



**ACCREDITING
COMMISSION
for COMMUNITY and
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

*Western Association
of Schools and Colleges*

10 COMMERCIAL BOULEVARD
SUITE 204
NOVATO, CA 94949
TELEPHONE: (415) 506-0234
FAX: (415) 506-0238
E-MAIL: accjc@accjc.org
www.accjc.org

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July 3, 2014

Dr. Gari Browning
Superintendent/President
Ohlone College
43600 Mission Boulevard
Fremont, CA 94539

Dear President Browning:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting on June 4-6, 2014, reviewed the Institutional Self Evaluation Report and the Report of the External Evaluation Team that visited Ohlone College March 10-13, 2014.

The Commission took action to **reaffirm accreditation** with the requirement that the College complete a **Follow-Up Report** to be submitted by **March 15, 2015**.¹

Reaffirmation with a Follow-Up Report is granted when the institution is found to substantially meet or exceed the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards and Commission policies but has recommendations on a small number of issues of some urgency which should be addressed in a short period of time. The Report should demonstrate that the institution has addressed the recommendations noted below, resolved the deficiencies, and meets Accreditation Standards.

Need to Resolve Deficiencies:

The Accreditation Standards, as an integrated whole, represent indicators of academic quality and institutional effectiveness. Deficiencies in any Standards will impact quality at an institution, and ultimately the educational environment and experiences of students. The Commission found Ohlone College deficient in meeting the following Eligibility Requirement and Accreditation Standards: Eligibility Requirement 10; Standards I.B.1-6; II.A.1.c; II.A.2.a, b, f, g, h, i; II.A.5; II.A.6; II.B.1; II.B.3; II.B.3.a; II.B.3.c; II.B.3.d; II.B.3.e; II.B.4; III.A.1.c; and IV.B.2.

Recommendation 1: In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the College complete the process to develop institution-set standards for student learning and achievement and to use those standards to systematically improve student learning and achievement and learning within the College. (Standards I.B.1-6, II.A.1.c, II.A.2.a, b, f, g, h, i, II.A.5, II.A.6, IV.B.2, ER 10 – Student Learning and Achievement)

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Recommendation 2: In order to meet the standards, the team recommends the College develop and implement a data-driven plan to provide appropriate, comprehensive, and reliable support services to students regardless of service location or delivery method; and develop and implement program-level student achievement data that assures the quality of all student support services and demonstrates that these services support student learning and enhance the achievement of the mission of the institution. (Standard II.B.1, II.B.3, II.B.3.a, II.B.3.c, II.B.3.d, II.B.3.e, II.B.4)

Recommendation 3: In order to meet the standard, the team recommends that faculty and others directly responsible for student progress toward achieving stated learning outcomes include, as a component of their evaluation, effectiveness in producing those learning outcomes. (Standard III.A.1.c.)

Under U.S. Department of Education enforcement regulations, the Commission is required to take immediate action to terminate the accreditation of an institution which is out of compliance with any standard. In the alternative, the Commission can provide the institution with additional notice and a deadline for coming into compliance that is no later than two years from when the institution was first informed of the noncompliance. In exceptional situations, if the institution has done all within its authority to reach compliance on any standard but remains out of compliance, the Commission is permitted by regulations to allocate a one-time, short-term “good cause extension” for the college to reach compliance prior to acting on the institution’s termination. However, continued noncompliance with multiple standards would diminish the appropriateness of such an extension. Ohlone College should fully resolve the noted deficiencies by **March, 2015**.

Improvement of Institutional Effectiveness:

Recommendations have been made for Ohlone College to improve institutional effectiveness. Recommendations for improvement may be made to highlight areas for continuing or expanding excellent practices. Recommendations for improvement may also be made when an institution is currently in compliance with Standards, but additional levels of effort should be demonstrated in the future. In the Commission’s experience, these recommendations may provide indicators of possible future noncompliance if left unattended by the institution. The College should plan to fully address all improvement recommendations in the Midterm Report.

Recommendation 4: In order to improve institutional effectiveness, the team recommends that the college develop and implement data-driven, systematic follow-up procedures that communicate quality assurance to the entire campus community on college planning, program review, unit planning and resource allocation processes. The team further recommends that the college include evaluation of these follow-up procedures as part of the annual evaluation of planning processes. (Standard I.B.4, I.B.6, I.B.7, III.A.6, III.B.2, III.B.2.a, III.B.2.B, III.C.2, III.D.4, IV.B.2.b)

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Recommendation 5: In order to improve institutional effectiveness, the team recommends that the cost of regularly replacing and updating library and learning resources be institutionalized in the College's budget rather than relying on one-time funding and/or donations. (Standard II.C.1)

Recommendation 6: In order to improve institutional effectiveness, the team recommends the coordination of all tutorial services incorporating mandatory tutor training, faculty outreach and referral processes, tracking of sessions and an assessment of the effectiveness of the services. (Standard II.C.2)

Recommendation 7: In order to improve institutional effectiveness, the team recommends that the College continue to work on implementing the staffing plan in order to ensure a sufficient number of full-time faculty to support all of the College's educational programs and services. (Standard III.A.2, ER 13 - Faculty)

During its institutional self evaluation, Ohlone College identified improvement plans for advancing its continuous improvement efforts. The Commission suggests that those plans for improvement be taken into account as the College continues into the next accreditation cycle. In its Midterm report, the College should address steps undertaken in those improvement areas.

The final External Evaluation Report enclosed with this letter provides details of the team's findings with regard to each Eligibility Requirement and Accreditation Standard and should be read carefully and used to understand the team's findings. Additional copies may now be duplicated.

The recommendations contained in the External Evaluation Report represent the best advice of the peer evaluation team at the time of the visit but may not describe all that is necessary to come into compliance. Institutions are expected to take all actions necessary to continuously comply with Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies. The Commission wishes to remind you that while an institution may concur or disagree with any part of the Report, Ohlone College is expected to use the External Evaluation Report to improve educational programs and services and to resolve issues identified by the Commission.

The Commission requires that the College give the Institutional Self Evaluation Report, the External Evaluation Report, and this letter appropriate dissemination to College staff and to those who were signatories of the College Self Evaluation Report. This group should include the campus leadership and the Board of Trustees.

The Commission also requires that the College's Institutional Self Evaluation Report, the External Evaluation Report, and this Commission action letter be made available to students and the public by placing a copy on the College website.

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Please note that in response to public interest in disclosure, the Commission now requires institutions to post accreditation information on a page no farther than one click from the institution's home page.

On behalf of the Commission, I wish to express continuing interest in the institution's educational programs and services. Professional self-regulation is the most effective means of assuring institutional integrity, effectiveness, educational quality, and student success.

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Beno, Ph.D.
President

BAB/tl

¹Institutions preparing and submitting Midterm Reports, Follow-Up Reports, and Special Reports to the Commission should review *Guidelines for the Preparation of Reports to the Commission*. It contains the background, requirements, and format for each type of report and presents sample cover pages and certification pages. It is available on the ACCJC website under College Reports to ACCJC at: (<http://www.accjc.org/college-reports-accjc>).