



**ACCREDITING
COMMISSION
for COMMUNITY and
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

*Western Association
of Schools and Colleges*

10 COMMERCIAL BOULEVARD
SUITE 204
NOVATO, CA 94949
TELEPHONE: (415) 506-0234
FAX: (415) 506-0238
E-MAIL: accjc@accjc.org
www.accjc.org

Chairperson
STEVEN KINSELLA
Administrative Member

Vice Chairperson
SUSAN KAZAMA
Academic Member

President
BARBARA A. BENO

Vice President
SUSAN B. CLIFFORD

Vice President
KRISTA JOHNS

Vice President
GARMAN JACK POND

Associate Vice President
JOHN NIXON

Associate Vice President
NORVAL WELLSFRY

February 6, 2015

Ms. Mojdeh Mehdizadeh
Interim President
Contra Costa College
2600 Mission Bell Drive
San Pablo CA 94806

Dear President Mehdizadeh:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting on January 7-9, 2015, reviewed the Institutional Self Evaluation Report and the Report of the External Evaluation Team that visited Contra Costa College October 6-9, 2014.

College Accreditation Reaffirmed:

The Commission took action to **reaffirm accreditation** and require the College to submit a Follow-Up Report in October 2015. The Report will be followed by a visit of Commission representatives.

Reaffirmation is granted when the institution substantially meets or exceeds the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies. Reaffirmation with a Follow-Up Report is required when there are deficiencies leading to noncompliance which do not create an immediate risk to the institution's quality and effectiveness. However, if they are not addressed and fully resolved in a short time, they may threaten quality and effectiveness, and lead to increased noncompliance.

Contra Costa College should submit the **Follow-Up Report Report by October 15, 2015.**¹ The Follow-Up Report should demonstrate that the College has resolved the deficiencies which led to noncompliance and that it meets the Standards. The Report should address the recommendations noted below.

Need to Resolve Deficiencies:

The Accreditation Standards, as an integrated whole, represent indicators of academic quality and institutional effectiveness. Deficiencies in institutional policies, procedures, practices, and outcomes which lead to noncompliance with any Standards will impact quality at an institution, and ultimately the educational environment and experiences of students.

Ms. Mojdeh Mehdizadeh
Contra Costa College
February 6, 2015

The Commission found Contra Costa College out of compliance with the following Eligibility Requirements and Accreditation Standards from College/District Recommendation 1 and College Recommendations 2, 3, 4, and 5: Eligibility Requirement 10, Standards I.A.4, I.B.1, I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.5, I.B.6, I.B.7, II.A. II.A.1.b, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.b, II.A.2.d, II.A.2.f, II.A.2.g-i, II.A.5-6, II.B.1, II.B.2.a, II.C.1.b, II.C.1.c, III.A.1.c, III.D.1.a-c, III.D.3.c, and III.D.4.

College and District Recommendation 1: In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends that the District and the College include, as a required component of the formal evaluations of faculty and others directly responsible for student progress towards achieving stated student-learning outcomes, a means to evaluate the effectiveness of that responsibility. (Standard III.A.1.c)

College Recommendation 2: In order to meet the Standards, the College needs to develop and implement processes for evaluating the effectiveness of the full range of planning and operational processes and use the results to improve the overall quality of the institution as a whole. This evaluation should examine the program review process and the use of its results to improve programmatic or department/unit effectiveness; the SLO and AUO assessment processes; and how results are used to inform decisions related to instruction, resource allocation priorities, and services to support student success. (Standards I.A.4, I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.6, I.B.7, II.A.2.e, III.D.4)

College Recommendation 3: In order to meet Standards, the College must establish institution-set standards for student learning and achievement, ascertain student performance against these standards, and plan improvements to programs and services to increase overall student performance. (Standards I.B.1-6, II.A, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.b, II.A.2.f, II.A.2.g, II.A.2.h, II.A.2.i, II.A.5, II.A.6, and ER 10)

With regard to College Recommendation 3, on institution-set standards for student achievement, Contra Costa College does not meet this requirement which is mandated by federal regulations. This deficiency does not rise to the level of a sanction, but the College needs to resolve it immediately.

