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Official Comments in Response to the Commission's Public Disclosure Notice

MiraCosta College has a long and proud history of serving the coastal North San Diego County community. As our graduates and current students attest, MiraCosta College's faculty and staff are diligent in ensuring that students receive an outstanding educational experience, and make student success their top priority. Accordingly, community colleges are held to high standards of student success and institutional performance, and being accredited is an integral part of assuring quality to the public.

In June 2010, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges Western Association of Schools and Colleges' (ACCJC's) fully reaffirmed MiraCosta College's accreditation, and asked the college to prepare two Follow-Up Reports that responded to four recommendations. In July 2011, following the first report and a visit by a peer evaluation team, ACCJC acted to place MiraCosta College on Probation.

MiraCosta College remains fully accredited during this period as it makes improvements to address the Commission's recommendations. This document represents MiraCosta College's official response to the Commission's Public Disclosure Notice, provides some background, and explains the efforts MiraCosta College has taken and continues to take to ensure compliance with accreditation standards.

The college embraces the accreditation process and professional self-regulation as an opportunity to refine and improve our institutional processes, and ultimately the educational outcomes of our students.

Summary of Recent Commission Actions

The process for reaffirmation of accreditation is comprehensive and occurs every six years. At MiraCosta College, our administrators, faculty and staff developed an extensive 300-page self-evaluation report; hosted a site visit by peer evaluators representing ACCJC; and represented the college at the commission's June 2010 meeting. These accreditation requirements were the vehicles through which the college demonstrated its commitment to, and fulfillment of, the Commission's accreditation standards. The college's board, faculty and staff worked tirelessly to ensure that we not only met the standards, but also were honest in assessing areas where we could grow. At this meeting, the Commission acted to fully reaffirm the college's accreditation status.

As part of our June 2010 reaffirmation, the college was asked to respond to four recommendations by preparing two Follow-Up Reports: one in March 2011 responding to Recommendation 1 and another in March 2012 responding to recommendations concerning student learning outcomes and the efficacy of our new governance structure.

In responding to Recommendation 1, the Commission recommended that the college:

Community Learning Center

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Oceanside Campus

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San Elijo Campus

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- Implement, align, and integrate various college plans into a fully integrated institutional plan that advances a defined mission statement.
- Develop specific, measurable, realistic and time-bound objectives in relation to clearly stating institution-wide goals that are understood college-wide and represent the foundation of the integrated institutional plan.
- Conduct consistent, systematic and timely evaluations of the integrated institutional plan and its related components based on analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data and ensure the results are communicated and understood by college constituents. Further, in order to promote and sustain a culture of evidence and improve institutional effectiveness, the college should implement an ongoing method of measuring and evaluating its effectiveness in achieving stated institutional performance objectives and student learning outcomes.
- Complete the Education Master Plan and begin implementation. In addition, the college must demonstrate that decisions regarding priorities result from stated institutional goals and are linked to an integrated institutional plan and its related planning components.

In spring 2011, the college issued a Follow-Up Report and hosted an evaluation team that assessed the college's progress in meeting the Commission's first recommendation. In June 2011, at the ACCJC meeting, the Commission reviewed the college's report, the report of the evaluation team and heard comments from MiraCosta College's superintendent/president. The Commission found that the college's spring 2011 Follow-Up Report did not provide sufficient evidence that the college has resolved the deficiencies noted in Recommendation 1. The college is required to submit a Follow-Up Report concerning Recommendation 1 to the Commission in March 2012.

Current Status and Action Steps

The college has focused its full attention and resources to ensure that we are in full compliance with the standards established by the Commission. Probation does not mean MiraCosta College has lost its accreditation. It is important to note that while on Probation the college maintains its accreditation status. MiraCosta College is fully accredited and our courses are transferable to other colleges and universities, and are recognized and accepted by various vocational industries and licensing boards. Furthermore, our students remain eligible for state and federal financial aid and veteran's benefits. Our focus on student success, and service to students and this community remain uninterrupted. Probation does mean that MiraCosta College will need to address the recommendations outlined by the Commission by the stated timeline, or risk further sanction.

While a sense of urgency is upon us, the current accreditation status and recommendations are manageable and we are confident that the recommendations will be addressed in a timely and productive fashion. Since the spring 2011 visit, MiraCosta College has continued to make excellent progress in addressing the recommendations. For the past year the college has been engaged with institutional planning efforts through the development of a new 10-year Comprehensive Master Plan that is on pace to be completed this fall. We have defined our broad institutional goals with bold and varied objectives. The college will prioritize, assign measurable outcomes and timelines, and define a process to integrate and systematically review them. The college has also improved the program-review-to-budget development process, incorporating improvements each time. By fall, we will have a version based on the master planning and data review elements. The master planning process can be viewed and monitored at www.miracosta.edu/masterplan.