



**ACCREDITING
COMMISSION
for COMMUNITY and
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

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January 6, 2010

Urgent and Important

**To: Chancellors, Superintendents and Presidents of California
Community Colleges, ALOs**

From: Barbara Beno, President
Lurelean Gaines, Commission Chair

Subject: The ACCJC's Public Meeting Today

We are writing to you on behalf of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges about an unprecedented and very serious set of events that are occurring and that concern your institutional interests in accreditation. We are writing to ensure that as the CEO of a member institution(s), you are kept fully apprised of the events that are occurring, and the reasons for the Commission's responses to those events.

The ACCJC has been approached by the California Community College Chancellor with suggestions for "improvement" of accreditation. These suggestions were developed by the Chancellor's shared governance body, the Consultation Council, apparently as reflection of the results of a survey that the Chancellor's Office administered in the summer. The Chancellor did not share the survey results or response rate with the Commission.

In August, the Chancellor indicated his desire to share these suggestions with the Commission, and was offered the opportunity to come to the January 2010 public meeting. He insisted he was unwilling to do so, and requested that the Commission convene in private to hear from him and the Council. In deference to the Chancellor's desire to share these suggestions with the Commission and his expressed desire to do so in private, the Commission sent four Commissioners to meet with four members of the Consultation Council in late October. The Commission expressly stated that its agreement to an informal private meeting would be in lieu of scheduling the Chancellor to come to the public meeting to address the Commission. In a meeting that lasted approximately four hours, the Chancellor and the members of the Consultation Council explained what they meant by the seven suggestions. The members of the Commission responded with some questions and some information. The Commission stated before and during that meeting that Commission representatives would take the conversation contents to the entire Commission for a private discussion during its January 2010 meeting and then provide a written response following the meeting.

The Chancellor and the Consultation Council have now requested in writing to speak at the public meeting of the Commission about the same matter, before the Commission has had a chance to internally discuss the October meeting and respond to it, and after the Commission agenda had been set. The request to appear at the Commission's public meeting has been politely declined in accordance with Commission policy. The Commission policies permit comment from persons who attend the public meeting of the Commission on matters that are on the public meeting agenda. The Commission has not placed the Chancellor's suggestions on its public meeting agenda. It is our understanding that the Chancellor and/or his Consultation Council members will appear at today's meeting and request time to speak about these same seven suggestions nevertheless.

As you know, the Commission is a membership organization; its members are the individual institutions that are accredited. By policy, the Commission communicates with member institutions through the institutional CEO. The Consultation Council has written a letter purporting to represent the California Community Colleges, as a group, and the CEOs. By policy, the Commission cannot accept the representations of a third party as a substitute for voice of its member institutions and their CEOs. There are 137 individual institutional members of the ACCJC; each institution has an equal voice.

Given this situation, we want you to know that the Commission will operate in alignment with its policies developed in collaboration with its member institutions, in alignment with federal regulations that govern recognized accrediting bodies, and as a regional quality assurance agency to enforce the Standards of Accreditation adopted in 2002.

The Commission will provide a written response to the Chancellor following its meeting this month, and we will send a copy of that response to you.

We remind you that as member institutions it is your responsibility to communicate to us directly on any issue of concern. The Commission welcomes your input and appreciates the opportunity to engage in dialogue with its members.

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