



ACCREDITING COMMISSION for COMMUNITY and JUNIOR COLLEGES
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Barbara A. Beno, President
Steven M. Kinsella, Chair

February 5, 2016

CORRECTED LETTER

Dr. Ronald Kraft
Superintendent/President
Napa Valley College
2277 Napa-Vallejo Highway
Napa, CA 94558

Dear President Kraft:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting on January 6-8, 2016, reviewed the Institutional Self Evaluation Report (ISER), submitted by Napa Valley College, supplemental information and evidence also submitted, and the External Evaluation Report prepared by the team that visited on September 28 to October 1, 2015. College leadership, including the president of the governing board and the college president certified the ISER which was submitted in application for reaffirmation of accreditation. The purpose of the Commission's review is to determine whether the college continues to meet Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards and Commission policies (hereafter called standards). Napa Valley piloted the 2014 Accreditation Standards in this review.

After considering all of the written material noted above, the Commission acted to **reaffirm accreditation for eighteen months** and to require a Follow-Up Report.¹ The Report will be followed by a visit by Commission representatives. Reaffirmation of accreditation for eighteen months indicates that the institution is in substantial compliance with the Commission's Standards. Napa Valley is required to submit its Follow-Up Report by **March 15, 2017**. The report should demonstrate that the College has resolved all deficiencies and meets standards. The Commission finds that Napa Valley College is out of compliance with the following: ER 11; Standard I.B.2; II.A.3; III.A.5, III.A.6; III.B.3, III.D.2, III.D.4, and III.D.11.

Need to Resolve Deficiencies:

Accreditation standards represent practices that lead to academic quality and institutional effectiveness and sustainability. Deficiencies in institutional policies, practices, procedures and outcomes which lead to non-compliance with any standard will impact institutional quality and ultimately, the educational environment and experience of students. The evaluation team has provided recommendations that provide guidance for how the institution may come into compliance with standards.

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Recommendation 1

In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends that the College fully engage in a broad-based dialogue that leads to the identification of Student Learning Outcomes at the course, program, and degree levels, and that leads to regular assessment of student progress toward achievement of the outcomes. The team further recommends that, in order to meet the Standards, the College develop student learning outcomes and assessment that is ongoing, systematic, and used for continuous quality improvement, where student learning improvement in all disciplines is a visible priority in all practices and structures across the College. The team further recommends that training be provided for all personnel in the development and assessment of learning outcomes at the course, program, institution and service levels. (Standard I.B.2; II.A.3; ER 11)

Recommendation 5

In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends that performance evaluations are regularly and consistently conducted for all employee groups. The team further recommends that faculty, academic administrators, and others directly responsible for student learning have, as a component of their evaluation, consideration of how these employees use the results of learning outcomes assessment to improve teaching and learning. (Standards III.A.5, III.A.6)

Recommendation 9

In order to meet the Standards, the team recommends the College link institutional plans (i.e. Campus Master Plan, Educational Master Plan, 5-Year Facilities Plan, and other appropriate plans; e.g. staffing plan) with financial plans to ensure that financial plans are integrated with other institutional short- and long-range institutional plans. Further, the team recommends the College's planning reflects a realistic assessment of financial resource availability and expenditure requirements. (Standards III.B.3, III.D.2, III.D.4, III.D.11, III.D.12)

The External Evaluation Report provides details of the team's findings with regard to the college's work to meet the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies. I advise you to read the Report carefully to understand the team's findings and recommendations. While your institution may concur or disagree with any part of the External Evaluation Report, the accreditation process intends that an institution will use the Report and its own Institutional Self Evaluation Report to assess its practices, assure compliance with Standards, and to improve its institutional effectiveness and to excel.

Improving Institutional Effectiveness:

The team report provided Recommendations 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, and 11 for improving institutional effectiveness (improvement recommendations). These recommendations do not identify current areas of deficiency in institutional practice, but highlight areas of practice for which college attention is needed.

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Consistent with its policy to foster continuous improvement through the peer accreditation process, the Commission expects that institutions will consider the advice for improvement offered during the peer evaluation process and report on actions taken in response to the team's recommendations, if any. Failure of an institution to act on these recommendations will not itself constitute a deficiency in meeting standards or requirements of the Commission. However, in the Commission's experience, failure to take note of areas of practice pointed out in improvement recommendations may lead to future conditions which limit the college's ability to meet standards. As such, we highly recommend the team's improvement recommendations for your attention.

Additional Information:

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 standards, or, alternatively, may provide an 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 non-compliance. With this letter, Napa Valley College is being provided with notice of the Standards for which it is out of compliance and is being provided time to meet the Standards.

In its self evaluation process, Napa Valley College also identified improvement plans it intends to undertake. These improvement plans should be linked to the College's ongoing evaluation and improvement work.

The evaluation team and the Commission have reviewed the College's Quality Focus Essay and found the document to be thoughtfully developed and focused on three Action Projects (APs) for improvement: student learning assessment; integrated planning and resource allocation; and Institutional Effectiveness, Evaluation, and Review. The Conceptual/Vision Map and the timelines established by the College will be effective tools in describing the details and realizing the outcomes of the APs. However, the team believes, and the Commission concurs that measurable outcomes, such as key performance indicators or milestones, would be more effective in assessing the effectiveness of the APs than the observable outcomes mentioned in the QFE. The Commission suggests the college identify measurable outcomes. Please feel free to call the ACCJC staff to answer any questions you may have on the Quality Focus Essay and the Projects as the college moves forward.

The guidance and 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 for the College to come into compliance (or to improve). While an institution may concur or disagree with any part of the Report, Napa Valley College is expected to use the

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Report to improve educational programs and services. In addition, the College has the responsibility to accept the Commission's action, and to uphold the integrity of the accreditation process by accurately portraying it and helping institutional constituencies to understand the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards and Commission policies pertinent to this Commission action.

A **final** copy of the External Evaluation Team Report is attached. Commission changes to the Report are noted on a separate page for inclusion with the Report. The College may now duplicate and post copies of the Report, with this added page. The Commission requires that you give the ISER, the External Evaluation Team Report, and this letter appropriate dissemination to those who were signatories of the ISER, and to make these documents available to all campus constituencies and the public by placing copies on the college website.

Please note that in response to public interest in accreditation, the Commission requires institutions to post accreditation information on a page no more than one click from the institution's home page.

On behalf of the Commission, I wish to express appreciation for the work that Napa Valley College undertook to prepare for institutional self evaluation, and to support the work of the external evaluation team. The Commission also appreciates Napa Valley College's willingness to pilot the 2014 Accreditation Standards, to be flexible during the evaluation team visit, and to share things learned with the ACCJC and other member colleges.

The Commission encourages the College's continued work to ensure educational quality and to support student success. Accreditation and peer review are most effective when the college and the ACCJC work together to encourage continuous quality improvement in higher education. Thank you for sharing the values and the work of accreditation.

If you should have any questions concerning this letter or the Commission action, please don't hesitate to contact me or one of the ACCJC Vice Presidents. We'd be glad to help you.

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Beno, Ph.D.
President

BAB/tl

Attachment

¹ Institutions 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* found on the ACCJC website at: (<http://www.accjc.org/college-reports-accjc>).