

Accreditation NOTES

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

Western Association of Schools and Colleges

ACCJC Member Institution Fees

By Brice W. Harris, Chair
Commission Budget and Personnel Committee

Member colleges of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACCJC/WASC) pay an annual fee for support of the Commission's operations and services. That fee is based on the size of the college and, with the exception of direct expenses related to team visits, is the only expense colleges have for the operation and services of the Commission. What that fee supports and how the Commission sets those fees is not always clear to our member institutions.

Commission Expenses

The major expense categories of the Commission include personnel costs, office expenses, and meetings and workshops. The Commission conducts yearly Accreditation Liaison Officer Workshops, Workshops on Accreditation and College Leadership, Program Review, and Accreditation Basics, to name a few, through different venues in our region. It also financially supports the Strengthening Student Success Conference with the RP Group each year. Each semester, the Commission offers a number of Self Study Training Workshops to prepare institutions to carry out the process of self study leading to the Self Study Report and several Team Training Workshops to prepare the evaluation teams to conduct the comprehensive site visits. The expenses for evaluation team visits (other than for team training) are recovered based on actual costs by billing the college being visited. The annual budget of the Commission, without those expenses, is approximately \$1.5 million. Of the total operational budget, personnel expenses account for 61% of budget,

office expenses 14%, and meetings and workshops 25%.

Additional staff costs for the Commission have been the main force driving the budget higher in recent years. These additional staff costs have been necessitated by the growing complexity of our colleges, the implementation of new standards, as well as the increasing number of substantive change proposals in the past few years. Added pressure for more accountability at the federal level and an increasing number of institutions struggling to meet the standards have also strained the Commission's human resources and required additional staff. Although this Commission is staffed more modestly than other regional commissions, it has experienced increased staffing in recent years and will probably see more growth in coming years.

ACCJC Approach to Member Fees

For 2008-09, the member institution fees will increase by 10%. Fees to member colleges have increased more rapidly in the last two years, and combined with the requirements to restore the Commission reserves, colleges have experienced some "sticker shock." However, when taken in context over several years, the fee increases are actually quite reasonable. From 2002 to 2005, fees did not change at all even as expenses rose considerably. In 2005-06 there was a restructuring of the manner in which fees were calculated based on enrollment. For some institutions, fees were reduced, and for others, fees rose. For 2006-07, fees rose 20% over the 2005-06 schedule; for 2007-08, they will rise 9.5%; and for 2008-09, they will rise by 10%.

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Prior to the current fee policy of setting fees annually, eighteen months in advance of their implementation, fee increases took place every third year. With that approach, the Commission tended to run a surplus in year one of the cycle, break even in year two, and run in the red in year three. The following year, the Commission would increase fees to cover the anticipated next three years.

Two years ago, the Commission began announcing fee increases 18 months in advance of implementation in an attempt to provide our members with adequate lead-time for budget planning. The Commission recently set the fees for member institutions for 2008-09. When the Budget and Policy Committee of the Commission met in January to consider fees for the next cycle, it also discussed its approach to fees, which is somewhat different than other regional accrediting commissions. The Committee reviewed the fee policies of the other regional commissions and found that, although in some cases their base fees are lower than ACCJC, those commissions charge their member institutions for many of the services that ACCJC includes in the basic fee. Other commissions levy additional fees on member colleges for everything from substantive change proposals to individual interactions with the commission, and some charge for manuals and publications of their commissions. The fee policies of the other commissions are complicated and seem to make it difficult for institutions to project their annual accreditation expenses. After reviewing these various fee policies, the Committee elected to retain the single-fee, full-service approach.

Commission Reserves

As a small organization, the Commission must maintain a healthy operating reserve. The Commission is currently considering a formal reserve policy, which will probably require the maintenance of a reserve in the range of 70-80% of the operating budget. If Commission reserves are dramatically lowered, the Commission must assess its members to restore those reserves. Unanticipated expenses, that are actually the result of a legal challenge to an action the Commission has taken, impact those reserves. Although rare, these challenges are occasionally experienced by all of the regional accrediting commissions and do require

appropriate response. This Commission is currently assessing our membership (this year and next) for reserve restoration. Once these reserves are restored, the special assessment will end.

