



**ACCREDITING
COMMISSION
for COMMUNITY and
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

*Western Association
of Schools and Colleges*

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July 3, 2013

Dr. Thelma Scott-Skillman
Interim Chancellor
City College of San Francisco
50 Phelan Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94112

Dear Chancellor Scott-Skillman:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACCJC), at its meeting June 5-7, 2013 took action on the accreditation status of City College of San Francisco. The Commission carefully considered the Show Cause Report submitted by City College of San Francisco on March 15, 2013, the Show Cause Evaluation Report prepared by the evaluation team that visited the College on April 4-5, 2013, the letter from Chancellor Scott-Skillman sent to the ACCJC on May 20, 2013, and the testimony provided at the Commission meeting on June 6, 2013, by Chancellor Scott-Skillman, Special Trustee Robert Agrella, and Accreditation Liaison Officer Gohar Momjian. As part of its deliberations, the Commission also reviewed the 2012 Evaluation Team Report and the Commission's July 2, 2012 action letter addressed to City College of San Francisco, placing the institution on Show Cause.

After careful consideration, the Commission acted to **terminate accreditation** effective **July 31, 2014**. This date was chosen to provide the college with one year to deal with all of the possible ramifications of the Commissioners' action, including time to arrange for teach out agreements that may be necessary so that students will be able to complete their certificates and degrees. The Commission may extend this date at its sole discretion if it determines that conditions warrant such action.

The Commission action to terminate accreditation is not yet final. City College of San Francisco has the right to request a review of the Commission's adverse action in accord with the Commission's ***Policy on Review of Commission Actions***. If the decision of the Commission, following the review, upholds the termination of the institution, the institution will then have the right to appeal in accordance with the ACCJC Bylaws. Failure to request a review in timely manner will waive the institution's right to appeal the adverse action in accordance with the **ACCJC Bylaws, Article IX, Appeals**.

The institution's accredited status of "show cause" will remain in effect until the termination action becomes final. If City College of San Francisco requests a review, then the institution will retain its accredited status until the review process of the Commission is completed. If the institution files an appeal, then during the period up to and including the pendency of the appeal, the institution's status with the Commission shall remain the same as it was prior to the decision being appealed, namely, Show Cause.

The *Policy on Review of Commission Actions* requires that City College of San Francisco send its request for review to the ACCJC, signed by the Chancellor and the Chair of the governing board, within 28 days of the date of this letter. In order for the review request to be considered timely, it must be received by the Commission on or before July 31, 2013. Otherwise, the Commission's action to terminate becomes final on that date.

The Commission also reviewed the Draft Closure Report submitted by the College and found it did not provide sufficient detail to ensure orderly closure, if the loss of accreditation would cause the college to close, including adequate retention of student records and transcripts, and the ability of students to complete their educational programs. The College is required at this time to submit a Closure Report to the Substantive Change Committee in accordance with Substantive Change timelines and processes so that it can be considered at the November 2013 Substantive Change Committee meeting and considered for action at the January 2014 Commission meeting. The Closure Report must carefully follow the Commission's *Policy on Closing an Institution* and provide details for how the institution is addressing its closure, as required by U.S. Department of Education regulation 34 C.F.R. § 602.24.

The Commission took action to terminate the accreditation of City College of San Francisco after a one-year period in which the college was placed on Show Cause and required to demonstrate that it had adequately addressed all of the deficiencies outlined in the Commission's action letter of July 2, 2012. On the basis of the College's 2013 Show Cause Report, the Show Cause Evaluation Report, Chancellor Scott-Skillman's letter, and the testimony provided by College representatives at the Commission meeting, the Commission concluded that the college is still significantly out of compliance with Eligibility Requirements 5, 17, 18, and 21, and significantly out of compliance with Accreditation Standards, including Standard I.B (Institutional Effectiveness); Standard II – Student Learning Programs and Services, including II.A (Instructional Programs), II.B (Student Support Services), and II.C (Library and Learning Support Services); Standard III.B (Physical Resources), III.C (Technology Resources); III.D (Financial Resources); Standard IV – Leadership and Governance, including IV.A (Decision-Making Roles and Processes), and IV.B (Board and Administrative Organization); and Commission policies on Distance Education and on Correspondence Education, Institutional Degrees and Credits, and Institutional Integrity and Ethics. Specifically, the Commission determined that City College of San Francisco does not yet meet Standards I.A.3; I.B.1; I.B.2; I.B.3; I.B.4; II.A.1; II.A.2; II.A.6; II.B.1; II.B.3; II.B.4; II.C.1; II.C.2; III.A.2; III.A.6; III.B.1; III.B.2; III.C.1; III.C.2; III.D.1; III.D.2; III.D.3; III.D.4; IV.A 1; IV.A.2; IV.A.3; IV.A.4; IV.A.5; IV.B1; and IV.B.2.

The 2012 Evaluation Team Report, and the Commission's action letter of July 2, 2012, provided City College of San Francisco with fourteen recommendations that, if followed, would help the institution come into compliance with accreditation requirements. The College has fully addressed two of those recommendations (Recommendations 6 and 9), and has resolved the deficiencies associated with those recommendations. The College has addressed and nearly resolved the deficiencies noted in one other recommendation, (Recommendation 3), which is expected to be fully implemented next year. However, eleven of the fourteen recommendations were not adequately addressed, including recommendations identified in the 2006 comprehensive evaluation as noted in the 2012 evaluation team report and Commission action letter. As noted above, the institution remains out of compliance with many Accreditation Standards.

