

RESPONSE TO ACCREDITATION COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES EVALUATION REPORT OF CITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO

JULY 3, 2012

As Interim Chancellor of City College of San Francisco, I want to assure everyone that we take the concerns of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) very seriously. We take responsibility for addressing, in a timely and comprehensive manner, the 14 recommendations concerning fiscal and structural issues contained in the Commission's report.

Despite very difficult current circumstances, CCSF's commitment to its overall mission, to its students' academic success, to diversity, inclusion, and the San Francisco community all remain undiminished and unquestioned. The report makes this clear.

The College has been deeply affected by shrinking levels of state support for community colleges. Years of budget cuts have taken a toll on the College's finances and its physical and technology infrastructure. These realities were evident to the Commission, as they are to us, every day.

The report shows that clear, difficult choices must be made, immediately, and at a number of levels. The ultimate responsibility rests with the Trustees, administration, faculty and staff to reinvent City College so that it can continue to achieve its important mission, but in a more cost-effective and efficient way.

CCSF Trustees have approved a Tentative Budget for 2012-13 that takes important first steps. All of our union partners have tentatively agreed to changes in compensation agreements that achieve immediate savings in compensation. Other short-term savings will be achieved through attrition and reorganization, and by not purchasing needed supplies and equipment.

But there is a great deal left to do, even in the short term. This includes finding resources to raise financial reserves to a minimum 5% of overall budget, contributing to retiree health plans, funding a technology replacement plan, and filling key vacancies in classified and administrative positions. All were cited as serious concerns by the ACCJC as requiring immediate action.

Earlier this month, CCSF Trustees asked the state Chancellor of California Community Colleges for the assistance of the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT). In the next two months, FCMAT will assist CCSF in the development of a multi-year financial plan, with specific recommendations on revenues, expenditures, and overall strategies for achieving financial stability.

If California voters approve the Governor's plan to increase state income and sales tax schedules, CCSF could still face a projected deficit of more than \$14 million in FY 2013-

14. If these measures are not successful, automatic trigger cuts would once again be levied against community colleges. For CCSF, that would mean additional cuts this year of \$10 million. Therefore, the College must make plans, as other Community Colleges have already done, for this potential outcome.

San Francisco voters will have the opportunity to vote on a parcel tax in November that would provide the College with an additional \$14 million annually for the next eight years. These funds would mitigate many of the College's immediate fiscal needs and could not be taken away by the state.

The CCSF community will need to implement dramatic systemic changes. CCSF's currently spends 92 percent of its budget on personnel costs, placing it at the very highest end of the state's community colleges. Reducing this number, to allow funding of the other critical needs identified in the Accreditation Report, is central to a meaningful resolution of the College's fiscal crisis. Equally as important, the College will need to reexamine the effectiveness of its shared governance and decision-making process, including appropriate roles for Trustees, faculty, administration, staff, and students. Additionally, we will need to continue to improve our integrated planning and focus on student outcomes.

Next week, I will appoint an Accreditation Liaison Officer and will lead and convene an Accreditation Response Team comprised of CCSF administration, faculty, and staff. It will be charged with developing a specific and immediate plan of action for addressing the ACCJC's 14 recommendations.

Although the challenge is great, I am confident that, working together, we can and will make the changes necessary to continue providing exemplary opportunities for our students and service to the people of San Francisco.

Dr. Pamela Fisher
Interim Chancellor