

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ACCJC President Dr. Mac Powell to Serve as
Chair of the Council of Recognized Accrediting Commissions**

Sacramento, CA — The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) announced today that its president, Dr. Mac Powell, will assume the role of Chair of the Council of Recognized Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC) effective July 1, 2026.

ACCJC accredits 138 community and junior colleges that collectively serve more than two million students and plays a central role in ensuring quality, access, and accountability across the two-year sector. Dr. Powell's appointment to Chair of C-RAC recognizes both his leadership in accreditation and the national importance of community colleges within the broader higher education ecosystem.

C-RAC is comprised of seven federally recognized institutional accrediting commissions whose collective membership includes nearly 3,000 postsecondary, degree-granting colleges and universities serving approximately 17 million students across the United States. These institutions span a wide range of missions and constituencies, including more than 1,500 public institutions, 1,100 private nonprofit institutions, and nearly 100 private for-profit institutions.

"Accreditation plays a vital role in protecting students, supporting institutional quality, and ensuring public accountability," said Dr. Powell. "It is an honor to serve as Chair of C-RAC at a time when there is heightened national focus on student outcomes, transparency, and the value of higher education, particularly as community colleges remain essential to workforce development, economic mobility, and community vitality."

As Chair, Dr. Powell will lead C-RAC's engagement with the U.S. Department of Education, Congress, state leaders, and other stakeholders, advancing accreditation as a system grounded in independent peer review, continuous improvement, and public trust. C-RAC member agencies work collectively to promote rigorous yet flexible accreditation processes that respect institutional mission while maintaining shared expectations for academic quality, fiscal responsibility, and ethical governance.

In recent years, accreditation has operated within a rapidly evolving federal policy environment, alongside increased public scrutiny about the cost, value, and outcomes of higher education. Under Dr. Powell's leadership, C-RAC will continue to respond constructively to these dynamics

by strengthening transparency, reinforcing accountability, and advancing peer review accreditation as a proven system of quality assurance and institutional improvement.

Since becoming president of ACCJC in 2022, Dr. Powell has been a national advocate for community and junior colleges, elevating their role in expanding access to higher education, serving broad student populations, and supporting student success. His leadership has highlighted how peer review accreditation supports high-quality educational opportunities while ensuring institutions remain responsive, accountable, and focused on meaningful outcomes for students.

“Community colleges are on the front lines of opportunity,” Dr. Powell said. “This role provides a meaningful platform to showcase the extraordinary work of two-year institutions as higher education navigates questions of public confidence and value.”

Dr. Larry Schall, President of the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE), will serve as Vice Chair of C-RAC. Dr. Schall’s career in higher education spans more than thirty years, including service as a vice president and president on two college campuses. He has served as President of NECHE since 2020, where he advocates for a supportive, hands-on approach to accreditation and partners closely with the more than 230 institutions NECHE serves. Dr. Schall shares Dr. Powell’s commitment to being a responsive advocate for peer review accreditation.

“I am honored to serve alongside Dr. Powell and the C-RAC membership at a pivotal moment for higher education,” said Dr. Schall. “Accrediting agencies play a critical role in safeguarding quality, strengthening accountability, and supporting institutional innovation. I look forward to advancing this work together in service of students and the public.”

Together, the Chair and Vice Chair will support C-RAC’s work at a critical juncture for higher education, supporting accrediting commissions as they respond to evolving federal expectations, ongoing recognition reviews, and increased public demand for demonstrable value and accountability.

Through collaboration, advocacy, and a shared commitment to peer review, C-RAC will continue to promote accreditation as a trusted and independent system of quality assurance, one that supports institutional improvement, serves students, and strengthens public confidence in higher education.

For more information about ACCJC and its current initiatives, visit www.accjc.org.

For more information about C-RAC, visit <https://www.c-rac.org/>.

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The **Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC)** is a federally recognized accrediting commission whose institutional accreditation is accepted as a reliable assurance of quality, allowing institutions of higher education access to federal financial aid.

ACCJC's membership includes 138 public, non-profit, faith-based, tribal, and proprietary institutions serving students across Arizona, California, Hawai'i, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Washington, and the western Pacific. That membership reflects the breadth and vitality of American higher education, including the nation's largest public higher education system, pastoral formation for service in the Salvation Army, language acquisition in support of the U.S. military, and liberal arts education on a working ranch.

ACCJC supports its member institutions to advance educational quality and student learning and achievement. This collaboration fosters institutional excellence and continuous improvement through innovation, self-analysis, peer review, and application of standards.

The **Council of Recognized Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC)** represents the seven institutional accreditors recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. C-RAC works collaboratively to advance quality assurance, institutional improvement, and public accountability in higher education across the United States.