Budget Oversight

The Commission budget is developed and monitored by the Budget and Personnel Committee made up of members of the Commission. The Chair of the Committee also sits on the Commission Executive Committee. Commission staff provides the information necessary for the Committee to do its work, and the Committee presents the annual dues structure and operational budget to the full Commission for approval. The Committee meets at least twice annually, and the Commission has an audit conducted annually by an outside auditing firm. The audit is carefully reviewed by the Committee, discussed, and ultimately accepted by the full Commission.

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges must, like its member colleges, exercise careful fiscal control and good budget management. It is the responsibility of the Budget and Personnel Committee, and the Commission as a whole, to see that this is accomplished.

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ACCJC 2007 Annual Reporting Requirements Q & A

In March, the ACCJC sent all member institutions an Annual Report Form designed to gather information about implementation of the 2002 Standards of Accreditation that deal with student learning outcomes and assessment. Institutions have asked for clarification about the purposes of the new form.

Q. Why has the Commission decided to ask institutions for information about their progress in meeting the 2002 Standards of Accreditation that deal with definition of the expected student learning outcomes, assessment of student learning, and changes to the institution designed to improve learning?

A. First, as part of a comprehensive review of its operations undertaken every six years, the Commission is in the midst of a year-long study of itself, its services, and the state of its member institutions. As part of that study, the Commission wanted to know where the institutions are in implementing the student-learning-related new requirements of the 2002 Standards. The Commission regularly uses the Annual Report to get information on new or innovative efforts at its member institutions, or to gather information on topics that are of interest to the Commission or the U.S. Department of Education. Good examples of this are the reporting on distance education and additional sites that the Commission's Annual Report has asked for in the past and that have now become rather routine.

Second, the Commission has repeatedly stated that it expects institutions to take "eight to ten years" to fully implement the student learning requirements of the 2002 Standards of Accreditation. In June 2007, five years will have passed since the Commission adopted and published those standards. The timeline is half complete. The Commission wants to know how much progress is being made. It also believes that institutional leaders want to know how far their institutions have come, and how far they have to go.

Finally, the ACCJC is undergoing its review for recognition with the U.S. Department of Education this year. The application will be submitted in June, and the Commission will appear before the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Improvement (NACIQI) in early December. Two other regional commissions have had some significant and negative NACIQI responses to their applications. The Southern Association of Colleges and

Schools (SACS) was required to submit a report that will show how it will set the "bright line" measure of learning outcomes for technical programs at institutions it accredits, and how it will act to remove accreditation from those institutions that cannot meet the bright line measure within a specified period of time. The Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities (ACSCU/WASC) was asked how it would annually assess the amount of learning going on at institutions it accredits, and assure that steady improvements are made in that learning. The ACCJC is anticipating being asked for specific information during its recognition hearing about where its institutions are in implementing its new standards, and it wants to be prepared to answer.

Q. Why did the ACCJC ask so many questions about institutions' definition of expected student learning outcomes, assessment of learning, and changes to institutional practice to improve learning?

A. The 2002 Standards require institutions to define expected student learning outcomes and assess them in order to improve learning at the course, program, and degree or institutional level. The template the Commission developed for this Annual Report is designed to gather relevant information at all of those levels of institutional effort.

In trying to design the relevant questions, the Commission also took into account the many questions it has received from institutions over the years about "What do the Standards require?" "Where should my institution start to work with student learning outcomes?" "What are all the key things we must do?" The Commission also examined published works on the assessment process that describe how institutions implement learning outcomes assessments that are linked to educational improvements.

The Commission staff decided to create a template for gathering information that would also be a "roadmap" for institutions. Its detail is designed to help institutions know where they are in their own developmental process.

Q. How will the Commission use this information?

A. The Commission will file the Annual Report form in individual institutional files, with other elements of the annual reports that we ask of institutions each year. It will also provide the Annual Report forms to the team chair of a comprehensive evaluation visit as background information.

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The Commission will also do an analysis at the aggregate level of where its member institutions are in the developmental process. It will consider this information as part of its strategic planning efforts that will begin in fall 2007, when other components of the Commission's research efforts are also completed. The planning will include provisions for workshops and conferences designed to help institutions move forward in this important area of higher education development.

Finally, it is expected that this template, in some form, may eventually become part of the material that guides self study and team analysis of institutional quality during comprehensive evaluation visits. It would then be embedded in the *Guide to Evaluating Institutions* and used by both colleges and teams.

