

ACCJC NEWS

ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES

Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Spring 2011

The Future of Accreditation

RISING EXPECTATIONS AND DECLINING TRUST

In the last six years, there has been a sea of change in attitudes toward higher education and its quality assurance system, accreditation. An individual reading the higher education press this academic year could not help but notice the many headlines and articles that refer to higher education quality and the effectiveness of accreditation. Headlines include, “‘Trust US’ Won’t Cut It Anymore”¹, “Academic Credit: Colleges’ Common Currency Has No Set Value”², “Community Colleges Must Focus on Quality of Learning, Report Says”³, and many additional headlines and articles about such things as the “abuses” of federal financial aid promulgated by a few accredited, for-profit institutions; articles about the quality of college graduates and the productivity of colleges in producing graduates, and articles about the presumed role of accreditation assessing the quality and quantity of college graduates being produced.

Senator Tom Harkin, who chairs the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, has both critiqued some individual institutions as well as put those institutions’ regional accreditor on the proverbial hot seat at a series of Committee hearings that began last August and continue to the present. Negative news reports have added to the public’s impression that both higher education and accreditation need to undertake significant reforms. In the partisan political discussions about higher education occurring this spring in Congress, one side is critiquing the for-profit sector of higher education while both are increasingly critiquing the effectiveness of public institutions. Accreditation is in the mix, often assumed responsible for the perceived deficiencies of both sectors.

The National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Improvement (NACIQI) the agency that

provides advice to the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) on recognition of accrediting bodies, held a hearing in early February on the future of accreditation and will issue a draft report on needed changes next September. The American Council on Education is creating a task force to review the future of regional accreditation, and that body will release a report sometime in the next academic year. These reports will set the stage for the renewal of the Higher Education Act in 2013.

At the same time, President Obama’s national goals for more college graduates, and the realities of limited public funding, also drive policy maker’s interest in the productivity of higher education. There is support for higher education’s critical role in meeting national needs, and a growing interest in how higher education can become more focused and intentional in producing educated citizens.

THE FUTURE OF ACCREDITATION

The discussions of higher education quality and accreditation are making clear an increasing tendency to view accrediting agencies as responsible for all aspects of institutional quality, to conflate the role of effective oversight of the use of federal financial aid funds with the quality assurance processes of accreditation, and to try to use accreditation as a portal to institutions that can be used to improve higher education.

The Commission believes that the higher education community needs to respond to this public discussion and that institutions can make strategic changes that are likely to improve student outcomes. The Commission is undertaking some changes, and considering others, in response to the pressure on higher education and accreditation. Here are some areas of change or potential change the Commission will make.

¹ Kevin Carey, January 18, 2011, The Chronicle of Higher Education

² Sara Lipka, October 17, 2010, The Chronicle of Higher Education

³ Sara Lipka, November 11, 2010, The Chronicle of Higher Education

Commissioners

MR. MICHAEL T. ROTA, CHAIR
University Of Hawai'i

DR. SHERRILL L. AMADOR, VICE CHAIR
Public Member

DR. JOSEPH BIELANSKI
Berkeley City College

MR. STEVEN BRUCKMAN
Chancellor's Office, California Community Colleges

MR. CHRIS CONSTANTIN
Public Member

DR. GARY DAVIS
Accrediting Commission for Schools Member

MS. LURELEAN B. GAINES
East Los Angeles College

DR. FRANK GORNICK
West Hills Community College District

DR. LOUANNE KENNEDY
Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and
Universities Member

DR. STEVEN KINSELLA
Gavilan College

MS. VIRGINIA MAY
Sacramento City College

MR. CHARLES MENG, II
Public Member

MS. SUSAN MURATA
Kapi'olani Community College

DR. JOHN NIXON
Mt. San Antonio College

DR. MARIE SMITH
Public Member

MS. EILEENE TEJADA
Napa Valley College

DR. PATRICK TELLEI
Palau Community College

DR. SHARON D. WHITEHURST-PAYNE
Public Member

Commission Staff

DR. BARBARA A. BENO, President

DR. SUSAN B. CLIFFORD, Vice President

MS. DORTE KRISTOFFERSEN, Vice President

MR. GARMAN JACK POND, Vice President

DR. LILY OWYANG, Associate Vice President

DR. NORVAL WELLSFRY, Associate Vice President

MS. BARBARA DUNHAM, Assistant To The President, Business Officer

MS. MINDY GRAHAM, Administrative Support Assistant

MR. TOM LANE, Information Technology & Administrative Support

MS. WHITNEY SPARKS, Administrative Assistant

ACCJC NEWS is Published by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC),
Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).

