



**ACCREDITING
COMMISSION
for COMMUNITY and
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

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January 29, 2010

Dr. Gilbert H. Stork
Interim Superintendent/President
Cuesta College
P. O. Box 8106
San Luis Obispo, CA 93403-8106

Dear President Stork:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting January 6-8, 2010, reviewed the Follow-Up Report submitted by Cuesta College and the report of the evaluation team which visited Tuesday, October 27, 2009. The purpose of this review was to assure that the recommendations made by the evaluation team were addressed by the institution. The Commission took action to accept the report.

The Commission also acted to impose **Probation** and to ask that Cuesta College correct the deficiencies noted. The college is required to complete a Follow-Up Report by **October 15, 2010**. The report will be followed by a visit of Commission representatives.

Probation is issued when the Commission finds that an institution deviates significantly from the Commission's Eligibility Requirements, Standards of Accreditation, or policies or fails to respond to conditions imposed upon it by the Commission. The accredited status of the institution continues during the Probation period.

The Follow-Up Report of October 15, 2010 should demonstrate the institution's resolution of the recommendations below:

Recommendation 2: Planning and Assessment

To meet standards, the team recommends that the college complete the strategic plan, institute an ongoing systematic evaluation process that communicates and clarifies the assessment tools used to measure the effectiveness of ongoing planning, program review, resource allocation processes and student learning outcomes. (Standard I.B, I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.6, I.B.7).

Recommendation 6: Technology Resources

To meet standards, the team recommends that the college establish a process for regular and systematic planning, acquisition, maintenance and replacement of its technology infrastructure, existing and newly acquired technology and equipment to meet institutional needs; and that the process is integrated with other college planning, assessment, and resource allocation. (Standard III.C.1.c., III.C.1.d.)

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Cuesta College

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Recommendation 7: Financial Planning and Stability

To meet standards, the team recommends that the college review and assess its long range financial and capital planning strategies to ensure sufficient funding levels for ongoing operations. The team also recommends that the college and the college foundation review and communicate the fiscal status of investments and implement appropriate protections to secure fiscal solvency. (Standard III.D.1.c., III.D.2.a., III.D.2.e., III. D. 3)

With regard to Recommendation 2, 6 and 7 above, the Commission is concerned that Cuesta College has not yet completed a planning process to which program review, planning, funding processes, technology planning, or financial planning can be linked.

Recommendation 8: Board of Trustees Evaluation and Policies

To meet standards, the team recommends that the Board of Trustees conduct its annual self-evaluation no later than June 2009 and yearly thereafter. Also, the team recommends that a process and timeline be established for regular review of current board policies and development of new policies as needed. (Standard IV.A.1., IV.B.1.b., IV.B.1.e., IV.B.1.g., IV.B.1.j., IV.B.2.a)

Recommendation 9: Leadership and Governance

To meet standards, the team recommends that the Board of Trustees delegate full responsibility and authority to the Superintendent/President to implement and administer board policies and the effective operation of the institution. To improve college decision making and institutional effectiveness, the team recommends that the college review and establish ongoing assessment of its college governance structures, processes, roles and responsibilities. (Standard IV.A.1., IV.A.2., IV.A.2.a., IV. A.3., IV.A.5., IV.B.1., IV.B.1.b., IV.B.2.a., IV.B.2.b., IV.B.2.c)

Eligibility Requirement 5: The Commission notes that Cuesta College does not have sufficient staff, with appropriate preparation and experience, to provide stable administrative services necessary to support its mission and purpose. The College needs to move expeditiously to fill vacancies and interim/acting positions.

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. Cuesta College should resolve the deficiencies noted by **October 2010** or the Commission will be compelled to act. While the deficiencies associated with the current team's Recommendation 2 were also identified by the 2002 comprehensive evaluation team, the Commission has extended Cuesta College's time to correct these deficiencies, but the institution must take appropriate steps to act quickly to resolve these deficiencies.

The Follow-Up Report will become part of the accreditation history of the college and should be used in preparing for the next comprehensive evaluation. I have previously sent you a copy of the Evaluation Team Report. Additional copies may now be duplicated.

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The Commission requires that you give the report and this letter appropriate dissemination to your college staff and to those who were signatories of your college report. This group should include campus leadership and the Board of Trustees. The Commission also requires that all reports be made available to students and the public. Placing copies in the college library can accomplish this. Should you want an electronic copy of the report, please contact Commission staff.

Finally, the Commission staff is available to assist the college with consultation and advice on its program review, integrated planning, and resource allocation processes. Please call the Commission office if you wish to avail yourself of that assistance.

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

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Beno, Ph.D.
President

BAB/tl

cc: Dr. Anna Greiner, Accreditation Liaison Officer
Board President, San Luis Obispo County Community College District
Dr. Frances White, Team Chair
Ms. Linda Henderson, U.S.D.E.