



**ACCREDITING
COMMISSION
for COMMUNITY and
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

*Western Association
of Schools and Colleges*

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February 11, 2013

Dr. Gilbert Stork
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 9-11, 2013, considered the Show Cause Report submitted by Cuesta College and the report of the evaluation team which visited October 29-30, 2012. The Commission notes that President Stork also addressed the Commission, as did the evaluation team chair, Dr. Raul Rodriguez. The purpose of this review was to determine whether Cuesta College meets Accreditation Standards at a level sufficient to remain accredited, and whether Cuesta College has made changes and improvement required by the Commission action letter of February 1, 2012 which placed the institution on Show Cause.

The Commission found that Cuesta College has fully resolved most of deficiencies that had been identified in the 2012 Commission action letter, but has yet to complete implementation of processes for internal quality assurance such that the institution's several plans and their implementation appropriately link academic processes, student outcomes and institutional resources in a manner that supports academic quality and improvement. Nevertheless, the College seems poised to demonstrate that it has fully resolved these issues in the next nine months as it enters the 2013-14 academic year.

The Commission also commends the considerable work that Cuesta College has accomplished by resolving the deficiencies related to technology planning, acquisition, maintenance, and replacement (Recommendation 6) and ensuring sufficient funding levels for ongoing operations (Recommendation 7). The Commission has determined that Cuesta College is now in compliance with Standard III.C and III.D.

The Commission acted to **remove Show Cause, issue Warning, and require Cuesta College to submit a Follow-Up Report¹ by October 15, 2013.** The report will be followed by a visit of Commission representatives.

The Commission also received Cuesta College's Closure Report.

Dr. Gilbert Stork
Cuesta College
February 11, 2013

Warning is issued when the Commission finds that 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. The Commission will specify a time within which the institution must resolve deficiencies and may subject the institution to required reports and evaluation visits. The accredited status of the institution continues during the warning period.

The Follow-Up Report should demonstrate that the institution fully resolved the deficiencies associated with the recommendations and Eligibility Requirements noted below, and now meets Accreditation Standards.

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)

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.

With regard to Recommendation 2 and Eligibility Requirement 19, the planning model that Cuesta College has implemented is robust and comprehensive. This new model appears to demonstrate that the College has linked program review, enrollment management, resource allocation, technology planning, facilities planning, and financial planning on the one hand and the college educational master plan and strategic plan on the other. When the College completes implementation and evaluation of the planning process, it should be able to demonstrate that Eligibility Requirement 19 has been met.

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. The timeline to correct deficiencies has been extended for good cause because the institution has just about completed all necessary improvements. Cuesta College must demonstrate that it has corrected the deficiencies noted above no later than **October 2013** or the Commission will be compelled to take adverse action.

Dr. Gilbert Stork
Cuesta College
February 11, 2013

I have previously sent you a copy of the Evaluation Team Report. Additional copies may now be duplicated. The Commission requires that you give the report and this action letter appropriate dissemination to your college staff and to those who were signatories of your college report. This group should include the campus leadership and the Board of Trustees. The Show Cause Report will become part of the accreditation history of the College and should be used in preparing for the next comprehensive evaluation.

The Commission also requires that the College's Show Cause Report, the Show Cause Evaluation Team Report, and this Commission action letter 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 farther than one click from the institution's home page.* If you would like an electronic copy of the Show Cause Evaluation Report, please contact Commission staff.

Finally, ACCJC staff is available to assist the College with consultation and advice on the recommendations identified above.

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

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Beno, Ph.D.
President

BAB/cms

cc: Ms. Deborah Wulff, Accreditation Liaison Officer
President, Board of Trustees, San Luis Obispo County CCD
Dr. Raúl Rodríguez, Chancellor, Rancho Santiago Community College District, Team Chair

¹ Institutions that will be 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*. It contains the background, requirements, and format for each type of report and presents sample cover pages and certification pages. It is available on the ACCJC website under College Reports to ACCJC at: (<http://www.accjc.org/college-reports-accjc>).