PUBLICATION ADDRESS:

10 Commercial Blvd., Suite 204, Novato, Ca 94949

Phone: 415-506-0234 ♦ E-Mail: accjc@accjc.org ♦ website: www.accjc.org

TRANSPARENCY

The public wants more easy-to-understand information about the quality of institutions and the results of an accreditation review. They also want more information about accreditation - what it does to assure quality. The regional accreditors are preparing a website for C-RAC (Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions) that contains general information about accreditation. Each commission is also beginning to use a Public Disclosure Notice, linked to its electronic directory of accredited institutions, that explains the reasons an institution has been placed on the sanction of probation or show cause/termination and provides data about next steps in the accreditation process (required by federal regulations as of July 1, 2010). It is likely accreditors and institutions will provide more information to the public at large about institutional quality in the future.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

There is a growing tendency to conflate institutional quality with the success of students and strong pressure on accreditors to report student achievement data to the public. The Commission will ask institutions to report certain longitudinal data on student achievement in institutional self-evaluation reports starting in Fall 2012; a new manual and templates for data reporting are under development now. This will make data reporting and analysis for purposes of quality review more consistent across member institutions. Some regional accreditors are already requiring institutions to make such data public on their websites, and ACCJC may consider that as well in the future.

BENCHMARKING AND GOAL-SETTING

Much recent research has investigated the various impediments to student completion and the variety of ways that students can be supported so that they complete certificates and degrees. The public believes that student success rates can be improved with appropriate institutional effort. Accreditors have been driving institutions to collect and use assessment data for several years. We now feel the pressure to use context for understanding that data by encouraging the use of benchmarks, goals, and peer group comparisons. Starting in 2012, the Commission will be asking institutions to set benchmarks for the purposes of analyzing their own data on student outcomes and to address goals for improvement in their planning processes and institutional actions. The Commission is considering whether Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data can be used to determine the overall collective performance of its member institutions in a manner useful for quality assurance and improvement.

THE QUALITY OF THE DEGREE OR CERTIFICATE

One important and persistent criticism of higher education is criticism of the quality of graduates. Admittedly, much of the research in this area has examined baccalaureate students, not community college students. However, the Commission believes that the institutional learning outcomes set by institutions, along with the outcomes of the program, are foundational for the quality of a degree. The Commission will begin asking institutions to demonstrate student learning of institutional level learning goals as well as programmatic learning goals in 2012. The Commission will also sponsor more dialogue and discussion about this subject and about the intentionality of learning environments among member institutions in the coming academic year.

SENATOR DURBIN'S LETTER

On March 15, 2011, one could find the following headline in the online press: "Durbin Asks 60 Accrediting Agencies for Explanation of Standards they Use to Ensure Quality at Colleges and Universities."⁴ Senator Durbin's letter states:

"Accreditation agencies such as yours serve as the gateway to federal funding, and students rely on the seal of approval you provide. As Congress works to reduce the federal deficit, we are taking a closer look at federal spending. Federal student aid makes sense when we can ensure the maximum return on investment. Accrediting agencies are well positioned to provide assurance to taxpayers and students that federal financial aid funding is only going to institutions of quality and rigor that are likely to produce good outcomes for students."

The ACCJC is preparing a response to Senator Durbin and will post it to the website when it is completed. ♦

⁴ Source: Press Release from Senator Durbin; text of letter to ACCJC available at www.accjc.org, President's page.

New Federal Regulations and Updates

CTP PROGRAMS

The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) has recently notified the accrediting commissions that new provisions under Title IV of the Higher Education Act (34 CFR Part 668, subpart O), as amended, enable eligible students with intellectual disabilities to receive Federal Pell Grants, Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants and Work-Study funds, if they are enrolled in an approved program. These programs are referred to as comprehensive transition and postsecondary programs for students with intellectual disabilities (CTP programs). Institutions have to currently participate in federal student financial aid programs for CTP programs to also be determined to be eligible for federal student aid programs.

According to the notification from the USDE, institutions must submit an application for approval to have their CTP program participate in Title IV that shows compliance with the following requirements:

1. The CTP program must be delivered to students physically attending the institution, support students with intellectual disabilities, include an advising and curriculum structure, require students with disabilities to have at least one-half of their participation in the program focus on academic components with student without intellectual disabilities, and provide students with intellectual disabilities to participate in coursework and other activities with students without disabilities.
2. The CTP must include the institution's policy for determining if an enrolled student is making satisfactory academic progress, the number of weeks of instructional time and the number of semester and quarter credit hours or clock hours in the program, a description of the educational credential offered or identified outcome or outcomes established for the enrolled students.
3. The CTP program must provide a copy of the notification of its accrediting agency of the institution's CTP program and must include a description of the requirements listed above.

Furthermore, in the future institutions must include CTP programs approved under Title IV in their institutional self evaluation reports (formerly self studies) for consideration in future comprehensive reviews. The USDE has not specified when this requirement takes effect and the Department is planning to provide accrediting commissions with technical assistance regarding the implementation of these regulations. ACCJC will keep its member institutions informed about these new requirements when the Commission receives more detailed information.

CREDIT HOUR, STATE AUTHORIZATION AND GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT

As mentioned in previous editions of this ACCJC News, the USDE proposed new regulations on three topics of interest to accreditation in June 2010. These topics are the definition of credit hour and the role of accreditors in assessing the credit hours awarded by institutions; the roles of states in authorizing postsecondary institutions and to provide consumer protection; and gainful employment of graduates from career and technical training programs. It is expected that the regulations will be effective July 1, 2011.

