



## From the President's Desk

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GO WEST. GO FAR.

July 10, 2012

Dear Colleagues,

**I wish to report that West Los Angeles College has been notified of the Accrediting Commission's action on its application for reaffirmation of accreditation. "The Commission acted to issue Warning and to ask that West Los Angeles College correct the deficiencies noted. The College is required to complete a Follow-Up Report by March 15, 2013. The report will be followed by a visit of Commission representatives."** The Commission's complete letter to the college can be seen at [www.WLAC.edu/Accreditation](http://www.WLAC.edu/Accreditation).<sup>1</sup>

West, like all California Community Colleges, is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACCJC).

"Warning" is the first of three levels of sanction that the ACCJC issues<sup>2</sup> and we must take this status very seriously. However, I believe that addressing the Commission's concerns is well within West's reach and doing so will be of highest priority.

To put this outcome in context, you may review the list of actions taken by the Commission in its June, 2012, meeting.<sup>3</sup> A majority of colleges in the Commission's purview, especially California Community Colleges, are subject to some sanction.

**Be assured that West remains fully accredited while on Warning.** Classes continue, and credits apply toward degrees and certificates and remain transferable to universities and colleges. Student financial aid eligibility continues unchanged. In fact, the visiting team acknowledged that high-quality teaching and learning are evident at West.

It is worth noting that West's consistently strong efforts and dedicated work since 2006 have resulted in marked improvements, many of which resulted in commendations. They included praise for the overall campus climate, career preparation programs, the online learning program, delivery of student services, our shared governance, the grants development and partnership efforts, and our efforts to address achievement gaps between student populations.<sup>4</sup> The full Evaluation Report is posted at [www.WLAC.edu/Accreditation](http://www.WLAC.edu/Accreditation).<sup>5</sup>

The purpose of accreditation is continuous improvement. The Commission's action to issue Warning is based on a requirement that improvements be made in a number of areas both at the college and at our district.<sup>1</sup> Required college improvements include: setting college goals in a more measurable way; systematic data collection and assessment tied to planning; resource allocation and assessment of the effective use of financial resources; and improving how student learning outcomes (SLOs) are documented and used to enhance instructional programs and services. The need to improve the library collection and make corrections to the college catalog were also cited. In addition to the library collection, the Commission noted that prior concerns related to regular and evening staffing priorities and the need to increase participation in governance activities had been only partially addressed. These three recommendations cited in the 2006 report must be fully resolved by March 2013 to comply with U.S. Department of Education regulations.

All LACCD colleges are held to account for the Commission's recommendations for the district.<sup>1</sup> These recommendations targeted: the oversight structure for bond construction; exceptions noted in the 2010 financial audit; the need to adopt and implement a new budget allocation model used to fund each college in the district; and the Board of Trustees' policy role in governing the district.

Our sister colleges, Harbor and Southwest, have been placed on Probation.<sup>3</sup> "I am disappointed by the Commission's recent actions in light of the fact that the Commission accepted all of the colleges' reports submitted over the past six years. However, the district's colleges will address the Commission's recommendations fully and within the specified timeline," said LACCD Chancellor Daniel LaVista.

The accreditation process reminds us as educators that we must continue to strive for excellence in our instructional program and our services to students, as well as in the organizational standards of good practice that are expected of us under ACCJC standards.<sup>6</sup> I will immediately engage the college leadership to create a plan of action. Once roughed out, it will of course be vetted through our shared governance processes. Notably, one of our own action plans is to increase faculty and staff participation in this meaningful effort. By fall, all of us, at some level, can expect to have a role in moving the college forward.

I am committed to leading West in the collective effort needed to respond to these recommendations. While financial resources are limited, we have an excellent team of professionals who can come together to respond to these recommendations for improvement.

Sincerely,



Nabil Abu-Ghazaleh, President

DOCUMENTS REFERENCED ARE ALL AVAILABLE AT [WWW.WLAC.EDU/ACCREDITATION/](http://WWW.WLAC.EDU/ACCREDITATION/)

- 1 Commission's Actions Letter to College (July, 2 2012)  
<http://www.wlac.edu/accreditation/2012ActionLetterToCollege.pdf>  
The following wording in the recommendations indicates to what degree the college fell short of meeting the standards from least to most problematic:
  - In order to increase effectiveness and improve its compliance with the Standard
  - In order to fully meet the standard
  - In order to meet the standard
  - In order to meet the Standards and Eligibility Requirements
- 2 About Sanctions:  
[www.wlac.edu/accreditation/2012AboutSanctions.pdf](http://www.wlac.edu/accreditation/2012AboutSanctions.pdf)
- 3 Commission's June Actions  
[www.wlac.edu/accreditation/2012CommissionsActions.pdf](http://www.wlac.edu/accreditation/2012CommissionsActions.pdf)
- 4 Summary of Commission's Commendations:  
[www.wlac.edu/accreditation/2012accjcreport-commendationsandrecommendations.pdf](http://www.wlac.edu/accreditation/2012accjcreport-commendationsandrecommendations.pdf)
- 5 The full 2012 Accreditation Evaluation Report:  
[www.wlac.edu/accreditation/2012accjcreport.pdf](http://www.wlac.edu/accreditation/2012accjcreport.pdf)
- 6 ACCJC Standards as of June 2012:  
[http://www.accjc.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/Accreditation-Standards\\_Revised-June-2012.pdf](http://www.accjc.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/Accreditation-Standards_Revised-June-2012.pdf)