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Accreditation Reaffirmed For All Four Los Rios Colleges

SACRAMENTO – All four Los Rios Colleges have had their accreditation reaffirmed by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, which said its action for each college “indicates that the institution is in substantial compliance with the Commission’s standards.”

Accreditation is a process of external quality review that higher education utilizes to evaluate colleges, universities and educational programs to assure and improve educational quality and institutional effectiveness.

“We are pleased and proud that all four Los Rios colleges have had their accreditation reaffirmed after lengthy, careful and comprehensive reviews – both internal and external,” said Los Rios Chancellor Brian King.

The ACCJC, an arm of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, reaffirmed accreditation for 18 months for all four Los Rios Colleges – American River, Cosumnes River, Folsom Lake and Sacramento City colleges – in separate letters dated February 5 to the colleges’ presidents. In those letters, the commission directed each college to submit a follow-up report in 18 months, by March 15, 2017, that addresses specific recommendations the commission identified as part of its reviews of the four colleges.

“We appreciate and respect the Commission’s conclusions, and have already begun efforts to address these districtwide and college-specific recommendations,” King added. “We are all focused on the same goals: performance standards and practices that promote academic quality, institutional effectiveness and student success.”

In its letters to the four Los Rios Colleges, the commission recommended three areas where the Los Rios District needs to make changes to fully meet accreditation standards. The District will implement each of the recommendations as soon as possible and describe its actions in the written follow-up reports that the colleges submit within the next 18 months. The commission recommended that the Los Rios District:

- Develop and implement a comprehensive Technology Plan for the District that “should align with and directly support the District Strategic Plan and the colleges’ strategic plans.”

- Develop and implement a “clearly-defined policy for selecting and evaluating the presidents of the colleges.”
- Modify existing Board policy “to more clearly define that the chancellor delegates full responsibility, authority and accountability to the presidents for the operations of the colleges.”

District staff had already begun drafting proposed Board policy changes before receiving the February 5 letters from the accrediting commission. The revised policies regarding presidential selection and evaluation and regarding the chancellor’s delegation of authority are nearing completion, and Los Rios has also begun the assessments necessary to develop and implement a districtwide technology plan.

The commission identified no findings at Folsom Lake College related to accreditation standards that warranted recommendations for the college to address within the next 18 months. For the three other Los Rios Colleges, the commission recommended that:

- American River College address and report back on one deficiency (revisit its institution-set standards within its participatory governance structure, including a “College-wide dialogue” on the topic.)
- Cosumnes River College address and report back on two deficiencies (accelerate the completion of its assessment cycle of learning outcomes and achievement rates for all courses, programs and degrees, and consistently and systematically document the dialogue about institutional effectiveness.)
- Sacramento City College address and report back on two deficiencies (develop a system to ensure that students receive course syllabi that contain learning outcomes consistent with the college’s officially approved course outlines, and move from a pilot online tutoring program to a fully implemented program that provides the same services to all students.)

Before these latest actions, the ACCJC last reaffirmed the accreditation of the four Los Rios Colleges in 2010, following comprehensive evaluation visits in fall 2009. At the time, the commission reaffirmed the accreditation of each of the four Los Rios Colleges for six years.

Under a policy the accrediting commission revised in April 2015, the [ACCJC recently reaffirmed accreditation](#) for 18 months for 10 of 11 California community colleges – including the four Los Rios Colleges – following the commission’s comprehensive reviews of each of the colleges. The commission did not reaffirm accreditation for the one remaining college, and instead issued that college a warning.

Each of the 10 colleges that the commission reaffirmed for accreditation will submit a follow-up report within the 18-month time frame that addresses how the college resolved the deficiencies or concerns that were part of its February 5 accreditation reaffirmation letter. After the commission reviews the follow-up report and determines that the college has sufficiently addressed all matters, then it will extend the college’s accreditation period.

As in all community college accreditation reviews, the commission appointed separate teams to visit each of the four Los Rios Colleges. Those visiting teams included volunteers from other California community colleges. In their visits and reviews of the colleges' own comprehensive self-evaluation reports, the teams focused on how well each of the Los Rios Colleges has performed according to four accreditation standards:

- Standard I: Institutional Mission and Effectiveness
- Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Services
- Standard III: Resources
- Standard IV: Leadership and Governance

Here are the links to the commission's letters to [American River College](#), [Cosumnes River College](#), [Folsom Lake College](#) and [Sacramento City College](#).

ABOUT LOS RIOS

The Los Rios Community College District is one of the nation's most respected learning institutions and the second-largest community college district in California, serving the greater Sacramento region. Los Rios includes: American River, Cosumnes River, Folsom Lake and Sacramento City colleges; six major education and outreach centers; and specialized workforce and economic development programs, for regional businesses, governments and organizations. Los Rios colleges offer AA/AS degrees, certificates and transfer-education opportunities in more than 70 career fields. The District's 2,400 square-mile service area includes all of Sacramento County, most of El Dorado County and parts of Yolo, Placer and Solano counties. About 75,000 students are enrolled in the four Los Rios Colleges. For more information, go to www.losrios.edu.