

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

July 5, 2013

It's leadership that counts

Accreditation is a grading or rating of an institution by a third-party agency. For Victor Valley College (VVC) that agency is the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, specifically the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC). Accreditation ensures that students at any college or university will receive a quality education that meets specific standards.

In 2005, the ACCJC found VVC to be below the minimum standards in six specific areas. Since that time VVC has had continuous visits from the ACCJC accreditation team inspecting the issues found during the 2005 review. Each time the team came out, it issued VVC a report on how to meet the minimum standards.

Three recommendations are still unsatisfactory. Recommendation 2 addresses student learning and institutional processes (VVC should be reviewing the programs it offers on a regular basis in order to continually improve and ensure it is providing programs students need.) Recommendation 3 addresses student learning outcomes (Are students actually learning what the college intends to teach them? How are we ensuring that?) Recommendation 6 addresses the long-term financial health of VVC (Plan for financial stability and not continue operating at a deficit.)

There are two major impacts of accreditation. Those are financial and academic. If VVC does not meet the standards by October 2103, students of VVC will be at risk of not having their credits transfer or recognized to meet employment standards. Current and future students may not be eligible for financial aid such as Pell Grants, and most likely tuition costs will rise if it is not subsidized by the state. At worst, the college may close causing job loss for hundreds of High Desert residents and leaving thousands of local students without classes.

We cannot afford to let Victor Valley College lose its accreditation status or struggle with accreditation any longer. We must ensure that VVC returns to full accreditation without sanctions to protect our future.

As voters who elected the Board of Trustees, we must let them know they need to do what's best for the college. They need to hire executive leadership that can lead the college out of the accreditation abyss that it is in.

Yvonne Woytovich

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