

# Accreditation NOTES

Winter 2007

## Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

Western Association of Schools and Colleges

### *Higher Education Reauthorization Act Delayed Until 2007*

The ACCJC and other accrediting bodies have been tracking development of the Higher Education Reauthorization Act for three years. This fall, it became clear that the bill would not be passed in the current congress. A new Congress will take up the legislation early in the next year. The shift in the party majority of both the House of Representatives and the Senate will result in the appointment of new chairs, supporting staff and members of the committees that will develop the legislation. The shift in party majority will also likely shift the priorities of the legislation; the Democrats have indicated one priority will be improving financial aid and access to higher education.

The ACCJC and other regional accreditors will be working through the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions, or CRAC, to inform the individuals newly assigned to the congressional committees about what accreditation and institutions already do to insure quality.

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### *Secretary Spellings Meeting on Accreditation*

On November 29, 2006, Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings held a Forum on Accreditation in Washington, D.C. Forum participants included about 60 individuals representing accrediting bodies, higher education institutions, the business community, assessment and evaluation consultants and experts, members of the Spellings Commission, and representatives of some higher education communities. ACCJC President Barbara Beno was one of the participants. The purpose of the meeting was to explore how accreditation might be changed through the Department of Education's enforcement of current regulations (contained in the current Higher Education Act) or through negotiated rulemaking which might alter how the Department enforces current regulations. The meeting discussed accreditation because accreditors are, in the words of a department representative last year, the opportunity to leverage institutions.

A "discuss and report-out" format was used to brainstorm answers to two sets of questions:

Session 1: Measuring and Reporting Student Achievement and Other Related Performance Outcomes

- What core measures of student achievement and related performance outcomes (e.g., course and program completion, degree attainment, certification and licensing, job placement) should

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Meeting on Accreditation*

be used by accreditation agencies in accreditation decisions for institutions and programs?

- How should accreditation agencies ensure that institutions and programs are reporting valid and reliable data on performance outcomes in ways that allow appropriate comparisons among institutions considering differences in mission and other factors?
- What evidence should institutions and programs provide that they are assessing student learning relative to their educational objectives and that students are successful in reaching these objectives?

Session 2: Defining Input (Resource) and Process Standards

- How should resource and process measures (curricula, faculty, facilities) be defined to ensure quality while promoting cost-efficiency and innovation in higher education?
- How can resource and process criteria be defined so that they are unbiased and neutral with respect to how institutions and programs design and deliver educational and support services to achieve their educational objectives while promoting innovation?
- What can be learned from standards and criteria used in other approaches to assessing quality in education, such as Baldrige?

The diverse and often divergent opinions expressed by the participants were recorded in a brief summary of bullet points. This will serve as a foundation for the Department's next steps to consider and implement changes to the regulations that guide accrediting bodies that are recognized by the U. S. Department of Education as gatekeepers for Title IV and other federal funds.

## *Barbara Dunham Retires*

After serving the Commission since August 1996, Ms. Barbara Dunham, Administrative Assistant and Business Officer, retired in August 31, 2006. A party in her honor was held at the Santa Rosa home of retired Executive Director, Dr. David Wolf, in October. Ms. Dunham came to the Commission from a career as an office manager for a large certified public accounting firm in Santa Rosa. Prior to her service with ACCJC, Ms. Dunham was self-employed as a weaver and hand painted ceramic tile maker in both Santa Barbara and Santa Rosa. She also taught junior high school in Richmond and Santa Rosa, California.

Ms. Dunham, who resides in Sebastopol, will remain with the Commission on a part-time basis to train her replacement (see article in this Newsletter) and do special projects. She then plans to pursue her passions of backyard gardening, world traveling, and art/cultural appreciation. The Commission joins the field in wishing Barbara well in her retirement and expresses gratitude for her many years of loyal service. We will miss her but we are delighted that she plans for a carefree retirement.



## *Report of the Commissioner Selection Committee*

The Commissioner Selection Committee met in November and selected two new commissioners whose terms will begin on January 1, 2007.

**Eileene C. Tejada** was selected to fill a faculty member position on the Commission. Formerly an adjunct faculty member at Chabot College, Ms. Tejada has been at Napa Valley College since 1992. Currently, Ms. Tejada is the Director of the Teaching and Learning Center and an Associate Professor of Language and Developmental Studies.



Ms. Tejada served on the Napa Valley College Academic Senate as Vice President from 1996 to 2000 and on the California State Academic Senate from 1999 to 2001. She is experienced in designing faculty and staff professional development programs, and, through her leadership as chair of the Professional Development Committee at Napa Valley College, she created the concept that became the Teaching and Learning Center through a Title III Grant.

Ms. Tejada has served the Commission as a team evaluator on four comprehensive evaluation teams since 1997.

**James H. Gray** was selected to fill a public member position on the Commission. As co-founder of Harbor Bank headquartered in Long Beach in 1974, he also served as Chairman of the Board and CEO from 1976 to 1998. In 1999, Mr. Gray founded Generations Trust Bank and served as Chairman and CEO until 2002. In June 2004, Mr. Gray co-founded Beach Business Bank in Manhattan Beach with branch offices in Long Beach, and Encino. Mr. Gray also served as President of the California Bankers Association from 1985 to 1986. He was also a member of the Board of Directors of the American Bankers Association from 1991 to 1996 serving as its treasurer from 1993 to 1995.



