

CCCI California Community College Independents

Allan Hancock • Contra Costa • Chabot-Las Positas • Foothill-De Anza • Grossmont-Cuyamaca • Ohlone • Pasadena
Rancho Santiago • Redwoods • Santa Barbara • Santa Monica • Santa Rosa • West Valley-Mission • Yosemite

May 26, 2009

Barbara Beno, ACCJC President; Lurlean Gaines, ACCJC Commission Chair;
Commissioners of the ACCJC; and WASC Board of Directors
10 Commercial Boulevard, Suite 204
Novato, CA 94949

Dear President Beno, Chair Gaines, ACCJC Commissioners, and WASC Board members:

At the California Community College Independents (CCCI) Spring Conference, May 8-9, 2009, representatives discussed the current state of ACCJC's accreditation process relative to California community colleges. CCCI is an association of faculty bargaining agents that are not affiliated with larger state or national labor organizations. Our member organizations come from fourteen districts located throughout the state, representing nearly a quarter of the faculty, both full- and part-time in California's community colleges.

During our meeting, members shared their individual experiences with the current standards, the commission, and local accreditation visiting teams. We also discussed the interactions of other California community college groups, including the system office, administrators, and our faculty colleagues from affiliated bargaining units, with the ACCJC.

As a result of these discussions, the body determined that it was time to communicate CCCI's dissatisfaction to the Commission. You will find, enclosed, a resolution of "no confidence" in the ACCJC and WASC passed unanimously at the close of the conference on May 9. Since the specific concerns are clearly stated in the resolution, I will not repeat them here.

CCCI had contemplated inviting President Beno to this year's Spring Conference, and she may recall a brief discussion we had in this regard at the California Forward meeting in late February. The group decided, instead, to review our experiences at this conference as a basis for future discussions with representatives from the Commission. That review led to the attached resolution.

While we know this is an unwelcome finding, CCCI is hopeful that a clear statement of our dissatisfaction will draw attention to faculty concerns and ultimately lead to a willingness, on the part of the Commission, to consider our point of view and work with us to address these issues.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Richard Hansen, President
California Community College Independents

CCCI California Community College Independents

Allan Hancock • Contra Costa • Chabot-Las Positas • Foothill-De Anza • Grossmont-Cuyamaca • Ohlone • Pasadena
Rancho Santiago • Redwoods • Santa Barbara • Santa Monica • Santa Rosa • West Valley-Mission • Yosemite

Resolution

Whereas the California Community College Independents (CCCI) supports the goals of accreditation as a means of ensuring quality education for community college students and carrying out the mission of community colleges; and

Whereas the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges' (ACCJC) interpretation and implementation of accreditation standards are no longer serving our colleges, faculty and especially students; and

Whereas the ACCJC under current leadership has overstepped its authority and undermined its own mission by sanctioning college districts inappropriately and with disproportionate severity; and

Whereas the ACCJC has too often ignored or dismissed the recommendations of its own accrediting site-visit teams; and

Whereas accreditation under the ACCJC has become an instrument of punishment rather than improvement; and

Whereas sanctions have too often been imposed by the ACCJC over issues not directly related to student benefit or improved instruction; and

Whereas the ACCJC's actions are now distracting college districts from their mission to serve students; and

Whereas the fear of sanctions is driving community college districts to expend considerable resources from increasingly limited budgets to meet the new and unreasonable ACCJC interpretation of accreditation standards rather than to benefit students; and

Whereas the ACCJC has interfered inappropriately in matters reserved to collective bargaining; and

Whereas the ACCJC's decisions are made in secret with little transparency and no oversight or accountability; and

Whereas the ACCJC has not been responsive or sensitive to feedback and suggestions from faculty and administrators; and

Whereas the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) has continued to support the current leadership of the ACCJC and their arbitrary and unreasonable decisions,

Be it therefore resolved on this 9th day of May that the California Community College Independents, representing nearly 25% of California's community college faculty, do formally and unanimously vote "no confidence" in WASC, in the ACCJC, and in ACCJC President Barbara Beno.