

June 23, 2017

Dr. Tod Burnett  
President  
Saddleback College  
28000 Marguerite Parkway  
Mission Viejo, CA 92692

Dear President Burnett:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting June 7-9, 2017, reviewed the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) and evidentiary documents submitted by Saddleback College and the External Evaluation Team Report (Team Report) prepared by the evaluation team that visited February 27-March 2, 2017. College leadership, including the president of the governing board and the College president, certified the College's report, which was submitted in application for reaffirmation of accreditation. The purpose of the Commission's review was to determine whether the College continues to meet Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies (hereafter called Standards).

After considering the material noted above, the Commission acted to **reaffirm accreditation for seven years** and to require a **Follow-Up Report in 18 months** on the issues identified in the team's findings of noncompliance at the College and the District.<sup>1</sup> Reaffirmation indicates that the Commission has determined that the institution is in substantial compliance with standards. Saddleback College is required to submit its Follow-Up Report by **October 1, 2018**. The Report should demonstrate that the College and the District have resolved all deficiencies and meets Standards.

The Commission finds the College out of compliance with Standards: II.A.1, II.A.2, and II.A.16 (College Recommendation 3) and III.A.5 and IV.D.2 (District Recommendation 1). Standard I.B.5 has been removed from the list of deficient Standards in College Recommendation 3.

### **College Recommendation 3 (Compliance)**

In order meet the standard, the team recommends that the College develop a more consistent mechanism to ensure that all program reviews are up to date and that all programs contain action plans to improve the quality of its programs (Standards II.A.1, II.A.2, II.A.16).

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<sup>1</sup> Institutions 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 found on the ACCJC website at: <http://accjc.org/college-reports-to-accjc/>.

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**District Recommendation 1 (Compliance)**

In order to meet the Standard, the South Orange County Community College District must implement a system that ensures the effectiveness of its human resources by evaluating all personnel systematically and at stated intervals. (III.A.5, IV.D.2)

Improving Institutional Effectiveness

The Team Report noted Recommendations 1, 4, and 5 for improving institutional effectiveness (improvement recommendations). The Commission acted to change College Recommendation 2 to a recommendation to increase institutional effectiveness and has deleted reference in the Recommendation to Standards I.B.3, I.B.15, I.B.6, and Eligibility Requirement 11. These recommendations do not identify current areas of deficiency in institutional practice, but highlight areas of practice for which College attention may be needed. Consistent with its policy to foster continuous improvement through the peer-review process, the Commission expects institutions to consider the advice for improvement offered. In the Midterm Report, the College will include any actions taken in response to the evaluation team's improvement recommendations.

Next Steps

The Team Report provides details of the team's findings with regard to the College's work to meet the standards. The guidance and recommendations contained in the Report represent the best advice of the evaluation team at the time of the visit but may not describe all that is necessary for the College to come into compliance (or to improve).

All colleges are required to file a Midterm Report in the fourth year after each comprehensive evaluation. Saddleback College will submit the Midterm Report by **March 15, 2021**. The Midterm Report describes resolution of any team recommendations made for improvement, includes a summary of progress on College-identified plans for improvement as expressed in the ISER, and forecasts where the College will be at the time of the next comprehensive evaluation.

A **final copy** of the Team Report is attached. Commission changes to the Team Report are noted on a separate page for inclusion with the Team Report. The College may now duplicate and post copies of the enclosed Team Report with this added page.

The Commission requires that the College give the ISER, the Team Report, and this letter appropriate dissemination to those who were signatories of the ISER and to make these documents available to all campus constituencies and the public by posting them on the College website. Please note that in response to public interest in accreditation, the Commission requires institutions to post accreditation information on a page no more than one click from the institution's home page.

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On behalf of the Commission, I wish to express appreciation for the collaborative work that Saddleback College undertook to prepare for institutional self-evaluation, and to support the work of the external evaluation team. Thank you for sharing the values and the work of accreditation to ensure educational quality and to support student success. Accreditation and peer review are most effective when the College and the ACCJC work together to focus on student outcomes and continuous quality improvement in higher education.

If you should have any questions concerning this letter or the Commission action, please contact me or one of the ACCJC Vice Presidents. We would be glad to help you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Winn", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Richard Winn, Ed.D.  
Interim President

RW/tl

Cc: Dr. Debra Fitzsimons, Interim Chancellor, South Orange County CCD

Attachment