The Commission hopes institutions will provide suggestions to improve this form as they work with it.

Q. Will the college annual report be used to evaluate the institution?

A. At this point, it will not be used by the Commission to evaluate institutional progress (see paragraphs above). It will simply be used to see where the institution is at this point in time, a year from now, and another year from now. It is a tool to assess developmental progress of institutions. The Commission will use the analysis of the aggregate results to gauge the progress of its member institutions over time. Evaluation teams will use the report as background information to their evaluation work.

However, a college or college system can use the completed form to get a more exact sense of where it is in the process of full implementation. Institutional leaders may be able to use this form to evaluate progress over time.

Q. How should a college fill out the form?

A. Institutions should accurately and honestly report where they are. An institution that began working with Student Learning Outcomes at the programmatic level may not be able to answer, yet, the questions about implementation at the course or degree level. But eventually, when the work is "done," an institution should be able to answer all or most of the questions.

This should not take a lot of work. Curriculum committees, program or department chairs, and deans should be able to tell the person filling out the form what has been done. Institutions should not rush to "do" the steps in student learning outcomes work that the form implies, but should just report on where they are in their work at this point in time.

Q. What other new reporting requirements does the Commission expect to have?

A. Institutions can expect that the Department of Education—through the negotiated rulemaking sessions this spring, through the Higher Education Act that will probably be adopted this year, or through its recognition process for accreditors—will be trying to impose new reporting requirements on accreditors and institutions. We do not yet know what these will be, but the areas of likely impact are:

- Student Learning Assessment and Levels of Learning
- Transfer of Credit policies and decisions made by a college in considering transfer
- Distance education offerings, programs, and quality assurance
- Quality assurance of off-campus sites or additional locations
- Information about the outcomes of students completing vocational/technical and career-oriented programs

Any additional questions about the Annual Report form can be directed to the Commission offices via email at accjc@accjc.org.

For the latest update on the Negotiated Rulemaking (Neg. Reg.) in Washington D.C. check for frequent postings on the ACCJC website by President Barbara Beno. From the main menu (www.accjc.org), click on President's Desk.

ACCJC Self-Evaluation: The Process Continues

An article in the Summer 2006 Accreditation Notes detailed the work of the Evaluation and Planning Committee and its oversight of the External Review Committee charged with conducting the evaluation of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges begun in April 2006. This article will provide an update on the work of the Evaluation and Planning Committee and where it expects to be by fall 2007.

The Commission embraces the principles of continuous quality improvement in all of its activities. It ensures this commitment through on-going self-evaluation and has a standing committee charged with guiding the agency's research, evaluation, and planning for improvements. The Evaluation and Planning Committee meets at least once a semester to review evaluation information and to direct additional evaluation efforts; the Committee is also charged with developing a strategic plan for the Commission and making recommendations to the Commission's President and Budget and Personnel Committee for allocations that will support needed improvements.

Approximately every six years, the ACCJC conducts a significant, comprehensive assessment guided by the Evaluation and Planning Committee. The research design for each comprehensive review is determined by the purpose of the review, which may vary. For example, the Commission's 2000 assessment included as a key research question: Should the standards be changed? The 2006-7 review is designed to be a formative review of new standards implementation and include as a key question: How successful are member institutions at implementing new requirements of the 2002 Standards?

These assessments always have an internal component in which research is conducted by staff. They always have oversight and an external component provided by an External Review Committee. The 1994, 2000, and 2006 assessments have all used the RP Group (Research and Planning Group of California) or its key members to assist in design and implementation of the research. These same three comprehensive assessments used, or will use, interviews, focus groups, and a survey of member institutional staffs along with other research techniques. The results of the comprehensive evaluation are published by the Commission and made available to member institutions (see *Evaluating the Evaluator*, the Commission's

reports published in 1995 and 2001). The results are also used by the Commission's staff and its Evaluation and Planning Committee to plan and implement improvements, and the Committee and the Commission receive regular feedback on whether the Commission has implemented the external and internal recommendations and plans for change.

