



# ACCREDITING COMMISSION for COMMUNITY and JUNIOR COLLEGES

*Western Association of Schools and Colleges*

Richard Winn, Interim President  
Raúl Rodríguez, Chair

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February 3, 2017

Dr. Kathryn Jeffery  
Superintendent/President  
Santa Monica College  
1900 Pico Boulevard  
Santa Monica, CA 90405

Dear President Jeffrey:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting January 11-13, 2017, reviewed the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) and evidentiary materials submitted by Santa Monica College and the External Evaluation Team Report (Team Report) prepared by the evaluation team that visited October 3-6, 2016. College leadership, including the chair of the governing board and the College president, certified the College's report, which was submitted in application for reaffirmation of accreditation. The purpose of the Commission's review was to determine whether the College continues to meet Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies (hereafter called Standards).

After considering the material noted above, the Commission acted to **reaffirm accreditation for 18 months**, and to require a **Follow-Up Report** on the issues identified in the team's findings of noncompliance at the College. The Follow-Up Report will be followed by a visit by Commission representatives.<sup>1</sup> Reaffirmation for 18 months indicates that the Commission has determined that the institution is in substantial compliance with Standards.

The Commission applauds the College for introducing a baccalaureate program and notes that the issues of not having assessed student learning outcomes for the program is attributed to not having run a full cycle of the program. Once that is accomplished, the College has plans to assess programmatic outcomes for its baccalaureate students.

The Commission finds Santa Monica College out of compliance with the following Standards: I.A.1 (Recommendation 1); IV.C.7 (Recommendation 4); IV.C.7, IV.C.12 (Recommendation 5); and I.C.1, II.A.5, II.A.12, and ER 10 (Recommendation 6). In addition the Commission finds the College out of compliance with Standards II.A.5, II.A.9, II.A.12, II.A.13, and II.A.14 (Commission Recommendation 1).

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<sup>1</sup> Institutions 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*, found on the ACCJC website at: [www.accjc.org/college-reports-accjc](http://www.accjc.org/college-reports-accjc).

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### Need to Resolve Deficiencies

Standards represent practices that lead to academic quality and institutional effectiveness and sustainability. Deficiencies in institutional policies, practices, procedures, and outcomes which lead to non-compliance with any Standard will impact institutional quality and, ultimately, the educational environment and experience of students. The evaluation team has provided recommendations that give guidance for how the institution may come into compliance with Standards.

**Recommendation 1:** In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends the College incorporate into its mission statement a clear description of its intended student population. (I.A.1)

**Recommendation 4:** In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends the College create a schedule to regularly review Board policies and regulations to assure integrity in all representations of the College mission, programs, and services. (IV.C.7)

**Recommendation 5:** In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends the Board follow its policies regarding delegation of authority related to the president/superintendent and ensure the president/superintendent is able to implement and administer Board policies without Board interference in college operations. (IV.C.7 and IV.C.12)

**Commission Recommendation 1:** In order to meet Standards related to the baccalaureate program, the College needs to come into compliance with Standards. (II.A.5, II.A.9, II.A.12, II.A.13, and II.A.15)

### Improving Institutional Effectiveness

The Team Report noted Recommendations 7 and 8 for improving institutional effectiveness (improvement recommendations). These recommendations do not identify current areas of deficiency in institutional practice, but highlight areas of practice for which College attention may be needed. Consistent with its policy to foster continuous improvement through the peer-review process, the Commission expects institutions to consider the advice for improvement offered. In the Midterm Report, the College will include any actions taken in response to the evaluation team's improvement recommendations.

In addition, the Commission adds the following improvement recommendation.

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**Commission Recommendation 2:** In order to increase institutional effectiveness, the College needs to complete the migration of its course data to ensure that all course outlines and syllabi include student learning outcomes. (II.A.3)

#### Two-Year Plan

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 standards, or, alternatively, may provide an 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 non-compliance. With this letter, Santa Monica 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.

#### Next Steps

The Team Report provides details of the team's findings with regard to the College's work to meet the Standards. The guidance and recommendations contained in the Team Report represent the best advice of the evaluation team at the time of the visit but may not describe all that is necessary for the College to come into compliance (or to improve).

A **final copy** of the Team Report is attached. Commission changes to the Team Report are noted on a separate page for inclusion with the Team Report. The College may now duplicate and post copies of the enclosed Team Report with this added page.

The Commission requires the College give the ISER, the Team Report, and this letter appropriate dissemination to those who were signatories of the ISER and to make these documents available to all campus constituencies and to the public by posting them to the College website. Please note that in response to public interest in accreditation, the Commission requires institutions to post accreditation information on a page no more than one click from the institution's home page.

On behalf of the Commission, I wish to express appreciation for the collaborative work that Santa Monica College undertook to prepare for institutional self-evaluation, and to support the work of the external evaluation team. Thank you for sharing the values and the work of accreditation to ensure educational quality and to support student success. Accreditation and peer review are most effective when the College and the ACCJC work together to focus on student outcomes and continuous quality improvement in higher education.

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Santa Monica College  
February 3, 2017

If you should have any questions concerning this letter or the Commission action, please don't hesitate to contact me or one of the ACCJC Vice Presidents. We would be glad to help you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Winn", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Richard Winn, Ed.D.  
Interim President

RW/tl

Attachment