



**ACCREDITING
COMMISSION
for COMMUNITY and
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

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June 28, 2005



Dr. Benjamin Duran
Superintendent-President
Merced College
3600 M Street
Merced, CA 95348

Dear President Duran:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting on June 8-10, 2005, reviewed the institutional self study report and the report of the evaluation team which visited Merced College on Tuesday, March 22-Thursday, March 24, 2005. I am pleased to inform you that accreditation has been reaffirmed, with a requirement that the college complete a Progress Report.

The Commission asks that a Progress Report be submitted by **March 15, 2006**. The Progress Report should focus on the recommendations and concerns as noted below:

- 1) In order to meet the standards, the team recommends that the college implement its new program review process in a focused and expeditious manner, including a published schedule as to when all college programs and services are committed to undergo the full process. Integration of program review with the institutional planning and budgeting processes, the development of student learning outcomes, and student achievement data is also recommended. This is imperative given that the program review process was cited by two previous teams as not meeting the standards. (Standard I.B.1, B.3, B.6, B.7; Standard II.A.1.a, b, c, A.2.a, b, c, e, f; B.1, B.3.d, B.4, C.2; Standard III.A.1, A.4.a; B.1.a; Standard IV.A.1)
- 2) In order to meet the standards, the college needs to develop student learning outcomes for all courses and programs. Additionally, institutional student learning outcomes need to be integrated with General Education and Competency Requirements. Assessment of student learning outcomes needs to show how course credit and the awarding of degrees and certificates is based on student achievement of stated student learning outcomes and how outcome assessments are used to improve courses and programs, improve teaching and learning strategies, and promote student success. (Standard I.B, B.2; Standard II.A.1.a, c, A.2.a, b, e, f, g, h, i, A.3.a, b, c, 6.a; B, B.4, C, C.2)

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The team notes with concern that the recommendation on program review was cited as not meeting the standard in the two previous evaluations.

The visiting team noted, and the Commission commends the college, for its initial work in adopting student learning outcomes (SLOs) at the course and program level, which will serve as a model to the entire college; its commitment to acquiring technology infrastructure and systems and the requisite planning and coordination since the last accreditation report; the numerous improvements in student services that resulted from student surveys and program reviews; and the college-wide commitment to dialogue in institutional leadership and improvement of planning structures.

I have previously sent you a copy of the evaluation team report. Additional copies may now be duplicated. The Commission requires you to give the report and this letter appropriate dissemination to your college staff and to those who were signatories of your college self study report. This group should include the Chancellor, campus leadership, and the Board of Trustees. The Commission also requires that the team report and the self study report be made available to the public. Placing copies in the college library can accomplish this. Should you want the report electronically to place on your web site or for some other purpose, please contact Commission staff.

The recommendations contained in the evaluation team report represent the observations of the evaluation team at the time of the visit. The Commission reminds you that while an institution may concur or disagree with any part of the team report, the college is expected to use the report to improve the educational programs and services of the institution.

All colleges are required to file a Midterm Report in the third year after each comprehensive evaluation. Merced College should submit the Midterm Report by **March 15, 2008**. Midterm Reports indicate progress toward meeting the evaluation team's recommendations and forecast where the college expects to be by the time of the next comprehensive evaluation. The college also includes a summary of progress on college-identified concerns as expressed in the self study.

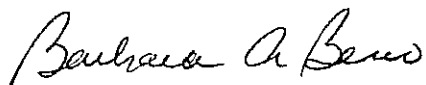
The college conducted a comprehensive self study as part of its evaluation. The Commission suggests that the plans for improvement of the institution included in that document be taken into account in the continuing development of Merced College. The next comprehensive evaluation of the college will occur during **Spring 2011**.

Finally, let me take this opportunity to remind you that federal legislation affecting accrediting agencies requires that accredited colleges conduct systematic assessment of educational outcomes (see especially Standards One and Two). A further requirement is that accrediting agencies pay close attention to student loan default rates.

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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 integrity, effectiveness and quality.

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Beno
Executive Director

BAB/tl

cc: Dr. Allan Grimsby, Accreditation Liaison Officer
Board President, Merced Community College District
Dr. Douglas Treadway, Team Chair
Evaluation Team Members