The planned regulations on credit hour have since they were released, been of concern to the higher education community including the regional accrediting commissions, C-RAC, of which ACCJC is a member. The proposed regulations define credit hour as "One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a



New Federal Regulations and Updates, continued on page 5

New Federal Regulations and Updates, *continued from page 5*

different amount of time.” The proposed regulations also state that “at least an equivalent amount of work as required for a credit hour for other academic activities, including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours, or institutionally established reasonable equivalencies for the amount of work required including [equivalencies for the amount of work] as represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement.”

In August ACCJC was one of the signatories of a letter sent by the American Council on Education (ACE) to the Department in response to the proposed new regulations. The higher education sector’s concern with the creation of a federal definition of credit hour was reiterated in a recent letter sent by ACE and signed by 70 higher education associations and accrediting organizations. The letter objects to the federalization of credit hour which is a basic academic concept and to the fact that the definition is complex, ambiguous and unworkable for its purposes. Most recently ACE submitted a joint request to the USDE that there be a one year delay in the implementation of the regulations on credit hour.

The USDE announced in November 2010, after having received an considerable amount of comments, that it was delaying planned regulations on gainful employment. The planned regulations would require institutions to collect data on the employment and income of graduates of career and technical programs and calculate a ratio of earnings to the cost of the program. Program costs would be required to be low enough that students would not incur debt they could not pay back. This attempt to control the high tuition fees of for-profit-institutions and to control the misuse of federal financial aid funds has been met with great resistance by the for-profit-sector of the higher education industry.

The USDE has announced that it is determined to issue the regulations on gainful employment and it expects that they will be issued in late March or early April. The final regulations on credit hour and state authorization are also yet to be issued.

HEARINGS ON THE FUTURE OF ACCREDITATION

On February 3 and 4, 2011, the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Improvement (NACIQI) held a hearing on the Future of Accreditation. NACIQI is an 18-member advisory panel established by the USDE to provide advice to the education secretary on recognizing accrediting commissions. The broad topic of the meeting was to consider what is working and what could be improved in the current system of recognition, accreditation, and student aid eligibility. A variety of speakers were invited to testify at the hearing and the regional accrediting commissions were represented by the Presidents of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges and the New England Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. The basic gist of the discussions was that higher education accreditation should change but that there is no need to create a different system to assure the quality of higher education.

Based on the presentations at the hearing, NACIQI will develop recommendations on the accreditation system for the USDE to consider for the next reauthorization of the Higher Education Act which is expected to take place in 2013. The first set of draft recommendations will be ready in June, and a final version of the recommendations will be completed in September 2011. The ACCJC will continue to report on this topic in coming issues of this newsletter. ♦

CHEA Awards for Outstanding Practice in Student Learning Outcomes 2011

The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) established the CHEA Award for Outstanding Practice in Student Learning Outcomes in 2005 to recognize institutions that have been exceptional in developing and applying evidence of student learning outcomes to improve higher education quality and accountability. Institutions are invited to submit applications which are judged by a committee whose members are selected from higher education institutions, accrediting organizations and the public on the basis of four award criteria: 1) articulation and evidence of outcomes; 2) success with regard to outcomes; 3) information to the public about outcomes, and 4) use of outcomes for educational improvement.

In 2011, 32 institutions submitted applications and four award winners were announced at the 2011 CHEA Conference. The winners included two community colleges one of which is an ACCJC member institution, i.e., Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC). Judith Eaton, CHEA President in her justification emphasized that the committee was impressed with DLIFLC's extraordinary work in language education and its use of student learning outcomes to move students to high levels of success in language training.

The other community college award recipient was Miami Dade College (MDC). More information about the DLIFLC and MDC's work is available below.

DLIFLC Receives 2011 CHEA Award for SLOs

By Lt. Col. Gregory Christiansen and Dr. Peter Silzer

The Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC), as the flagship foreign language teaching institution of the U.S. military, is a Federal degree granting institution accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC). The institution provides foreign language instruction to several thousand students each year. The basic language programs at DLIFLC are designed to meet a detailed set of student learning outcomes (SLOs) developed in consultation with the major employers of DLIFLC graduates (i.e., the National Security Administration and the Defense Department).

Each student is evaluated according to rigorous standards developed to measure SLOs in listening, reading, and speaking the foreign language (FL) studied. The primary evaluation tool used to evaluate the SLOs at the end of a student's course of studies is the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) used in conjunction with an Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI). These assessments have been developed by a specialized team in DLIFLC's Testing and Evaluation Division and have been vetted by assessment experts and language teaching professionals external to the Institute to provide a highly reliable tool for measuring student proficiency. DLIFLC SLOs are thus verified by a rigorous, well regulated set of external evaluations based on the Interagency Language Roundtable standards, which provide a consistent scale for measuring FL proficiency across all U.S. government agencies. These standardized measures of proficiency are used on a national and international basis throughout the Department of Defense to assess FL ability of DLIFLC graduates and other government linguists on an on-going basis.

In addition to the above end-of-course DLPT and OPI assessments, students are also assessed in their global FL skills (listening, reading, speaking) and their sub-skills such as transcription, gisting, and translation on a regular basis throughout their course of studies through unit and semester evaluations.

