ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES

PUBLIC SESSION MINUTES

January 9, 2013

Hyatt Regency Hotel, San Francisco Airport, Burlingame, California

Call to Order: 9:30 a.m., Wednesday, January 9, 2013, Chairperson Sherrill Amador

Members Present: Joseph Bielanski; Timothy Brown; Chris Constantin; Gary Davis; Frank Gornick; Steven Kinsella; Richard Mahon; Virginia May; Charles Meng; Susan Murata; Raul Rodriguez; Michael T. Rota; Barry Russell; Eleanor Siebert; Marie B. Smith; Patrick Tellei; Sharon D. Whitehurst-Payne; John Zimmerman.

Staff: Barbara A. Beno, President; Susan B. Clifford, Vice President; Krista Johns, Vice President; Garman Jack Pond, Vice President; John Nixon, Associate Vice President; Norv Wellsfry, Associate Vice President; Cheri M. Sixbey, Executive Assistant to the President/Business Officer; Barbara Dunham, Assistant.

Guests: Megan Lawrence, Senior Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Heald College; Laurel Hunter, Grant Project Manager, ACCJC Lumina Project; Eeva Deshon, President and CEO, Heald College; Carol Rookstool, Dean, Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising; Zev Kvithy, California Federation of Teachers; Matt Jordan, Associate Dean, Pasadena City College; Richard Hansen, President, California Community College Independents, Inc., Foothill-DeAnza Community College District; Nanette Asimov, Reporter, San Francisco Chronicle

OPENING PROCEDURES

1. Review and Approval of the Agenda
   Moved: Rodriguez/Tellei
   Approved: Unanimous Approval

2. Chair’s Welcome and Overview
   a. Introduction of New Commissioner, Dr. Richard Mahon, Faculty, Riverside Community College
   b. Introduction of Special Guest, Dr. Karen Kershenstein, Council for Higher Education Association (CHEA)

3. Review and approval of June 2012 Public Session Minutes
   Moved: Smith/Zimmerman
   Approved: Unanimous Approval

STAFF REPORTS

4. President’s Report – Barbara Beno

Dr. Beno summarized ACCJC activities and regional issues within last six months.
The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) has begun its process to restructure its own corporate bylaws and its three divisions (ACCJC, ACSCU, ACS) so that each commission becomes an independent, non-profit corporation under California law. The three commissions will retain their affiliation with and the name of WASC. This will ensure that the higher education commissions have appropriate autonomy to comply with U.S. Department of Education (USDE) regulations. The WASC restructuring committee drafted new bylaws for WASC that were approved at its Board of Directors meeting in December 2012. The ACCJC will now be adopting new bylaws to reflect its incorporation and attendant legal responsibilities.

The Council for Higher Education Association (CHEA) approved the ACCJC’s ten-year Eligibility Review, a necessary step for seeking re-recognition, and the ACCJC has submitted an application for recognition. The application will be considered by the CHEA Committee on Recognition this spring, and the CHEA Board of Directors will make the final determination of recognition status at a subsequent meeting, possibly a September 2013 meeting.

The ACCJC has developed a financial monitoring process that allows the Commission to watch institutional fiscal indicators for evidence of declining fiscal stability and provide assistance to those institutions before they reach a crisis state. This practice is comparable to what the other regional accreditors do. ACCJC staff used detailed information about other accreditor’s processes, advice from the ACCJC’s Financial Review Task Force (CEOs and CBOs from member institutions, and representatives of the California and Hawai‘i system offices), to develop the list of relevant fiscal indicators. The USDE specifically requires recognized accreditors to monitor fiscal health of accredited institutions in order to protect the students’ interests.

ACCJC completed the series of regional workshops on Program Review and Integrated Planning. New regional workshops on Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment will begin this spring. It has been beneficial for the ACCJC to have Dr. John Nixon assisting with workshops and governing boards’ trainings. The needs of member institutions are increasing and the hope is that other educational or professional affiliation organizations will step up and provide training to institutions.

The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) has informed the ACCJC that its application for renewal of recognition is due in June 2013. The National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI) will review the application and make a decision on recognition at its December 2013 meeting. A number of regional commissions were reviewed by NACIQI in December 2012, and received multiple findings of non-compliance as the USDE review drills down into details that are now being carefully interpreted by USDE staff. Many findings of non-compliance were based on accreditor practices that are long standing and “passed” prior reviews. The ACSCU/WASC received 21 recommendations and a requirement that it return for a compliance review in one year. Accreditors’ overall impression is that NACIQI has adopted a ‘fine print’ review.

