



**ACCREDITING
COMMISSION
for COMMUNITY and
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

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January 31, 2008

Dr. Joan Smith
President
Columbia College
11600 Columbia College Drive
Sonora, CA 95370

Dear President Smith:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting on January 9-11, 2008, reviewed the Progress Report submitted by Columbia College and the report of the evaluation team which visited on Monday, November 19, 2007. The Commission took action to accept the report, with a requirement that the college complete a Focused Midterm Report.

I also 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. Recommendations 2, 3, 4 and 5, identified as deficiencies, were also noted by the year 2005 comprehensive evaluation team. The Commission has extended Columbia College's time to correct these deficiencies for good cause because the College has begun significant work to address these deficiencies.

All colleges are required to file a Midterm Report in the third year after each comprehensive evaluation. Midterm Reports indicate resolution of any team recommendations made for improvement, include a summary of progress on college-identified plans for improvement as expressed in the Self Study Report and forecast where the college expects to be by the time of the next comprehensive evaluation. A **Focused Midterm Report** is a midterm report which must give evidence of resolution of the recommendations selected for emphasis by the Commission.

Columbia College should submit the Focused Midterm Report by **October 15, 2008**. The Focused Midterm Report should address all the team's recommendations and should demonstrate the resolution of the recommendations and noted below:

Recommendation 2: Planning The team recommends that the college establish an integrated comprehensive planning process in all areas of the college by emphasizing and strengthening the link between planning, budgeting, and Program Review. Particular focus should be in the following areas (I.A.4; I.B.2; I.B.5; II.A.2; II.C; III.B):

- Communication of a planning calendar complete with timelines and delineated with the person(s) responsible
- Instituting and communicating processes that produce evidence that program evaluations lead to the improvement of college programs and services
- Development of a strategic plan that will guide the college in integrating its planning processes that result in the college meeting its goals set forth and in line with its mission

With regard to Recommendation 2, the college is expected to demonstrate that it has attained the Continuous Sustainable Quality Improvement level on the Commission's Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness.

Recommendation 3: Resource Allocation The team recommends that in order to best serve the needs of students, the district and the college engage in a collaborative process to ensure a transparent and equitable allocation of financial resources and that the district and the college implement a process to communicate budget issues with each other on an ongoing basis (IIIC.1a; IIIC.1d; IIIC.2; IIID.1a,b,c; IIID.2a; IIID.2b; IIID.2d; IIID.2e; IIID.2g; IIID.3; IVB.2d; IVB.3d; IVB.3g).

Recommendation 4: Research The team recommends that the institution adopt a culture of evidence by developing and implementing, with timelines, responsibilities, and evaluations, a research process based on quantitative and qualitative analysis that assesses institutional effectiveness and documents the need for resources, technology, staffing, programs, and facilities which best serve the students needs (I.A.; I.B; II.B.1,3,4; II.C).

Recommendation 5: Student Learning Outcomes The team recommends that the college adopt an aggressive approach with specific timelines and responsibilities for developing student learning outcomes including documentation and assessments at the course, the program, and the institutional level and demonstrate that evidence is being used for institutional improvement. All employees of the college must assume responsibility to improve student learning outcomes (II.A.1, II.A.2; II.B; II.C).


With regard to Recommendation 5, the college is expected to demonstrate that it has attained the Development stage on the Commission's Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness.

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 letter appropriate dissemination to your college staff and to those who were signatories of your college report. This group should include campus leadership and the Board of Trustees. The Commission also requires that all reports be made available to students and the public. Placing copies in the college library can accomplish this. The Progress Report will become part of the accreditation history of the college and should be used in preparing for the next comprehensive evaluation.

Dr. Joan Smith
Columbia College
January 31, 2008
Page Three

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 integrity, effectiveness and quality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara A. Beno".

Barbara A. Beno, Ph.D.
President

BAB/tl

cc: Dr. Roe Darnell, Chancellor, Yosemite CCD
Dr. Dennis Gervin, Accreditation Liaison Officer
Board President, Yosemite CCD
Dr. Brian King, Team Chair
Evaluation Team Members