



Peralta Community College District

Peralta Community College District

(Berkeley City College, College of Alameda, Laney College, and Merritt College)

Official Comments in Response to Commission's Public Disclosure Notice:

On March 11, 2011, the Peralta Community College District (PCCD), and each College received a letter from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), alerting the institution that new federal regulations required ACCJC to provide to the public a brief statement summarizing the reasons that the Commission placed the PCCD (Berkeley City College, College of Alameda, Laney College, and Merritt College) on Probation. The regulations also required the Commission to provide to the public the PCCD's official comments in response to the Commission's action.

This document represents the PCCD's (Berkeley City College, College of Alameda, Laney College, and Merritt College) official response to ACCJC's Public Disclosure Notice.

ACCJC Commission Hearing:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting January 13, 2011, reviewed the Peralta Community College District (PCCD) Follow-Up Report, the report of the evaluation team, the additional responses submitted to the Commission on January 4, 2011, and the presentation by the PCCD representatives at the Commission meeting.

The Commission took action to defer a decision and therefore continue all four colleges of the Peralta Community College District on Probation. All four colleges originally had been placed on Probation in June 2010, due to the ACCJC findings and recommendations at that time. The Commission defers a decision on accreditation pending receipt of specified additional information.

The PCCD is required to submit a Follow-Up Report by April 1, 2011. The Report will be followed by a visit by Commission representatives on Monday, April 11, 2011 and Tuesday, April 12, 2011. Upon completion of the visit, the ACCJC Team Chair will prepare a report which will be presented to the Commission at its meeting in June 8, 2011 through June 10, 2011.

ACCJC Recommendations:

The PCCD is required to submit a Follow-Up Report to ACCJC by April 1, 2011. The Report will demonstrate the current status on all of the remaining issues (recommendations) as noted in the recommendations from the November 2010, ACCJC Team Report. The PCCD's Follow-Up Report will reflect progress towards resolution on the ACCJC recommendations. Following is a listing of the ACCJC recommendations and a brief summary statement of the progress relative to each recommendation. Please be advised that a more complete response can be found in the PCCD's April 1, 2011 Follow-Up Report.

ACCJC Recommendation 1: The team recommends that the 2010 Recommendation 5 be revised to include the following language: The Team additionally recommends that the Board of Trustees continue to redefine the appropriate roles of the Board and its relationship to the Chancellor. The Board of Trustees should also refine and change the roles and charges of the Board Committees so that they also reflect an appropriate role for the Board. (Standard IV.B.1, 3)

PCCD's Response: In addressing Recommendation 1 regarding Board Committees, the Chancellor has provided the Board with a draft policy that eliminates the Board Committees and establishes a committee of the whole. The Board has taken the proposed policy under review and has suspended the previous board committees. This policy review will continue to refine and change the roles and charges of the Board so that the new process reflects an appropriate role for the Board consistent with ACCJC Standard IV.B.1.3.

ACCJC Recommendation 2: The team recommends that the district continue to monitor its progress toward meeting the issues listed in the Corrective Action Matrix. In particular, the district needs to plan to address the OPEB bond and to be evaluated on keeping to its 2010-2011 budget. (Standard III.D.1,2,3)

PCCD's Response: In addressing Recommendation 2, the district hired a public finance firm, Kelling, Northcross, Nobriga, Inc., (KNN), to review the OPEB bond program and to provide recommendations for Board action. A KNN power point presentation was provided on February 15, 2011 at a meeting of the Governing Board. The Board took action at its March 15, 2011 meeting to establish a Retirement Board and Trust for the Peralta OPEB Program. The Board will take additional action regarding managing OPEB at its March 29, 2011 meeting.

ACCJC Recommendation 3: The team recommends that the Board of Trustees develop and implement a plan to review all Board policies so that the policies reflect only policy language and that the operational processes for these policies be reflected in a system of administrative regulations (procedures). (Standard IV.B.1.e, IV.B.3)

PCCD's Response: In addressing Recommendation 3, the Chancellor, working with his staff, developed a policy revision that addresses the distinction between policies and administrative procedures. The revised policy, BP 1.25 – Policy Development, was approved by the Governing Board on March 15, 2011. The Chancellor will work with the five Vice Chancellors and General Counsel to review current policies and separate out administrative procedures from those policies.

Recommendation 4: The team recommends that the district continue to address all recommendations from 2009, 2010 and the current visit (November 2010). Although the district has invested substantial effort to address all recommendations, it is incumbent to the district to ensure that these efforts continue and are institutionalized within the district.

PCCD's Response: In addressing Recommendation 4, the Planning and Budgeting Integration Model process continues and once again will be evaluated before the end of spring semester 2011. The district continues to address the PeopleSoft non-financial modules and in so doing has hired additional permanent programmers and a new Director of Enterprise Services. The district has posted the position of Data Base Administrator. The district continues to address the Financial Management issues under the leadership of the Vice Chancellor of Finance and Administration and the District's Fiscal Advisor.

ACCJC's January 31, 2011 letter also requires the PCCD to inform the Commission regarding several reports that the PCCD will receive and to "update" the Commission at the time of the April 1, 2011 Follow-up Report on four separate activities. These activities all relate to various ACCJC recommendations and will be addressed within the PCCD April 1, 2011 Follow-Up Report.

PCCD's Response to Accreditation and Public Disclosure Notice

The PCCD embraces the Accreditation process and supports the ACCJC Public Disclosure Notice. Accreditation is a quality assurance process through which institutions collectively set standards for good practice, conducts 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 areas needing attention and reinforcing good practices and standards being demonstrated by the institution.

PCCD believes that the current accreditation status and recommendations are manageable. PCCD's April 1, 2011 Follow-Up Report to the Commission will be a more formal, evidence based response, in addressing the ACCJC recommendations. Additionally, PCCD looks forward to the ACCJC site visit on April 11, 2011 and April 12, 2011. The District is confident that the ACCJC visiting team will recognize the commitment and progress toward meeting the four (4) ACCJC recommendations and required activities associated with those recommendations.

Chancellor Allen, administrators, faculty, staff, students and the PCCD Board are working in a collaborative and collegial manner to resolve the ACCJC recommendations and to ensure that students receive a high quality education.