

January 26, 2018

Dr. Angela Fairchilds, President
Columbia College
11600 Columbia College Drive
Sonora, CA 95370

Dear President Fairchilds:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting January 10-12, 2018, reviewed the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) and evidentiary materials submitted by Columbia College. The Commission also considered the External Evaluation Team Report (Team Report) prepared by the peer review team that conducted its onsite visit to the College Monday, October 2-Thursday, October 5, 2017. At its meeting, the Commission considered the spoken testimony of Chancellor Henry Yong, yourself, Dr. Brian Sanders, and team chair Dr. Keith Curry. The Commission found these additional perspectives to be helpful.

The purpose of this review was to determine whether the College continues to meet ACCJC's Eligibility Requirements, Commission Policies, and Accreditation Standards (hereinafter, the Standards). Upon consideration of the written and oral information noted above, the Commission acted to **Reaffirm Accreditation for 18 months and required a Follow-Up Report, due no later than March 1, 2019**, followed by a visit from a peer review team.

Compliance Requirements

The Commission also determined that the College must demonstrate compliance with the following Standards, as addressed in the District Compliance Requirements. This demonstration must be addressed in the required Follow-Up Report.

1. **Standard III.B.4 and III.C.2 (District Recommendation 1):** In order to meet the standard, the District must address the total cost of ownership for physical and technological resources in support of the Colleges' missions, operations, programs, and services.
2. **Standards IV.C.7 and IV.C.12 (District Recommendation 4):** In order to meet the Standards, the Board must fully delegate operational authority to the Chancellor and the College Presidents as specified in Board Policies 2430 and 2430.1, and demonstrate through practice, their policy making role while refraining from interfering with the CEO's authority to operate the District/Colleges.

In accordance with federal regulations, compliance requirements must be addressed and the institution must demonstrate that it aligns with Standards within two years¹.

¹ For more information, refer to the Commission policy on "The Two-Year Rule and Extension for Good Cause" on the ACCJC website at <https://accjc.org/eligibility-requirements-standards-policies/>.

Recommendations for Improving Institutional Effectiveness

The Team Report noted College Recommendations 1 through 4 and District Recommendations 2 and 3 for improving institutional effectiveness. These recommendations do not identify current areas of deficiency in institutional practice but, consistent with its mission to foster continuous improvement through the peer review process, the Commission encourages institutions to give serious consideration to the advice contained in the peer reviewers' recommendations. The Commission anticipates that you will bring them and the team's full report to the attention of your institution for serious consideration. In the Midterm Report, the College will include actions taken in response to the peer review team's improvement recommendations.

Next Steps

The Team Report provides details of the peer review team's findings with regard to the College's work to meet Standards. The guidance and recommendations contained in the Report represent the best advice of the peer review team at the time of the visit but may not describe all that is necessary for the college to improve or to come into compliance. A final copy of the team report is attached.

The Commission requires that you disseminate the ISER, the Team Report, and this letter to those who were signatories of the ISER and that you make these documents available to all campus constituencies and the public by placing copies on the College website. Please note that in response to public interest in accreditation, the Commission requires institutions to post current accreditation information on a Web page no more than one click from the institution's home page. In keeping with ACCJC policy, the Commission action will also be posted on the ACCJC website within 30 days of the date of the Commission's action.

The College's Midterm Report² will be due on October 15, 2021. The institution's next comprehensive review will occur in the fall term of 2024.

On behalf of the Commission, I wish to express appreciation for the diligent work and thoughtful reflection that Columbia College undertook to prepare for this evaluation. These efforts confirm that peer review can well serve the multiple constituencies of higher education by both ensuring and encouraging institutional quality and effectiveness.

If you have any questions about this letter or the Commission's action, please feel free to contact me or the vice president that has been assigned as liaison to your institution.

Sincerely,



Richard Winn, Ed.D.
President

cc: Mr. Henry C. Yong, Chancellor, Yosemite CCD
Dr. Brian Sanders, Accreditation Liaison Officer

² Institutions preparing and submitting Midterm Reports, Follow-up Reports, and Special Reports to the Commission should review *Guidelines for the Preparing Institutional Reports to the Commission*, found on the ACCJC website at <https://accjc.org/publications/>.