Every class and every student in a DLIFLC basic language program are evaluated in detailed progress reports created by the teaching team and the department chair at six critical times throughout the program of instruction. These reports serve as a starting point to implement strategies to help every student achieve maximal success. The students also receive academic advising at least once a month, and students who do not meet the defined standards in any of several ways (e.g., failure on a unit



Photo courtesy of Michael Cooney

DLIFLC Receives 2011 CHEA Award for SLOs, continued on page 7

test, failure to complete assignments on time) receive additional individual advising related to the deficiency. Students placed on academic probation receive mandatory tailored assistance targeted at meeting their individual needs.

In summary, DLIFLC students and graduates are trained to become proficient in FL skills through an intensive program of study. DLIFLC is proud to have been recognized for excellence in the area of SLOs. Defining and assessing SLOs plays an important role in enabling DLIFLC to perform its mission: To provide culturally-based foreign language education, training, evaluation, research and sustainment for DoD personnel in order to ensure the success of the Defense Language Program and enhance the security of our nation.

Engagement as a Transformative Strategy to Empower Miami Dade College Faculty in Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

By Dr. Sean Madison, Director of Learning Outcomes Assessment, Miami Dade College

Miami Dade College (MDC) has been strategic in its efforts to champion a number of teaching and learning initiatives that address not only accountability but also student achievement and success. Recently, the College has accomplished a number of milestones in measuring its graduates' attainment of the College's 10 Learning Outcomes that were established in 2006. With almost 170,000 students annually on multiple campuses, the College has been noted for its work in this area in such publications as InsideHigherEd, AACU's Liberal Education, and The Chronicle of Higher Education.

A featured component of the College's Learning Outcomes initiative is the college-level assessment known as the Collegewide Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (CSLOA). The CSLOA is a collection of scenario-based, authentic assessment tasks designed by college faculty to measure potential graduates' attainment of the College's Ten Learning Outcomes and informs collegewide discussions about strategies to improve student learning, including co-curricular learning, at the College. Not only do faculty play a key leadership role in design of this college-level assessment initiative, but they also lead the overall initiative and generate student learning assessment findings, which are used by faculty to improve student learning. Fully engaging faculty in this work, with support from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, has helped us make important strides in creating a culture of inquiry and in addressing faculty concerns about assessment.

MDC realizes that the assessment findings are only useful if they facilitate college-wide student outcome learning discussions and specific improvements within MDC schools, disciplines, and student services areas. Every year, the College's Learning Outcomes Assessment Team (LOAT) and Learning Outcomes Coordinating Council (LOCC) - predominately faculty - lead campus dialogues about assessment results and promising strategies to improve student performance on the ten student learning outcomes. All students, faculty, and staff are invited, and the dialogues are spirited and well attended (150+ participants at the larger campuses). Through these dialogues, faculty members generate improvements that will strengthen and transform student learning in the classroom.

For example, the English Composition and Literature Discipline Committee mapped five college-wide outcomes to its introductory composition and literature courses. Across the discipline, faculty has introduced initiatives to address assessment results as revealed through our mapping and the findings of the CSLOA including student portfolios, a novel in Freshman Composition, and collaboration with the Florida Center for the Literary Arts to bring authors into classrooms. To strengthen student learning in historical and cultural perspectives, the discipline designed a Literature of Genocide course.

In addition to assessments based on retention, graduation, and licensure pass rates, the School of Health Sciences integrated selected college-wide outcomes into its 23 associate degree, certificate, and baccalaureate programs. The CSLOA findings on civic and social responsibility and effective communication outcomes led to the requirement that Medical Assisting students participate in community events and complete a self-reflective essay based on these experiences.

Information about assessments, strategies employed to enhance learning, and evidence of their impact is collected in Annual Institutional Effectiveness reports. Every college-wide discipline, school and student services area submits a report using a template provided by the Institutional Effectiveness Committee.

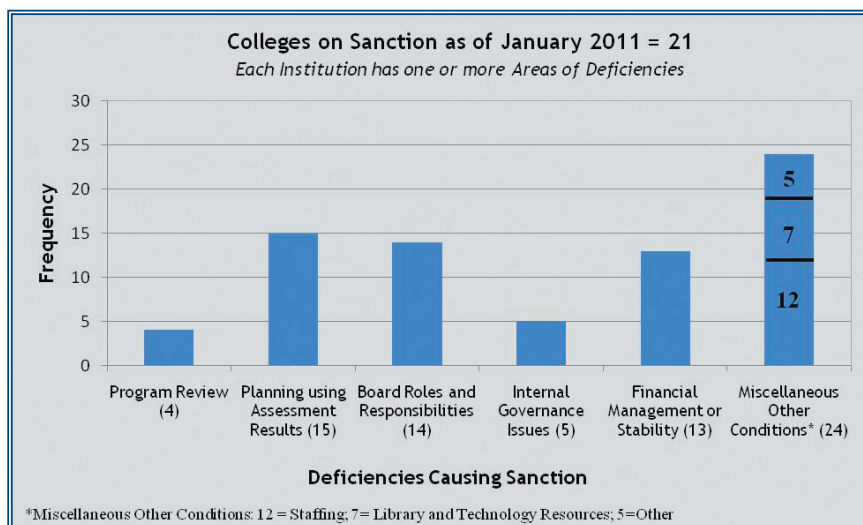
The Learning Outcomes Assessment initiative at MDC has transformed the College into one that collectively demonstrates a culture of inquiry and evidence to enhance student learning. It has received unprecedented, college-wide support and is a strategic priority for the College. Most importantly, the College has celebrated its success, recognizing not only faculty leadership in this endeavor but also intentional faculty collaboration across disciplines and schools to advance this important student success initiative. ♦

Deficiencies Leading to Sanction

In February 2011, the ACCJC analyzed the institutional deficiencies that caused the Commission to impose a sanction of Warning, Probation or Show Cause. Twenty one colleges were on sanction as of January 2011. The five most frequently cited reasons for sanctions are shown in the table.

