

Accreditation & Institutional Quality (AIQ) Report

October 14, 2015

Committee activities this semester focus on:

1. Developing reporting process for work on Strategic Directions Initiatives.
2. Analyzing work on Strategic Directions Initiatives.
3. Developing annual surveys on perception of effectiveness of college services and district services to the colleges.
4. Examining documents arguing whether CCC's should retain or remove the ACCJC (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges) as our regional accrediting commission.
5. Voting to make recommendations to Academic Senate, College Council, and CCA regarding the 2015 Task Force on Accreditation from the Chancellor's Office.

The summary is in response to #4 and #5:

Only 37 of the California Community Colleges have not received a sanction¹ in the last ten years. BC is one of them. Some schools have had difficulty getting off sanction and had divisive experiences dealing with the process. Others have viewed sanctions as a way to finally get administration or the college on the right path.

The City College of San Francisco (Show Cause status in 2012) situation has been particularly difficult and divisive. CCSF has experienced a dramatic decline in number of students attending, which has affected FTES and income from the state. Fewer students → fewer sections → fewer faculty → fewer dollars from the state due to drop in FTES. It was revealed at the CCSF trial that the visiting team had not made a recommendation of Show Cause, but the Commission did. This situation is not the only time the Commission's position has been different, usually stronger, than the visiting team's. The Commission's position is that they see all the reports on all the colleges and apply sanctions consistently. So if College X received a sanction for program review and College Y is showing the same problem, then Y will receive a sanction, too. The visiting team does not have that context and larger view.

Over the years various groups have expressed concern, written reports, and developed resolutions about the ACCJC and the accreditation process. Some feel the Commission has been unresponsive; some feel the Commission has not been responsive enough. Others continue to embed the goals of accreditation—to have an effective institution with quality programs serving students and their communities—in their work.

¹ Categories:

- a. **Reaffirm Accreditation** (No noncompliance issues)
- b. **Reaffirm Accreditation for ____** (Specify period up to 18 months) **with a FollowUp Report**³ Note: If an evaluation team visit is recommended in addition to the institution's Follow-Up Report, the reasons should be provided in the team chair's confidential letter to the Commission.
- c. **Warning with a Follow-Up Report** and evaluation team visit in 18 months
- d. **Probation with a Follow-Up Report** and evaluation team visit in 18 months
- e. **Show Cause** with a Show Cause Report and evaluation team visit in 6 months

³ If the recommendation is for any action other than "Reaffirmation of Accreditation," the Team Chair is asked to write a confidential letter to the Commission summarizing reasons for the team recommendation, drawing from the External Evaluation Report. The team chair's letter will also include explanation if the team wants to recommend a time frame different from what is generally associated with the action.

The June 2014 report by the California State Auditor, *California Community College Accreditation: Colleges Are Treated Inconsistently and Opportunities Exist for Improvement in the Accreditation Process*, noted that “88 percent of the college executives responding felt that the commission’s recommendations were reasonable, meaning that the commission appropriately identified issues and concerns and that the commission’s recommendations related to the issues identified” (4).

The most recent report commissioned by the State Chancellor’s Office, the *2015 Task Force on Accreditation* released August 28, 2015, states that

- The structure of accreditation in this region no longer meets the current and anticipated needs of the California Community Colleges.
- The ACCJC has consistently failed to meet the expectations outlined in section three of this report.
- On several occasions the ACCJC has promised changes and has offered reports detailing their efforts to address concerns, but these promises and reports have led to few significant improvements.
- The California Community College system and its member institutions have lost confidence in the ACCJC. (8)

At its September 21st meeting, the Board of Governors directed the Chancellor to send the Task Force Report to the Department of Education (DOE) in order to meet the September 25 deadline of third party responses to the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity Meeting (NACIQI), scheduled for December 16-18, 2015, in Washington, D.C. I read the 57-page report from the BOG meeting (in closed caption form). The Chancellor’s Office declined to meet with ACCJC, which held an open meeting Friday, October 9, which I attended.