College Recommendation 4: In order to comply with the Standards, the team recommends that as part of the College's strategic plan, the College develop a distance education plan that addresses the need for and growth of distance education, training for faculty who are developing and teaching distance education classes, and provide a student orientation and online student and learning support services. (Standards II.A.1.b, II.A.2.d, II.B.1, II.B.2.a, II.C.1.b, II.C.1.c)

College Recommendation 5: In order to meet Standards, the team recommends the College evaluate its current financial status and its ability to address future fiscal sustainability given current expenditures for salaries and benefits and other obligations.

Ms. Mojdeh Mehdizadeh
Contra Costa College
February 6, 2015

The College should engage in a process whereby long-range financial plans are modeled in anticipation of internal and external expenditure pressures, shifts in student enrollment, and continued development of the College in alignment with its mission and goals, maintaining student learning as a top priority. (Standards III.D.1.a, III.D.1.b, III.D.1.c, III.D.3.c)

Under U.S. Department of Education enforcement regulations, the Commission is required to take immediate action to terminate the accreditation of an institution which is out of compliance with any Standard. In the alternative, the Commission can provide the institution with additional notice and a deadline for coming into compliance that is no later than two years from when the institution was first informed of the noncompliance. With this letter, Contra Costa College is being provided with notice of the Standards for which it is out of compliance and is being provided time to meet the Standards.

The Commission noted the absence of actionable improvement plans in many areas of the Self Evaluation Report. The purpose of institutional self evaluation is to develop analyses of strengths and weaknesses of educational quality and institutional effectiveness based on the institution's continuous evaluation and quality improvement activities. Thus, it is the expectation of the Commission that when an institution evaluates itself during the self evaluation process, it should be honest in its findings of need for actionable improvement plans and include the plans in the Self Evaluation Report.

Contra Costa College conducted an educational quality and institutional effectiveness review as part of its self evaluation. College-identified improvement plans are another important outcome of the comprehensive self-evaluation process. These plans provide a way for the institution to link its self-evaluation to the regular, ongoing evaluation of institutional plans and processes and to integrate accreditation self-evaluation into the ongoing planning and improvement efforts at the institution. The College will want to track and document changes coming out of its self-identified improvement plans for reporting during the accreditation cycle.

The External Evaluation Report that was sent to the institution provides details of the team's findings with regard to each Eligibility Requirement and Accreditation Standard and should be read carefully and used to understand the team's findings.

The guidance and recommendations contained in the External Evaluation Report represent the best advice of the peer evaluation team at the time of the visit but may not describe all that is necessary for the College to come into compliance. The College's own self evaluation and responsive action is a vital part of a successful, voluntary, peer evaluation process. Institutions are expected to take all action necessary to continuously comply with Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies. The Commission wishes to remind you that while an institution may concur or disagree with any part of the Report, Contra Costa College is expected to use the External Evaluation Report to improve educational programs and services.

Ms. Mojdeh Mehdizadeh
Contra Costa College
February 6, 2015

I have previously sent you a copy of the External Evaluation Report. Additional copies may now be duplicated. The Commission requires that the College give the Institutional Self Evaluation Report, the External Evaluation Team Report, and this letter appropriate dissemination to College staff and to those who were signatories of the College Self Evaluation Report. This group should include the Chancellor, campus leadership, and the Board of Trustees.

The Commission also requires that the College's Institutional Self Evaluation Report, the External Evaluation Team Report, 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 more than one click from the institution's home page.* If you would like an electronic copy of the External Evaluation Team Report, please contact Commission staff.

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

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Beno, Ph.D.
President

BAB/tl

¹Institutions 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>).