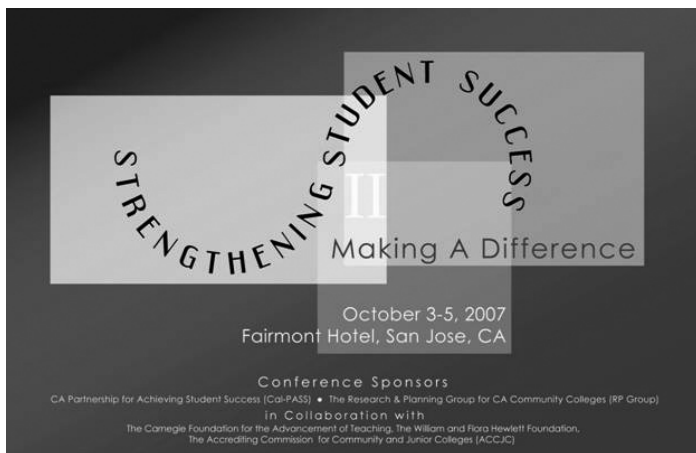
Other ongoing evaluation activities include the following:

- The Commission conducts an evaluation of every workshop with a participant survey at the conclusion of the training and frequently after the evaluation visits by teams. Staff analyze and summarize the results and use them to adjust subsequent training session(s). The Commission also asks team members to evaluate Commission manuals; the results are used to improve the manuals.
- The Commission conducts a brief, written evaluation of every Commission meeting and retreat. Staff debrief on the results within a few days of each meeting and make changes to reflect content of the evaluations. The Commission is given the contents of the evaluation at the next Commission meeting, along with any news of a changed procedure that is relevant.
- Every two years, the Commissioners conduct a formal Self Evaluation that involves answering questions about the functioning of the Commission as a whole as well as an individual commissioner's self assessment. The results are compiled and presented to the Commission in a longitudinal format for discussion at the retreat of that same year. Commission plans for improvement are either directed to staff or incorporated into the Evaluation and Planning Committee's strategic plan for the Commission.
- All institutions undergoing a comprehensive evaluation visit are asked to provide an evaluation of the visit and the team chair. Team chairs are asked to evaluate all team members. The Commission uses this data to evaluate its teams and in making future team assignments.

Earlier stages of the external review included focus groups and interviews. The external evaluation is currently in its final stage. An on-line survey has been sent to sampled team members and institutional representatives. Results will be analyzed over the summer and sent to the Commission's Evaluation and Planning Committee in the fall.

Conference Announcement

ACCJC is again proud to be a supporter of the Strengthening Student Success Conference this fall (Oct. 3-5) in San Jose. Last year's conference received rave reviews. This year, expansion to more than 80 sessions, includes a special strand for student learning outcomes coordinators and numerous sessions on assessment practices and how the results can be used to improve teaching and learning. Keynote speakers include Lee Shulman, Vince Tinto, and Elizabeth Barkley. More information about the conference can be found at <http://www.rp-group.org/SuccessConf-Main.htm>. Registration is now open with a special early registration price. Last year the conference sold out early.



Please share this information with your department chairs and faculty leaders and encourage them to attend this conference. It promises to be informative and engaging, and will provide participants with practical tools with which to assess student learning.

Join us for the exhilarating and revitalizing conference on "Strengthening Student Success: Making a Difference" October 3-5, 2007 at the Fairmont Hotel in San Jose, CA. The conference is tailored for those engaged in the quest for increasing student success through assessment of learning and collaborative inquiry. The sessions will address good practices and how results are used to improve teaching, student learning, and successful transitions K-16.

This conference is aimed at community college faculty and staff--student services, instruction, and planning, research and assessment--and their partners (i.e., K-12, university). Presentations are expected to address assessment practices and how the results can be used to improve teaching and learning in the following ten strands:

1. Math
2. English
3. Social Sciences
4. Science
5. Basic Skills
6. Student Services
7. General Education
8. Cal-PASS
9. Student Learning Outcomes Coordinators (**NEW**)
10. Cross-Discipline (assessment tools and methodology applicable across disciplines, technology assisted assessment, complementary roles, equity in expected outcomes, etc.)

Keynote speakers: **Lee Shulman**, President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching; **Elizabeth Barkley**, music professor at Foothill College; and **Vincent Tinto**, Distinguished Professor of Higher Education at Syracuse University.

