



**ACCREDITING
COMMISSION
for COMMUNITY and
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

*Western Association
of Schools and Colleges*

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June 29, 2015

Dr. Donald Wallace
Superintendent/President
Palo Verde College
One College Drive
Blythe, CA 92225

Dear President Wallace:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting June 3-5, 2015, reviewed the Follow-Up Report submitted by Palo Verde College and the report of the evaluation team that visited on April 13, 2015. The College Follow-Up Report was certified by college leadership, including the president of the board of trustees, the college president, and leaders of the faculty, staff, and student organizations.

Based on the College Report, evidence submitted, and the Team Report, the Commission finds that Palo Verde College has addressed Recommendations 3 and 6, from the spring 2014 comprehensive evaluation, resolved the deficiencies, and meets Standards I.B.1-6; II.A.1.a; II.A.2.a, e, f; II.A.7.b-c; II.B.2.c; and II.B.4. Therefore, the Commission took action to remove Probation and **issue Warning**. The Commission also acted to require Palo Verde College to submit a **Follow-Up Report in March 2016**.¹ The Report will be followed by a visit of an external evaluation team.

Warning is issued when the Commission finds that an institution has deficiencies which lead to noncompliance with the Commission's Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, or Commission policies to an extent that gives concern to the Commission.

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 Standard will impact quality at an institution and ultimately the educational environment and experiences of students. The Commission finds that Palo Verde College has taken the steps required to meet the Standards cited above and should now complete the work necessary to meet the Standards noted below.

The Follow-Up Report due **March 1, 2016** should demonstrate that the College has addressed Recommendations 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, and 8, noted below, from the 2014 comprehensive evaluation, fully resolved the remaining deficiencies, and meets Eligibility Requirements 8, 10, and 19 and Standards I.A.3-4; I.B.1-6; II.A.1.a, b, c; II.A.2.a, b, c, d, e, f; II.B.1; III.A.1.b, c; III.C.2; III.D.1. The recommendations provide guidance for resolving the remaining deficiencies.

Dr. Donald Wallace
Palo Verde College
June 29, 2015

Recommendation #1: In order to meet the Standards and as noted in Team Recommendations #1 and #2 and Commission Recommendation #4 (2008), the team recommends the College create a complete blueprint for planning that includes regular review of the mission statement and current institutional plans that collectively describe how the College will achieve its goals. The mission statement should inform overarching plans, such as the education master plan or strategic plan. Overarching plans should drive other long-term institutional plans such as the technology plan and enrollment management plan. These long-term plans should include institution set standards for student achievement and be used to inform annual planning as part of the program review process. Assessment of student learning outcomes and related dialogue should be integral to the planning process, such as by embedding SLO dialogue into program review.

(Standards I.A.3-4; I.B.1-6; II.A.2.f; II.B.1; III.C.2; III.D.1; ER.10; ER.19)

Recommendation #2: In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends that the College develop and implement a sustainable assessment plan that ensures the College completes a full cycle of student learning outcome (SLO) assessment that includes discussion of results and action planning at all levels [course SLOs, program SLOs, general education (GE) SLOs, and institutional SLOs] to move to the *Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement Level* of the ACCJC Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness. To complete a full assessment cycle, the College must accelerate its efforts to assess all student learning outcomes for every course, and must demonstrate the following:

- All SLOs included in official course outlines of record are the same SLOs being assessed by faculty and that assessment of all SLOs is completed on a regular basis.
- Faculty are engaged in ongoing dialogue about methods of assessment, results of assessment and plans for quality improvement based on assessment.
- The College maintains records of assessment tools and methods used, assessment samples, assessment results, assessment dialogue and action planning based on assessments, and makes these records easily available.
- Course, program, GE, and institutional SLO assessment data and analysis are integral parts of the program review process and drive efforts to improve course, program and institutional effectiveness.

(Standards I.B; I.B.2-3; II.A.1.a,c; II.A.2.a,b,e; ER.8; ER.10; ER.19)

Recommendation #4: In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends that the College implement a data-informed process to systematically evaluate the methods of teaching of all courses and programs including all instructional modalities [distance education (DE), correspondence education (CE) and face-to-face] to ensure the student learning experience and outcomes are comparable regardless of the method of instruction or delivery.

(Standards II.A.1.b-c; II.A.2.a,c,d,e,f)

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Recommendation #5: In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends that the College implement a data-informed process to systematically evaluate the instruction methods for all instructional service agreement (ISA) courses and programs to ensure the student learning experience and outcomes meet college standards.
(Standards II.A.1.b-c; II.A.2.a,c,d,e,f)

Recommendation #7: In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends that the College develop, implement and evaluate an effective part-time faculty evaluation process.
(Standard III.A.1.b)

Recommendation #8: In order to meet the Standards and as noted in Commission Recommendation #2 (2008), the team recommends that the College fully implement the negotiated amendment to the faculty collective bargaining agreement requiring that a Professional Self-Disclosure Statement regarding faculty involvement in SLOs be included as part of the faculty evaluation process and that the College provide evidence that this self-disclosure is effective in producing student learning outcomes. (Standard III.A.1.c)

With regard to Standard III.A.1.c, as cited in Recommendation 8, the Commission notes that the College has implemented the negotiated amendment to the faculty collective bargaining agreement by including faculty involvement in the SLO process as part of the full-time faculty evaluation. However, the intent of the Standard is that the College faculty involvement in SLOs include part-time faculty as well as full-time faculty.

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, Palo Verde College is being given notice of the Standards for which it is out of compliance and is being provided time to meet the Standards. Palo Verde College must resolve the remaining deficiencies and meet the Standards by **March 2016**.

Institutions are expected to meet Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies at all times during the six-year review cycle. Palo Verde College must demonstrate to the Commission at the time of the March 2016 Report that it has resolved all remaining deficiencies and meets the Standards noted above.

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A **final** copy of the External Evaluation Team Report is attached. 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.

The Follow-Up Report submitted in March 2015 will become part of the accreditation history of the College. The Commission requires that you give the Follow-Up Report, the External Evaluation Team Report, and this letter appropriate dissemination to your College staff and to those who were signatories of your Follow-Up 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. *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 Palo Verde 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.

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Beno, Ph.D.
President

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¹ Institutions preparing and submitting Midterm Reports, Follow-Up Reports, or Special Reports to the Commission should review *Guidelines for the Preparation of Reports to the Commission* which can be found on the ACCJC website at: <http://www.accjc.org/college-reports-accjc>.