

June 14, 2022

Dr. Star Rivera-Lacey
Superintendent/President
Palomar College
1140 W. Mission Road
San Marcos, CA 92069-1487

Dear Dr. Rivera-Lacey:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting June 1-3, 2022, reviewed the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) and evidentiary materials submitted by Palomar College. The Commission also considered the Peer Review Team Report (Team Report) prepared by the peer review team that conducted its site visit to the College February 28-March 3, 2022.

The purpose of this review was to determine whether the College continues to meet ACCJC's Eligibility Requirements, Commission Policies, and Accreditation Standards (hereinafter, the Standards). Upon consideration of the information noted above, the Commission acted to **Reaffirm Accreditation for 18 months and require a Follow-Up Report,¹ due no later than November 15, 2023.**

Commendations

Commendations signify institutional practices for which the Commission believes exceed Standards. The Commission recognizes the exemplary performance of Palomar College in the following areas.

Standards III.A.8, III.A.14 (Commendation 1): The Commission commends the College for its comprehensive professional development portal, Palomar Powered Professional Development (3PD), which provides robust support and training for all employees, including full-time and part-time faculty, classified staff, and management.

¹ Institutions preparing and submitting Midterm Reports, Follow-up Reports, Special Reports, or Teach-out Plans/Agreements to the Commission should review *Guidelines for Preparing Institutional Reports to the Commission*, found on the ACCJC website at <https://accjc.org/guides-and-manuals/>.

Compliance Requirements

The Commission determined that the College must demonstrate compliance with the following Standards, as identified in the requirements below. This demonstration must be addressed in the required Follow-Up Report.

Standards III.D.1, III.D.5 (College Requirement 1): In order to meet the Standards, the Commission requires the College to fully institutionalize processes and practices for integrated fiscal reporting, internal controls, and financial planning to ensure long-term financial stability and effective oversight for sound financial decision-making and budget management.

In accordance with federal regulations and the *Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions*, compliance requirements must be addressed and the institution must demonstrate that it aligns with Standards within three years, by June 2025. If the institution cannot document that it has come into compliance within the designated period, the Commission will take adverse action.

Modifications to Team Recommendations

In taking its action, the Commission modified the team's recommendation as follows:

Recommendation 1 is changed from an improvement recommendation to a compliance requirement. The Commission also determined that the wording of the recommendation should be revised with the additional citation to III.D.1 as follows:

Original Recommendation 1 (Improvement): In order to increase effectiveness, the Team recommends the College completes the implementation of the newly developed processes for integrated fiscal reporting, internal controls, and financial planning to improve oversight, transparency, and direction in decision-making and budget management. (III.D.5)

Revised Recommendation 1 (Compliance): In order to meet the Standards, the Commission requires the College to fully institutionalize processes and practices for integrated fiscal reporting, internal controls, and financial planning to ensure long-term financial stability and effective oversight for sound financial decision-making and budget management. (III.D.1, III.D.5)

Recommendations for Improving Institutional Effectiveness

The Peer Review Team Report noted Recommendations 2 and 3 for improving institutional effectiveness. Improvement recommendations do not identify current areas of deficiency in institutional practice, but consistent with its mission to foster continuous improvement through the peer review process, the Commission encourages institutions to give serious consideration to these recommendations and the advice contained in the Peer Review Team Report. In the Midterm Report, the College will include actions taken in response to the improvement recommendations.

Next Steps

The Peer Review Team Report provides details of the peer review team's findings, including areas of noteworthy practice. The guidance and recommendations contained in the Peer Review Team Report represent the best advice of the team at the time of the visit but may not describe all that is necessary for the college to improve or to come into compliance. A final copy of the Peer Review Team Report is attached.

The Commission requires that you disseminate the ISER, the Peer Review Team Report, and this letter to all campus constituencies and the public by placing copies on the College website. Please note that in response to public interest in accreditation, the Commission requires institutions to post current accreditation information on a Web page no more than one click from the institution's home page. In keeping with ACCJC policy, the Commission action will also be posted on the ACCJC website within 30 days of the date of the Commission's action.

On behalf of the Commission, we wish to express appreciation for the diligent work and thoughtful reflection that Palomar College undertook to prepare for this review. These efforts confirm that peer review can serve the multiple constituencies of higher education by both ensuring and encouraging institutional quality and effectiveness.

If you have any questions about this letter or the Commission's action, please feel free to contact Dr. Cindy Miles or the vice president assigned as liaison to your institution.

Sincerely,



Cindy Miles, Ph.D.



Sonya Christian, Ed.D.

cc: Ms. Michelle Barton, Accreditation Liaison Officer