

VVC focusing on unresolved accreditation issues

College board trustee blames school's slow response

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VICTORVILLE • Victor Valley College officials have received a detailed explanation of their deficiencies from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, which extended the school's accreditation probation period.

In 2011, the ACCJC placed VVC on probation for failing to comply with several standards. The probationary notice gave the college two years to turn things around or lose its accreditation, which is needed to award student degrees, transfers and financial aid.

A letter from Barbara Beno, president of the ACCJC to VVC President Christopher O'Hearn, states the college has exceeded the two years for coming into compliance in some areas and has been granted additional time. The college has until Oct. 15 to demonstrate sufficient compliance or the commission will take action, according to a public disclosure notice from the ACCJC.

The notice and Beno's letter are public documents and can be viewed on the college's website.

Bill Greulich, spokesman for VVC, said the college fully resolved six out of the nine recommendations from the ACCJC in 2011, and that the remaining three recommendations are almost fully completed.

The remaining deficiencies have to do with planning, student learning outcomes assessment and long-term fiscal planning.

"The commission noted that Victor Valley College has continued to refine program review and planning process, though there is still work to do," Beno wrote in her letter to O'Hearn. "Another remaining issue is that most instructional program reviews do not include assessment reporting."

The letter states that most programs at the college only reported assessment definitions and plans, but little assessment information. In tracking student learning outcomes and assessments, the campus has started utilizing a software system called TracDat, which stores and reviews student data such as grades.

Beno's letter states that at the time of the follow-up visit in November, only 51 percent of courselevel student learning outcomes had been assessed.

In a public letter, VVC board trustee Joseph W. Brady blamed the college's slow response for failing to make the two-year deadline to complete the recommendations made by the ACCJC.

"The faculty did not participate because they claim preparation for the SLO's and the subsequent course assessment were not 'a part of their jobs,'" Brady wrote.

According to Brady's letter, several faculty members were paid large stipends to lead activities such as collecting student learning outcomes and assessments.

The ACCJC's concerns about the college's longterm fiscal plans were also highlighted in Beno's letter, although she credits the college for providing timely, accurate and comprehensive financial data and budget projections. Beno wrote that the college, however, has not implemented a plan to correct the long-term structural budget deficit, which is vital to the longterm health of the college.

The college is awaiting results from the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assessment Team. Beno wrote that these results will help the college develop and implement its long-term fiscal plans.

Greulich said the college is confident it will have them fully resolved before October.

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