ACCREDITING COMMISSION for COMMUNITY and JUNIOR COLLEGES

Western Association of Schools and Colleges

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June 29, 2015

Dr. Debbie Budd
President
Berkeley City College
2050 Center Street
Berkeley, CA 94704

Dear President Budd:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting on June 3-5, 2015, reviewed the Institutional Self Evaluation Report, the Report of the External Evaluation Team that visited Berkeley City College March 9-12, 2015, and considered the opening testimony provided by President Budd and representatives of the college and district leadership. The Commission appreciates the joint commitment to working together toward improvement that Berkeley City College and the Peralta Community College District spoke about.

The Commission took action to **issue Warning** and require the College to submit a Follow-Up Report in October 2016. The Report will be followed by a visit by an external evaluation team. Warning is issued when 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. When Warning is issued as a result of the institution's educational quality and institutional effectiveness review, reaffirmation of accreditation is delayed during the period of warning. Warning is being issued for the District deficiencies.

Berkeley City College should submit the Follow-Up Report by **October 1, 2016.**[1] The Follow-Up Report should demonstrate that the College has resolved the deficiencies which led to noncompliance and that it meets the Standards. The Report should address the college and district recommendations, and the Commission Concern noted below.

Need to Resolve Deficiencies:

The Accreditation Standards represent practices that lead to academic quality and institutional effectiveness. Deficiencies in institutional policies, procedures, practices, and outcomes which lead to noncompliance with any Standards will impact quality at an institution, and ultimately the educational environment and experiences of students.

The Commission found Berkeley City College out of compliance with the following Eligibility Requirements and Accreditation Standards: Eligibility Requirement 18 and Standards I.A.3, I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.5, I.B.6, I.B.7, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.b, II.A.2.f, II.A.2.g, II.A.6, III.A.2, III.A.6, III.B.1, III.B.1.a, III.B.2, III.B.2.a, III.C.1.b, III.C.1.d, III.C.2, III.D.1.a, III.D.1.b, III.D.1.c, III.D.2.b, III.D.3.c, III.D.3.h, III.D.4, IV.B.1, IV.B.1.a, IV.B.1.e, IV.B.1.j, IV.B.2.b, IV.B.3, IV.B.3.b, IV.B.3.c, IV.B.3.g. The External Evaluation Report that was sent to the institution provides details of the team's findings with regard to each Eligibility Requirement and Accreditation Standard and should be read carefully and used to understand the team's findings. College Recommendations 1 through 3, District Recommendations 1 through 8, and Commission Concern 1 provide guidance for coming into compliance.

College Recommendation 1:
In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends that the College, through its governance and decision-making structure, develop and publish a process to review its mission and program review, institutional planning, student learning assessment, and resource allocation processes on a regular basis and revise as necessary (I.A.3, I.B.3, I.B.5, I.B.6, I.B.7, III.C.1.b, III.C.1.c, III.C.1.d, III.C.2, IV.B.2.b).

College Recommendation 3:
In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends that the College reevaluate the established SLO assessment cycles to implement a process that includes more frequent assessment of all courses. The team further recommends that SLOs be included in all course syllabi and match the official course outlines of record (I.B.5, I.B.7, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.b, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.A.2.g, II.A.6).

District Recommendation 1: In order to meet the Standard, the Team recommends that the District follow the 2014 audit recommendations and develop an action plan to fund its Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) liabilities, including the associated debt service (III.D.1.c, III.D.3.c).

District Recommendation 2. In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends that the District resolve comprehensively and in a timely manner the ongoing deficiencies identified in the 2013 and 2014 external audit findings (III.D.2.b, III.D.3.h).

Commission Concern 1:
Regarding District Recommendations 1 and 2, the Commission carefully reviewed the team report and the District's external audit and found that the District must provide the documented, long-term planning necessary for the continued financial stability of the District. This must include attention to obligations coming due in the future such as the postemployment health care benefits, the annual line of credit repayment, and the appropriate resolution to audit findings from 2013 and 2014 which impact the District both at the operating fund level and the entity-wide financial statement level (III.D.1.c, III.D.2.b, III.D.3.c, III.D.3.h).

