



**ACCREDITING
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for COMMUNITY and
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

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June 30, 2008

Dr. Douglas Houston
Superintendent/President
Lassen Community College
P. O. Box 3000
Susanville, CA 96130

Dear President Houston:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting on June 4-6, 2008, reviewed the institutional self study report and the report of the evaluation team which visited Lassen Community College on Tuesday, March 11-Thursday, March 13, 2008. The Commission acted to continue Lassen Community College on **Probation** and to require that the College submit a Report by **October 15, 2008**. The Report will be followed by a visit of Commission representatives.

Probation is issued when the Commission finds that an institution deviates significantly from the Commission's eligibility criteria, standards, or policies, or fails to respond to actions and conditions imposed by the Commission. The accredited status of the institution continues during the probation period. However, the institution's accreditation will not be reaffirmed until the conditions which warranted probation are removed.

This sanction constitutes a public sanction as described in the Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions in the Commission's *Accreditation Reference Handbook*. As such, the action will be noted on the Commission's website.

I also wish to inform you that under U.S. Department of Education regulations, institutions out of compliance with standards or on sanction are expected to correct deficiencies within a two-year period or the Commission must take action to terminate accreditation. Lassen College must correct the deficiencies noted by the time of the Commission's **January 2009** meeting. While five recommendations identified as deficiencies were also noted by the year 2002 comprehensive team (recommendations 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6), the Commission has extended Lassen College's time to correct these deficiencies for good cause. The institution has made significant progress toward resolving deficiencies and has enlisted the assistance of the State through a Special Trustee for additional assistance as it tries to resolve these deficiencies.

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The Report of October 15, 2008 should demonstrate the institution's resolution of the following concerns expressed in team recommendations:

Recommendation 1 (previous Recommendation #19 - 2002): Institutional Planning and Decision-Making

The College must implement and evaluate ongoing student learning outcomes and institutional planning processes, which should be based on data and research that results in a strategic plan, and incorporate all other College planning documents, such as an educational master plan, a technology plan, and a facilities plan. These processes should guide future enrollment management decisions, resource allocation, and most importantly educational programs and services for the students and the community. The processes should be evaluated, using agreed-upon criteria, on an annual basis to determine the effectiveness of the governance groups and leadership responsible for them, as well as the success of the planned outcomes and actions stated in the plans. (Standards IA.4, IB.3, 4, 5, 6, & 7, IIA.1c, IIA.2e, IIA.2f, III B.2a&2b, III C.1&2, IIID.1 a – d, IIID.2 a – g, III D.3, IV A.3, IV A.5)

Recommendation 2 (previous Recommendation #14 - 2002): Student Learning Outcomes

The team recommends that the College achieve a sustainable level of assessing student learning outcomes, which can be used for continuous quality improvement. Administrators, faculty, and staff need to continue to conduct meaningful, timely, and inclusive dialogue with all constituent groups to identify, develop, implement, and assess student-learning outcomes at the course, instructional and non-instructional programs, and degree levels and use the results of those assessments to improve student learning, services, plans, and institutional effectiveness. (Standards IB.1, IB.4, IB.7; Standard IIA.1c, IIA.2a, IIA.2b, IIA.2e, IIA.2f, IIA.2g, IIA.2i, IIA.3, IIA.6, IIA.6a, IIB.1, IIB.3.e, IIB.4, IIC.2; Standard III; and Standard IVA.1, IVA.2b, IVB.1b)

Recommendation 3 (previous Recommendation #17 - 2002): Institutional Research

The College must fully develop, implement, and evaluate its research capabilities (staff skills, data analysis/interpretation and use of data) assuring the College has the appropriate resources and staff to perform the necessary research, data collection, and analysis to meet all accreditation standards. The College needs to conduct research on programs and services, student achievement and learning outcomes, and institutional effectiveness, such that program reviews and stated learning outcomes can draw on this resource to improve the effectiveness of the College. The results of the research need to be used by the leadership and all governance groups in their deliberations, dialogue, and decision-making. (Standards IB.3, IB.4, 5, 6, 7, IIA.1a, IIA.2e, IIA.2f, IIB.3a – 3e, IIB.4, IIC.2, IVA.1– 4)

Recommendation 4: Employee Evaluations

The College must take steps to assure that evaluation processes of all personnel are current, and the evaluation processes seek to assess effectiveness of personnel and encourage improvement. Evaluation of faculty members must include, as a component of their evaluation, effectiveness in producing student learning outcomes. (Standards III.A.1.a & b)

Recommendation 5 (previous Recommendation #10 - 2002): Administrative Positions

The College must fill all administrative/management vacancies as quickly as possible while consistently using established hiring policies and practices. (Standards III A.1a, IIIA.2)

Recommendation 6 (previous Recommendation # 15 - 2002): Faculty Staffing Plan

The College must implement and assess the effectiveness of a staffing plan that will ensure full-time faculty members are proportionally distributed, based on a long-term plan, which results in an effective course schedule. Faculty must be assigned to a course schedule that will meet the demands of students, so that they can achieve their academic goals in a timely manner. (Standards IIIA.1a, III.2, III.6)

Recommendation 7: Financial Planning

The College must, as part of the strategic planning process for the College, develop and implement a set of baseline data, which are used to evaluate performance involving financial management and planning (i.e., expected revenues and expenditures over time to ensure this planning does not result in deeper long term deficits). It must develop objectives and action items, and evaluate outcomes, based on these data, which are necessary to achieve goals. The College should incorporate data into the overall strategic planning process for the College. (Standards IIIB.2a & b, IIIC.2, IIID.1, 2, 3)

Recommendation 8: Fiscal Stability

The College must carry out its fiscal and academic portion of the Multi-Year Recovery Plan and the Corrective Action Matrix, which delineate how future revenues and expenditures will provide the College a blueprint to fiscal solvency. The College must monitor performance of these financial actions and assumptions, and make appropriate corrective actions to ensure this financial recovery plan is completed successfully. (Standards IVB.1c, IVB.2d, IVB.3c&d)

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 team 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 campus leadership and the Board of Trustees.

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The Commission also requires that the team report and the self study report be made available to students and 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, but 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. Lassen Community College should submit the Midterm Report by **March 15, 2011**. Midterm Reports indicate continued resolution toward meeting the evaluation team's recommendations and forecast where the College expects to be by the time of the next comprehensive evaluation. The report also includes a summary of progress on College-identified plans for improvement 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 Lassen Community College. The next comprehensive evaluation of the College will occur during Spring 2014.

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.

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, Ph.D.
President

BAB/tl

cc: Ms. Susan Mouck, Accreditation Liaison Officer
Board President, Lassen CCD
Dr. Sherrill Amador, Team Chair
Evaluation Team Members
Ms. Linda Henderson, U.S. DOE