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From: **Julie Adams** <julie@asccc.org>
Date: Tue, Aug 23, 2016 at 1:29 PM
Subject: Faculty and Senate Response to ACCJC Request for Letters of Support
To: Senate Presidents <senatepresidents@listserv.cccnext.net>, "Curriculum Listserv (CCCCO)" <curriculum@listserv.cccnext.net>, CTEFACULTY@listserv.cccnext.net

Dear Colleagues,

In the past few weeks, community college faculty across the state have received a request from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) requesting letters of support for the accrediting commission. These letters would be included by ACCJC in a report to the United States Department of Education in preparation for a review by the National Advisory Committee Institutional Quality and Improvement (NACIQI) at its hearing in December. The ACCJC must demonstrate to the USDE that its standards, policies, decisions, and practices in granting, reaffirming, or denying accreditation are widely accepted by educators, as required by federal regulations (C34 CFR §602.13). To meet this requirement, the ACCJC has contacted faculty, by email and by phone, to request support letters and has provided a list of elements to be included in the letter as well as a sample letter that may be used as a template, if so desired (see attached).

A number of faculty have contacted members of the ASCCC Executive Committee, both past and present, requesting guidance in how to respond to ACCJC’s request. The Executive Committee met on August 19-20 to discuss the issue and offers the following advice to faculty as they consider whether or not to submit a letter regarding ACCJC. Please note that these comments and recommendations from the ASCCC Executive Committee are advisory and that local senates and faculty may choose to follow, adapt, or ignore them.

First, no one is under any obligation to respond to ACCJC’s request. Each faculty member must make the decision for himself or herself and should not feel obligated to comply with the request unless comfortable doing so.

Second, the letter need not follow the form or format supplied by the ACCJC. The letter may include both strengths and weaknesses of ACCJC’s accreditation process and may be submitted to ACCJC, with copies sent to the USDE or to NACIQI. The addresses are provided below for reference.

Third, if you are a senate president and have been asked to submit a letter, it is valuable and essential to differentiate between responding as an individual faculty member and responding as a local senate president. This distinction would appear in the writer’s title as noted in the letter’s signature and perhaps in the body of the letter. Since senate presidents are the official representatives of their local senates and their college faculty, ASCCC recommends that if senate presidents would like to respond to ACCJC’s request in their official capacity as senate presidents, they bring the issue to their local senates for deliberation. This process would provide an opportunity for the local senate to determine whether or not to respond as well as to provide input regarding the content of the letter. The letter might follow past positions of the local senate, if any were taken, or senates might consider passing a resolution that includes the content of the letter to authorize their senate president to communicate with ACCJC. Resources to provide context for the discussion, such as ASCCC resolutions and the 2015 CCCCO Accreditation Task Force report, may be found on the ASCCC Accreditation and Assessment Committee page at <http://www.asccc.org/directory/accreditation-and-assessment-committee>

Finally, the ASCCC Executive Committee will be considering a response to ACCJC’s request at our next meeting on September 9, 2016 at San Bernardino Valley College. As always, all are welcome to attend and comment at our meetings.

The ASCCC Executive Committee hopes that you find these comments and recommendations helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact us with questions or comments.

Respectfully,

Julie Bruno, President

Addresses:

ACCJC

10 Commercial Blvd., Suite 204

Novato, CA 94949

United States Department of Education

400 Maryland Avenue, SW

Washington, D.C.  20202

For NACIQI, email letters to:  Jennifer.Hong@ed.gov.