

ACCREDITATION UPDATE #2

August 27, 2008

LASC Faculty, Staff and Students:

Yesterday, August 26, 2008, I, along with Trustee Scott-Hayes, Dean Dan Walden and Vice-Chancellor Colombo met with the President of Accrediting Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC) and her staff. During that meeting we got a clearer understanding of process, definitions, responses and timelines. Specifically:

- The Commission makes the decision on accreditation status in closed session. Staff involves themselves in the area of insuring legalities are conformed to and as a resource to the team to insure clarity of reports. Staff provides historical perspectives of colleges for the Commission to make decisions. The Commission takes into account previous visits (both comprehensive and other visits), team reports and college responses. Additionally, it was reported and it is in policy, that the Commission is not bound in a “step” process to go from accreditation without sanction to warning to probation to further action. It is in the realm of the accreditation to apply whatever level of sanction, outside of removing accreditation, to insure that colleges comply with standards.
- The Commission, it appears, was most concerned with the non-instructional program review wherein the recommendations on planning was reviewed back to the 1994 comprehensive accreditation review. The full planning process, inclusive of instructional and non-instructional programs, had not been completed as of the March, '08 visit. As a result, it is my opinion that the weight of the sanction is based on the non-instructional program review. Coupled with the US Department of Education directive of “forcing” compliance by the regional accreditation association onto colleges that have not completely complied with recommendations over a long standing period – it appeared it added to the decision made by the Commission.
- We presented cogent evidence that rebutted portions of the report. It was recommended that we identify the misinformation and provide it to the Commission as we respond to the 4 recommendations.
- We got clarity as to wording of “process”, “focus”, “planning” – all of this terminology used in reports is misleading. Teams are being asked to be more specific in that implementation must be presented. Bottom line – whenever a recommendation is made the action/resolution must be implemented fully – not partially, not primarily, - fully. All actions related to recommendations 1-4 must be fully implemented. Additionally, evidence must be provided and measured

whether actions that were done were assessed and had impact on student learning and services provided.

- In March, 2009 there will be one report that includes the mid-term and responses to each recommendation. The visiting team will only focus on the 4 recommendations identified in the March '08 visit, not the other 3 recommendations of the '06 visit. However, all 7 must be addressed.

Next Steps:

- Continue with actions/activities to meet each of the 4 recommendations.
- Assign, from the district, an individual to assist in writing, editing and follow-up
- Prepare a comprehensive report with full evidence reflecting each standard and sub-standard
- Align all plans with actions and budget in a coordinated fashion
- Prepare report for submission in early January, 2009 to Commission
- Request that a commission or staff member accompany team in March, 2009
- Request to address the Commission at their January meeting to update on progress and the seriousness of which we are concerned about planning, implementation and student success
- Continue to provide monthly updates to the college community