The reasons for sanction as of January 2011 are listed below:

- ❖ Four colleges did not have adequate procedures and did not appropriately implement program review of instructional programs and services. The number of colleges being placed on sanction due to lack of appropriate program review has diminished considerably from 16 in January 2009, 13 in January 2010 to now 4 in January 2011.
- ❖ 15 colleges failed to meet the requirements regarding the use of assessment results in integrated planning.
- ❖ The governing boards of 14 colleges failed to adhere to appropriate roles and 5 colleges had governance issues.
- ❖ 13 colleges lacked appropriate and sustainable financial management.
- ❖ 24 colleges had miscellaneous other deficiencies, primarily related to staffing (12) and library and technology resources (7).



Fourteen colleges have three or more areas of deficiencies. The institutions on sanction differ from year to year as some have made improvements and were removed from sanction, while others were found deficient and were placed on a sanction. The Commission Actions on Institutions are available on the ACCJC website: <http://www.accjc.org/actions-on-institutions>.

The Commission awards accreditation or reaffirms accreditation when an institution meets or exceeds the ACCJC Accreditation Standards. Sanctions on the other hand are imposed when an institution fails to meet all standards, eligibility requirements or policies. In making a decision on the accreditation status of the institution, the Commission takes into account the recommendation of the peer evaluation team, the institutional history of compliance with the Accreditation Standards, the relative importance of the Standards that are at issue, the particular conditions at a college that are or have historically been affecting the institution's quality and compliance, and the consistency of the proposed action with actions the Commission has taken on other institutions.

(Source: Commission Policy on Actions on Institutions. The Policy can be found in the ACCJC Accreditation Reference Handbook at: <http://www.accjc.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Accreditation-Reference-Handbook-August-2010.pdf>)

New federal regulations came into effect on July 1, 2010, that require accrediting commissions to publish brief statements summarizing the reasons for the commissions' decision to place an institution on Probation or Show Cause or to deny, withdraw, suspend, revoke or terminate accreditation or initial accreditation. Accrediting commissions must also provide the affected institutions the opportunity to make official comments to the decision and make these comments available to the public. The brief statements on ACCJC member institutions placed on Probation or Show Cause in January 2011 are available in the ACCJC Directory of Accredited Institutions: <http://www.accjc.org/directory-of-accredited-institutions>. ♦

Focus on Quality

SHARING OF PRACTICES FOR INSTITUTIONALIZING CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

The Fall 2010 Conference of the California Community Colleges Chief Instructional Officers was held October 27-29, 2010, and October 28 focused on issues related to continuous quality improvement. ACCJC President Dr. Barbara Beno participated in a panel discussion on the topic of Educational Excellence. The topic was explored from the perspective of the ACCJC, from a college Chancellor, a CIO and the Academic Senate. Other topics covered were Institutionalizing Integrated Planning, Effectively Using Research and Making the Substantive Changes Valuable. The lunch keynote was delivered by Dr. David Longanecker who outlined and shared his perspectives on the challenges in terms of student achievement that California community colleges will face over the next decade.

IMPROVING ASSESSMENT

WASC Educational Seminars on Assessment Levels I and II were held in September and October 2010. The seminars are organized by the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities and co-sponsored by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of WASC. The Level I seminar required participants to prepare a project on assessment in advance of the seminar. During the seminar the participants could seek suggestions and feedback to particular institutional strategies on assessment from the seminar facilitators. In the seminar Level II, participants were given the opportunity to delve further into specific campus areas and challenges in assessment.

The project topics submitted by institutions ranged from questions and strategies for developing appropriate measures for assessing student learning, developing quality learning outcomes, and training faculty in the development of student learning outcomes. Feedback from the seminars showed that the participating colleges appreciated the sharing of experiences with different models and strategies for assessment and having the opportunity to work on an actual project during the seminars.

The seminar leaders were Mary Allen and Amy Driscoll. The facilitators for two-year colleges were Fred Trapp and Gary Williams for Level I and Fred Trapp and Bob Pacheco for Level II. Dr. Lily Owyang and Ms. Dorte Kristoffersen attended the seminars as ACCJC resource persons.

QUALITY ASSURANCE STRATEGIES FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

The WCET Annual Conference was held on November 10-13, 2010. "Everyone, start your I-Phones!" That was the opening for the WCET (Western Cooperative for Educational Technologies, Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education [WICHE]) Annual Conference. From that point attendees were given specific instructions for the channel to Twitter and how to connect to the conference electronically.



