



**ACCREDITING
COMMISSION
for COMMUNITY and
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

*Western Association
of Schools and Colleges*

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July 2, 2012

Mr. Marvin Martinez
President
Los Angeles Harbor College
1111 Figueroa Place
Wilmington, CA 90744

Dear President Martinez:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting June 6-8, 2012, considered the institutional Self Study Report, the report of the evaluation team which visited Los Angeles Harbor College Monday, March 12-Thursday, March 15, 2012, and the additional materials submitted by the institution. The Commission acted to impose **Probation** effective immediately and to require that Los Angeles Harbor College submit a Follow-Up Report by **March 15, 2013**. The report will be followed by a visit of Commission representatives.¹

Probation is imposed when the Commission finds that an institution has deviated significantly from Commission Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards or Commission policies, or has failed to respond to conditions imposed upon it by the Commission, including warning. The Commission will specify a time within which the institution must resolve deficiencies and may subject the institution to required reports and evaluation visits. During the probation period, reaffirmation is delayed, but the institution remains accredited and will be reaffirmed when the issues giving rise to the probation are fully resolved and the institution is removed from sanction.

The Commission wishes to convey its concern that the Los Angeles Community College District is out of compliance with Eligibility Requirements 17 and 18 as noted in the recommendations below. The Commission urges the District and the colleges to rectify these issues that are related to the financial planning and distribution of resources of the District and the ability to resolve continuing concerns expressed in the District's audit. These issues are ongoing and place the District's colleges at risk.

The Commission is concerned about the two College recommendations of the 2012 evaluation team.

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Recommendation 1 reflects a continuing concern from the 2006 evaluation team that the planning process is not yet the central focus of decision making. Recommendation 2 refers to insufficient oversight and planning in the College's expenditure of funds.

The Follow-Up Report should demonstrate that the institution has addressed the recommendations noted below, resolved the deficiencies, and now meets the Eligibility Requirements and Accreditation Standards.

College Recommendation 1: As previously stated in Recommendation 2 by the 2006 Comprehensive Evaluation Team and in order to meet Standards, the planning process needs to reflect an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation that use data as the central focus to inform decisions. The process needs to be made clear to the college constituencies so they understand the steps, as well as which plan informs which plan. In addition, human resource planning for classified personnel and administrators needs to be evidence-based and integrated with institutional planning and program review. An evaluation of the effectiveness of the planning process as well as the effectiveness of programs and services need to be included. (I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.6, I.B.7, III.A.6)

The 2006 Comprehensive Evaluation Recommendation 2 read: The College needs to develop an on-going and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation. This should be based in deep analysis of District and institutional research-provided data and assure a broad involvement and participation in the institutional planning cycle. (I.B.1)

College Recommendation 2: In order to meet the Standard, and to adequately monitor salary and benefit expenditures and insure the institution practices effective oversight of finances, the team recommends that salary actions should first be reviewed for available and adequate funding prior to initiating the employment process. (III.D.2.d)

District Recommendation 1: To meet the Standards and Eligibility Requirements, the teams recommend that the district actively and regularly review the effectiveness of the construction bond oversight structure and the progress in the planned lifting of the moratorium to ensure the financial integrity of the bond programs, and the educational quality of its institutions as affected by the delays of the planned facilities projects. (III.B.1.a, III.C, III.D.2.a, IV.B.1.c, Eligibility Requirements 17 and 18)

District Recommendation 2: In order to meet the Standards and Eligibility Requirements, and to ensure the financial integrity of the district and the colleges, the teams recommend the resolution of the material weakness and significant deficiencies cited in the 2010 financial audit be fully effected by the completion of next year's audit, and appropriate systems be implemented and maintained to prevent future audit exceptions. (III.D.2.a, IV.B.1.c, Eligibility Requirements 17 and 18)

