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April 29, 2013

Dr. Christopher O'Hearn
Superintendent/President
Victor Valley College
18422 Bear Valley Road
Victorville, CA 92395

Dear President O'Hearn:

Thank you for your inquiry about the accreditation history of Victor Valley College. We understand that the College is working on an accreditation report to the Commission due in October 2013, and hope this summary of the institution's performance with respect to Accreditation Standards, and our suggestions, are useful.

Victor Valley College is working on a response to recommendations identified in a Spring 2011 comprehensive evaluation. The comprehensive evaluation team provided the College with eight recommendations, and the Commission added one recommendation. Some of the issues identified by the 2011 comprehensive evaluation team had been identified by previous evaluation teams, going back as far as 2005 for some (Recommendations 2, 3, 4) and 1999 and 1993 for one (Recommendation 2). The College's failure to make improvements identified by earlier evaluation teams, or to sustain those improvements, was a factor in the Commission's decision to impose Probation and ask the College to fully make the needed changes. It is clear in looking at this history that the issue is *college-wide culture and practice*, something that the institution should take care now to develop fully.

In fall 2012, a follow-up evaluation team examined Victor Valley College's progress on the eight recommendations from the 2011 comprehensive evaluation team, and found that five of the eight recommendations, and the Commission recommendation, had been successfully resolved. Recommendations 2, 3, and 6 remain to be completed. The evaluation team report indicated substantial work had been done to address the remaining three recommendations, and that it expected the institution to be able to resolve them soon.

It is worth commenting on Recommendations 2 and 3: In implementing these recommendations, the institution was "coming from behind" after a substantial period of little or no compliance with some of the 2002 Accreditation Standards. The 2005 Evaluation Team Report indicates the College was substantially unresponsive to the Accreditation Standards that required data driven program review conducted on a regular basis, planning for improvements, and data driven decision-making. The College was also at elementary levels of responding to accreditation requirements that required the institution to define intended learning outcomes, assess learning, and use the results for continuous

quality improvement. Also absent was an institutional practice of discussing the results of program review and learning assessment in order to develop institutional understanding of its own quality, and shared commitments to improvement. *In short, the institution needed to develop a culture and practice of assessment and improvement – something that takes time and a commitment from all levels of an institution.*

The fall 2012 Evaluation Team Report states, “The College has continued to make substantial progress on this recommendation (Recommendation 2). There appears to have been some confusion about the program review submissions process during the 2011-12 cycle, which led to the apparent lack of participation in the spring 2012. The actual participation rate for 2011-12 is much higher than initially reported.” (Page 7) The team report also notes that the institution’s adoption of TracDat software should help it better collect, retain, and use program review data.

Recommendation 3, the completion of the definition and assessment of student learning outcomes for all programs, inclusion of SLOs on course syllabi, and incorporation of learning results into course and program improvements, is also linked to the institution’s culture and practice of continuous quality improvement. The 2012 evaluation team noted that while the College has made “significant progress” (Page 12), “there does not seem to be widespread dialogue about assessment results, neither is there ongoing dialogue based on the results of course, program, and institutional SLOs in decision making processes related to continuous improvement.” (Pages 11-12) Learning outcomes data needs to be added to the same college- wide dialogue about quality and improvement that incorporates the results of program review. *This should become part of the institutional culture and practice of assessment and improvement, with a commitment from all levels of an institution.*

With regard to Recommendation 6, which deals with the long-term structural budget deficit, the fall 2012 Evaluation Team Report indicates that at the time of its visit, the report of the Fiscal Crisis Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) had not yet been completed. The team concluded that the institution had done an excellent job responding to Recommendation 6, but was unable to implement a plan to correct the long-term structural budget deficit until the FCMAT Report was completed.

We would suggest that with the amount of work that has been completed, it is now appropriate for the College to develop processes and an annual calendar for institution wide discussion of quality and educational effectiveness, using the results of program review and learning outcomes assessment. The institution might consider starting the 2013-14 academic year with a convocation that considers evidence of institutional quality that program review and learning assessment have yielded, and continues that discussion over the next year in setting, funding, and implementing institutional priorities for improvement. The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges can assist Victor Valley College in finding good models for an annual cycle of dialogue, planning, resource allocation and improvement should you wish.

I hope this review of Victor Valley College’s accreditation history has been helpful to you and the members of the staff as you work to develop institutional practices that will bring Victor Valley College into full alignment with Accreditation Standards. If we can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Beno, Ph.D.
President



Susan Clifford, Ed.D
Vice President