Discussion topics ranged from student success strategies for meeting the challenges of technologies in the classroom, e.g., how does the instructor manage students who Google the answers faster than the teacher or other students can give them, to excellent models for student services, e-portfolios, and faculty development. Dr. Barbara Beno presented with a panel of regional accreditation leaders that addressed distance education in the light of the new Higher Education Opportunity Act and requirements for evaluating distance education.

The next annual conference will take place October 26-29, 2011 at the Denver City Center Marriott in Denver Colorado. Registration will open May 2, 2011. For additional information, contact wcetconference@wiche.edu or 303-541-0233.

DIALOG ABOUT INCREASED INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The annual Community College League Convention and Conference was held November 18-20, 2010. ACCJC presented two pre-convention workshops, a focus session, and a special session at the Convention.

Focus on Quality, continued on page 10

Thirty, primarily new Accreditation Liaison Officers (ALOs), attended the ALO Workshop and gained insights into the role of the ALO, including the ALO's responsibilities in substantive change, campus communication responsibilities, new and increasing expectations for distance education, and federal regulations. The workshop also, thanks to Dr. Randall Lawson, ALO at Santa Monica College, provided reflections from an experienced ALO and idea-exchange with participants on best practices used by fellow ALOs. This workshop will be presented at the Academic Resource Conference April 6-8, 2011. For more information see Upcoming Events in this newsletter.

Twenty-four individuals participated in the workshop on Increased Institutional Effectiveness through Program Review, Integrated Planning, and Resource Allocation. In the evaluations of the workshop participants emphasized that the highlight of this workshop was the chance to examine two models of program review, planning, and resource allocation processes from fictitious colleges, one with highly-developed institutional effectiveness practices, and one with "broken" practices. At the end of the presentation, participants were asked to evaluate the accredited status of both institutions and ask themselves how their own institutions compared to the two fictional colleges. This workshop will be presented at the Academic Resource Conference April 6-8, 2011. For more information see Upcoming Events in this newsletter.

Twenty-five individuals attended the focus session on Quality Institutional Practices that Support Student Success which was facilitated by Dr. Rose Ascera, Director of Pathway Connections of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and Ms. Margaret Tillery, Learning Disabilities Specialist, from Allan Hancock College, and former Commissioner. The workshop was intended for college deans and faculty leaders, and participants engaged in an interactive discussion about national directions, assessment, and accountability, and the challenges of leading institutional change through accreditation processes. The ACCJC thanks Dr. Ascera and Ms. Tillery for the insights they shared with participants.

President Barbara Beno and Ms. Dorte Kristoffersen were invited by the California Colleges for International Education to share their views on the topic 'Quality Assurance and Accreditation of International Education'. In their presentation Dr. Beno and Ms. Kristoffersen spoke about the context of international education, accreditation requirements as well as quality issues related to non-U.S. nationals studying in the U.S., education program offered to non-U.S. nationals overseas, distance education and study abroad programs. ♦



Upcoming Events

Academic Resource Conference (ARC)

April 6-8, 2011 at the Hyatt Regency in San Francisco, CA. ARC is sponsored by WASC/Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities in collaboration with WASC/Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges. The theme is "Higher Education's Third Horizon". ACCJC will be presenting workshops on Increased Institutional Effectiveness through Program Review, Integrated Planning and Resource Allocation, Evaluating Distance Education/Correspondence Education, and a workshop for ACCJC Accreditation Liaison Officers. In addition, there will be a Special Interest Group lunch giving attendees an opportunity to meet ACCJC representatives and raise issues about building capacity toward educational quality and institutional effectiveness. More information about these workshops is available at <http://www.accjc.org/accjc-co-sponsored-conferences/academic-resource-conference-2011-acscuwasc>.

Strengthening Student Success Conference

October 12-14, 2011 at the San Francisco Airport Marriott, San Francisco, CA. The theme of the conference is "Emerging Issues in Assessment and Learning". The conference is sponsored by the Research and Planning Group in collaboration with ACCJC, the Career Ladders Project, and LearningWorks. This conference provides a unique opportunity for a wide cross-section of educators to meet and brainstorm ways to strengthen institutional effectiveness and student learning. It will focus

Upcoming Events, continued on page 11

on helping practitioners link emerging issues in assessment and learning into action. ACCJC will be presenting workshops that relate to the conference theme and to accreditation in order to support institutions to build capacity for educational quality. More information about the conference is available at: <http://www.rpgroup.org/events>.

ACCJC Regional Workshops 2011-2012

In the fall 2010 ACCJC introduced the concept of regional workshops, and the first workshop was held at Mt. San Antonio College in October 2010. It is a characteristic of the regional workshops that they cover a topic which is relevant to ACCJC accredited institutions, they are hosted by a member institution and the participants are other colleges in close geographic proximity of the host college. The workshops also offer opportunities for the sharing of practices through presentations and group discussions and the participating institutions are invited to send small groups of participants.

