



**ACCREDITING
COMMISSION
for COMMUNITY and
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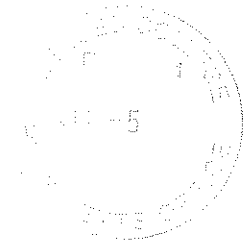
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June 30, 2011



Dr. Benjamin Duran
Superintendent/President
Merced College
3600 M Street
Merced, CA 95348

Dear President Duran:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting June 8-10, 2011, reviewed the institutional Self Study Report and the report of the evaluation team which visited Merced College Monday, March 7-Thursday, March 10, 2011. The Commission took action to issue **Warning** and to require Merced College correct the deficiencies noted. The College is required to complete a Follow-Up Report by **March 15, 2012**. That report will be followed by a visit of Commission representatives.

Warning is issued when the Commission finds that an institution has pursued a course of action which deviates from the Commission's Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, or policy to an extent that raises a concern regarding the ability of the institution to meet The Standards. The accredited status of the institution continues during the warning period. However, the institution's accreditation will not be reaffirmed until the conditions which warranted Warning are resolved. Warning is being issued at this time for deficiencies identified in the team report and associated with Recommendations 1, 3, and 5.

The Follow-Up Report of **March 15, 2012** should demonstrate that the institution has addressed the recommendations noted below, resolved the deficiencies, and now meets Accreditation Standards.

Recommendation 1: Program Review

In order to meet the standard and ensure that progress continues toward achieving the Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement level of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges' rubric for program review, the team recommends that the college continue to apply the recommendations of the 1999 and 2005 comprehensive evaluation teams, fully implement its new program review process, and ensure that the process is ongoing, systematic and used to assess and improve student learning and achievement and that the results of program review are used to continually refine and improve program practices. (I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.5, II.A, II.A.5, II.C.2, III.D.3)

Recommendation 2: Student Learning Outcomes

To meet the standard and ensure that the proficiency level of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges' (ACCJC) rubric for student learning outcomes is reached by the fall 2012 deadline established by the ACCJC, the team recommends that the college continue its efforts to fully implement the recommendation of the previous team and ensure that student learning outcomes and assessment are ongoing, systematic and used for continuous quality improvement regardless of location or means of delivery; dialogue about student learning is ongoing, pervasive and robust; evaluation and fine tuning of organizational structures to support student learning is ongoing; student learning improvement is a visible priority in all practices and structures across the college; a timeline indicating how the college will meet the Commission's fall 2012 requirement of proficiency is created and published; and learning outcomes are specifically linked to program reviews. (II.A.1, II.A.1.a,c, II.A.2.a, h, II.C.2, III.A.1.c)

Recommendation 3: Integrated Planning, Evaluation, and Resource Allocation, and Decision-Making Process

In order to meet the standard and to ensure that the college progresses toward the Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement level of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges' rubric for planning, the team recommends that the college continue to apply the recommendations of the 1999 and 2005 comprehensive evaluation teams and ensure that its established planning processes include ongoing and systematic evaluation and planning with clearly established timelines to refine its key processes and improve student learning. The team recommends that the college conduct dialogue about institutional effectiveness that is ongoing, robust and pervasive, continue collecting data, and ensure that analyses of the data are widely distributed and used throughout the institution, that there is ongoing review and adaptation of evaluation and planning processes; that there is a consistent and continuous commitment to improving student learning; and that educational effectiveness is a demonstrable priority in all planning structures and processes. (I.A.4, I.B.2, I.B.3, 4, II.A.2, III.A.2, III.A.6, III.B.2.b, III.C.2, III.D.1.a)

Recommendation 5: Governing Board

In order to meet the standard, the team recommends that the Board model to the college its commitment to continuous improvement, develop and implement a written comprehensive Board development plan that includes, but does not rely primarily on travel and attendance at conferences, and specifically includes delegation of authority to the CEO (policy) without interference in the operation of the college, an examination of the participatory governance processes and the extent to which the Board's behavior supports those governance structures, accreditation standards for Board performance; and analysis of the governing board's 2010 self-evaluation and a plan for improvement. (IV.A.2.a, b; IV.A.3, IV.A.4, IV.A.5, IV.B.1.f, IV B.1.g, IV.B.1.i, IV.B.1.j)

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Recommendation 8: Human Resources

In order to meet the standard, the team recommends that the college develop and implement an organizational structure that includes a fully functional human resources division and develop, implement, and evaluate a Faculty and Staff Diversity Plan in order to adequately assess its record in employment equity and diversity consistent with its mission. The team recommends that processes for hiring classified and management staff be integrated with Institutional Planning. The College also needs to systematically assess the effective use of human resources and uses the results of the evaluation as the basis for improvement. (III.A.1.b, III.A.3, III.A.4.a-c, III.A.6.)

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. Merced College must correct the deficiencies noted by **March 2013**.

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 Merced College.

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 team report, the College is expected to use the report to improve educational programs and services and to resolve issues identified by the Commission.

A **final** version of the Evaluation Team Report is attached. 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 team report and the Self Study Report be made available to students and the public. Placing a copy on the college web site 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 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,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara A. Beno".

Barbara A. Beno, Ph.D.
President

BAB/tl

Enclosure

cc: Dr. Anne Newins, Accreditation Liaison Officer
Board President, Merced Community College District
Dr. Jackie Fisher, Sr., Team Chair
Ms. Martina Fernandez-Rosario, U.S.D.E.