District Recommendation 3:
In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends that District General Services (DGS) work with college personnel to implement a plan to address total cost of ownership for new facilities and equipment, including undertaking critical deferred maintenance and preventive maintenance needs at the college in order to assure safe and sufficient physical resources for students, faculty and staff (III.B.1, III.B.1.a, III.B.2.a).

District Recommendation 4:
In order to meet the Standards, the District should clearly identify the structures, roles, responsibilities and document the processes used to integrate human, facilities, technology planning, and fiscal planning in support of student learning and achievement and regularly evaluate the process in order to fairly allocate resources to support the planning priorities (III.A.6, III.B.2, III.C.2, III.D.4, IV.B.3.g).

District Recommendation 5:
In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends that the District ensure retention of key leadership positions and that adequate staffing capacity is available to address the needs of the colleges in three critical areas reflected in the accreditation standards: institutional effectiveness and leadership, institutional research, and financial accountability and management (III.A.2, III.A.6).

District Recommendation 6:
In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends that the District clearly delineate and communicate the operational responsibilities and functions of the district from those of the colleges and consistently adheres to this delineation in practice; and regularly assesses and evaluates District role delineation and governance and decision-making structures and processes to assure their integrity and effectiveness in assisting the colleges in meeting educational goals (IV.B.3).

District Recommendation 7:
In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends the Governing Board adhere to its appropriate role. The Board must allow the chancellor to take full responsibility and authority for the areas assigned to District oversight (IV.B.1, IV.B.1a, IV.B.1.e, IV.B.1.j).

District Recommendation 8:
In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends that the District systematically evaluate the equitable distribution of resources and the sufficiency and effectiveness of district-provided services in supporting effective operations of the colleges (IV.B.3.b, IV.B.3.c, III.D.1.a, III.D.1.b, III.D.3.h).

Improving Institutional Effectiveness:

In its report, the team noted College Recommendation 2 for improving institutional effectiveness. This recommendation does not identify current areas of deficiency in institutional practice, but highlights areas of practice for which College attention is needed. The Commission requires that institutions address recommendations for increasing institutional effectiveness as an aspect of maintaining compliance with Standards and continuous quality improvement. Berkeley City College should report on College Recommendation at the time of the Midterm Report.

Additional Information:

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. With this letter, Berkeley City College is being provided with notice of the Standards for which it is out of compliance and is being provided time to meet the Standards.

Commission changes to the External Evaluation Report have been noted on a separate page for inclusion with the team report, which is enclosed. Copies of the enclosed team report, with this added page, may now be duplicated and posted.[2]

In its self evaluation process, Berkeley City College also identified improvement plans it intends to undertake. These improvement plans should be linked to Berkeley City College's ongoing evaluation and improvement work.

The guidance and 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 for Berkeley City College to come into compliance. While an institution may concur or disagree with any part of the Report, Berkeley City College is expected to use the External Evaluation Report to improve educational programs and services. In addition, the College has the responsibility to accept the Commission's action and to uphold the integrity of the accreditation process by accurately portraying it and helping institutional constituencies to understand the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission Policies pertinent to the Commission action.

A **final** copy of the External Evaluation Report is enclosed. 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 College Self Evaluation Report. This group should include the campus leadership and the Board of Trustees. The Commission also requires that these documents be made available to students and the public by placing a copy on the College website.

Dr. Debbie Budd
Berkeley City College
June 29, 2015

Please note that in response to public interest in disclosure, the Commission now requires institutions to post accreditation information on a page no more than one click from the institution's home page.

On behalf of the Commission, I wish to encourage your continued work to ensure Berkeley City College's educational quality and to support students' success. Professional self-regulation is the responsibility of an accredited college and the accreditor. Thank you for sharing in that responsibility.

If you should have any questions concerning this letter or the Commission action, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Barbara A. Beno, Ph.D.
President

BAB/tl

cc: Dr. José Ortiz, Chancellor

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[1] Institutions 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* found on the ACCJC website at: http://www.accjc.org/college-reports-accjc.

[2] The External Evaluation Team chair has concurred with the Commission revision to the Team Report.