

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges  
Western Association of Schools and Colleges  
Public Comment  
San Francisco Airport Marriott  
June 11, 2009

Good Morning Chairperson Gaines, Commissioners, Dr. Beno and Staff.

Prior to my “leave of absence” from California, I viewed accreditation as a peer review process that assisted colleges in their development and provided recommendations to further meet their missions and the standards outlined by the Commission. Upon my return the last 3 years, much has been said about the relationship between the Commission and the colleges. Some positive, and some, honestly, quite negative. However, what I want to express is my appreciation for the recommendations and suggestions of the last three years, and most specifically, that of last year. Those four (4) recommendations outlined in the probationary letter were pointed and necessary for us to provide enhance services and programs for students. We can argue about sanctions and what were levied, but let’s concentrate on the positive side of what this probationary sanction meant to us at Los Angeles Southwest College. The college community came to the realization and understanding that evidence in support of standards reflective in the four (4) recommendations had to be in place --- not in process or ALMOST done --- but completed. It was also a strong and needed indication of the seriousness of addressing each recommendation effectively as well as past recommendations. And, not to “slip” in addressing the standards no matter if there was a recommendation, suggestion or any comment. Why give recommendations if they are not going to be addressed?

This was a “wake-up call” in the strongest sense of the word. I, no the College appreciated the necessity and urgency to move forward with its eyes on student success. Having the type of review given in 2008 was necessary for us to “hit our stride”. I believe we have and have gone beyond. The most recent team, chaired by Wes Bryan who was joined by Tony Cantu, attests to that. More importantly, it was an affirmation that LASC was making progress on several fronts – inclusive of planning, matching budget with planning, serving our entire community, addressing the needs of our ill-pre-prepared students and completing and **USING** a program review process focused on non-instructional areas. It is important to note that our re-focused attention has not stopped with the visit and apparent positive review we received from the visiting team. The College’s culture is changing and continuous assessment and responsive actions are being embedded in all of the College’s operations. The best evidence of this posture is the recent completion of validation studies in English and Developmental Education. From that study we found that the cut scores needed to be adjusted

based on data received. Yesterday afternoon, we completed the same process for the validation of the math assessment and cut scores and made similar adjustments based on the data. Further evidence of our continuous improvement is the work of the Strategic Planning Committee who has just completed the review of the college's ICOP (Integrated College Operational Plan) and it is the foundation for the development of the 09-10 ICOP that will be finalized during our summer retreat. The focus of the ICOP is grounded in continuous improvement and student success. Additionally, the mini-instructional program review have all been completed and approved by the Academic Senate and will be integrated into the 2009-10 ICOP.

We fully agree that recommendations need to be met in timely ways – not 6, 12, and in the case of our non-instructional program review 16 years late. We have established a schedule where the program review recommendations are addressed annually and used in the annual updates to the strategic and specific program planning.

Even though I have focused on the recommendations relating to the sanction, we have continued to build upon the remaining three (3) recommendations found in the mid-term progress report; namely:

- Recommendation 5: Participatory Governance – We continue to improve and monitor the information flow to insure transparency and accuracy. The new Senate leadership has already begun to establish on going meeting dates and committee representation. The budget committee has been in full dialog relating to the current budget crisis. Forums have been held to inform the campus of the financial difficulties, implications and actions – both Board directives and College directives.
- Recommendation 6: Fire Proof Storage – Site identified and secured with appropriate fire proof storage for files. Document imaging of all files is now in progress.
- Recommendation 7: Student Learning Objectives - As an update: 1) Faculty have developed a rubric for critical thinking (Institutional SLO); Student Self-Assessment for critical thinking will be implemented in the Fall, '09. 2) All instructional SLO's added to the current program reviews will be assessed Fall, '09. 3) When the visit occurred in April, '09 36% of courses had their SLO's completed. As of last week, 40% have been completed. 4) The College is on target in their schedule and assessment of SLO's. 5) Administrative outcomes relating to Administrative Services will be developed in Fall '09 with the SLO committee.

The conversations with the team were insightful and very worthwhile. We have learned from the process and strongly support the tenets of the peer review process as fostered by the Commission. Often, the result of positive engagements and interactions is rarely identified and articulated in a public way. I would like to offer my thank you's to the team and the commission. – The team for its thoroughness and strong support in LASC's meeting of the standards; – the Commission for its parts in insuring that colleges focus on student success.

We are in an extensive building program at Los Angeles Southwest College and are very proud and happy for what has been developed, however, building designs and new construction are worthless if the academic programs and support services do not meet students' needs. These recommendations have assisted us in framing and doing what needs to be done to meet our students and community's needs. Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,

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President