



**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

Chairperson
STEVEN KINSELLA
Administrative Member

Vice Chairperson
SUSAN KAZAMA
Academic Member

President
BARBARA A. BENO

Vice President
SUSAN B. CLIFFORD

Vice President
KRISTA JOHNS

Vice President
GARMAN JACK POND

Associate Vice President
JOHN NIXON

Associate Vice President
NORVAL WELLSFRY

EL CAMINO COLLEGE

June 17, 2015

2015 JUN 23 PM 3:28

President Tom Fallo
El Camino College
16007 Crenshaw Blvd.
Torrance, California 90506-0002

OFFICE OF THE
PRESIDENT

Dear President Fallo:

El Camino College Compton Center (Compton Center) was granted Eligibility by a vote of the Commission in March 2015. The Commission reviewed carefully the Eligibility Report submitted by Compton Center and found all Eligibility Requirements were met. Again, let me offer congratulations to Compton Center on achieving this milestone. The process toward achieving accreditation now begins.

This letter confirms the requirements for further review and the timelines for each step in the process of application for initial accreditation. We established these timelines in the discussion among you, me, and State Trustee Tom Henry at the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) office on June 16, 2015.

Compton Center will undergo the process of gaining accreditation as a second institution of El Camino College. Its review for both Candidacy and Initial Accreditation will be conducted under the current Accreditation Standards and associated practices. Compton Center understands that in applying for Candidacy, and subsequently in applying for Initial Accreditation, it must meet the requirements as described in the ACCJC's *Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions* (attached). I advise you and the staff of El Camino College and of Compton Center to read sections I and II of that policy carefully, and to remain abreast of any changes the Commission may make to that policy, to Accreditation Standards, and to other requirements in the coming years. The *Accreditation Reference Handbook* and other ACCJC manuals and guides, available on the ACCJC website, will also provide guidance as to the preparation of institutional reports to the Commission and are updated as requirements change.

The schedule going forward for review of the Compton Center is as follows:

- Compton Center will prepare a comprehensive Institutional Self Evaluation Report in preparation for a **spring 2017 comprehensive evaluation team visit**. The Institutional Self Evaluation Report will be due to the Commission office at least 60 days before the date of

the evaluation visit. Commission staff will contact the El Camino College and the Compton Center's Chief Executive Officers in 2016 to set the date for the visit, but it will be within the first three weeks of March 2017.

- The Commission will consider Compton Center's application for Candidacy, comprised of the Compton Center's letter of application and its Institutional Self Evaluation Report, and the external evaluation team report, at its June 2017 meeting. If Compton Center is granted Candidacy, it will be for a period of two years, or until June 2019.
- In spring 2019, Compton Center may apply for either a two-year extension of Candidacy, or it may apply for Initial Accreditation. Compton Center will be expected to meet all Standards in order to achieve Initial Accreditation, and should only apply for initial accreditation if it believes it does meet all Standards.
- If Compton Center wishes to request an extension of Candidacy in spring 2019, it should submit a letter of application and an update to its Institutional Self Evaluation Report from two years prior. The due date of that report will be determined in consultation between the ACCJC staff and the institution. Upon its consideration of Compton Center's application for extended Candidacy, the Commission may act to extend candidacy for a maximum of an additional two years, or until June 2021, or act to deny candidacy.
- When applying for Initial Accreditation in either 2019 or 2021, Compton Center must submit an Institutional Self Evaluation Report 60 days before the scheduled evaluation team visit. At its June meeting, the Commission will consider the Institutional Self Evaluation Report, the report of the external evaluation team, and all other information the Commission has received about the institution in concert with its policies and practices. The Commission may act to grant initial accreditation, deny initial accreditation and extend Candidacy (if the institution has not yet completed four years of Candidacy), or to deny accreditation.

As El Camino College and Compton Center move forward in this process, I urge you to ask ACCJC staff for any assistance you may need. It will be important to read carefully the newsletter, institutional advisories and other communications from the ACCJC, attend all workshops and training events that are pertinent to your efforts to gain initial accreditation, and stay abreast of any changes to ACCJC policies or requirements.

The preparation of an Institutional Self Evaluation Report provides an opportunity for an institution to engage in careful reflection about its own quality, and its ambitions for future quality and service to students. I hope that Compton Center's staff and community will enjoy the process of envisioning the future and working toward it.

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Beno, Ph.D.

