January 8, 2013

Dear Interim Chancellor Thelma Scott-Skillman:

Based on reports from yourself, Special Trustee Robert Agrella, and my staff, I remain concerned about the accreditation status of City College of San Francisco (CCSF). Although much work has been done and there is still a chance the college will meet its timeline for improvement, the college may not successfully correct its identified deficiencies within the timeframe allowed by the accreditation process, and accreditation may be lost. While this is an outcome we all hope will be avoided, it must be considered and planned for in order to ensure that we take all steps possible to reduce disruption to CCSF students in the event that the college loses its standing as an accredited institution.

To advance this contingency planning, I am requesting information regarding the progress being made on CCSF’s Closure Plan required pursuant to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges’ (ACCJC) July 2, 2012, letter to CCSF. While the Closure Report is not due to ACCJC until March 15, 2013, it is important that my office begin engaging with the college immediately on the plan’s development given the scope and complexity of closing a college the size of CCSF, and the resulting impact on thousands of students. Specifically, I request that you provide my office with information regarding the development of the Closure Plan by February 8, 2013.

Please structure your response to my request according to the framework laid out in the “Policy on Closing an Institution” found in the AACJC’s Accreditation Reference Handbook. The specific policy elements addressed in this framework include:

A. Student Completion
B. Disposition of Academic Records and Financial Aid Transcripts
C. Provisions for Faculty and Staff
D. Disposition of Assets
E. Obligations to Creditors
F. Coordination with the ACCJC
G. Key Governing Board Obligations

While each of these elements is important, I am particularly concerned with the steps planned to facilitate Student Completion. If CCSF loses its accreditation, the challenges associated with helping existing students to complete their educational programs would be tremendously complex and would likely necessitate a regional approach involving numerous other colleges. The following two
excerpts from the ACCJC’s publication describe the closing institution’s responsibilities and raise some of the programmatic, logistical, and community relations challenges that would be involved:

“

Institutions considering closing must provide for the academic needs of students who have not completed their degrees and educational programs. Arrangements for transfer to other institutions will require complete academic records and all other related information gathered in dossiers which can be transmitted promptly to receiving institutions. Agreements made with other institutions to receive transferring students and to accept their records must be submitted to the ACCJC for approval.”

“When a student has completed 75% of an academic degree and educational program in the closing institution and choose to continue at another institution, arrangements shall be made to permit that student to complete the requirements for a degree and educational program elsewhere, but to receive the degree and educational program from the closed institution.”

Helping students to complete their educational programs will require a coordinated strategy across academic, student services, and administrative departments not only at CCSF but also at each of the receiving colleges. The immense challenges of planning such a complex and large-scale operation will require a high level of involvement by my office. Please expedite the transmission of the requested information so that we may begin our collective planning efforts.

If you have questions or concerns regarding this request, please contact Executive Vice Chancellor Erik Skinner at (916) 323-7007.

Sincerely,

Brice Harris
Chancellor

Cc:  Manuel Baca, President, CCC Board of Governors
     John Rizzo, President, CCSF Board of Trustees