission expects that institutions meet standards that require the identification and assessment of student learning outcomes, and the use of assessment data to plan and implement improvements to educational quality, by fall 2012. The Commission reminds Southwestern College that it must be prepared to demonstrate that it meets these standards by fall 2012 (Standards I.B.1, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.B.4, and II.C.2).

I have previously sent you a copy of the Evaluation Team Report. Additional copies may now be duplicated. The Commission requires that you give the report 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 all reports be made available to students and the public. Placing copies in the college library can accomplish this. Should you want an electronic copy of the report, please contact Commission staff.

Finally, ACCJC staff is available to assist the College with consultation and advice on the recommendations identified above.

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On behalf of the Commission, I wish to express my 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 quality.

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Beno, Ph.D.
President

BAB/tl

cc: Dr. Mink Stavenga, Accreditation Liaison Officer
Board President, Southwestern Community College District
Dr. Gari Browning, Team Chair