

Dr. Michael J. Kasler

President

June 30, 2011

Dear Colleagues:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, has communicated with us regarding our accreditation. As a result of three recommendations for the District, Cypress College has been placed on Warning status. During this period, Cypress College remains fully accredited.

The news is disappointing and, on its face, incongruent with the effusive praise shared by the site-visit team. Clearly, there is work to be done — and, consistent with the Cypress College can-do spirit, we will see it through.

Before I elaborate on the Commission's action letter (which is also attached in full), I want to share some context:

- Cypress College remains a premier learning community recognized for supporting student success and enriching society;
- As a campus, we are doing all and more than we are required to do, and we will work closely with the District to assure a full reaffirmation of accreditation;
- We have never worked harder, we have never faced such fiscal circumstances, and, most importantly, we have never gone to greater lengths to serve our students. The Commission's action does not diminish all that we provide for our students;
- The leadership provided during the accreditation process, and the broad participation across the campus community, could not have been stronger. The work we did under the guidance of Cherie Dickey and Santanu Bandyopadhyay is something we should all be proud of.
- During the accreditation process, as we do day in and day out, we worked as a team, pulling on the same end of the rope for the benefit of our students. That is what I appreciate most about being a Cypress College Charger.

But, now, it is necessary to redouble our efforts in order to gain reaffirmation of our accreditation.

In the action letter, ACCJC President Dr. Barbara Beno provided the basis for Warning status as a result of three District recommendations related to planning, budget allocation, and evaluation of those processes.

"Warning is being issued at this time for deficiencies identified in the team report and associated with District Recommendations 1, 2, and 3," she wrote.

These three recommendations are contained in the full action letter — which is both attached and being posted on our campus website. In addition to the three recommendations which prompted the Warning status, the Commission also included two College recommendations and a reminder related to progress on SLO's. I want to emphasize that these College recommendations were NOT the basis for the Warning status.

After the report was faxed to my office yesterday afternoon, Dr. Beno called to offer her full support and assistance in the remaining accreditation process. She assured me that the Commission's decision was a difficult one, and that the recommendations directed at the college did not warrant Warning status. The deficiencies related to the three District recommendations must be addressed in a follow-up report due by next March. Although the remaining recommendations outlined in the action letter must be corrected by March 2013, we will be submitting our plan of action at the same time we address the District recommendations.

I am as proud today to be President of Cypress College as I was the day that Dr. Lori Gaskin, chair of our site-visit team, shared these words following their work on campus:

"I would like to conclude with perhaps the most powerful commendation. One that was pervasive, shared by nearly everyone with whom we had the pleasure of interacting. We describe it as your esprit de corps — your strong belief in a common purpose to serve the educational needs of your students; and the fact that you carry out this common goal with a strong sense of camaraderie and joy. You live and breathe your core values of collegiality, integrity, excellence and inclusiveness."

Dr. Gaskin's remarks accurately reflect who we are as a College and are available in full on our website in the @Cypress Online blog, which is linked from the front page. Just as has been the case throughout the entire accreditation process, we will remain fully transparent as we move forward. On the blog, you will find additional links to pertinent information.

There is now work to be done to address the concerns expressed by ACCJC; however, there is no reason to lament either our efforts related to accreditation or to doubt our ongoing commitment to promoting student learning and success, embracing diversity, and contributing to both the economic and social development of the surrounding community.

Sincerely,



Michael J. Kasler, Ed.D.
President



**ACCREDITING
COMMISSION
for COMMUNITY and
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

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June 30, 2011

Dr. Michael Kasler
President
Cypress College
9200 Valley View Street
Cypress, CA 90630

Dear President Kasler:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting June 8-10, 2011, reviewed the institutional Self Study Report and the report of the evaluation team which visited Cypress College Monday, March 14-Thursday, March 17, 2011. The Commission acted to issue **Warning** and to ask that Cypress College correct the deficiencies noted. The College is required to complete a Follow-Up Report by **March 15, 2012**. That report will be followed by a visit of Commission representatives.

Warning is issued when the Commission finds that an institution has pursued a course of action which deviates from the Commission's Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, or policy to an extent that raises a concern regarding the ability of the institution to meet The Standards. The accredited status of the institution continues during the warning period. However, the institution's accreditation will not be reaffirmed until the conditions which warranted Warning are resolved. Warning is being issued at this time for deficiencies identified in the team report and associated with District Recommendations 1, 2, and 3.

The Follow-Up Report of **March 15, 2012** should demonstrate that the institution has addressed the recommendations noted below, resolved the deficiencies, and now meets Eligibility Requirements and Standards.

District Recommendation #1:

In order to meet the standards, the team recommends the district, in concert with the colleges, further define and align planning, governance, and decision-making processes to provide improved clarity to its structure, function, and linkages. (Standards IB.3; IB.4; IB.6; IVA.3; IVB.3.a; Eligibility Requirement #19)

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District Recommendation #2

To fully meet the standards, the team recommends the district more clearly delineate its budget allocation model, communicate the model to campus constituencies, and provide clarity as to its link to district planning. (Standards IB.3; IB.4; IIID.1.a; IIID.1.d; IVB.3.a; Eligibility Requirement 17)

District Recommendation #3:

In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the district conduct regular analysis and evaluation of its district planning, governance, and decision-making processes in order to assess the efficacy of these systems and ensure their effectiveness. Results of these analyses and findings should be broadly communicated across the institutions and used as a basis for improvement, as appropriate. (Standards IVA.5; IVB.3.g)

College Recommendation #1:

In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the college conduct regular analysis and evaluation of its college planning, governance, and decision-making processes in order to assess the efficacy of these systems and ensure their effectiveness. Results of these analyses and findings should be broadly communicated across the institution and used as a basis for improvement, as appropriate. (Standards IB.6; IB.7; IVA.5; IVB.2.b)

College Recommendation #2:

To fully meet the standard, the team recommends that the college implement a program discontinuance process that provides pathways for program completion by currently enrolled students. (Standard IIA.6.b)

Commission Reminder: The Commission expects that institutions meet standards that require the identification and assessment of student learning outcomes, and the use of assessment data to plan and implement improvements to educational quality, by fall 2012. The Commission reminds Cypress College that it must be prepared to demonstrate that it meets these standards by fall 2012 (Standards I.B.1, II.A.2.e, II.A.2.f, II.B.4, II.C.2, and III.A.1.c).

I 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. Cypress College must correct the deficiencies noted by **March 2013**.

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 Cypress College.

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The recommendations contained in the Evaluation Team Report represent the observations of the evaluation team at the time of the visit. The Commission reminds you that while an institution may concur or disagree with any part of the team report, the College is expected to use the report to improve 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 this 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 team report and the Self Study Report be made available to students and the public. Placing a copy on the College website can accomplish this. Should you need an electronic copy of the report, please contact Commission staff.

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

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. Ned Doffoney, Chancellor, North Orange County CCD
Mr. Santanu Bandyopadhyay, Accreditation Liaison Officer
Board President, North Orange County CCD
Dr. Lori Gaskin, Team Chair
Ms. Martina Fernandez-Rosario, U.S.D.E.