



March 15, 2005

Accrediting Commission for  
Community and Junior Colleges  
10 Commercial Blvd., Suite 204  
Novato, California 94949

Dear Commission:

The College of Marin Board of Trustees and I are pleased to submit to you a report and appendices directly responding to the January 31, 2005 letter sent to me by Executive Director Barbara Beno. This letter outlines actions taken by the Commission to issue a warning to College of Marin following its January 12-14, 2005 meetings. We are pleased to report significant accomplishments regarding Recommendations of the Commission.

Three Recommendations were identified to be included in the Progress Report to be submitted to College of Marin by March 15, 2005.

**Recommendation #1: The college should finalize immediately an effective governance structure that reinforces respectful dialog, defines shared commitment, and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all constituent groups for participation in informed decision-making processes. The processes must be designed to result in action with on-going assessment and evaluation of institutional effectiveness to improve student learning. (Standards IV.A.1, IV.A.2, IV.A.3, IV.A.5)**

A Governance Review Council (GRC) was established in December 2003 for the purpose of re-establishing College of Marin participatory governance processes and procedures. The GRC has met regularly since that time; minutes of its meetings, along with other governance related materials, are attached in [Appendix 1: Effective Governance Structure](#).

A substantially updated College of Marin Participatory Governance System (March, 2005) is included in the Appendix Section I materials that the Governance Review Council adopted on February 24, 2005 for my approval and that of the Board of Trustees. Subsequently, the Classified and Student Senates have raised concerns regarding matters of committee composition and establishment of committee majority. Therefore, the Board of Trustees adopted my recommendation to re-establish former district governance board policy as a temporary measure until the few remaining concerns are resolved by the end of the current semester. David Viar, representing the Community College League of California, and Ms. Kate Clark, representing the State of California Academic Senate, will facilitate the resolution of these concerns and will be at the College of Marin on April 12, 2005.

A draft of a possible evaluation framework has been developed and is ready for discussion by the Governance Review Council as soon as the new governance system is finalized. Once this draft is reviewed and finalized by the Governance Review Council, the evaluation can begin as early as spring 2005. The governance system will be regularly evaluated and modified as required at least annually thereafter.

**Recommendation #2: The team recommends that the college complete the reexamination of the college mission statement immediately to ensure it defines the purpose of the institution and addresses the emerging educational needs of the changing and diverse population of the district. The college must establish and adhere to a systematic and regular cycle for reviewing and updating the mission statement. (Standards I.A.1, I.A.3, I.A.4)**

A revised, updated College of Marin mission statement has been developed and adopted by the College of Marin Board of Trustees on March 8, 2005. An extensive process involving College faculty, administrative staff, classified staff, and students was utilized to prepare this new mission statement. Input also was received from community leaders and stakeholders, members of the College of Marin Foundation Board of Directors, and members of the College Board of Trustees.

Documentation of the activities held and public presentations of multiple mission drafts are attached in Appendix 2: Revised College Mission Statement. The successful adoption of the new mission statement was led by the Mission Task Force, consisting of representatives of all principal constituencies of the College.

**Recommendation #5: The team recommends that the college complete an actuarial study by June 2005 to determine the college's unfunded retirement liability. Based on the findings, the college then must implement an action plan to fund future liability obligations. (Standards III.D.2c, III.D.2g).**

The College of Marin solicited requests for qualifications for actuarial valuation consultants to evaluate the College's "other post employment benefits" to ascertain the District's unfunded liability as required by the General Accounting Standards Board, issue 45. At the March 8, 2005 Board of Trustees meeting the Board approved my recommendation to retain Total Compensation Systems, Inc. to conduct a study to determine this unfunded liability. The study will be completed by June 30, 2005 at which time the College will formalize financial plans to address this variance.

A copy of the Board Agenda Item adopted March 8, 2005 is included in Appendix 3: Actuarial Study.

Although the focus of the review by the Commission team on March 24, 2005 is on the three Recommendations mentioned above, I am also pleased to report substantial progress on Recommendation #3 that relates to institutional planning and Recommendation #4 that relates to student learning outcomes.

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A major reorganization of the College of Marin's management structure was completed and implemented in January, 2005. One of its principal outcomes was better alignment of management to best respond to Western Association of Schools and Colleges Recommendations, past and present. Part of the reorganization created a division of organizational development that manages accreditation matters, institutional studies, community and student research, governance training, staff and faculty development, and strategic planning support.


Faculty and staff have participated in statewide workshops and a student learning outcomes committee has now been formed. A well-attended flex workshop was held on January 20, 2005, titled "Student Learning Outcomes: Let the Dialogue Begin!" led by a faculty member. This workshop included a review of other college's work on SLOs, why the College is expected to develop SLOs, what SLOs are, and how to develop them. Small groups identified possible learning goals for their discipline. Materials are available in the Site Visit Team's Resource Room.

The College intends to fully comply with Commission deadlines of January, 2006 in relation to Recommendations #3 and #4.

In addition to the supporting documentation in the three appendices, a resource room of additional information is being set up for your use.

We look forward to your next week's visit. In the meantime, if the College of Marin can provide anything additional, please let me know.

Sincerely yours,



Frances L. White, Ph.D.  
Superintendent/President  
College of Marin

Enclosures