



**ACCREDITING
COMMISSION
for COMMUNITY and
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

*Western Association
of Schools and Colleges*

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February 11, 2013

Mr. Stan Carrizosa
Superintendent/President
College of the Sequoias
915 South Mooney Boulevard
Visalia, CA 93277

Dear President Carrizosa:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting January 9-11, 2013, considered the institutional Self Evaluation Report, the report of the evaluation team which visited College of the Sequoias October 8-11, 2012, and the comments made by College representatives via conference call to the meeting.

The purpose of the review was to consider College of the Sequoias' application for reaffirmation of accreditation, and determine whether the College meets Eligibility Requirements and Accreditation Standards. The Commission found that College of the Sequoias was in substantial non-compliance and that it failed to meet a significant number of Eligibility Requirements and Accreditation Standards, and failed to address five recommendations, and resolve associated deficiencies, identified for the institution at the time of its last comprehensive evaluation in 2006.

The Commission acted to order **Show Cause** and to require that the College complete a **Show Cause Report by October 15, 2013**. The report will be followed by a visit of Commission representatives. College of the Sequoias is also required to prepare a **Closure Report by October 15, 2013**, which is to be submitted with the institution's Show Cause Report.

The accredited status of the institution continues during the period of Show Cause but reaffirmation of accreditation will not occur until and unless the institution addresses all deficiencies and is found to be in substantial compliance with all Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies.

Show Cause is issued when the Commission finds an institution in substantial non-compliance with the Commission's Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, or Commission policies, or when the institution has not responded to the conditions imposed by the Commission.

In these situations, the Commission will require the institution to Show Cause why its accreditation should not be withdrawn at the end of a stated period by demonstrating that it has corrected the deficiencies noted by the Commission and is in compliance with Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies.

President's Office

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In the case of a Show Cause action by the Commission, the burden of proof will rest on the institution to demonstrate why its accreditation should be continued.

If loss of accreditation will likely cause an institution to close, then during the Show Cause period, the institution must make preparations for closure according to the Commission's "Policy on Closing an Institution." College of the Sequoias is therefore also required to prepare a Closure Report.

Show Cause was ordered for College of the Sequoias (COS) for deficiencies associated with Eligibility Requirements 10, 13, 19, and 21, and Recommendations 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6, each of which was also identified by the 2006 comprehensive evaluation team. The Commission notes that faculty at the institution stopped work on a number of academic issues critical to institutional quality during recent years, and that this failure was related to the campus climate issue identified and addressed in the 2006 team report and again in the 2012 team report with Recommendation 2. The Commissioners wish to convey their strong sentiment that regardless of differences among parties at a college, all staff must work to assure academic quality and support student success.

The Show Cause Report of October 15, 2013 should provide evidence and explanation of how the institution meets the Standards and Eligibility Requirements identified in the 2012 Evaluation Team Report. These include Standard I.A.3 and 4; Standard I.B.1-6; Standard II.A.1 a and c, Standard II.A.2 a, b, e, f, g, h and i; II.B.3.a. and II.B.4; Standard II.C.1 and II.C.1.c; III.A.1, all sections; III.D, all sections; IV.A.2.a and b; IV.A.3; IV.A.5; IV.B.2; IV.B.2.b and IV.b.1.g. The Report should also demonstrate that the College is in compliance with Eligibility Requirements 10, 13, 19 and 21. Unless the Commission finds during its January 2014 meeting that the College has met its burden to demonstrate that it is in full compliance with the above referenced Standards and Eligibility Requirements, the Commission will act to terminate accreditation, effective at the end of the Spring semester 2014.

For specific reference to the Eligibility Requirements and Accreditation Standards that COS was found by the evaluation team and the Commission not to meet, either fully or partially, the institution is referred to the Evaluation Team Report that connects each of its findings, conclusions, and recommendations to the applicable Eligibility Requirement or Accreditation Standard. The College is urged to very carefully review the *entire* report and use it as a basis for developing and enacting strategies to come into compliance with accreditation requirements.

Evaluation Team Findings on Eligibility Requirements:

Eligibility Requirement 10 Student Learning and Achievement

The evaluation team confirmed that COS is still in the process of developing and assessing student learning outcomes for its courses and programs but has not, however, fully defined and published student learning outcomes for all programs. Additionally, the College has not assessed all of the learning outcomes that have been published and is therefore not using that data to determine if those outcomes are being achieved.

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Eligibility Requirement 13 Faculty

Faculty responsibilities include the development and review of curriculum; however, the team could not verify that they include the required assessment of learning.

Eligibility Requirement 19 Institutional Planning and Evaluation

The evaluation team confirmed that COS has established processes for institutional planning and evaluation. The team recommends, however, that the college continue to improve those processes. See Recommendations 1, 4, and 7.

Eligibility Requirement 21 Integrity in Relations with the Accrediting Commission

The evaluation team confirmed that COS has stated its commitment to adhering to all ACCJC Eligibility Requirements and Accreditation Standards and to accurately portraying itself to the Commission. However, COS has not addressed the findings and recommendations of the Commission with regard to the 2006 comprehensive evaluation, and has not fulfilled its statement of commitment.

