

**DAS President's Report to the Peralta CCD Board of Trustees for February 12, 2013**  
**Karolyn van Putten**

Thank you Mr. President, and good evening trustees, chancellor, district administration center staff, college presidents, colleagues and members of the public.

Last week seven members of the District Academic Senate and three additional Peralta faculty members attended the 2013 Accreditation Institute held in San Jose, CA. The institute was developed by the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC), in conjunction with the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC). This year's theme was, "Meeting and Exceeding the Standards -- The Evolution of Accreditation." Our participation in general and breakout sessions exposed us to dialogs that are taking place at colleges across the state, as well as provided opportunities for us to inquire about accreditation and assessment concerns and processes.

At the opening general session we heard from ACCJC President Dr. Barbara Beno followed by a discussion of the state of the accreditation process and the ACCJC moving beyond the 2012 standards. You should know that these standards are undergoing review at present, with the expectation that a new set of standards will be finalized and available in 2014. Colleges with visits in 2015 (this applies to all of the Peralta colleges) will NOT be held accountable to the newly revised standards, with one major exception. The exception will be that any changes in regulations coming from the Department of Education (DOE) must be implemented immediately.

Some of the new DOE regulations focus on directing how visiting accreditation teams will examine and evaluate institutions. Among other things, at each college evaluation teams will review samples of at least five course outlines and corresponding syllabi and examine class schedules to determine that the institution has assigned an appropriate amount of work to conform to the Carnegie Unit, and this sampling MUST include:

- At least one distance education course
- At least one classroom based course with a laboratory
- At least one course that provides for clinical practice, if applicable to the institution, and
- At least one class that converts clock hours to credit hours for purposes of awarding credit, if the institution does so.

In addition, the evaluation team will review the manner in which the institution determines if a course is offered by distance education or correspondence education and will examine the delivery mode of a sampling of courses where students are separated from the instructors as a way to determine which mode of delivery is being employed. With the intention of judging the integrity of the credits and grades awarded, evaluation teams will examine methods for verifying the identity of students enrolled in distance and correspondence education classes and look for evidence that the institution uses a secure log in and password for its distance education classes.<sup>1</sup>

Many of Dr. Beno's remarks referenced a paper by Dr. Peter Ewell, "The New 'Ecology' For Higher Education: Challenges to Community College Accreditation." Here's a seminal quotation from the opening paragraph of that paper:

"If current trends continue, community college students in 2020 will participate in new kinds of learning experiences, access new kinds of learning resources, and deal with broader ranges of providers than ever before. Meanwhile, colleges will harness almost unimagined new technologies, will face escalating demands for performance, and will be forced to operate in an increasingly seamless global marketplace for higher education. Together, these conditions constitute nothing less than a "new ecology" for community colleges. Its characteristics are increasingly removed from the kinds of on-the-ground, face-to-face, bricks-

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<sup>1</sup> Source: ACCJC Memo To All External Evaluation Team Members, Effective Spring 2013, Implementation of New U.S. Department of Education Regulations New Evaluation Team Responsibilities.

and-mortar conditions in which today's accreditation approaches evolved.”<sup>2</sup>

You've heard similar themes in many of my reports to you over the past year or so. Dr. Ewell focused specifically on new patterns of student participation that are “raising issues about how learning transfers from one institution to another in a cumulative and coherent fashion as a student works toward a credential.”<sup>3</sup> Four more forces interact to define this “new ecology for higher education”. They are: A transformed and contingent faculty, new approaches to teaching and learning, constrained resources, and a global higher education system.

Combine those factors with the increase in “new kinds of providers” that rely solely on distance education and access to Internet resources that can potentially allow a dedicated student to master all of the material covered in a baccalaureate program without ever physically attending an organized institution of higher education. Taking new DOE regulations into account, one of the breakout sessions examined how distance education figures into the accreditation process and ways to determine what constitutes quality distance education, ensuring that our courses and programs meet the standards.

Later in Dr. Ewell's paper he states, “The results of [accreditation] reviews will need to be reported in more detail to external audiences, including summaries of findings and the enumeration of institutional strengths and weaknesses. At the same time, colleges will be increasingly required to make the results of learning outcomes assessment public, together with appropriately-benchmarked levels of student performance.”<sup>4</sup>

For those who want more details, Dr. Ewell's paper, as well as the full text of Dr. Beno's remarks, are available for download at the ACCJC's web site (<http://www.accjc.org/>). All of the Accreditation Institute handouts and presentations are available at the ASCCC site (<http://asccc.org/events/2013/02/accreditation-institute>).

With increased Department of Education scrutiny and rising expectations for student success, Dr. Beno made it clear that the new accreditation standards will focus more on outcomes and less on processes, will centralize all requirements about assessment and will include standards on institutional integrity. With so many changes afoot, it is also clear that Peralta derives considerable benefit from having a large faculty presence at events like these. There is so much to pay attention to and keep track of that it is essential to have multiple perspectives on the content and we support one another in clarifying and interpreting the information shared.

That concludes my report for tonight. Thank you for receiving it.

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<sup>2</sup> Source: [http://www.accjc.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/The-New-Ecology-for-Higher-Education\\_P.Ewell.pdf](http://www.accjc.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/The-New-Ecology-for-Higher-Education_P.Ewell.pdf), p. 1, retrieved February 12, 2013

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p. 4.