

**September 26, 2010**

**To: Peralta CCD Board of Trustees**

**From: Dr. Cindra Smith, Board Development and Facilitation**

**Re: September 14 Discussion of Accreditation Team Recommendations**

It was a pleasure to meet with seven trustees (including two student trustees), the Chancellor and district and college staff on September 14, 2010 to discuss the Board's response to the Accreditation Team Recommendations contained in the June 30, 2010 letter from ACCJC. I appreciate the commitment and dedication of the trustees to address these concerns and to improve board and district performance and accountability to the public. The Board is dedicated to the district and to the colleges' mission to educate students.

I anticipate that the Board will formally adopt a number of practices and protocols identified in the discussion. The list below is a summary, which I have added based on my reflections after the workshop. The recommendations may be further reviewed, changed as necessary, and adopted by the Board.

- A deadline or calendar should be established for completing the review of personnel policies. The review should clarify that the hiring and evaluation processes are delegated to the Chancellor and that board members are not involved in those processes.
- All board members shall channel requests for information through the Chancellor, rather than to district and college staff.
- The Chancellor will provide the Board with requested information and assure regular reporting to the Board on fiscal operations and strategic priorities.
- The Board should review and modify board committee purposes and practices to assure that committees do not direct staff work. It may consider retaining only those committees that directly support board responsibilities, such as fiscal, facilities, policy, and monitoring strategic goals, such as student success.
- The Policy Committee and Board should consider prioritizing its review of administrative procedures. Time should be dedicated primarily to those areas in which the Board has cause for concern due to audit, accreditation recommendations, or weaknesses identified through systematic monitoring reports on policy implementation.
- The Board will continue to schedule workshops to clarify its roles and responsibilities and those of district staff.
- If a trustee should violate protocols and standards of practice, the Chancellor will notify the Board President, who will address the issue.

### **Board Discussion of Accreditation Team Recommendations**

**Recommendation 1:** *In order to meet Standards at all times, all personnel selection actions must adhere to the established policies and procedures.*

Discussion:

Concerns were expressed about lack of consistent oversight and practices in the past. The personnel policies and procedures are currently under review with the intent to standardize and streamline them.

The Board affirmed that processes for recruiting, selecting, hiring and evaluating college employees are delegated to the Chancellor through policy, and that no trustee should use his or her position to influence the selection/hiring of specific individuals for college and district employees. Applications for positions are not provided to trustees. The Board affirmed that its role is to set expectations that the district is adequately

staffed, that job descriptions are current, that there is an effective evaluation process, and that procedures exist that ensure the processes are fair, equitable and result in quality employees.

**Recommendation 2:** *In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends the District evaluate the reporting structure with regard to the inspector general so that the position is properly placed in the hierarchy of the District organization.*

Discussion: This recommendation has been addressed and the inspector general now reports to the Chancellor.

**Recommendation 3:** *In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends the District clarify the role of the board members with respect to the work of the District managers. This would include a review of reporting structures, methods for board inquiries, distinction between board policy setting and oversight, and management, leadership and operational responsibilities for the District.*

Discussion:

**Reporting Structures:** The Board affirmed that its only employee is the Chancellor of the District. It discussed the need to have sufficient oversight to assure that the Chancellor was accountable to the Board. Trustees should refer things that come to their attention to the Chancellor.

**Oversight:** The Board discussed previous situations where it had not received appropriate information. The Interim Chancellor assured the Board that he was committed to providing information to the Board. The Board affirmed that it expects information and reports from district staff that enable it to hold the Chancellor accountable for implementing board policy and district plans, and to be assured that the district meets relevant laws and regulations, audit and accreditation standards.

**Requesting Information:** In order to enable the Chancellor to best direct the work of district staff and to assure that all board members are equally informed, **it is recommended that all trustee requests for information are directed to and through the Chancellor for the time being.** The Board President should be copied on requests for information. The Chancellor shall assure timely response to trustee requests and shall provide information to all trustees. If a request will consume significant staff time and resources, the request may be submitted to the Board for approval. This protocol will be revisited with the new Chancellor.

