



# The Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges

PRESENTED TO THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

DATE: March 21-22, 2016

SUBJECT: Moving to a new Model of Accreditation for California Community Colleges		Item Number: 2.2	
Attachment: Yes (to be posted prior to the meeting)			
CATEGORY:	Academic Affairs	TYPE OF BOARD CONSIDERATION:	
Recommended By:	 Brice W. Harris, Chancellor	Consent/Routine	
		First Reading	
Approved for Consideration:	 Brice W. Harris, Chancellor	Action	X
		Information	

**ISSUE:** Since 2009, the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office has commissioned a series of task forces to examine the status of accreditation and make recommendations regarding the current and future accreditation needs of the system. Formation of these task forces stemmed from changes in the needs of the colleges as well as growing concern and frustration expressed by multiple constituent groups. Those groups; including faculty, staff, CEOs, trustees, students, and other statewide organizations, expressed concerns regarding the accreditor's lack of transparency, collegiality, and consistency in the accrediting processes, as well as, the sanctioning of two-thirds of the state's community colleges over the last decade.

The most recent of these groups formed by the Chancellor's Office, the 2015 Task Force on Accreditation, conducted a comprehensive review of numerous reports, resolutions, and recommendations that called for reform, but documented little change by the current accreditor of community colleges in the western region, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC). The task force members reached a clear consensus that the ACCJC had lost credibility within the system. The task force report identified ideal attributes that the system should expect of its accreditor in the changing landscape of public higher education and concluded that the current accreditor does not meet those expectations. (*Issue Cont.*)

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve the attached resolution in support of the California community college CEOs initiative to fundamentally change accreditation processes and structures, and to monitor their progress with periodic updates to the Board of Governors beginning at the July 2016 meeting.

**(Issue Cont.)**

In its recommendations, the task force called for a new model of accreditation for the system's institutions, noting that the California Community Colleges require an accreditor that can fulfill the qualities delineated in the task force report for the future benefit of its colleges and the students and communities they serve.

On November 16, 2015, the California Community Colleges Board of Governors accepted this report and stated its intent that a new model for an accrediting agency should be established. The Board of Governors specifically directed "the Chancellor, working through the system's established consultation processes, to bring to the Board of Governors at its March 2016 meeting: (1) A recommendation for action to establish a new model for an accrediting agency; and (2) An implementation plan, along with timeline." The Chancellor reconvened the 2015 Task Force with augmented membership as the 2016 Accreditation Implementation Task Force to advise him on the new model.

On March 14, 2016 at a statewide CEO meeting accreditation was discussed at length. At that meeting the nearly 80 CEOs in attendance overwhelmingly voted to endorse the following:

*\_\_\_\_\_ I believe that there should be fundamental changes made to our accreditation processes and structures. During any exploration of change, all colleges must maintain their current status, terms, and cycle for accreditation with the ACCJC. A parallel approach should be followed which includes:*

- making improvements in the existing processes and culture of ACCJC, and*
- at the same time, exploring alternative structures for a regional accreditor, which will take many years to develop.*

*To pursue changes, the member organizations should immediately form two representative planning groups to:*

- develop and recommend improvements regarding the ACCJC, and*
- facilitate communication leading to the long-range goal of California's community colleges participating in a structure for regional accreditation that aligns all segments of higher education.*

*These two planning groups should include representatives from the California community colleges, the University of Hawaii community colleges, the Western Pacific community colleges and the ACCJC, and, where appropriate, other regional accreditors.*

Since that time the CEOs have met with ACCJC, and have begun to form the planning groups mentioned above. As the member institutional representatives, the CEOs have taken responsibility to lead the mid-term improvements in ACCJC as well as the long-term alignment of accreditation in all of higher education in the western region. They have agreed to keep the Board of Governors informed of their progress by making periodic reports at regular meetings.