



**ACCREDITING
COMMISSION
for COMMUNITY and
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

*Western Association
of Schools and Colleges*

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November 9, 2011

Dear College Superintendents, Chancellors and Presidents:

It has been almost six years since the Commission undertook a review of the Accreditation Standards and Processes that were approved in 2001 and went into effect in 2004. The last review was conducted in 2006-8, and the results were published in *Quality Assurance: A Formative Review* (ACCJC publication, 2008). Since that time, numerous changes have taken place nationally and locally in both our institutional practices as well as the expectations the public has expressed regarding issues of educational quality and transparency.

While the Commission believes that our Standards still largely reflect practices indicative of educational quality, it also believes, as noted in the summer 2011 edition of *Accreditation News*, that now is an appropriate time to undertake a review to determine if there are changes needed to be made to continue to align our practices to the new environment that the higher education community is facing. This review is being led by the Commission's Evaluation & Planning Committee.

The Review of Accreditation Standards and Practices will provide many opportunities for input from ACCJC member institutions and their constituencies, specifically on topical committees and task forces, and in opportunities for general comment on proposed changes. However, at this early stage, the Commission invites your ideas about **key issues** that it should be sure to consider.

As part of its efforts to track and assess the changes taking place in our complex policy and practice environment, the Commission has contracted Dr. Peter Ewell, Vice President at the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), a research and development center founded to improve the management effectiveness of colleges and universities, to assist the Commission in its work. Dr. Ewell, who is a major contributor to the national dialog on the issues facing accreditation, produced a monograph, *The New "Ecology" for Higher Education: Challenges to Community College Accreditation*, in which he identified the following issues that will be included in the review:

- New Patterns of Student Participation
- New Kinds of Providers
- A Transformed and Contingent Faculty
- New Approaches to Teaching and Learning
- Constrained Resources
- A Global Higher Education System
- Increasing Public Interest in Educational Quality and Transparency

This document can be found on the President's Page at the Commission website:
www.accjc.org.

I am writing to ask your assistance in identifying **additional key issues** the Commission should consider as part of this review. Please send your thoughts about any additional issues, with a brief explanation as to the issue and its significance to the Commission, care of Dr. Sharon Whitehurst-Payne, Chair of the Evaluation and Planning Committee at accjc@accjc.org by **December 9, 2011**.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael T. Rota". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M' and 'R'.

Michael T. Rota, Commission Chair
Chancellor, Honolulu Community College

Cc: Accreditation Liaison Officers