



**ACCREDITING
COMMISSION
for COMMUNITY and
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

*Western Association
of Schools and Colleges*

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July 3, 2014

CORRECTED LETTER

Dr. Linda Lacy
Superintendent/President
Cerritos College
11110 Alondra Blvd
Norwalk, CA 90650

Dear President Lacy:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting on June 4-6, 2014, reviewed the Institutional Self Evaluation Report, the Report of the External Evaluation Team that visited Cerritos College March 3-6, 2014, and the presentation by College officials.

The Commission took action to **issue Warning** with the requirement that the College complete a **Follow-Up Report by March 15, 2015**¹ addressing the three recommendations noted below. The Report will be followed by a visit of Commission representatives and should demonstrate that the College has addressed the recommendations, resolved the deficiencies, and now meets Standards.

Warning is issued when the Commission finds that an institution has pursued a course deviating from the Commission's Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, or Commission policies to an extent that gives concern to the Commission. The institution is expected to correct its deficiencies, refrain from certain activities, or initiate certain activities. If the warning is issued as a result of the institution's educational quality and institutional effectiveness review, reaffirmation is delayed during the period of warning. The accredited status of the institution continues during the warning period.

Need to Resolve Deficiencies:

The Accreditation Standards, as an integrated whole, represent indicators of academic quality and institutional effectiveness. Deficiencies in any Standards will impact quality at an institution, and ultimately the educational environment and experiences of students. The Commission found Cerritos College deficient in meeting the following Accreditation Standards: II.A.2.f, IV.A.2.a, IV.A.3, IV.B.1.e, IV.B.1.f, IV.B.1.g.

Recommendation #2: Degree and Certificate Outcomes

In order to meet the standard, the team recommends the college establish program student learning outcomes for all degrees and certificates, assess student achievement of the program student learning outcomes, and use the results of the assessment to make improvements to the programs. (II.A.2.f)

Dr. Linda Lacy
Cerritos College
July 3, 2014

Recommendation #3: Leadership and Governance

In order to meet the standard, the team recommends the members of the governing board demonstrate compliance with their policies on the appropriate roles of the Board and the Superintendent/President, the requirements of Standard IV, and adopted Board Policies 2410, 2040, 2510, 2200, 2430, Administrative Procedure 2410, and the Shared Governance Handbook. (IV.A.2.a, IV.A.3, IV.B.1.e)

Recommendation #4: Board Development

In order to meet the Standards, the Board should, through its behavior and actions, demonstrate compliance with Board policies and Accreditation Standards. (IV.B.1.f, IV.B.1.g)

With regard to Recommendations 3 and 4 above, the Commission recognizes the achievements under the leadership of the new president; however, interference by the Board of Trustees' majority has placed the College in jeopardy. The district has provided numerous trainings for Board members, but their behavior remains unchanged. The behavior of the Board must align with Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies, and in accordance with its own policies and state laws.

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. In exceptional situations, if the institution has done all within its authority to reach compliance on any standard but remains out of compliance, the Commission is permitted by regulations to allocate a one-time, short-term "good cause extension" for the college to reach compliance prior to acting on the institution's termination. However, continued noncompliance with multiple standards would diminish the appropriateness of such an extension. Cerritos College should fully resolve the noted deficiencies by **March 2015**.

Improvement of Institutional Effectiveness:

Recommendations have also been made for Cerritos College to improve institutional effectiveness. Recommendations for improvement may be made to highlight areas for continuing or expanding excellent practices. Recommendations for improvement may also be made when an institution is currently in compliance with Standards, but additional levels of effort should be demonstrated in the future. In the Commission's experience, these recommendations may provide indicators of possible future noncompliance if left unattended by the institution. The College should fully address all improvement recommendations in the Midterm Report.

Dr. Linda Lacy
Cerritos College
July 3, 2014

Recommendation #1: Planning and Effectiveness

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends the college clearly demonstrate how assessment is utilized in the integrated planning and resource allocation cycle for human resources, information technology, and fiscal services to improve institutional effectiveness. (I.B.4)

Recommendation #5

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends each part of the integrated planning process cycle should be assessed and results should be analyzed to allow for continuous quality improvement of the integrated planning processes. (I.B.6)

Recommendation #6

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that all student learning outcomes be made available to students and prospective students. (II.A.6)

Recommendation #7

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends the college reevaluate the number of assessments in Counseling per year in order to improve the timeliness of the SLO/AUO assessments and institutionalize a comparable campus-wide program planning and SLO/AUO assessment cycle for all areas of the college. (II.B.3, II.B.3.c, II.B.4)

Recommendation #8

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that the college develop and implement an assessment plan that will measure the effectiveness of library resources and services in enhancing student achievement of identified learning outcomes. (II.C.1.a)

Recommendation #9

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that the college develop a more formal structure to ensure that students are acquiring necessary information literacy. (II.C.1.b)

Recommendation #10

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends Human Resources evaluate all personnel evaluations systematically and at stated intervals based on existing Board policy, procedures, and collective bargaining agreements. (III.A.1)

Recommendation #11

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends securing all personnel records on a consistent basis and improving internal controls for access by employees and Human Resources personnel based on post-interview site assessment. (III.A.3.b)

During its institutional self evaluation, Cerritos College identified improvement plans for advancing its continuous improvement efforts. The Commission suggests that those plans for improvement be taken into account as the College continues into the next accreditation cycle. In its Midterm report, the College should address steps undertaken in those improvement areas.

Dr. Linda Lacy
Cerritos College
July 3, 2014

As the Commission reviewed the External Evaluation Report and considered the presentation by College representatives, the Commission made changes to the External Evaluation Report with the concurrence of the team chair. A **final** copy of the External Evaluation Report is attached. It provides details of the team's findings with regard to the institution's compliance with each Eligibility Requirement and Accreditation Standard and should be read carefully and used to understand the team's findings. Additional copies may now be duplicated.

The 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 to come into compliance. Institutions are expected to take all actions 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, Cerritos College is expected to use the External Evaluation Report to improve educational programs and services and to resolve issues identified by the Commission.

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 Self Evaluation Report. This group should include the 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 farther than one click from the institution's home page.*

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, institutional effectiveness, educational quality, and student success.

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>).