



**ACCREDITING
COMMISSION
for COMMUNITY and
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

*Western Association
of Schools and Colleges*

10 COMMERCIAL BOULEVARD
SUITE 204
NOVATO, CA 94949
TELEPHONE: (415) 506-0234
FAX: (415) 506-0238
E-MAIL: accjc@accjc.org
www.accjc.org

Chairperson
MICHAEL T. ROTA
University of Hawaii

Vice Chairperson
SHERRILL L. AMADOR
Public Member

President
BARBARA A. BENO

Vice President
SUSAN B. CLIFFORD

Vice President
KRISTA JOHNS

Vice President
GARMAN JACK POND

Associate Vice President
JOHN NIXON

Associate Vice President
NORVAL WELLSFRY

CORRECTED LETTER

February 1, 2012

Dr. Gilbert Stork
Superintendent/President
Cuesta College
P. O. Box 8106
San Luis Obispo, CA 93403-8106

Dear President Stork:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting January 10-12, 2012, reviewed the Follow-Up Report submitted by the College and the report of the evaluation team which visited on Thursday, November 10, 2011.

The Accrediting Commission acted to order **Show Cause** and to require that Cuesta College submit a Show Cause Report by **October 15, 2012**. The Report will be followed by a visit of Commission representatives.

Show Cause is ordered when the Commission finds that an institution is in substantial non-compliance with its Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, or Commission policies or when the institution has not responded to the conditions imposed by the Commission. The Commission requires the institution to Show Cause why its accreditation should not be withdrawn at the end of a stated period by demonstrating that it has corrected the deficiencies noted by the Commission and is in compliance with Eligibility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. 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 the 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.*" The accredited status of the institution continues during the period of the show cause order.

The Show Cause was ordered for Cuesta College for deficiencies associated with Recommendations 2 and 6, listed below, which were identified by the 2008 comprehensive evaluation team; Recommendation 2 was also identified by the comprehensive evaluation team in 2002. Specifically, the College is out of compliance with Standard IB, Standard IIIC and Standard IIID.

Dr. Gilbert Stork
Cuesta College
February 1, 2012
Page Two

In addition, the Commission finds that Cuesta College is out of compliance with Eligibility Requirement #19, Institutional Planning and Evaluation. This deficiency was identified in the 2008 comprehensive evaluation report, “the team could not confirm that planning is integrated with ongoing assessment tied to resource allocation, research data and student learning outcomes.” (Page 11)

Cuesta College has not responded to conditions previously imposed by the Commission, and has not demonstrated an ability to address evaluation team recommendations in a manner that is timely, complete and sustained. Cuesta College has not demonstrated consistent and reliable compliance with Accreditation Standards and Eligibility Requirements.

The **Show Cause Report of October 15, 2012** should demonstrate the institution’s compliance with Standard IB, Standard IIIC, Standard IIID, and Eligibility Requirement 19. The Report should provide explanation and evidence of how the institution meets the Standards and Eligibility Requirement noted above, **and** what it has done to resolve the recommendations noted below. The failure of the College to demonstrate in its report full compliance with Commission Standards and Eligibility Requirements will require the Commission, at its January 2013 meeting, to take action to terminate accreditation.

Recommendation 2: Planning and Assessment

To meet standards, the team recommends that the college complete the strategic plan, institute an ongoing systematic evaluation process that communicates and clarifies the assessment tools used to measure the effectiveness of ongoing planning, program review, resource allocation processes and student learning outcomes. (Standard 1.B, 1.B.3, 1.B.4, 1.B.6, 1.B.7)

Recommendation 6: Technology Resources

To meet standards, the team recommends that the college establish a process for regular and systematic planning, acquisition, maintenance and replacement of its technology infrastructure, existing and newly acquired technology and equipment to meet institutional needs; and that the process is integrated with other college planning, assessment, and resource allocation. (Standard III.C.1.c, III.C.1.d)

Eligibility Requirement 19: Institutional Planning and Evaluation

The institution systematically evaluates and makes public how well and in what ways it is accomplishing its purposes, including assessment of student learning outcomes. The institution provides evidence of planning for improvement of institutional structures and processes, student achievement of educational goals, and student learning. The institution assesses progress toward achieving its stated goals and makes decisions regarding improvement through an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation.

Dr. Gilbert Stork
Cuesta College
February 1, 2012
Page Three

The Commission is concerned as well about Cuesta College's financial stability. Cuesta College has projected a deficit for its 2011-12 Budget due to enrollment reductions and the impact of not achieving the threshold for mid-sized colleges. The College reserves have remained sufficient to date to meet Commission requirements, but continuing deficits may reduce reserves. The College relied on Certificates of Participation (COPs) for capital construction in anticipation of a bond measure which failed in 2006. The institution reports that it has to date made all of its debt payments in a timely manner. However, the Commission asks that Cuesta College include with its October 2012 Show Cause report an update on its debt management plans and performance and in so doing, address Recommendation 7, below:

Recommendation 7: Financial Planning and Stability

To meet standards, the team recommends that the college review and assess its long range financial and capital planning strategies to ensure sufficient funding levels for ongoing operations. The team also recommends that the college and the college foundation review and communicate the fiscal status of investments and implement appropriate protections to secure fiscal solvency. (Standard III.D.1.c, III.D.2.a, III.D.2.e, III.D.3)

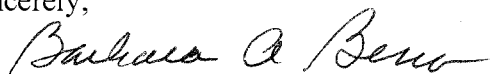
The Commission requires that you give the Show Cause Report and this letter appropriate dissemination to your College staff and to those who were signatories of your report. This group should include campus leadership and the Board of Trustees.

The Commission also requires that the College make all reports and action letters available to students and the public by placing them on the institution's website. The Report will become part of the accreditation history of the College. Should you want an electronic copy of the report, please contact Commission staff.

Finally, ACCJC staff is available to assist the College with consultation and advice on the issues identified in the recommendations noted above. Staff recommends that the institutional leaders read the 2011 Evaluation Team Report and the 2011 Cuesta College Follow-Up Report very carefully, and also examine the Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions.

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

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Beno, Ph.D.
President

BAB/tl

cc: Dr. A. Cathleen Greiner, Accreditation Liaison Officer
Board President, San Luis Obispo Community College District
Dr. Andreea Serban, Team Chair
Ms. Martina Fernandez-Rosario, U.S.D.E.