BAB/cms

Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions

*(Adopted January 1977; Revised January 1979, January 1991, June 1998;
Edited July 2002; Revised June 2003; Edited August 2004, January 2006,
August 2006, November 2008, January 2009; Revised January 2010, January 2011;
Edited August 2012; Revised June 2013, June 2014, June 2015)*

Policy

This policy sets forth the actions that may be taken on the accredited status of institutions by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACCJC). Institutions applying for candidacy or initial accreditation and accredited institutions undergoing periodic evaluation for reaffirmation of accreditation will be reviewed by the Commission. The Commission will examine institutional evidence of student learning and achievement, the Self Evaluation Report of Educational Quality and Institutional Effectiveness, the External Evaluation Report of Educational Quality and Institutional Effectiveness, and documents from previous evaluations to determine whether the institution complies with the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies. The Commission will apply, as appropriate, one of the actions listed in this policy. The Commission will not condition the granting of candidacy, initial accreditation, or reaffirmation of accreditation on the payment of any fees which are not approved by the Commission for payment of annual dues, evaluation costs, or other fees and assessments to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACCJC).

In the case when an accredited institution no longer demonstrates that it meets the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies, the institution will be notified in the Commission action letter of the time it has to come into compliance, which must not exceed two years after first receiving notification of any noncompliance with a standard.¹ If the institution cannot document that it has come into compliance within the designated period, the Commission will take adverse action. In keeping with the provisions of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, the Commission defines adverse actions for accredited institutions as termination of accreditation; denial, or termination for institutions seeking candidacy; and denial for institutions seeking initial accreditation.

Definitions

Accreditation Cycle. The accreditation cycle is a seven-year period beginning at the conclusion of a comprehensive external evaluation and continuing through the next comprehensive external evaluation.² During the accreditation cycle, all institutions complete annual reports and a midterm report. Institutions may be required to complete other reports with or without visits as determined by the Commission based upon the institution's status of compliance with standards.

¹ The Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies together comprise the Commission's standards. College deficiencies may result in noncompliance with a standard that is in the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, or in Commission policies.

² The seven-year cycle will take effect and begin for an institution when it has concluded its initial comprehensive external evaluation under the Accreditation Standards adopted in June, 2014.

Compliance. The institution meets or exceeds all Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies.

Substantial Compliance. The institution meets or exceeds all Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies, but for a few which do not place the institution or its students at imminent risk, and for which the deficiencies can be fully resolved in a short period not to exceed one year.

Deficiency. An institutional policy, procedure or practice, or absence thereof, which results in an institution not meeting one or more standards. These conditions are generally noted within the factual findings of an external evaluation team report, and may also be noted in the institution's Self Evaluation Report, or by the Commission in its review.

Enforcement Action. The two-year rule, as it is commonly known, is found in federal regulation 34 C.F.R. § 602.20. Under U.S. Department of Education enforcement regulations, the Commission is required to take immediate action to withdraw 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 must not exceed two years from when the institution was first informed of the noncompliance.

Good Cause Extension. In exceptional situations, if the institution has done all within its authority to reach compliance on any standard but remains out of compliance after the time allocated by the Commission for coming into 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 withdrawal. This extension—of generally six months to one year-- must not exceed two years. An institution does not have the right to a good cause extension; these extensions are viewed by the U.S. Department of Education to be a form of exceptional relief, afforded to institutions infrequently at the discretion of the Commission. No good cause extension will be granted if there is risk to the students in regard to academic quality or to the sustained viability of the institution.

Recommendation to meet standards. A narrative statement of actions recommended to be taken by an institution in order to resolve its deficiencies and to meet the cited standard(s). The included citation of Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies in a recommendation to meet standards notes the areas of noncompliance by the institution.

Recommendation to improve. A narrative statement of actions recommended to be taken by an institution that is currently meeting the cited Eligibility Requirement, Accreditation Standard or Commission policy, but without further action may fall into noncompliance.

Team notations of effective practice. Evaluation team observations of an institution fully meeting or exceeding the standard, or of effective practice, are not included in recommendations but are noted in the external evaluation report narrative and conclusions. The evaluation team may also note suggestions for enhancement or institutionalization of effective practices.

Actions on Accredited Status

I. Actions on Institutions that are Applicants for Candidacy or extension of Candidacy

Grant candidacy. Candidacy is a pre-accreditation status granted to institutions that have successfully undergone eligibility review³ as well as a comprehensive evaluation process using the Accreditation Standards, including preparation of an Institutional Self Evaluation Report and a review by an evaluation team. Candidacy is granted when the institution demonstrates the ability to meet all the Accreditation Standards and Commission policies, or to fully meet them within the two-year candidate period. Candidacy indicates that an institution has achieved initial association with the Commission and is progressing toward accreditation. During candidacy, the institution undertakes the necessary steps to reach demonstrable and complete compliance with Accreditation Standards. This includes an Institutional Self Evaluation Report in preparation for initial accreditation. Candidate status may be extended for two years, for a total period not to exceed four years.