An active member of the Long Beach community, Mr. Gray was a past President of the Chamber of Commerce, the Port of Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners, Chairman of United Way, and was named as the Entrepreneur of the Year by the Long Beach Chamber of Commerce in 2002. He served as a Trustee for the Long Beach Community College District and, in an appointment by the Governor of California, as Trustee for the California State University System from 1990 to 1999. He was also appointed to complete a term on the Desert Community College Board of Trustees and was subsequently re-elected for another term that concluded in 2006.

## Conference Notes

With over 400 participants from across California and elsewhere, to call the recent conference, **Strengthening Student Success: What Counts**, anything less than a smashing success would be an understatement. Sponsored by the California Partnership for Achieving Student Success (Cal-PASS), the Research and Planning Group of California (RP Group), and the California Assessment Institute (CAI), participants gathered in San Diego to attend the three-day event October 4-6, 2006. Presented in collaboration with the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the San Diego Community College District, and ACCJC, the 58 sessions were organized across eight strands (General Education, Basic Skills, English, Social Science, Math, Science, Student Services, and Cal-PASS) with many cross-disciplinary topics. The themes that ran throughout the conference included: student learning outcomes; community building among students, faculty, and staff with attention to equity; and building learners' self confidence.

Kay McClenney, from the University of Texas at Austin, delivered one keynote address on the growing need for evidence to promote institutional dialogue, guide faculty work, and chart a course toward better learning for all students. Lee Shulman, from the Carnegie Foundation, delivered the other on recognizing narratives as well as numbers as powerful evidence of student learning that made a difference in results.

Forty-eight (48) California Community and Junior Colleges made presentations with many giving several sessions. Some colleges partnered with other institutions outside their districts to present examples of assessment efforts at the individual colleges, the data that had been collected, and the improvements that have been made to the teaching/learning process as a result of data analysis. Some of the presentations offered to participants covered topics which included: Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs); assessment methods; rubrics; portfolios; weaving SLOs into program reviews; using technology in assessment; effective collaboration with institutional researchers; and SLOs in student services, math, basic skills, the sciences, the humanities, and the social sciences.

Due to the overwhelming success of this conference, a similar event is being planned for October 3-5, 2007 in San Jose. The call for presentations is at <http://rpgroup.org/SuccessConf-Main.htm>. Watch for registration and program information in March.

## Upcoming Event Announcements

The **American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO)** is announcing its 2007 Annual Meeting to be held February 28-March 3, 2007 in Boston, Massachusetts. The conference theme this year will be Leading the Higher Education Revolution: Your Call to Action. Enrollment managers, admissions professionals, academic advisors, deans, faculty, presidents, registrars, student services and financial aid professionals and others are invited to attend. Please see the AACRAO web site for more information at [www.aacrao.org](http://www.aacrao.org).

The **American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)** is announcing its 87<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention to be held in Tampa, Florida April 14-17, 2007. Please visit AACC's web site for conference information at [www.aacc.nche.edu](http://www.aacc.nche.edu).

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## New Commission Staff

With the retirement of Barbara Dunham, the Commission hired two new office support staff.

**Ms. Deanne Wilburn**, Executive Assistant and Business Officer, provides support for Commission staff and maintains the Commission's financial operations. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Oregon State University and a Master of Science degree in Education from Dominican University. Deanne joined the Commission staff in 2006.



**Ms. Clare Goldberg**, Administrative Assistant, provides administrative support to the Commission staff. Clare received her Bachelor of Science degree from Molloy College in New York and attended graduate school at San Francisco State University where she studied Art Education. She joined the Commission staff in 2006.



## Comprehensive Visits

Under current U.S. Department of Education regulations, ACCJC must provide opportunity for third-party comment regarding the institutional qualifications for accreditation. The institutions noted below are scheduled to undergo comprehensive visits in the spring of 2007, the fall of 2007, and the spring of 2008. Review by the Commission will occur at the regularly scheduled meeting following the review visit (June 2007, January 2008, and June 2008). Third-party comment on these institutions should be made to the ACCJC President, Dr. Barbara A. Beno, at 10 Commercial Blvd. Suite 204, Novato, CA 94949. For consideration, such comment must be made in writing, signed, accompanied by return address and telephone number, and received no later than five weeks before the scheduled Commission meeting.