Early registration is now open at http://www.vipmeetings.com/conferences/student_success_meet_07.html. For more information, please visit <http://www.rpgroup.org/SuccessConf-Main.htm> or contact Nga Pham at pham_nga@rscdd.org or (714) 480-7467.

*The conference is co-sponsored by the California Partnership for Achieving Student Success (**Cal-Pass**) and the Research and Planning Group of California (**RP Group**), in collaboration with the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (**Carnegie Foundation**), The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), and our host the San Jose-Evergreen Community College District.*

January 2007
Commission Actions on Institutions

At its meeting, January 10-12, 2007, The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, took the following institutional actions:

Reaffirmed Accreditation

Bakersfield College
Hawai'i Community College
Honolulu Community College
Kapi'olani Community College
Kauai Community College
Leeward Community College
Maui Community College

Removed from Warning and Reaffirmed Accreditation

Windward Community College

Placed on Warning

Cerro Coso Community College
College of the Sequoias
Porterville College

Placed on Probation

Northern Marianas College

Accepted System Report

University of Hawai'i Community Colleges

Accepted Progress Report with Visit

Antelope Valley College
Cypress College
Evergreen Valley College
Irvine Valley College
Oxnard College
Reedley College
Saddleback College
San Jose City College
Ventura College

Continued on Warning

College of Marin
Fresno City College
Hawai'i Tokai International College

Placed on Probation

Heald College
Lassen College

Accepted Progress Report

College of the Desert
Crafton Hills College
Cuesta College
Fullerton College
Mission College
San Diego Miramar College
West Valley College
Yuba College

Removed from Probation and Placed on Warning

College of the Marshall Islands

Accepted Focused Midterm Report

Laney College
National Polytechnic College of Engineering and
Oceanering

Accepted Midterm Report

American River College
Citrus College
Cosumnes River College
Folsom Lake College
Napa Valley College
Sacramento City College

Accepted College Closure Report

Compton Community College

Deferred Approval of Center

El Camino Compton Education Center

Substantive Change Actions

National Polytechnic College of Oceanering and Engineering: Approved, A.S. degree in Homeland Security.

Kapi'olani Community College: Approved the A.S. degree in Interpreting, A.S. program for Education Professionals, Health Education program provided since 2000 in Health Sciences, Emergency Medical Services including Nursing, Practical Nursing, Medical Assisting, Occupational Therapy Assistant, Dental Assisting the PN to RN program, Radiologic Tech program offered since 2003 and the Radiologic program scheduled for Fall 2007.

San Joaquin Valley College: Approved the Dental Assisting program for the Modesto/Salida site.

Santa Monica College: Approved request to provide instructional services to Compton Community College for two summer 2006 sessions.

Heald College: Deferred action on the change of ownership and control of the College with the request that the College resubmit the application.

Mission College: Approved the request to modify instruction delivery in the Business and Computer Applications degree and certificate programs since 50% or more of a program is offered via distance learning.

January 2007

Commission Actions on Policies

Policies Approved for First Reading:

Policy on Institutions with Related Entities – This policy was developed through a CRAC collaborative in response to the increasing frequency with which holding companies that control several institutions in more than one accrediting region are being bought, sold, and merged. This policy is intended to apply to corporate ownership, and does not replace or supersede the Commission’s policy that deals with accreditation of colleges in multi-college systems or districts.

Policy on Joint Accreditation by Regional and Specialized Accreditors – There are three revisions made to this policy, last reviewed by the Commission in 1999. The term “Joint Accreditation” replaces “Relationship” to more accurately represent the topic of the policy. The phrase “Regional institution accrediting bodies” replaces the term “General Agencies” in the title and text of the policy. Language from the general education eligibility requirements is incorporated to specify general education expectations of ACCJC if a specialized institution desires to seek institutional accreditation.

Policies Adopted:

Policy on Review of Accreditation Standards – This revised ACCJC policy disassociates the review of each edition of the Accreditation Reference Handbook from the review of the accreditation standards. The standards are reviewed normally every six years, and the updates of the handbook are now done on an annual cycle.

Edited Policies:

Policy on Complaints Against the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges – This policy was edited by adding a footnote that refers to the Commission’s policy, Review of Commission Actions, which provides guidance for institutions on how to challenge a Commission action to terminate accreditation of a specific institution.

