



Digest

Digest means an item that has been through internal review of the Chancellor's Office and the review entities. The item now has form and substance, and is officially "entered into Consultation." The Council reviews the item and provides advice to the Chancellor.

CONSULTATION

TITLE: Accreditation and the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

DATE: March 19, 2009

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BACKGROUND

In Fall 2007, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) underwent its own "accreditation" before the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), the federal agency in charge of certifying regional accreditation agencies. Two major actions on the part of ACCJC emerged from that accreditation. First, ACCJC was found out of compliance with enforcing a federal requirement that colleges and universities address any deficiencies with regards to accreditation standards within two years. As a result, ACCJC has been compelled to rigorously hold colleges to this rule, something it had not done previously. Second, ACCJC needed to strengthen the peer review process else face federal intervention into the accreditation process. The result of that need has been the establishment of a timeline for when colleges need to sustainably address components of the peer review process such as student learning outcomes (SLOs) and assessing institutional effectiveness.

Since the federal review of ACCJC by CHEA, there has been an increase in sanctions issued against California community colleges. Below is a summary of commission actions in its last three meetings.

January 2008

- 9 colleges put on warning (one from probation)
- 2 colleges continued on warning
- 2 colleges put on probation (one from warning)
- 2 colleges continued on probation
- 15 colleges on sanction

June 2008

- 9 colleges put on warning (one from probation)
- 8 colleges continued on warning
- 1 college put on probation
- 2 colleges continued on probation
- 4 colleges reaffirmed accreditation (three from warning, one from probation)
- 20 colleges on sanction

January 2009

- 7 colleges put on warning (one from probation, one from reaffirmation)
- 10 colleges continued on warning
- 2 colleges put on probation (one from warning)
- 1 college continued on probation
- 2 colleges put on show cause (both from warning)
- 9 colleges either reaffirmed or removed from sanction
- 22 colleges on sanction (20% of all colleges in the system)

The concern over the status of accreditation for community colleges in California is shared among all groups. The Statewide Academic Senate has included this topic in its Spring Plenary Session, and the CEOCCC Board has included it as one of its top ten priorities for the year. Many other stakeholder groups (ACCCA, CIOs, CSSO, etc) are also addressing the issue in their respective meetings and conferences. Dr. Barbara Beno, President of AACJC, is meeting with the Northern and Southern California CEOs as well as other groups across the state, and the Commission has increased its training sessions for the year.

RECOMMENDATION

The Consultation Council will discuss current concerns over the large number of colleges that are currently being sanctioned, share perspectives on the situation, and explore strategies for addressing the situation. In addition, the discussion will inform discussion by the Board of Governors at their May 2009 meeting.