### Spring 2007

(for June 2007 Commission Review)

Coastline College  
Copper Mountain College  
Gavilan College  
Golden West College  
Hartnell College  
Imperial Valley College  
Los Angeles County College of Nursing and Allied Health  
Los Angeles Mission College  
Los Angeles Pierce College  
Los Angeles Valley College  
Orange Coast College  
San Joaquin Valley College  
Western Career College

### Fall 2007

(for January 2008 Commission Review)

Cabrillo College  
Cañada College  
College of San Mateo  
Cuyamaca College  
Grossmont College  
Marymount College  
MTI College  
Riverside Community College  
Moreno Valley Campus  
Norco Campus  
Salvation Army Crestmont College for Officer Training  
Sierra College  
Skyline College

### **Spring 2008**

(for June 2008 Commission Review)

Cerritos College  
Lassen College  
Mendocino College  
Mission College  
Ohlone College  
Palo Verde College  
Santiago Canyon College  
Santa Ana College  
San Joaquin Delta College  
TransPacific Hawaii College  
West Valley College



## ***ACCJC Spring 2007 Workshops***

Each year, ACCJC holds workshops to train evaluators and team chairs who will conduct comprehensive reviews of member institutions as well as workshops for institutions about to begin the process of self study leading to the Self Study Report and comprehensive visit.

### **Self Study Training**

Self Study Training Workshops will be held this fall for the following institutions preparing for self study review and comprehensive visits in two years:

#### ***February 9, 2007***

Palomar College

#### ***February 14, 2007***

East Los Angeles College, Los Angeles City College, and Los Angeles Trade-Technical College

#### ***February 15, 2007***

Pasadena City College, American Academy of Dramatic Arts Los Angeles.

#### ***February 20, 2007***

Berkeley City College, Laney College, Merritt College, College of Alameda, and Santa Rosa Junior College.

#### ***February 26, 2007***

Butte College

#### ***TBA***

American Samoa Community College

### **Team Training**

Team Training Workshops are held for specific teams of evaluators and require that all team members and chairs attend. This process benefits team development and allows the teams to begin work on the upcoming visit well in advance. Workshops will be held at the locations indicated for the following teams:

#### ***February 5, 2007 – Oakland***

Coastline College, Golden West College, and Orange Coast College

#### ***February 6, 2007 – Oakland***

Gavilan College, Hartnell College, Los Angeles County College of Nursing and Allied Health, San Joaquin Valley College, and Western Career College

#### ***February 13, 2007 – Los Angeles***

Imperial Valley College, Los Angeles Mission College, Los Angeles Pierce College, and Los Angeles Valley College

### **Team Chair Training**

Team Chair Training Workshops will be held January 16 and 18 for the chairs conducting visits in the Spring of 2007.

## *Substantive Change Committee Meeting Schedule 2007*

Institutions seeking substantive change must submit complete documents one month before the Committee meeting. All meeting dates are subject to change depending on scheduling circumstances.

### **Spring 2007**

No meeting in January due to Commission Meeting  
February 16, 2007  
March 16, 2007  
April 20, 2007  
May 19, 2007

### **Summer 2007**

The Committee meets during the summer as needed

### **Fall 2007**

To be set at a later date

Note to institutions: Please contact Commission staff before submitting a substantive change proposal in order that the Committee review of the proposal can be scheduled in a timely manner. Copies of each institutional substantive change application must be mailed directly to each of the committee members. Staff will provide the mailing list after initial institutional contact.

One copy of the college catalog should accompany every application. In addition, applications must include supporting materials such as course syllabi. See the Substantive Change Manual for additional information (available on the Commission web site at: [www.accjc.org](http://www.accjc.org)). Applications must be received no later than one month BEFORE the date of the scheduled meeting.

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## **Accreditation Q & A**

**Q.** What are the different kinds of accreditation?

**A.** There are three types of accrediting agencies and three types of accreditation used in the United States.

**Regional Accreditation.** The most highly regarded form

of institutional accreditation, and that sought by most degree-granting academic institutions with comprehensive missions, is provided by accrediting agencies that have chosen to organize themselves into six broad geographic regions of the country. These are referred to as the regional accrediting commissions and operate in the New England states, the mid-Atlantic states, the southern states, the middle or north central states, the northwestern states, and the western states and US territories of the Pacific. Although the regional accrediting bodies operate within geographic regions of the United States, their standards are aligned nationally through adoption of common eligibility requirements, some common core standards, and through regular review and alignment of higher education and accreditation practices.

The regional accrediting commissions in these six regions have standards that set requirements for quality for the entire institution. They all require that a component of general education, providing core knowledge and skills expected of a college-educated individual, be included in all degree programs. All require that institutions undergo a regular, comprehensive review. All have procedures that provide for the institution undergoing review to submit a comprehensive self study report and other evidentiary documents before an accreditation team examines the institution's quality and writes a comprehensive peer-evaluation report. The regional accrediting commissions set a very high standard for the performance of the entire institution. Not all higher education institutions seek accreditation from regional accreditation commissions.

**Programmatic Accreditation.** Programmatic accrediting agencies provide quality assurance for individual degree or certificate programs that may be offered within accredited institutions but that require special review because their graduates become licensed practitioners (for example, nursing, medical, or culinary programs, or law schools). The programmatic accrediting agencies assure that the quality of the educational program meets the national and state standards and that graduates are prepared to pass licensure examinations.

**National Accreditation.** National accrediting agencies accredit institutions with specialized missions (for example, business colleges or colleges of art and design). National accrediting agencies accredit institutions that offer degrees as well as institutions that offer only courses or certificates.





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