

News from Saddleback College

For Immediate Release

Contact: Jennie McCue
jmccue@saddleback.edu
(949) 582-4320

Amy Wheeler
awheeler@saddleback.edu
(949) 582-4897

Accreditation Maintained, College to Address Commission's Recommendations

Mission Viejo, CA – A letter received today from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges states that Saddleback College's accreditation status remains unchanged, while the commission issued warning for the college and district to address six specific recommendations.

Following its campus visit in October, 2010, the commission's evaluation team report stated, "The team perceives the college and its community of faculty, staff, students, and administrators to be thoughtful, creative, caring, and very optimistic." The team also noted the following specific commendations:

1. The team commends the college for the positive change in campus climate. The team observation of Saddleback College was that of a college and its community of faculty, staff, students, and administrators to be academically and programmatically engaged, creative, and optimistic with respect to their institution. The pride everyone has in the campus connection to the community, the transfer rate, and esprit de corps is notable.
2. The team commends the college for its development of a 20-year facilities needs assessment that includes scheduled maintenance, renovation and new buildings.
3. The team commends the college on the leadership role the academic senate and its committees have taken in championing the development and implementation of student learning outcomes and program reviews.
4. The team commends the college for its efforts in strategic planning and integrating that with the college resource allocation process.
5. The team commends the college faculty and staff who support the Center for Instructional Design and Distance Education to ensure quality online and mediated instruction.
6. The team commends the college for creating and institutionalizing a transfer culture on campus and the Transfer Center staff's commitment to a leadership role in supporting students' success.

Dr. Tod A. Burnett, President of Saddleback College, stated, "I am very proud of the commendations earned by our college and look forward to working with our new chancellor and the district to address the commission's recommendations. Each of the college's participatory governance groups demonstrated unprecedented dedication in preparing a superb accreditation self-study to the commission, resulting in a successful site visit that highlighted the wonderful work we've all accomplished for our students over the past several years."

In its letter to the college, the commission issued warning for the college and district to correct deficiencies contained in the following six recommendations:

1. The team recommends that the chancellor develop and implement both a strategic short-term and long-term plan that is inclusive of the planning at the colleges and that this planning structure drive the allocation of district resources for the colleges, Advanced Technology Education Park (ATEP), and the district.
2. The team recommends that the district and the colleges develop and implement a resource allocation model driven by planning that includes all district funds and is open, transparent, inclusive, and that is widely disseminated and reviewed/evaluated periodically for effectiveness.
3. The team recommends that the college, district administrators, faculty and staff develop a communications process among the entities on key issues of district-wide concern including academic calendar, planning, ATEP, technology and building priorities.
4. The team recommends that the Board of Trustees widely communicate the results of its self evaluation process annually and use this as the basis for improvement.
5. The team recommends that the Board of Trustees develop a clearly defined policy for a code of ethics which must include dealing with violations of the Board's code of ethics.
6. The team recommends that the district provide a clear delineation of its functional responsibilities, the district level process for decision making and the role of the district in college planning and decision making. The district should perform a regular review of district committees, conduct an assessment of the overall effectiveness of services to the colleges and communicate the results of those reviews.

Dr. Burnett will be assembling a college task force to address the recommendations with the district. The college will be required to submit a follow-up report to the commission by October 15, 2011, with a visit planned by commission representatives in November 2011. The commission's letter to the college and evaluation team report and other accreditation documents can be found at www.saddleback.edu/accreditation.

Accreditation is the voluntary process for the evaluation of colleges and universities used by the higher education community. It is a quality assurance process through which institutions collectively set standards for good practice, conduct peer-based evaluations of institutions on a regular basis, confer accredited status on institutions, and make the results of accreditation

review of institutions known to the public. All colleges must complete an accreditation self-study every six years that is submitted to the commission, which follows up with an accreditation team site visit to the college to determine whether accreditation will be maintained.

Located in Mission Viejo, Saddleback College provides quality higher education and training to the greater south Orange County community. Having served more than 500,000 students since 1968, Saddleback College offers more than 300 degree and certificate programs to help students reach their personal, career, and educational goals. For more information, please visit www.saddleback.edu.

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