ACCJC held the second of these workshops in Honolulu on February 28, 2011 for its member colleges in Hawai'i and the American Affiliated Pacific Islands. One hundred college representatives attended the workshop. The topic of the workshop was Capacity Building for Educational Excellence through Program Review and Integrated Institutional Planning. The program included presentations from ACCJC on Commission views on program review and integrated planning and Dr. Ray D. Somera, Academic Vice President at Guam Community College, Mr. Mike Rota, Chancellor, Honolulu Community College and Dr. Dennis Gervin, Chief Instructional Officer, Columbia College presented their colleges' processes for program review and integrated planning. Dr. Fred Trapp shared his and Robert Pacheco's research on Effective Assessment Reports. This research provides examples of effective assessment reports from colleges around the country.

The next regional workshop will be held at West Valley College on Friday April 29, 2011. The list of invited colleges include: Berkeley City, Cabrillo, Cañada, College of Alameda, College of San Mateo, DeAnza, Evergreen Valley, Foothill, Gavilan, Hartnell, Laney, Merritt, Mission, Ohlone, San Jose City, Skyline and West Valley. The topic of the workshop is Capacity Building for Educational Excellence through Program Review and Integrated Institutional Planning.

ACCJC will organize two regional workshops every half year until the end of 2012. The two workshops to be held in the Fall 2011 will be hosted by College of the Canyons and Modesto Junior College, respectively. ♦

Changes in Commissioners

New Commissioner (Term Beginning January 1, 2011)

Mr. Charles Meng serves as a public member of the Commission. Mr. Meng is a nuclear engineer with a specialty in quality assurance. From 1962 to 1991 he held the position as Director, Quality Assurance at Mare Island Naval Shipyard. He has been an adjunct faculty member at higher education institutions and a trustee of Napa Valley College. Mr. Meng received a Bachelor of Science Degree at the United States Military Academy, West Point and a Master of Science Degree from the University of San Francisco. ♦



Staff Changes in the Commission

Dr. Norval Wellsfry joined the Commission in February 2011, as Associate Vice President on a part-time basis. Dr. Wellsfry joins the Commission from a position as professor of accounting and computer information at Cosumnes River College. He served as a member of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges from 2004 to 2010.

Ms. Dorte Kristoffersen, formerly Associate Vice President, was appointed to the vacant position as Vice President for Policy and Research effective as of January 2011 after the position was advertised in the fall 2010. ♦

January 2011 Commission Actions on Institutions

At its meeting, January 11-13, 2011, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, took the following actions on institutional accreditation:

REAFFIRMED ACCREDITATION

Antelope Valley College
College of Marin
Moorpark College
Mt. San Antonio College
San Diego City College
San Diego Mesa College

CONTINUED ON PROBATION

Cuesta College
Berkeley City College
College of Alameda
Laney College
Merritt College
Southwestern College

REMOVED FROM WARNING

American Samoa Community College
Feather River College
Pasadena City College
Riverside City College

CONTINUED ON SHOW CAUSE

Northern Marianas College

REMOVED FROM PROBATION

Crafton Hills College
Diablo Valley College
Solano Community College

PLACED ON WARNING

Evergreen Valley College
Irvine Valley College
Oxnard College
Saddleback College
San Diego Miramar
Ventura College

CONTINUED ON WARNING

Taft College

PLACED ON PROBATION

San Jose City College



January 2011 Commission Actions on Policies

At its meeting January 11-13, 2011, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges took the following actions:

Adopted Policies and Statements

- ❖ Statement on Benefits of Accreditation
- ❖ Policy on Closing an Institution
- ❖ Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions
- ❖ Policy on Commission Good Practices in Relations with Member Institutions
- ❖ WCET Best Practices Strategies for Academic Integrity in Online Education

Policies Approved for First Reading

- ❖ **Policy on Contractual Relationships with Non-Regionally Accredited Organizations.** The federal requirement that if an institution contracts with an unaccredited entity to offer 25% or more of the accredited institution's programs, it is considered a substantive change, has been added.
- ❖ **Policy on Distance Education and on Correspondence Education.** The definitions of Distance Education and Correspondence Education have been replaced by federal language and reference to federal regulations has been added.
- ❖ **Policy on Institutional Compliance with Title IV.** This policy responds to the requirement of the Higher Education Opportunity Act regulations of November 2010 regarding institutional compliance with Title IV.
- ❖ **Policy on Insider Trading.** ACCJC current policies do not provide adequate protection against an insider, associated with the ACCJC, trading in stock of an institution or of its affiliate publicly traded company. This policy has been developed to serve this purpose.
- ❖ **Policy on Institutional Degrees and Credits.** The policy has been developed to reflect new federal regulations about credit published November 1, 2010, and taking effect July 2011.
- ❖ **Policy on Integrity and Ethics.** The revisions to this policy reflect new federal regulations published November 1, 2010, and taking effect July 2011, regarding increased institutional responsibility with respect to the content of an institutional representation and who makes the representation.
- ❖ **Policy on Procedures for the Evaluation of Institutions in Multi-College/Multi-Unit Districts or Systems.** The language regarding the role of the governing board in the institutional self evaluation process (formerly self study) has been updated.
- ❖ **Policy on Substantive Change.** The policy has been revised to appropriately reflect the new requirements of the Higher Education Opportunity Act, as amended 2008.
- ❖ **Policy on Rights and Responsibilities of the Commission and Member Institutions and the Accrediting Process.** The language has been revised for clarity in particular with respect to the presentation of the responsibilities of the Commission and the member institutions respectively.