Sections of the required petition deal with how the accreditor examines quality related to institutional mission, student achievement standards set by the institution and outcomes data, including licensing examinations and job placement rates. ACCJC will adapt its instructions for the self-evaluation requirements immediately. Evaluation teams will need to assess the
institutions' performance with respect to these indicators. This is a significant shift and means the USDE will look at accreditors' evaluation of student achievement closely. ACCJC must require institutions to set standards for student achievement and the Commission must evaluate the appropriateness of the standards.

Other areas of concern expressed by the USDE in its December 2012 decisions on regional accreditors include the following: online courses and the quality of support services for online students; reviewing students' work and granting degrees; transfer of credit and transfer by a third entity; job placement data and student earnings subsequent to placement. Unfortunately, absent a national student and employment tracking system, many institutions do not have the data the USDE is asking accreditors to examine. The National Student Clearing House has been contracted by several states to track this data, but it has not been asked to do so for California or Hawai'i.

Accreditors are increasingly asked by Homeland Security about whether the accreditors have information about when programs were approved or closed out, and the agency has a difficult time understanding ACCJC and other regional accreditors are not keeping detailed programmatic records. New efforts to better control the issuance of student visas to come to the United States have caused member institutions to contact ACCJC asking for certification for the Student Exchange and Visitors Program for certain courses or programs in which students with visas are studying. It is adding to the ACCJC workload.

Discussion: Krista Johns commented that these other agencies are using accreditation to serve their purposes. In a sense, there is a different level of concern in tracking student visas than in assuring quality of educational programs. Gary Davis commended the staff for providing rich training offerings to our member institutions and asked, "How can we expand this without strain on staff? All institutions have restraints on budget and look to us to see if we can expand rather than cut back on help to institutions."

5. Vice President Susan Clifford’s Report

Vice President Clifford reported on substantive change reviews and site visits. She mentioned the increasing volume of transfer degrees in response to SB1440 and that the Commission acknowledges these transfer degrees by a formal letter of notification to the college and the USDE. She continues to be involved in numerous trainings to the field and is the ACCJC contact for the Research and Planning (RP) Group’s Strengthening Student Success Conference, the Community College League of California, and the Academic Senate’s Accreditation Institute. Of the eight Regional Workshops provided over the last two years, 611 people participated and only 18 colleges were not able to participate in the workshop provided near their campuses.

6. Vice President Garman Jack Pond’s Report

Vice President Pond noted that the number of team training and self evaluation training dates were reduced by increasing the size of the groups attending each training session. He reported that as of December 2012 over 2,000 persons had signed on to the online course, Accreditation Basics, and that over 1,092 had completed the training. This 90-minute course is required of all first time team
evaluators, and he mentioned that some institutions have required all college staff to take the
course. He also reported that after the May 9, 2012 ACCJC webinar on distance education the
ACCJC was invited to participate in a webinar sponsored by the California Community College
Chancellor’s office titled “Maintaining a Quality Distance Education Program” (December 10,
2012).

7. Vice President Krista Johns’ Report

a. College Status Reports on Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) Implementation

A detailed study of the fall 2012 and spring 2013 College Status Reports on SLO
Implementation will result in a report on the field’s status in student learning outcomes and
assessment and will be provided to the Commission at its June 2013 meeting. In addition,
colleges with information falling outside the norm of expectations may be asked to provide
follow-up information.

b. Revisions to Annual Reports

In light of the USDE emphasis on identification of college information for regular monitoring
and linking monitoring to Commission action where warranted, the ACCJC reviewed its annual
reporting process. The outcome is that additional information valuable to monitoring quality
and institutional effectiveness will be asked on the 2013 Annual Report and the Annual Fiscal
Report. Student learning outcomes will continue to be monitored.

c. CHEA Recognition Review

In addition to what was mentioned in Dr. Beno’s report, the purposes of CHEA recognition are
1) to advance academic quality, 2) to demonstrate accountability, and 3) to encourage, where
appropriate, scrutiny and planning for change and for needed improvement.