**Board Committees:** Participants identified problems that have been created through the Board committee process including delving into operational issues and directing staff work. Addressing these problems includes a reminder that the purpose of committees is to inform board decision-making, not to direct staff (doing so violates the principle that staff work is delegated through the Chancellor, not by individual board members). Trustees affirmed that the purpose and agenda for each committee should be set by the Board as a whole; not by the chair of the committee. Committee agendas and discussion should be focused on policy principles and values, and should not result in committees directing or appearing to direct staff work.

The Board discussed eliminating committees but there was no consensus. It was suggested that the charters, purpose and mission of each committee be reviewed to assure that the committee is necessary to and functions in such a way to inform board decision-making.

**Board and Management Roles:** At the July 20 meeting, the Board adopted the publication, "Board and CEO Roles, Different Jobs, Different Tasks." Board members affirmed it is helpful in identifying the mutually supportive responsibilities of the CEO and Board.

**Recommendation 4:** *In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends the District provide ongoing and annual training for board and management on roles and functions as it relates to District policy and operations.*

**Recommendation 5:** *In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends the District engage in ongoing discussion about the role of the board and how it serves its trustee role for the good of the District. The role of the board should be reviewed regularly with each board member.*

Discussion: The Board participated in a June training session on fiscal responsibilities, and in September one on responding to ACCJC recommendations. Trustees present at the workshop affirmed they are committed to continuing regular workshops and/or retreats in an ongoing effort to continuously improve trustee understanding of board roles and the performance of the Board as a unit.

The Board identified that it adds value to the district by representing the community, seeking funding for the district, and being its advocate and champion. It does not wish to operate as a “super-CEO.”

**Recommendation 6:** *In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends the board consider regular review of the code of ethics to assure thorough understanding and application of its intent.*

Discussion: The code of ethics Board Policy 1.06 was last reviewed on September 15, 2009 and on October 13, 2009 in Board Resolution 9/10-14. It was suggested that the Board consider reviewing the code and board practice as part of the board self-evaluation.

**Recommendation 7:** *In order to meet the Standard, the visiting team recommends a change in the reporting relation of the Inspector General from the Board of Trustees to the Chancellor.*

Discussion: See Recommendation 2.

**Recommendation 8:** *In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends a regular review of board roles to assure that the board is relying on the Chancellor to carry out the policy set by the board.*

Discussion: As noted above, the Board adopted the publication “Board and CEO Roles”, which it anticipates will be helpful in guiding board and CEO responsibilities. The Board delegates to the CEO through board action and resolutions approved at board meetings, board policy, and requests for information at board meetings. The value of asking questions about agenda items prior to board meetings was discussed, to clarify issues and assure that appropriate staff members have the information available at board meetings.

The importance of regular CEO evaluation and discussion of progress on district priorities was discussed.

It was noted that the Policy Committee may review administrative procedures to assure that they exist to adequately carry out board policy, but that the Board does not approve procedures.

**Recommendation 9:** *The team recommends the Board of Trustees and District adhere to their appropriate roles. The District must serve the colleges as liaison between the colleges and the Board of Trustees while assuring that the college presidents can operate their institutions effectively. Meanwhile the Board must not interfere with the operations of the four colleges of the district and allow the Chancellor to take full responsibility and authority for the areas assigned to district oversight.*

The Board discussed the purpose of the “listening sessions” at the colleges that involved administration and board members. It was noted that while they served the purpose of connecting district trustees and administration with the colleges, they are not a systematic way of monitoring institutional effectiveness.

The Chancellor discussed how he holds the district and college administration accountable to implementing Board direction and policy. It was noted that the Board holds the Chancellor accountable and if trustees have concerns about college performance, they should be expressed to the Chancellor.

The Board affirmed that the following practices and protocols will help address these recommendations:

- All board members will channel requests for information through the Chancellor
- The Chancellor will assure regular reporting to the Board on fiscal and strategic priorities
- Board committee purposes and practices will be reviewed to assure they do not result in directing staff work.
- If a trustee should violate these practices, the Chancellor will notify the Board President, who will address the issue.

Prepared by Cindra J. Smith, Ed. D.  
Board Development and Facilitation  
2042 Roaring Camp Drive  
Gold River CA 95670  
916.635.5733 916.955.5733 (cell)  
[cindrasmith@comcast.net](mailto:cindrasmith@comcast.net)

Subject to review and amendment by the Peralta CCD Board of Trustees

DRAFT