Extend candidacy. Candidacy is extended in response to a college request when the Commission determines that a candidate institution continues to meet the Eligibility Requirements and has made significant progress toward meeting the Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies, and anticipates that the institution will meet all Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies if granted additional time to do so. Candidacy can be extended once for a two-year period. Four years in candidate status is the maximum allowable.

Deny candidacy. Candidacy is denied when the Commission determines that the institution has demonstrated that it does not meet all of the Eligibility Requirements, or does not meet a significant portion of the Accreditation Standards and Commission policies, and therefore cannot be expected to meet all Accreditation Standards and Commission policies within a two-year period. Denial of candidacy is subject to a request for review and appeal under the applicable policies and procedures of the Commission.

Termination of candidacy. Candidacy is terminated when the Commission determines that an institution has not maintained its eligibility for candidacy or has failed to explain or correct deficiencies of which it has been given notice. Termination is subject to a request for review and appeal under the applicable policies and procedures of the Commission.

II. Actions on Institutions which are Applicants for Initial Accreditation

Grant initial accreditation. Initial accreditation may be granted after a comprehensive institutional evaluation demonstrating that the institution is in compliance with Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies. The institution is required to submit a Midterm Report midway through the seven-year accreditation cycle. The institution must be fully evaluated again within a maximum of seven years from the date of the Commission action granting initial accreditation.

Extend candidacy. The Commission may extend candidacy in lieu of granting initial accreditation when the institution has not met the conditions for initial accreditation and

³ See the Policy on Eligibility to Apply for Accredited Status.

has had candidacy for one two-year term. Candidacy can only be extended for a maximum of two years.

Deny Initial Accreditation. The Commission denies initial accreditation when an applicant institution is not in compliance with Accreditation Standards, Commission policies, or Eligibility Requirements within the maximum period allowed for a college to remain in candidacy. A denial is subject to a request for review and appeal under the applicable policies and procedures of the Commission. If initial accreditation is not granted, the institution may not reapply for candidacy for at least two years.

III. Actions on Institutions that are Applicants for Reaffirmation of Accreditation

Actions that Reaffirm Accreditation

Reaffirm accreditation. The institution is in compliance with Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards and Commission policies. The institution is required to submit a Midterm Report midway through the seven-year accreditation cycle.

Reaffirm accreditation for one year and require a Follow-Up Report. The institution is in substantial compliance with Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards and Commission policies. The institution is required to submit a Follow-Up Report demonstrating that it has resolved all cited deficiencies. The Commission will specify the issues to be addressed and the due date of the report. Upon successful completion of the one-year reaffirmation period, the institution will qualify for reaffirmation for the remainder of the seven-year accreditation cycle and will be required to submit a Midterm Report midway through the seven-year accreditation cycle.

IV. Sanctions

Sanctions serve as an indicator of the severity of noncompliance by an institution. A sanction is not based upon the number of deficiencies noted nor on the number of standards out of compliance. Instead, the determination is based upon the conditions of the college, its history of compliance with standards, and the impact of the noncompliance upon the quality and stability of the institution. Sanctions are not imposed in a progressive order (nor are they sequentially reduced along a continuum as an institution demonstrates resolution of deficiencies which led to noncompliance); rather, a particular sanction is imposed or removed when the Commission finds it is appropriate to do so.

Institutions are advised that the U.S. Department of Education requires recognized accrediting bodies to terminate accreditation when an institution is determined to be out of compliance with Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards and Commission policies and fails to meet any standard for which the institution is out of compliance within the time permitted by the Commission to meet the standard, which may not be more than two years from when notification of deficiencies is first provided to the institution. Consequently, the Commission will take action to terminate accreditation if deficiencies are not resolved within the time period allocated to the institution. Under extraordinary circumstances, the institution may be granted additional time when the Commission determines good cause for extension exists.

It should be noted that the maximum allowable period for meeting a standard is not based upon whether there is the imposition of a sanction. The U.S. Department of Education requirement is based solely on the passage of time following notification to the institution of any standard it does not meet.