All first reading policies have been sent to the field for comment.

Commissioner Election Process

At its meeting, January 11-13, 2011, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, adopted changes to its Bylaws introducing a new Commissioner election process. The main steps in the election process are as follows:

There are 19 Commissioners, and they are elected for staggered, three-year terms. Each sitting Commissioner may be elected to a second three-year term.

- At its January meeting, the Commission will announce the identities of departing Commissioners, the names of Commissioners seeking a second term, and the types of Commissioner positions that are becoming vacant and to which individuals may be elected or sitting Commissioners may be elected to a second term.
- Each February, the Commission will send a letter to the field announcing the Commissioner positions becoming vacant, accompanied by an invitation for applications and nominations for Commissioner positions that are becoming vacant. The announcement will be widely distributed and posted on the Commission's website.
- A Nominating Committee, selected by the Commission's Executive Committee and comprised of four Commissioners and four persons representing member institutions, will review applications for Commissioner positions and create a slate of candidates for the vacant Commissioner positions.
- The Presidents/Chancellor of each institution that is accredited by the ACCJC will be asked to review the slate and may nominate alternative candidates through the process described in the Bylaws.
- Each May, the slate of candidates, with any additional alternative candidates, will be sent to the President/Chancellors of each institution accredited by the ACCJC. The President/Chancellor will vote for the slate candidate or the alternative candidate for each Commissioner position becoming vacant.
- Each June, the results of the Election will be announced at the Commission's meeting and thereafter made public on the Commission's web site and in its summary of the June meeting contained in its newsletter.
- New Commissioner terms begin on July 1 of each year.

The Commission is currently soliciting applications from individuals who wish to be considered for membership. The Commission is seeking applications for the following positions:

- One commission member representing faculty
- One commission member representing administration
- One commission member representing the public
- One commission member representing the Pacific Postsecondary Education Council

The deadline for applications is April 15, 2011.

More information about the Commissioner application process can be found at the ACCJC website, President's Desk: http://www.accjc.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/Commissioner-Application-Packet_February-2011.pdf.

The amended Bylaws are also available on the ACCJC website: <http://www.accjc.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/Bylaws-for-the-ACCJC1.pdf>.

Future Comprehensive Visits

Under current U.S. Department of Education regulations, ACCJC must provide opportunity for third-party comment regarding the institutional qualifications for accreditation. The institutions noted below are scheduled to undergo comprehensive visits in the spring of 2011, the fall of 2011, and the spring of 2012 and review by the Commission at its June 2011, January 2012, and June 2012 meetings. Third-party comment on these institutions should be made to the ACCJC President, Dr. Barbara A. Beno, at 10 Commercial Blvd. Suite 204, Novato, CA 94949. For consideration, such comment must be made in writing, signed, accompanied by return address and telephone number, and received no later than five weeks before the scheduled Commission meeting.

SPRING 2011

(for June 2011 Commission Review)

College of the Desert
Cypress College
Deep Springs College
Fashion Institute of Design &
Merchandising
Fullerton College
Merced College
Victor Valley College
West Hills College Coalinga
West Hills College Lemoore

FALL 2011

(for January 2012 Commission Review)

College of the Redwoods
Columbia College
DeAnza College
Foothill College
Fresno City College
Lake Tahoe Community College
Modesto Junior College
Mt. San Jacinto College
Reedley College
Shasta College
Solano Community College
Willow International Center
of Reedley College*

*Candidacy

SPRING 2012

(for June 2012 Commission Review)

Barstow College
City College of San Francisco
Defense Language Institute
Feather River College
Guam Community College
Hawaii Tokai International College
Los Angeles Harbor College
Los Angeles Southwest College
West Los Angeles College

Evaluation Team Member Selection Process

In the United States, higher education accreditation is characterized by self regulation. The processes of establishing Accreditation Standards, evaluating institutions against those Standards, and determining the accredited status of institutions are peer-based. In the processes developed by regional accrediting commissions across the country, a review by trained, professional, peer evaluators is central. The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges maintains a pool of more than 2,500 peer evaluators to populate the external evaluation teams that conduct comprehensive evaluation visits.

Each year, ACCJC staff select approximately 250 individuals to serve on external evaluation teams. Teams are comprised of individuals who are accomplished professionals in their respective areas of expertise and are experienced in the major areas of curriculum and instruction; financial accountability; governance; technology; student support; and evaluation, planning, and resource management. They may be from within or outside the Western region. Individuals who are interested in serving on evaluation teams submit a Bio Data Form for Evaluators that details their particular background and expertise together with a recommendation from their college presidents. Their completed Form is reviewed by Commission staff. The Commission seeks individuals who are likely to make a strong contribution to the peer evaluation process. All team members are trained prior to conducting a site visit.

Following the visit, team chairs evaluate the performance of each team member. This information is recorded in the evaluator's database file and will be used to determine continued service on evaluation teams. ♦



ACCREDITING COMMISSION
for **COMMUNITY** and
JUNIOR COLLEGES

10 Commercial Blvd., Suite 204
Novato, CA 94949

NON PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT #166
PETALUMA, CA