The USDE is actively promulgating new regulations for higher education accreditation. Although
gainful employment and some of the state authorization regulations were struck down in the courts,
the USDE has signaled they will bring those back soon. Nevertheless, regulations continue to
encourage improvement of practices. Accreditors are asked to identify college information and
monitor it regularly. The ACCJC has been monitoring information on an annual basis and has set
triggers to require additional information. For example, information about significant growth (i.e.,
beyond an established trigger) in enrollment of distance or online education will be queried.
Accreditors need to pay attention to this, to student achievement, learning outcomes, retention, and
success. Colleges are encouraged to collect other information that is of interest/concern to them
and the advancement of their missions. If colleges set standards, accreditors believe it will
encourage continuous quality improvement. Colleges must be evaluated and be able to demonstrate
that the narrative in their Self Evaluation Reports is accurate and supports student success and
institutional effectiveness.

8. Financial Task Force Committee Report – Associate Vice President Norv Wellsfry and
Commissioner Steve Kinsella
Steve Kinsella presented the report summary of the recommendations of the Financial Review Task Force. The Financial Review Task Force reviewed recommendations made by the Financial Reviewer Team based on information submitted by the Colleges in March 2012. The expertise of the Financial Task Force was utilized to review the reports and recommendations of the Financial Reviewer Teams. The report included the process used by the financial reviewers to develop the preliminary recommendations.

WASC CONSTITUTION AND ACCJC BYLAWS REVISION

9. Approval of Bylaws – President Barbara Beno and Commissioner Marie Smith

a. Amendment to Western Association of Schools and Colleges Constitution Bylaws

President Beno and Commissioner Marie Smith reported on the changes in state and federal laws regarding corporations and USDE regulations. In November the WASC Board adopted new corporate bylaws affecting WASC and ACCJC. Going forward, there will be four legal entities (3 commissions and WASC Board). The ACCJC Bylaws will be changed to include new functions that were formerly delegated to WASC Corporate, including an appeals process.

Moved: Sharon Whitehurst-Payne  
Seconded: Timothy Brown  
Motion: To approve amendment to WASC Constitution Bylaws  
Action: Unanimous approval

b. Amendment to ACCJC Bylaws

Moved: Virginia May  
Seconded: Frank Gornick  
Motion: To approve amendment to ACCJC Bylaws  
Approved: Unanimous approval

c. Appellate Conflict of Interest Policy and Statement

Moved: Mike Rota  
Seconded: Sharon Whitehurst-Payne  
Motion: To approve Appellate Conflict of Interest and Policy Statement  
Action: Unanimous approval

POLICY

10. First Reading Policies – Commissioner Marie Smith and Vice President Krista Johns

a. Policy on Substantive Change

Moved: Tim Brown  
Seconded: Charles Meng
Motion: To approve policy for first reading
Action: Unanimous approval

b. Policy on Institutional Integrity and Ethics

Moved: Patrick Tellei
Seconded: Steve Kinsella
Motion: To approve policy for first reading
Action: Unanimous approval

c. Policy on Award of Credit

Moved: Joseph Bielanski
Seconded: Susan Murata
Motion: To approve policy for first reading
Action: Unanimous approval

d. Policy on the Rights and Responsibilities of the Commission and Member Institutions

Moved: Raul Rodriguez
Seconded: Sharon Whitehurst-Payne
Motion: To approve policy for first reading
Action: Unanimous approval

e. Policy on Representation of Accredited Status

Moved: Mike Rota
Seconded: Tim Brown
Motion: To approve policy for first reading
Action: Unanimous approval

f. Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions

Moved: John Zimmerman
Seconded: Sharon Whitehurst-Payne
Motion: To approve policy for first reading
Action: Unanimous approval

g. Policy on Review of Commission Actions

Moved: Steve Kinsella
Seconded: Raul Rodriguez
Motion: To approve policy for first reading
Action: Unanimous approval

h. Policy on Public Disclosure and Confidentiality in the Accreditation Process
Moved: Susan Murata  
Seconded: Sharon Whitehurst-Payne  
Motion: To approve policy for first reading  
Action: Unanimous approval

i. Policy on Commission Good Practice in Relations with Member Institutions

Moved: Tim Brown  
Seconded: Virginia May  
Motion: To approve policy for first reading  
Action: Unanimous approval

j. Policy and Procedures for the Evaluation of Institutions in Multi-College/Multi-Unit Districts or Systems

