

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Feb. 18, 2014

Still in the woods

In a Feb. 7 letter to the school, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) removed Victor Valley College from probation and reaffirmed accreditation because VVC “substantially meets or exceeds” the relevant requirements, but still has “a small number of issues of some urgency which, if not addressed immediately, may threaten the ability of (VVC) to continue to meet (those) requirements.”

VVC must submit a follow-up report no later than March 15, which, among other things, must “demonstrate” and “the visiting team must verify” that VVC “has sustained compliance with the standards” they previously failed to maintain and for which they were put on probation.

Of the three areas of concern, one is that VVC “should develop long-term fiscal plans that support student learning programs and services that will not rely on using unrestricted reserves to cover deficits. Additionally, the College should provide timely, accurate and comprehensive financial data and budget projections for review and discussion throughout the institution.”

The ACCJC letter’s supplementary notes refer to the Fiscal Crisis Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) report which says “salaries are an issue,” that salaries and benefits “are a constant 85 percent of total” expenses, and “personnel reductions will have to be a large part of overall reductions.”

According to a headline article in the Feb. 8 Daily Press, announcing that VVC was taken off probation, the California Teachers Association (VVC full-time faculty) union negotiator is eyeing unrestricted funds — presumably to further pad the nests of full-time faculty members, most of whom already take home well over \$100,000 each year?

In the context of the issue under scrutiny, I don’t understand why the union rep would call attention to the unrestricted funds, which the ACCJC said was off limits. Given that VVC must resolve its longterm structural deficit problem without using unrestricted funds, and must make reductions in personnel costs, it appears to me that VVC Trustees still have a challenge on their hands to keep the college off probation.

I’d like to see whether the College will provide “timely, accurate and comprehensive financial data and budget projections for review and discussion throughout the institution.” Frankly, I don’t think VVC is “out of the woods” yet.

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