Evaluation Team Recommendations:

Recommendation 1: Planning

(Repeats 2006 Recommendation 2)

In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the college integrate, strengthen, and formalize its planning processes, systematically reviewing and revising them to ensure informed decisions for continuous improvement. (Standards I.A.3, I.A.4, I.B, I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.6, III.D.1.a, III.D.2.d, III.D.3, IV.A.2.a, IV.A.2.b, IV.A.3, IV.B.2)

Recommendation 2: Campus Dialog

(Repeats 2006 Recommendation 1)

In order to be more effective, the team recommends that the college improve the campus climate by encouraging all constituents to participate in an inclusive dialogue that embodies a culture of respect, civility, and trust. (Standards I.B.1, I.B.4, I.B.5, IV.A.2, IV.A.2.a, IV.A.3)

Recommendation 3: Research Capacity

In order to fully comply with the standards, the team recommends the college increase the research capacity of the institution in order to compile and provide data to guide institutional planning and resource allocation, program review and assessment, and decision-making for institutional effectiveness. (Standards I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.6, II.A.1.a, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.B.4, III.A, IV.B.2.b)

Recommendation 4: Student Learning Outcomes

(Repeats 2006 Recommendation 3)

To meet the standard, the team recommends that the college advance its progress on student learning outcomes by regularly assessing those outcomes and using the results to improve student learning and strengthen institutional effectiveness.

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The college needs to include effectiveness in producing student learning outcomes as a component of the evaluation of faculty and staff who are responsible for assessing student learning. The college also needs to demonstrate how it is using these data for improvement. (Standards I.B.3, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.b, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.A.2.h, II.A.2.i, II.A.5, II.A.6, II.B.3.a, II.B.4, III.A.1.c, and IV.B.2)

Recommendation 5: Student Support Services
(Repeats part of 2006 Recommendation 4)

In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the college improve counseling services for evening students, online students, and students that attend the Hanford Center, and library services for evening students and students that attend the Hanford Center in order to ensure the equitability of those services. (Standards II.B.3.a, II.C.1, II.C.1.c)

Recommendation 6: Human Resource Processes

In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that the college improve human resource processes to include hiring procedures for all employees and establish a clear connection between employee evaluation and improvement. (Standards III.A.1, III.A.1.a, III.A.1.b, III.A.1.c)

Recommendation 7: Evaluation of Processes

In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the college develop and implement a systematic evaluation of its decision-making and budget development processes and use the results of those evaluations as a basis for improvement. (Standards III.D.1.a, III.D.1.d, III.D.2.d, III.D.3, IV.A.2, IV.A.5, IV.B.1.g, IV.B.2)

Since the loss of accreditation will likely cause College of the Sequoias to close, during the show cause period, the institution must make preparations for closure according to the Commission's "Policy on Closing an Institution." The College will be required to submit a Closure Plan with its Show Cause Report on October 15, 2013.

I wish to inform you that under U.S. Department of Education regulations, institutions out of compliance with Standards or on sanction are expected to correct deficiencies within a two-year period or the Commission must take action to terminate accreditation. College of the Sequoias must come into compliance with accreditation requirements by January, 2014, or the Commission will be compelled to take adverse action and terminate accreditation effective with the end of the Spring 2014 semester.

Enclosed you will find a **final copy** of the Evaluation Report. Additional copies may now be duplicated. The Commission requires that the Evaluation Report and this action letter be disseminated to College staff and to those who were signatories of the institutional Self Study Report. This group should include campus leadership and the Board of Trustees.

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The Commission also requires the College to make the Self Study Report, Evaluation Report, and this Commission action letter available to students and the public by placing the materials on the College website. *Please note that in response to public interest in disclosure, the Commission now requires institutions to post accreditation information on a page no farther than one click from the institution's home page.* If you would like an electronic copy of the Evaluation Report, please contact Commission staff.

Federal regulations require the Commission to post a Public Disclosure Notice (PDN) for institutions placed on Probation or Show Cause, or when accreditation is terminated. The PDN is used to inform the public of the reasons for such a severe sanction. The Commission will post the PDN on the College's entry in the Directory of Accredited Institutions online at www.accjc.org. The institution is permitted to post a response to the PDN. Enclosed find the proposed notice for College of the Sequoias with this action letter, and your comments on it are invited. Please provide the College's response for posting, if any, by March 11, 2013.

Please call this office if the ACCJC staff can be of assistance or if you have any questions.

On behalf of the Commission, I wish to express continuing interest in the institution's educational programs and services. Professional self-regulation is the most effective means of assuring integrity, effectiveness and quality.

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Beno, Ph.D.

BAB/cms

Enclosure

cc: Dr. Jennifer Vega La Serna, Accreditation Liaison Officer
Board President, Board of Trustees, Sequoias Community College District
Mr. William H. Duncan IV, Superintendent/President Sierra College, Team Chair
Ms. Martina Fernandez-Rosario, U.S.D.E.