- A. **Warning.** An institution has been determined by the Commission not to meet one or more standards, and Reaffirmation for One Year is not warranted. When the Commission finds that an institution is out of compliance with Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, or Commission policies to an extent that gives concern to the Commission, it may issue Warning to the institution to correct its deficiencies, refrain from certain activities, or initiate certain activities, and meet the standards. The Commission may also issue Warning if the institution has acknowledged within its Self Evaluation Report or Special Report the deficiencies leading to serious noncompliance, and has demonstrated affirmative steps and plans to fully resolve the deficiencies within twelve months. The Commission will specify the time within which the institution must resolve the deficiencies and demonstrate compliance, generally twelve to eighteen months. During the Warning period, the institution will be subject to reports and visits at a frequency to be determined by the Commission. If Warning is issued as a result of the institution's educational quality and institutional effectiveness review, reaffirmation is delayed during the period of Warning. The accredited status of the institution continues during the Warning period.

- B. **Probation.** An institution has been determined by the Commission not to meet one or more standards, and there is a serious concern on the part of the Commission regarding the level and/or scope of the noncompliance issues. When an institution deviates significantly from the Commission's Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, or Commission policies, but not to such an extent as to warrant a Show Cause order or the termination of accreditation, or when the institution fails to respond to conditions imposed upon it by the Commission, including a Warning, the institution may be placed on Probation. The Commission will specify the time within which the institution must resolve deficiencies and demonstrate its compliance with Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards and Commission policies, generally twelve to eighteen months. A shorter period may be given if the severity of noncompliance warrants it. During the Probation period, the institution will be subject to reports and visits at a frequency to be determined by the Commission. If Probation is imposed as a result of the institution's educational quality and institutional effectiveness review, reaffirmation is delayed during the period of Probation. The accredited status of the institution continues during the Probation period.

- C. **Show Cause.** When the Commission finds an institution to be in substantial noncompliance with Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, or Commission policies, or when the institution has not responded to the previous conditions imposed by the Commission, the Commission will require the institution to Show Cause why its accreditation should not be withdrawn at the end of a stated period by demonstrating that it has corrected the deficiencies noted by the Commission and is in compliance with the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards and Commission policies. In such cases, the burden will rest on the institution to demonstrate why its accreditation should be continued. The Commission will specify the time within which the institution must resolve deficiencies and meet the standards. The period will

generally be six months or less. If the loss of accreditation will likely cause an institution to close, then during the Show Cause period, the institution must make preparations for closure according to the Commission's "Policy on Closing an Institution." While under a Show Cause order, the institution will be subject to reports and visits at a frequency to be determined by the Commission. If Show Cause is ordered as a result of the institution's educational quality and institutional effectiveness review, reaffirmation is delayed pending the institution's ability to Show Cause why its accreditation should be continued. The accredited status of the institution continues during the period of the Show Cause order.

V. Actions Related to Commission Withdrawal of Accreditation

Withdrawal of Accreditation for Noncompliance. If, in the judgment of the Commission, an institution has not satisfactorily explained or corrected deficiencies of which it has been given notice, or has taken an action that has placed it significantly out of compliance with the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies, its accreditation may be withdrawn. The Commission will give the institution written reasons for its decision. Commission withdrawal of an institution's accreditation is subject to a request for review and appeal under the applicable policies and procedures of the Commission. The accredited status of the institution continues pending completion of any review and appeal process the institution may request. Otherwise, the institution's accreditation ends on the date when the time period permitting such a request expires. In such a case, the institution must complete the entire accreditation process beginning with Eligibility Review and then Candidacy to regain its accreditation.

Restoration Status. When there has been a Commission action to withdraw the accreditation of a member institution for noncompliance, prior to the withdrawal effective date established by the Commission or within seven days after completion of any requested review and appeal process,⁴ whichever is later, the institution may submit a request for granting of Restoration Status. If, however, an institution has been granted a good cause extension to come into compliance with any standard prior to the withdrawal action,⁵ the institution may not apply for Restoration Status following withdrawal.

The request for granting of Restoration Status must be accompanied by a completed Eligibility Application, demonstrating compliance with the Eligibility Requirements. Upon receipt of the institution's request, the Commission shall schedule a comprehensive evaluation of the institution no later than four months following the request. The institution must submit an institutional self-evaluation four to six weeks prior to the scheduled visit.

For the period leading to completion of the comprehensive evaluation for Restoration Status, the withdrawal effective date will be rescinded and the withdrawal implementation will be suspended. The institution's status will be accredited, pending withdrawal.

