



**ACCREDITING
COMMISSION
for COMMUNITY and
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

*Western Association
of Schools and Colleges*

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July 3, 2014

Mr. Bradley Davis
President
West Valley College
14000 Fruitvale Ave
Saratoga, CA 95070

Dear President Davis:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting on June 4-6, 2014, reviewed the Institutional Self Evaluation Report and the Report of the External Evaluation Team that visited West Valley College March 17-20, 2014.

The Commission took action to **issue Warning** and require the College to submit a **Follow-Up Report** by **March 15, 2015**.¹ The Report will be followed by a visit of Commission representatives and should demonstrate that the College has addressed the Recommendations noted below, resolved the deficiencies, and meets Eligibility Requirements and Accreditation Standards.

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 institution is expected to correct its deficiencies, refrain from certain activities, or initiate certain activities. If the warning is issued as a result of the institution's educational quality and institutional effectiveness review, reaffirmation is delayed during the period of warning. The accredited status of the institution continues during the warning period.

Need to Resolve Deficiencies:

The Accreditation Standards, as an integrated whole, represent indicators of academic quality and institutional effectiveness. Deficiencies in any Standards will impact quality at an institution, and ultimately the educational environment and experiences of students. The Commission found West Valley College deficient in meeting the following Eligibility Requirement, Accreditation Standards: Eligibility Requirement 21, Standards I.B.2, II.A, II.A.1.b, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.b, II.A.2.h, II.A.5, II.A.6.b, III.A.1.b, III.A.1.c, III.C.1, III.C.2, and IV.A.4.

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College Recommendation 1: To satisfy the Eligibility Requirement and meet the standard, the team recommends that the College review its instructional programs with respect to the percentage of online offerings and submit a Substantive Change report to the accrediting body on programs that have equaled or exceeded the 50 percent threshold in online offerings. (ER 21; II.A.1.b; IV.A.4)

College Recommendation 2: To meet the standards, the team recommends that the College establish institution-set standards for student performance so that the degree to which they are achieved can be determined and widely discussed. (I.B.2; II.A.1.c; II.A.2.b; II.A.2.h; II.A.5; II.A.6.b)

College Recommendation 4: To meet the standards, the team recommends that the College satisfy the Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement requirement for Student Learning Outcomes and Program Learning Outcomes and regularly assess and monitor non-credit courses. (II.A; II.A.1.c; II.A.2.a)

College Recommendation 5: To meet the standard, the team recommends that the College evaluate all personnel systematically and at stated intervals. (III.A.1.b)

College Recommendation 6: To meet the standard, the team recommends the District and the College ensure that faculty and others directly responsible for student progress toward achieving stated student learning outcomes have, as a component of their evaluation, effectiveness in producing these learning outcomes. (III.A.1.c)

College Recommendation 7: To meet the standard, the team recommends the College integrate technology planning with institutional planning, and that the College and the District develop a comprehensive technology plan for the entire organization which addresses and incorporates the needs of both instructional and non-instructional areas. (III.C.1; III.C.2)

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. In exceptional situations, if the institution has done all within its authority to reach compliance on any standard but remains out of compliance, the Commission is permitted by regulations to allocate a one-time, short-term “good cause extension” for the college to reach compliance prior to acting on the institution’s termination. However, continued noncompliance with multiple standards would diminish the appropriateness of such an extension. West Valley College should fully resolve the noted deficiencies by **March 2015**.

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Improvement of Institutional Effectiveness:

Recommendations have been made for West Valley College to improve institutional effectiveness. Recommendations for improvement may be made to highlight areas for continuing or expanding excellent practices. Recommendations for improvement may also be made when an institution is currently in compliance with Standards, but additional levels of effort should be demonstrated in the future. In the Commission's experience, these recommendations may provide indicators of possible future noncompliance if left unattended by the institution. The College should plan to fully address all improvement recommendations in the Midterm Report.

College Recommendation 3: To increase effectiveness, the team recommends that College closely monitor, fully implement and evaluate the newly developed Budget Resource Allocation process to determine whether it is meeting the needs of the College and providing more transparency into the budget allocation process. (I.B; III.D; III.D.1d; III.A.6)

College Recommendation 8: To increase effectiveness, the team recommends that the College work with the District to assure the continued development and support of West Valley College's physical resources, and continue to work on updating the Educational and Facilities Master Plan in accordance with the five-year timeline. Additionally, the team recommends that the Facilities and Security Council regularly meet as scheduled. (III.B)

During its institutional self evaluation, West Valley College identified improvement plans for advancing its continuous improvement efforts. The Commission suggests that those plans for improvement be taken into account as the College continues into the next accreditation cycle. In its Midterm report, the College should address steps undertaken in those improvement areas.

The final External Evaluation Report that was sent to the institution provides details of the team's findings with regard to each Eligibility Requirement and Accreditation Standard and should be read carefully and used to understand the team's findings. Additional copies may now be duplicated.

The recommendations contained in the External Evaluation Report represent the best advice of the peer evaluation team at the time of the visit, but may not describe all that is necessary to come into compliance. Institutions are expected to take all actions necessary to continuously comply with Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies. The Commission wishes to remind you that while an institution may concur or disagree with any part of the Report, West Valley College is expected to use the External Evaluation Report to improve educational programs and services and to resolve issues identified by the Commission.

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The Commission requires that the College give the Institutional Self Evaluation Report, the External Evaluation Report, and this letter appropriate dissemination to College staff and to those who were signatories of the College Self Evaluation Report. This group should include the campus leadership, the Chancellor, and the Board of Trustees.

The Commission also requires that the College's Institutional Self Evaluation Report, the External Evaluation 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.*

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 institutional integrity, effectiveness, educational quality, and student success.

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Beno, Ph.D.
President

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¹Institutions 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>).