Moved: Joseph Bielanski  
Seconded: Gary Davis  
Motion: To approve policy for first reading  
Action: Unanimous approval

11. Second Reading Policies – Commissioner Marie Smith and Vice President Krista Johns

a. Policy on Review of Accreditation Standards

Moved: Mike Rota  
Seconded: Sharon Whitehurst-Payne  
Motion: To approve policy for second reading  
Action: Unanimous approval

b. Policy on Student and Public Complaints Against Institutions

Moved: Susan Murata  
Seconded: Tim Brown  
Motion: To approve policy for second reading  
Action: Unanimous approval

12. Approval of Operational Policies – Marie Smith and Vice President Krista Johns

a. Policy on Relations with Government Agencies

Moved: Steve Kinsella  
Seconded: Sharon Whitehurst-Payne  
Motion: To approve operational policy  
Action: Unanimous approval
b. Coordinating Guidelines for the WASC Accrediting Commissions

   Moved: Tim Brown
   Seconded: Raul Rodriguez
   Motion: To approve operational policy
   Action: Unanimous approval

13. Elimination of Policy – Marie Smith and Vice President Krista Johns

   a. Policy on Credit for Prior Experiential Learning in Undergraduate Programs

   Moved: Virginia May
   Seconded: Tim Brown
   Motion: To eliminate policy
   Action: Failed, 1 Yes, 16 No, 1 Abstention

REVIEW OF ACCREDITATION STANDARDS AND PROCESSES

14. Report on “ACCJC Review of Accreditation Standards and Practices” - Commissioners Mike Rota and Frank Gornick, Co-Chairs; Associate Vice President John Nixon, Staff

OPERATIONS

15. Audit for 2011-2012 – Commissioner Gary Davis

   Commissioner Davis reported that appropriate accounting policies are in place and there were no difficulties with the audit.

   Moved: Gary Davis
   Seconded: Chris Constantin
   Motion: To adopt audit
   Action: Unanimous approval

16. Recommendation for Auditor – Commissioner Gary Davis, Chair, Audit Committee

   Moved: Davis
   Seconded: Constantin
   Motion: To appoint auditor
   Approved: Unanimous approval


   The Commission received the Financial Report.

18. Budget and Personnel Committee Report – Commissioner Frank Gornick
Commissioner Gornick presented the preliminary budget for 2013-2014. He stated that: 1) the Commission needs to look at trimming costs; 2) efforts need to be made to work smarter rather than harder; 3) consider using the Cloud or other methods to save time spent by staff on trainings; 4) consider the possibility of a fee structure for trainings; remain independent and explore what other agencies do and how they might help. Commissioner Gornick noted that these ideas were not an indication to stop ACCJC activities, but to find other resources.

Moved: Steve Kinsella  
Seconded: Charles Meng  
Motion: To adopt the Preliminary 2013-2014 Budget as presented  
Action: Unanimous approval

2014-2015 Fee Schedule

Commissioner Gornick stated that he doesn’t expect increases to always be 10%. President Beno stated that the real driver of some of these costs is the increased duties of ACCJC guided by federal regulations. Discussion ensued regarding cost saving and revenue generating ideas.

Moved: Eleanor Siebert  
Seconded: Steve Kinsella  
Motion: To increase 2014 – 2015 fees by 10%  
Approved: Unanimous approval

AGENCY RELATIONS

19. WASC Board of Directors Report – Commissioner Mike Rota  
The Commission received the WASC Board of Directors report.

20. WASC – Schools Commission – Commissioner Gary Davis  
The Commission received the Schools Commission report.

21. WASC/ACSCU – Commissioner Eleanor Siebert  
The Commission received the Senior Commission report.

22. California Community Colleges – Commissioner Barry Russell  
The Commission received the California Community College report.

23. Hawai‘i Colleges – Commissioner Mike Rota  
The Commission received the Hawai‘i Colleges report.

24. Pacific Colleges – Commissioner Patrick Tellei  
The Commission received the Pacific Colleges report.

25. Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions – President Barbara Beno

26. Council for Higher Education Accreditation – President Barbara Beno
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   The Commission received the California Community College report.

23. Hawai‘i Colleges – Commissioner Mike Rota
   The Commission received the Hawai‘i Colleges report.

24. Pacific Colleges – Commissioner Patrick Tellei
   The Commission received the Pacific Colleges report.

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