⁴ The other administrative remedies provided to an institution for which the Commission has acted to withdraw accreditation are a Review of Commission Action in accordance with Commission policy, and an appeal heard before an Appellate Hearing Panel, in accordance with the Bylaws of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACCJC).

⁵ See Enforcement Action and Good Cause Extension in the definitions section of this policy.

The comprehensive evaluation for Restoration Status will determine if the institution meets all Eligibility Requirements and has demonstrated either its compliance with all of the Accreditation Standards and Commission policies or the ability to meet them within the two-year Restoration Status period. If, in the judgment of the Commission, the institution fully meets all Eligibility Requirements and has demonstrated either its compliance with all of the Accreditation Standards and Commission policies or the ability to fully meet all Accreditation Standards and Commission policies within the two-year Restoration Status period, the institution will be granted Restoration Status. If, however, in the judgment of the Commission, the institution does not fully meet all Eligibility Requirements and/or has not demonstrated the ability to fully meet all Accreditation Standards and Commission policies within the two-year Restoration Status period, the withdrawal implementation will be reactivated and the effective date will be immediate. There will be no further right to request a review or appeal in this matter.⁶

The Commission shall determine such follow-up and special reports as may be warranted during the Restoration Status. At the conclusion of the Restoration Status period, a comprehensive evaluation will be conducted for the purpose of determining whether the institution has demonstrated its compliance with Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies. If, in the judgment of the Commission, the institution is in compliance with Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies, then the accredited status of the institution will be reaffirmed. However, if in the judgment of the Commission the institution is not in compliance with Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies, then the withdrawal implementation will be reactivated and the effective date will be immediate. There will be no further right to request a review or appeal in this matter.

An institution may apply for Restoration Status only one time within a 20-year period.

Administrative Withdrawal of Accreditation. The accreditation of a member institution may be withdrawn administratively for nonpayment of dues, costs incurred as part of an external evaluation, or special assessments, following provision of notice to the institution of nonpayment and sufficient time to pay, and upon providing 60 days notice of the impending termination action.

Re-application for accredited status. In the event of the withdrawal of accreditation of an institution, the institution must complete again the entire accreditation process, starting with the Eligibility Review and then Candidacy, to regain accreditation.

V. Other Actions

- A. **Deferral.** The Commission may postpone its decision on the candidacy or initial accreditation of an institution pending receipt of specific documentation, as identified by the Commission, that is needed in order to grant candidacy or initial accreditation. The deferral may be for a period not to exceed six months.

⁶ The institution will have already exercised its administrative remedies of Review of Commission Action and appeal prior to applying for restoration. Thus, if restoration fails, the administrative remedies will be considered exhausted and the institution may then seek legal recourse without further administrative steps, if it feels there is a basis to do so.

The Commission may postpone a decision on the reaffirmation of accreditation of an institution pending receipt of specified additional information from the institution. The response from the institution may be followed by a visit addressed primarily to the reasons for the deferral. The Commission will specify the nature, purpose, and scope of the information to be submitted and of the visit to be made. The accredited status of the institution will continue during the period of deferral. The deferral may be for a period not to exceed six months.

- B. Report and site visit to verify sustained compliance.** The Commission may require that a report be submitted by an institution and/or a site visit be conducted at an institution to verify sustained compliance with Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies. That report and/or site visit may be required when an institution has demonstrated current compliance with standards during an external evaluation, but has a recent history of serious noncompliance or a pattern of falling out of compliance and then regaining compliance for a short period.
- C. Voluntary Withdrawal.** An institution may voluntarily withdraw its request for initial candidacy at any time (even after evaluation) prior to action by the Commission on the institution's accredited status. Upon receipt of written notice of voluntary withdrawal by the institution through its chief executive officer and governing board, the Commission will act to accept the withdrawal.

Candidate institutions and accredited institutions may voluntarily withdraw from accreditation at any time by submitting notification to the Commission of the intention to withdraw and the expected time for the withdrawal effective date. If the voluntary withdrawal will result in the likely closure of the institution or certain programs, then the institution must submit a closure plan in accordance with the Policy on Closing an Institution. The Commission will act at its next meeting to accept the institution's voluntary withdrawal upon fulfillment of the closure plan.

If the voluntary withdrawal is based on the anticipation of accreditation by another recognized accrediting agency, the Commission will act to accept the institution's voluntary withdrawal upon receipt of notification by the U.S. Department of Education that another recognized accrediting agency has been authorized for the institution. While that notification is pending, the institution will remain accredited by the ACCJC, will all the attendant responsibilities of a member institution.