



**ACCREDITING
COMMISSION
for COMMUNITY and
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

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January 29, 2010

Dr. Raj Chopra
Superintendent/President
Southwestern College
900 Otay Lakes Road
Chula Vista, CA 91910

Dear President Chopra:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting on January 6-8, 2010, reviewed the institutional Self Study Report and the report of the evaluation team which visited Southwestern College Monday, October 5-Thursday, October 8, 2009. The Commission acted to impose Probation and to require that the college submit two Follow-Up Reports. The first report is due by October 15, 2010 and 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, Standards of Accreditation, or policies, or fails to respond to actions and conditions imposed by the Commission. The accredited status of the institution continues during the Probation period. However, the institution's accreditation will not be reaffirmed until the conditions which warranted the sanction are resolved

The Follow-Up Report of October 15, 2010 should demonstrate resolution of the following recommendations:

Recommendation 5: The team recommends that, in order to comply with the Commission's policies on distance learning and substantive change, the college submit a substantive change report for those programs that currently offer more than 50 percent of a program through distance education. (Eligibility Requirement 21)

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 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)

Recommendation 8: The team recommends that the college set as a priority fostering an environment of trust and respect for all employees and students that allows the college community to promote administrative stability and to work together for the good of the college. The team further recommends that the college establish and follow a written process and structure providing faculty, staff, administrators, and students a substantial voice in decision-making processes. (Standards IV.A, IV.B.2.b, and III.A.4.c)

With regard to Recommendation 8 above, the Commission requires that Southwestern College develop and implement written definitions of an effective decision-making process by the time of the first Follow-Up Report and visit in October 2010.

The second Follow-Up Report is due March 15, 2011 and will also be followed by a visit of Commission representatives. That report should demonstrate resolution of the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1: As previously identified in the 2003 ACCJC/WASC Accreditation Report, the team recommends that the college systematically and regularly evaluate and update the mission statement; assure that it defines the college educational purposes, its intended student population, and its commitment to student learning; and use it to guide institutional decisions and improvement goals. (Standards I.A.3, I.B.2, and II.A.1)

Recommendation 2: As previously identified in the 2003 ACCJC/WASC Accreditation Report, the team recommends that the college establish and implement a collegial and comprehensive planning process that assures 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 noninstructional services; and provides for an ongoing and systematic cycle of goal setting, resource allocation, implementation, and evaluation. (Eligibility Requirement 19, Standards I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.7, III.A.6, III.B.2a, and III.B.2.b)

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Recommendation 3: The team recommends that the college improve program review across all areas; integrate it with student learning outcomes; and ensure that it is evidence based and is occurring at regular intervals sufficient to provide a foundation for college planning and allocation of human, physical, technological, and fiscal resources. At issue since 1996, the team recommends that the college implement its policy on program discontinuance. (Eligibility Requirement 19, Standards I.A.4, I.B.1, I.B.5, I.B.6, II.A, II.A.1.a, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.B.4, II.C, II.C.1.a, and III.B.2)

Recommendation 8: The team recommends that the college set as a priority fostering an environment of trust and respect for all employees and students that allows the college community to promote administrative stability and to work together for the good of the college. The team further recommends that the college establish and follow a written process and structure providing faculty, staff, administrators, and students a substantial voice in decision-making processes. (Standards IV.A, IV.B.2.b, and III.A.4.c)

Recommendation 4: The team recommends that the college identify SLOs for all of its courses, academic programs, learning and support services, and identify administrative unit outcomes for non-instructional areas. It is further recommended that the college use data and analysis to assess student achievement of those outcomes and use assessment results to make improvements. (Standards II.A, II.A.2.e, and II.A.2.f)

With regard to Recommendation 4 above, the Commission requires Southwestern College to demonstrate that the college is at the Developmental level on the Commission's Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness-Part III: Student Learning Outcomes, and is making progress toward the Proficiency level on the Rubric by fall 2012.

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 must correct the deficiencies noted by October 2011 or the Commission will be compelled to act.

The college conducted a comprehensive self study as part of its evaluation. The Commission suggests that the plans for improvement of the institution included in its self study efforts be used to support the continuing improvement of Southwestern College. The next comprehensive evaluation of the college will occur during Fall 2015.

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The recommendations contained in the Evaluation Team Report represent the observations of the evaluation team at the time of the visit. The Commission reminds you that while an institution may concur or disagree with any part of the report, the college is expected to use the Evaluation Team Report to improve the educational programs and services of the institution.

I have previously sent you a copy of the Evaluation Team Report. Additional copies may now be duplicated. The Commission requires you to give the Evaluation Team Report and this letter dissemination to your college staff and to those who were signatories of your college Self Study Report. This group should include campus leadership and the Board of Trustees. The Commission also requires that the Evaluation Team Report and the Self Study Report 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, the Commission staff is available to assist the college with consultation and advice on its program review, integrated planning, and resource allocation processes. Please call the Commission office if you wish to avail yourself of that assistance.

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 integrity, effectiveness, and quality.

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Beno, Ph.D.
President

BAB/tl

cc: Mrs. Mary Wylie, Accreditation Liaison Officer
Board President, Southwestern Community College District
Dr. Gari Browning, Team Chair
Ms. Linda Henderson, U.S.D.E., San Francisco