

Resolution in Support of Fair Accreditation for California Community Colleges

Whereas: The U.S. system of regional accreditation continues a long tradition of providing essential guarantees of quality in America's post-secondary institutions; a spirit of collaboration and mutual respect between the regional commissions and their member institutions is essential to the success of the system of accreditation; and a shared focus on the needs and interests of students is primary and vital to preserve, and

Whereas: Over the last decade, the relationship in the Western Region between the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) and California's 112 community colleges has changed from one of constructive collegiality to one in which the member colleges increasingly report antagonism, intimidation and fear, and

Whereas: The ACCJC levels sanctions against California community colleges at a rate that is 400% of the sanction levels seen in other regions and in four-year California institutions,

Whereas: Concerns about the changed nature of the relationship between the ACCJC and many of its member institutions have been documented by resolutions, articles and complaints prepared and approved by leading statewide organizations of professional educators, including the Community College Council of the California Federation of Teachers (CCC-CFT), the Community College Association of the California Teachers Association (CCA-CTA), the California Community College Independents (CCCI), the Faculty Association of the California Community Colleges (FACCC) and the Academic Senate for the California Community Colleges (ASCCC), and

Whereas: The growing concerns regarding the ACCJC have led to a review of the ACCJC's financial impact on community colleges by the CA Legislature's Joint Legislative Audit Committee, creation of two separate Task Forces by the California State Chancellor's office, filing of three lawsuits against the ACCJC, and multiple public statements of concern from members of California's Congressional delegation as well as state legislators, and

Whereas: The ACCJC's frequent sanctions based on the legitimate activities of trustees of Community College District Boards have raised serious concerns regarding the free speech rights of elected officials and the rights of voters to representation by duly elected officials, and

Whereas: Areas of non-compliance found during the ACCJC's regular review by the U.S. Department of Education prompted the DOE to continue its recognition of the ACCJC as an accrediting body for only a one-year period -- in which it must demonstrate compliance -- instead of the standard five-year period for renewal of recognition, and

Whereas: The ACCJC's actions at City College of San Francisco have brought to light numerous and serious legal and ethical concerns regarding the ACCJC, its processes and procedures, biases, conflicts of interest, leadership, and interpretations of its charge, and

Whereas: The ACCJC's decision to put CCSF on show cause and subsequently announce revocation of its accreditation despite the unquestioned educational quality at the college created an unprecedented enrollment and financial crisis for CCSF and caused irreparable hardship for its students, in particular those most disadvantaged,

Whereas: The ACCJC's actions at CCSF and elsewhere have undermined the trust and constructive relationships necessary for wide acceptance of the ACCJC's ability to fairly administer the accreditation process in California, and

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Therefore Be it Resolved: That [Our Organization] hereby joins with our colleagues throughout the state to express deep concern over the adversarial relationships fostered by the ACCJC, which pose a threat to fair accreditation and access to public higher education in California, and

Be it Further Resolved: That this body stands in strong support of the City College of San Francisco and its vital role in providing accessible public education in the San Francisco area; that we support efforts underway to prevent CCSF's mandated closure, provide financial resources needed to address the enrollment and fiscal crises created by the ACCJC's actions, and re-instate CCSF's elected Board of Trustees, and

Be it Further Resolved: That this body urges support for state legislation that would increase the accountability, transparency, and ethics of the accreditation process and create an option for a choice of accrediting bodies in the California, and that would protect the free speech rights of community college district trustees and preserve the rights of the people of California to a public community college system overseen by duly elected trustees, and

Be it Finally Resolved: That this body urges the USDOE to carefully scrutinize ACCJC's work as a regional accreditor, and further urges the USDOE to note that the ACCJC's standards, policies, procedures, and decisions to grant or deny accreditation are no longer widely accepted among educators and educational institutions.

Date _____

Title

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