Some colleges and districts have developed resolutions or written letters to the DOE or the State Chancellor’s Office in support of ACCJC (Victor Valley, West Hills, Rancho Santiago, Gavilan, State Center); the state Academic Senate has a resolution up for voting at the Fall Plenary, November 2015, to endorse the report from the Chancellor’s Office. CCA also has a proposed resolution in support of the Task Force Report.

AIQ has been reading and discussing the documents as they appear. The report first appeared on our September 1, 2015 agenda. We now have ACCJC’s written response and its letter to the Department of Education. Relevant documents are posted and continue to be posted at the AIQ page, including my comments to the ACCJC on October 9: <https://committees.kccd.edu/bc/committee/accreditation>

AIQ met October 13, 2015 and voted unanimously not to support the following resolutions:

Academic Senate Resolution 2.01 F15 Adopt the ASCCC Paper *Effective Practices in Accreditation*
Whereas, Accreditation is an ongoing concern for all colleges in the California Community College System;
Whereas, Faculty participation in the accreditation process and the role of faculty in maintaining an individual college’s accreditation are essential and have been the subject of many Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC) *Rostrum* articles, resolutions, and breakout sessions; and
Whereas, Resolution 02.01 S12 directed the ASCCC to develop resources, including a paper, on effective practices for accreditation compliance to be used by faculty at the local level;
Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges adopt the paper *Effective Practices in Accreditation: A Guide To Support Colleges in the Accreditation Cycle* and disseminate the paper upon its adoption.

AIQ comment: The paper appeared to be in draft form with underlining, editing comments, varying fonts, and basic spelling errors. AIQ agrees with the spirit but not the execution. AIQ will look at it again before Plenary to see if it has been finalized.

Academic Senate Resolution 2.02 F15 Endorse the CCCCO Task Force on Accreditation Report
Whereas, The California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office (CCCCO) convened the 2014-2015 Task Force on Accreditation to review and address serious concerns regarding California community colleges’ accreditation process;

Whereas, The president of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, several community college presidents and administrators, a representative from the Faculty Association of California Community Colleges, a community college board trustee, and the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs from the California Community College Chancellor’s Office were active participants in the work of the Task Force on Accreditation and unanimously supported its findings and recommendations;

Whereas, The recommendations of the Task Force on Accreditation were, in part, based on ASCCC resolutions, which included recommendations for the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC); and

Whereas, According to the Task Force on Accreditation, “On several occasions the ACCJC has promised changes and has offered reports detailing their efforts to address concerns, but these promises and reports have led to few significant improvements”;

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges endorse the recommendations of the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office Task Force Report on Accreditation.

AIQ comment: The Task Force Report does not reflect Bakersfield College’s experience with the accreditation process and the ACCJC. BC is one of 37 institutions that have not received a sanction in the last ten years. BC has had the opportunity to respond to ACCJC proposed policy changes and proposed standards changes directly to the Commission and through the Academic Senate. In contrast, BC did not have the opportunity to give feedback or weigh in on the Task Force Report.

The Report makes several statements without providing evidence and with which AIQ disagrees:

- **The structure of accreditation in this region no longer meets the current and anticipated needs of the California Community Colleges.**
- **On several occasions the ACCJC has promised changes and has offered reports detailing their efforts to address concerns, but these promises and reports have led to few significant improvements.**
- **The California Community College system and its member institutions have lost confidence in the ACCJC.**

While the task force was a representative body, there is no indication that the representatives requested input from the people or groups they represented as they developed the report. BC had no opportunity to give feedback or even to respond at any stage of the process.

For the same reasons, AIQ does not support the CCA-proposed resolution in favor of the 2015 Task Force on Accreditation.

Kate Pluta
Faculty Chair of AIQ (Accreditation & Institutional Quality Committee)
October 14, 2015