



Santanu Bandyopadhyay, Ph.D.
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May 11, 2020

To: Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges
10 Commercial Boulevard, Suite 204
Novato, CA 94949

From: Dr. Santanu Bandyopadhyay
President of Columbia College

Re: Temporary Correspondence Education Modality for Two Degrees

Columbia College has been teaching in-person courses to inmates of local prisons for several years. These have been enormously successful. Student inmates appreciate the personal interaction, effective teaching, and care that our faculty and staff provide.

The extent of course offerings in any given semester is only a fraction of a degree. However, over time our courses are strategically rotated among various prison yards and sites to allow student inmates to make strides toward completion of the Associate of Arts Degree in Social and Behavioral Sciences.

We believe the Commission will be pleased to learn that one such rotation started with a beginning algebra course taught by an excellent tenured mathematics professor from Columbia College who achieved an extremely high success rate in this course. The students then took intermediate algebra and thrived. Then trigonometry, precalculus, and calculus 1. This summer, we are offering calculus 2 and plan to offer the remaining elements of the Associate of Science for Transfer degree in Mathematics to this group over the coming semesters, assuming enough of the successful group of inmates remain in the facility to generate revenue to cover the instructional cost.

Due to the COVID 19 Pandemic, however, all in-person courses have shifted to Correspondence Education. Likewise, all student services are currently provided through a combination of Correspondence Education between student inmates and the college, as well as through regular conversations between prison officials and our Interim Director of Dual Enrollment and Prison Education. We have engaged with leaders in ACCJC-approved Correspondence Education programs at both Lake Tahoe Community College and Feather River College, learning their effective practices to

maximize student success. Through these efforts, we continue to meet the expectations of the Commission for high quality instruction and effective student services.

This letter is provided as notification to the Commission that we are temporarily conducting courses pursuant to the two aforementioned degree pathways via Correspondence Education. We will continue to do so through the duration of this crisis. We request approval from the Commission to support this course of action.

The COVID 19 crisis has illustrated a need to thoroughly consider Correspondence Education as a mode of instruction. Columbia College will engage in internal discussions and seek input from our assigned ACCJC Vice President regarding the wisdom of completing a Substantive Change Proposal to add Correspondence Education as a permanent part of our ACCJC-approved offerings. In light of the many recent issues in California, including wildfires, public safety power shutoffs, and viruses, coupled with the volatility of the prison environment possibly resulting in facility lockdowns, it may be wise to arrive at a status of full ongoing approval for Correspondence Education for use whenever necessary.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "S. Bandyopadhyay", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Santanu Bandyopadhyay, Ph.D.
President, Columbia College