While the institution and many of its staff have worked very hard to move the institution forward in order to comply with Accreditation Standards since the 2012 evaluation team identified deficiencies, City College of San Francisco would need more time and more cohesive institution-wide effort to fully comply with accreditation requirements. The testimony provided to the Commission by College representatives, and the Show Cause Evaluation Report, indicate that institutional deficiencies in the area of Leadership and Governance (Standard IV) have inhibited the institution's ability to move effectively and with appropriate speed to resolve its problems. The governing board has been unable to perform its appropriate roles and assume responsibility for united leadership, and its actions undermine the ability of the Chancellor to move expeditiously to make needed changes. The Show Cause Team Report states,

“As reported in the Show Cause Report, and verified by the Show Cause Visiting Team, the Board still engages in behaviors that violate its own code of ethics and definition of roles and responsibilities. In addition, the Show Cause Report presents evidence that Board members have difficulty in delegating authority to the Chancellor, either by undermining decisions made by the Board or by interfering with the implementation of policies adopted by the Board.” (Show Cause Evaluation Report, Page 77)

The evidence found in the institution's Show Cause Report, the Show Cause Evaluation Report, and the testimony provided by the college representatives indicate that disagreements and undefined relationships still characterize the institution's (new) governance system, and significant divisions in the faculty and in the wider institution prevent the institution from responding effectively to requirements of accreditation and providing a sustained quality education. Testimony indicated that, within the college, some faculty feel strong pressure, even intimidation, to defer to designated faculty leaders even when they feel that a different approach should be considered. While some groups work to make needed changes, others militate against change. The acrimony is evident in behaviors at governing board meetings among other venues. Two new governance groups created through Board Policy were intended to restructure decision making, but the Show Cause Evaluation Report indicates,

“The Participatory Governance Council and the relationship between it and the Collegial Governance System has not yet been defined. The Show Cause Visiting Team found that no operating principles or processes have been defined for the revised governance structure. Through interviews with constituency leaders, the Show Cause Visiting Team found that some participants believe that decisions affecting the college are too rushed and too “top down.” Some also believe that instability in the senior administration has led to some confusion in decision making and that the interim administrators may not understand the culture of the college.” (Show Cause Evaluation Report, Page 76)

The Show Cause Team Report notes that,

“The pace and substance of decisions has led to concern expressed by college constituencies (primarily faculty) that decisions have not been discussed and vetted adequately. However, in spite of turnover among senior administrators, including the assignment of two interim Chancellors, the decisions and actions taken by the interim administrators have been unified and, as presented in this report, largely effective thus far.” (Page 62)

The Show Cause Evaluation Report notes that two interim chancellors over the last year have:

“focused on correcting the deficiencies cited by the Commission in 2012, as well as leading the college through a fiscal crisis.”

and,

“Many of the elements of the standard (Standard IV) are met *as it related to the CEO (emphasis added)*; however, the institution is only as strong as its leadership throughout the organization. Institutional effectiveness is not dependent on the CEO alone. It requires the collaboration and support of the members of the Board of Trustees who are elected to adopt strategic goals, institutional priorities and stable financial practices leading to a vibrant organization. It is the actions of college leaders, including those on the Board of Trustees, in the administration, and among faculty and staff that enable the college to embrace the values and goals leading to institutional effectiveness.” (Page 62)

Nevertheless, active protests against the direction the college is taking, expressed at governing board meetings, and against the college leadership, indicate that not all constituencies are ready to follow college leadership to make needed changes in a timely manner.

Finally, City College of San Francisco has still not addressed, and appears to lack the capacity to address, the many financial management deficiencies (Standard IIID) identified by the 2012 Evaluation Team Report. The College has very significant internal control deficiencies that were largely unaddressed over the last year. The College contracted with the Fiscal Crisis Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) in 2012 and the team made 53 recommendations, most of which the Show Cause Evaluation Report found to be

unaddressed as of 2013. In spring 2013, City College of San Francisco contracted with FCMAT for a second study designed to identify problems with financial processes and to inform an improvement in financial controls, but that report was not completed at the time of the Commission's deliberations. The institution's inability to identify the costs associated with all of its sites and centers, identified as a problem in 2006, still remains. The institution does not meet Eligibility Requirement 18 or Standards for financial accountability.

I have previously sent you a copy of the Show Cause Evaluation Report. Additional copies may now be duplicated. The Commission requires that the Evaluation Team Report and this action letter be disseminated to College staff and to those who were signatories of the institutional Show Cause Report when the Commission action becomes final. This group should include campus leadership and the Board of Trustees. The Commission also requires that the Show Cause Report, Evaluation Team Report, and this Commission action letter be made available to students and the public when the Commission action becomes final. Placing a copy on the College website can accomplish this.

Federal regulations require the Commission to post a Public Disclosure Notice (PDN) for institutions placed on Probation or Show Cause, or when accreditation is terminated. The PDN is used to inform the public of the reasons for such a severe sanction. When the Commission action becomes final, you will be sent the proposed notice for City College of San Francisco. At that time, you will be asked to provide the College's response, if any, for posting. You will have approximately 30 days to submit your response.

Please do not hesitate to call this office for any assistance you need.

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Beno, Ph.D.
President

BAB/cms

Enclosures:

- Policy on Review of Commission Actions
- Policy on Closing an Institution
- Substantive Change Policy and Manual

cc: Mr. John Rizzo, Board President, San Francisco Community College District
Ms. Gohar Momjian, Accreditation Liaison Officer, City College of San Francisco
Ms. Sandra Serrano, Team Chair
Ms. Martina Fernandez-Rosario, U.S.D.E.