Principles of Good Practice in Overseas International Education Programs for Non-US Nationals – This CRAC-developed policy was edited to make it up-to-date by correcting the names of the seven regional institutional accrediting bodies, and noting ACCJC’s review and editorial revision in October 2006.

Comprehensive Visits

Under current U.S. Department of Education regulations, ACCJC must provide opportunity for third-party comment regarding the institutional qualifications for accreditation. The institutions noted below are scheduled to undergo comprehensive visits in the fall of 2007, the spring of 2008, and the fall of 2008. Review by the Commission will occur at the regularly scheduled meeting following the review visit (January 2008, June 2008, and January 2009). Third-party comment on these institutions should be made to the ACCJC President, Dr. Barbara A. Beno, at 10 Commercial Blvd. Suite 204, Novato, CA 94949. For consideration, such comment must be made in writing, signed, accompanied by return address and telephone number, and received no later than five weeks before the scheduled Commission meeting.

Fall 2007

(for January 2008 Commission Review)

Cabrillo College
Cañada College
College of San Mateo
Cuyamaca College
Grossmont College
Imperial Valley College
Marymount College
MTI College
Riverside City College
Moreno Valley Campus
Norco Campus
Salvation Army Crestmont College for Officer Training
Sierra College
Skyline College

Spring 2008

(for June 2008 Commission Review)

Cerritos College
Lassen College
Mendocino College
Mission College
Ohlone College
Palo Verde College
San Joaquin Delta College
TransPacific Hawai'i College
West Valley College

Fall 2008

(for January 2009 Commission Review)

American Samoa Community College
College of the Canyons
Contra Costa College
Crafton Hills College
Cuesta College
Diablo Valley College
El Camino College
Long Beach City College
Los Medanos College
Rio Hondo College
San Bernardino Valley College
Santa Ana College
Santiago Canyon College

Substantive Change Committee Meeting Schedule 2007

Institutions seeking substantive change must submit complete documents one month before the Committee meeting. All meeting dates are subject to change depending on scheduling circumstances.

Spring 2007

No meeting in January because of Commission Meeting

February 16, 2007

March 16, 2007

April 20, 2007

May 18, 2007

Summer 2007

The Committee meets during the summer as needed

Fall 2007

To be set at a later date (check website)

Note to institutions: Please contact Commission staff before submitting a substantive change proposal in order that the Committee review of the proposal can be scheduled in a timely manner. Copies of each institutional substantive change application must be mailed directly to each of the committee members. Staff will provide the mailing list after initial institutional contact.

One copy of the college catalog should accompany every application. In addition, applications must include supporting materials such as course syllabi. See the Substantive Change Manual for additional information (available on the Commission web site at: www.accjc.org). Applications must be received no later than one month before the date of the scheduled meeting.

ACCJC Fall 2007 Workshops

Each year, ACCJC holds workshops to train evaluators and team chairs who will conduct comprehensive reviews of member institutions as well as workshops for institutions about to begin the process of self study leading to the Self Study Report and comprehensive visit.

Self-Study Training

Self Study Training Workshops will be held this fall for the following institutions preparing for self study review and comprehensive visits: (Dates are pending)

American River College
Cosumnes River College
Folsom Lake College
Sacramento City College

Chabot College
Las Positas College
Napa College

Citrus College
National Polytechnic College of Engineering
and Oceaneering
Santa Barbara City College
Taft College
Southwestern College

Team Training Workshops

Team Training Workshops are held for specific teams of evaluators and require that all team members and chairs attend. This process benefits team development and allows the teams to begin work on the upcoming visit well in advance. Workshops will be held at the locations indicated for the following teams:

September 5, 2007 – Oakland – Cabrillo College, MTI College, Riverside City College, Norco Campus, and Moreno Valley Campus

September 6, 2007 – Oakland – Sierra College, Cañada College, Skyline College, Imperial Valley College, and the College of San Mateo

September 11, 2007 – Los Angeles – Cuyamaca College, Grossmont College, Marymount College, and Salvation Army Crestmont College.

Other ACCJC Workshops

Accreditation Liaison Officer – To be held in conjunction with the annual conference of CCLC November 15-17, 2007 in San Jose, California.

Accreditation 101 – A Workshop on the Basics – To be held during the annual conference of the CCLC November 15-17, 2007 in San Jose, California.

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