1. **Who is WASC and why is accreditation important?**

   The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) is one of six regional accrediting associations in the U.S. and exists to assure quality in higher education. The accrediting activities of WASC are conducted by three Commissions. Each Commission works with a different segment of education. The WASC Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) evaluates and accredits public and private postsecondary institutions that offer two-year education programs and award the associate degree. It grants accreditation to institutions not individual programs.

   Accreditation certifies to the academic community and to the general public that all of degree programs and educational activities offered by CCSF meet or exceed established standards and the institution is achieving its own stated mission.

   While no institution in the U.S. is required to be accredited, eligible institutions seek to become accredited because of the tangible and intangible benefits. In attaining WASC accreditation, an institution shows that it has met established standards and proves that it is working toward achieving its stated goals and objectives. Accreditation also encourages institutional development and improvement through self-study and review. The higher education community, students, parents, governmental agencies, and the general public view WASC accreditation as an indicator of effective educational practices and institutional quality. Accreditation facilitates institutional eligibility to participate in Title IV student financial aid programs. Many institutions rely on regional accreditation in their decisions to recognize transfer credit.

2. **Why does CCSF need to reaffirm its accreditation?**

   Colleges follow a six year cycle during which institutional review is continuous. These reviews include an Annual Report, a Midterm Report, completion of a comprehensive institutional self study, and an evaluation team peer review. The last re-accreditation review/report for CCSF was in 2000. Colleges maintain accreditation through continuous adherence to accreditation criteria as set forth by the WASC Commission.

3. **What is the Self-Study?**

   The Self-Study is a comprehensive institution-wide process of reflection on areas of strength and weakness guided by the standards of accreditation. CCSF’s Self-Study document includes a response to the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) standards, thematic essays exploring important issues for the College, and a set of major recommendations. The two year process to produce the study included input from all segments of the College, through participation on Standards Committees, Theme Committees, Public Listening Sessions, Flex Day workshops, and Board presentations. The process was overseen by a Steering Committee and coordinated by a Work Group with the Office of Research, Planning and Grants. Both committees include representation from various constituencies of the College community.

4. Who is the WASC Visiting Team and what will they do during their March visit?

The WASC Visiting Team is comprised of faculty, administrators, and a trustee from community colleges from the region. The Visiting Team members will be seeking to verify and understand what is contained in the College’s Self-Study report so they can determine to what extent the standards have been met or exceeded. To accomplish this, they will visit several of the CCSF campuses, talk with members of the college community, study evidence documents provided in the Team evidence room, drop-in on classes, meetings and in general will observe, listen and seek information to try and confirm what is written in the report.

5. How can I participate?

The WASC Visiting Team will hold a drop-in visit time for any member of the College community to attend. Please visit the website to view the current schedule.

The CCSF Accreditation Work Group will work closely with WASC to prepare a comprehensive schedule of meetings and interviews in advance of the visit and will work hard to promote this schedule throughout the Spring.