

July 13, 2009

Dear PCC family;

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its June meeting, reviewed the institutional Self Study Report and the report of the evaluation team which visited Pasadena City College Monday, March 16 – Thursday, March 19, 2009. The Commission agreed with the five recommendations from the visiting evaluation team, and acted to issue a warning on recommendation #1, which reads: "The team recommends that the college develop a systematic assessment of evaluation mechanisms, i.e., program review and planning processes, to determine their effectiveness in improving student learning programs and services and administrative services. Specifically, the college needs to implement a consistent data set for program review and process improvement (IB.6, IB.7)."

In speaking with the visiting team chair, Dr. Jose Ortiz, this morning as well as with Dr. Beno, the president of the commission, the focus of their recommendation is that we provide, and utilize, consistent data for all program reviews that lead to recommendations for program and process improvements. Because this is an academic and professional matter, I will ask that our Academic Senate work with the deans, vice presidents, IPRO, and our other shared governance representatives to develop a consistent set of data to be used going forward for all programs and services. I am confident that we can determine the best course of action in responding to this recommendation, and have the warning removed within short order. We have been asked to prepare two follow-up reports for the commission, one due by March 15, 2010, and the second due by October 15, 2010.

Of the 10 community colleges visited this spring, 7 were given warnings, and 2 were placed on probation. Community colleges across the country are in transition, working to meet the new accrediting standards, redefine accountability measures, instituting new planning processes and improving program reviews. We are no different. The visiting team provided recommendations and constructive criticisms of practices, which in fact in most instances confirmed our planning assumptions about areas that needed improvement. However, even with our exceptional self-study, the Accreditation Commission determined that we can make even more progress in a few areas. As a result, PCC, like several other community colleges, currently is adjusting to the new standards. Being placed on "warning" status is

the least severe of the several sanctions the commission might have applied, and is issued when the commission finds that an institution has a practice or procedure that raises a concern and warrants focused attention by the institution.

Let me stress that PCC's accreditation is not in jeopardy. Our students' credits continue to be accepted by transfer institutions and our students remain eligible for financial aid while the institution works on the recommended improvements. We will be reviewed again in the spring to reassure the commission that we are making satisfactory progress. It is our intention to meet the goals set for us by the commission and to receive a Reaffirmation of Accreditation at that time.

The full accreditation report is being placed on our college website for your review. I believe the WASC accreditation process provides an important opportunity to look at ourselves through the lens of a third party in order to keep improving and adjusting to meet current student and work force needs. I look forward to working with the campus community in the coming months to address the report's recommendations.

Sincerely,

Dr. Paulette J. Perfumo
President