



June 5, 2013

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Dr. Barbara Beno, President

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

Western Association of Schools and Colleges

10 Commercial Blvd., Suite 204

Novato, CA 94949

Dear Dr. Beno:

The California Teachers Association wishes to express its concern over a number of issues having to do with the accreditation of the community colleges in California. We share many of the views of the California Federation of Teachers as set forth in its recent Complaint and will list several of our concerns here.

First, the ACCJC has issued an extraordinarily high number of sanctions as compared with other regional commissions in the United States. There is no evidence that the California Community Colleges do not provide higher education of a comparable quality to that provided by community colleges in other regions. The prevalence of sanctions – including very severe sanctions – in this region needs to be clarified.

Second, we are concerned as an association focusing on due process for our faculty that there are no mechanisms for due process built into the system for accrediting community and junior colleges. For example, why do we often find serious discrepancies between the report and recommendations of the visiting team and the final report and Commission action, with no explanation of why the recommendations changed?

Finally, we are especially concerned that the ACCJC does not foster a collaborative approach in its relationship with the colleges. While we recognize that the teams are often helpful when they conduct site visits, colleges operate under the threat of sanction rather than by positive reinforcement of effective accreditation work. We would like to see a system that encourages colleges to overcome any weaknesses as a result of the ACCJC working with the faculty, administration, and Board of Trustees before controversial recommendations are made public. We would also like to recommend to the Commission that it adopt a proactive approach – for

instance, if the Commission felt that the suggestions for improvement for the City College of San Francisco had become deficiencies, why not work with the constituent groups there to make that clear and offer suggested ways of mitigating those deficiencies, again before taking the drastic step of imposing Show Cause and subjecting CCSF to public humiliation and causing widespread panic among the 90,000 students who attend the college?

The California Teachers Association asks that you change your policies to foster more effective communication and a positive and supportive relationship between the ACCJC and its member colleges.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dean E. Vogel".

Dean E. Vogel  
President

cc: Lynette Nyaggah, President  
Community College Association

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