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District Recommendation 4: In order to meet the Standards and Eligibility Requirements, to fully respond to the recommendation first tendered by the Comprehensive Evaluation Team in 2006, and to reflect a realistic assessment of financial resources, financial stability, and the effectiveness of short- and long-term financial planning for the district and the colleges, the teams recommend that the district adopt and fully implement as soon as is practicable an allocation model for its constituent colleges that addresses the size, economies of scale, and the stated mission of the individual colleges. (III.D.1.b, III.D.1.c, III.D.2.c, IV.B.3.c, Eligibility Requirements 17 and 18)

The recommendation for implementing and assessing impact of an allocation model was first given to the District in 2006, as part of the comprehensive evaluation reports for Los Angeles Southwest College, Los Angeles Harbor College, and West Los Angeles College. Subsequent Commission Concerns for colleges in the district have raised issues connected with Standard III.D. Financial Resources about the effectiveness of short- and long-term financial planning for the district and the colleges. The need to adopt and implement an allocation model is a district recommendation again, as articulated in District Recommendation 4 to Los Angeles Southwest College, Los Angeles Harbor College, and West Los Angeles College from their comprehensive evaluations.

District Recommendation 5: In order to meet the Standard, the teams recommend that the Board of Trustees make visible, in behavior and in decision-making, their policy role and their responsibility to act as a whole in the public's interest. Further, the teams recommend continuing professional development for the Board of Trustees to ensure a full understanding of its role in policy governance and the importance of using official channels of communication through the chancellor or his designee. (IV.B.1.a)

It should be noted that College Recommendation 1 and District Recommendation 4 above reprise issues that have been raised with the College and District in previous evaluation reviews. I wish to inform you that under U.S. Department of Education regulations, institutions are expected to resolve deficiencies within a two-year period or the Commission must take action to terminate accreditation. The Commission's *Policy and Procedures for the Evaluation of Institutions in Multi-College Districts or Systems* clarifies that the integrity of the district falls within the scope of the institution's accreditation. Los Angeles Harbor College must demonstrate full resolution of College Recommendation 1 and District Recommendation 4 and resolve the deficiencies noted by **March 2013** or the Commission will be compelled to act. It is imperative that the Los Angeles Community College District cooperate with the College in responding to these deficiencies in order to ensure the College can demonstrate its ongoing and sustained compliance with the Eligibility Requirements and Accreditation Standards.

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Enclosed with this action letter is the proposed Public Disclosure Notice (PDN) for Los Angeles Harbor College. Your comments on it are invited. Federal regulations require the Commission to post a PDN for institutions placed on Probation or Show Cause, or when accreditation is terminated. The PDN is used to inform the public of the reasons for such a sanction. The Commission will post the PDN on the college's entry in the Directory of Accredited Institutions online at www.accjc.org. The institution is permitted to post a response to the PDN. Please provide the College's response for posting, if any, by July 31, 2012.

The 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. The recommendations contained in the 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 action necessary to 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 team report, Los Angeles Harbor College is expected to use the report to improve the educational programs and services and to resolve issues identified by the Commission.

I have previously sent you a copy of the Evaluation Team Report. Additional copies may now be duplicated. The Commission requires you to give the Evaluation Team Report and the Commission action letter dissemination to your College staff and to those who were signatories of your College Self Study Report. This group should include the Chancellor, campus leadership, and the Board of Trustees. The Commission also requires that the Evaluation Report, the Self Study Report, and the Commission action letter be made available to students and the public. Placing a copy on the College website can accomplish this.

The College conducted a comprehensive self study as part of its evaluation. The Commission suggests that the plans for improvement of the institution included in its self study efforts be used to support the continuing improvement of Los Angeles Harbor College.

Finally, ACCJC staff is available to assist the College with consultation and advice on the issues identified in the recommendations noted above.

Mr. Marvin Martinez
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On behalf of the Commission, I wish to express continuing interest in the institution's educational quality and students' success. Professional self-regulation is the most effective means of assuring integrity, effectiveness and quality.

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Beno, Ph.D.
President

BAB/tl

cc: Dr. Daniel LaVista, Chancellor, Los Angeles Community College District
Mr. Luis Rosas, Accreditation Liaison Officer
President, Board of Trustees, Los Angeles Community College District
Dr. Terrence Burgess, President, San Diego City College, Team Chair

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*. 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-reports-accjc>).