

April 2, 2015

Assemblymember David Chiu
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249
(916) 319-2017

RE: Support for AB 404 (Chiu)

Dear Assemblymember Chiu,

The American Federation of Teachers, Local 2121 supports Assembly Bill 404, which would provide a pathway for accrediting agency accountability by integrating meaningful feedback during the accrediting agency's own recognition review process. Such legislation will help ensure that California's 112 community colleges have access to a fair accreditation process.

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) oversees accreditation for the community college system, and it is subject to a "recognition review" process run by the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI). In the past there has not been a sufficiently strong voice for the community college system during this process, and the system does not currently have a method for soliciting feedback from colleges, faculty, staff, and other stakeholders to deliver crucial information on the accreditor's performance.

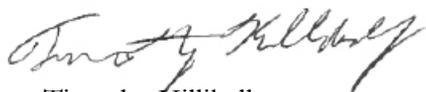
The accreditation process significantly impacts colleges, as the state has unfortunately witnessed over the past three years as the ACCJC has unjustly—and as CA Superior Court has now ruled, illegally—sought to revoke City College of San Francisco's accreditation. Any process with such tremendous potential impact should be transparent and deeply integrated with stakeholder feedback—without fear of retribution. This bill will allow more voices to be heard in a manner that will also protect individual colleges' and stakeholders' anonymity; unfortunately, we have heard repeatedly that such protection is necessary if the feedback on this accreditor's recognition is to be truthful and constructive.

As you no doubt know, the critical feedback provided to NACIQI and the Department of Education when ACCJC was last reviewed for recognition in 2013 ultimately blocked the accreditor from full and immediate recognition, triggering an additional review, still underway. At the time, many community college constituents who had quietly expressed concerns about ACCJC actions and processes felt unable to securely offer truthful feedback toward NACIQI's recognition review. Had legislation such as AB 404 already been in place at that time, we have no doubt that the additional feedback from system stakeholders would have been helpful.

As the union representing counselors, instructors, and librarians at City College of San Francisco, AFT 2121 has a direct interest in an improved accreditation process. Our members, the students we serve, and the San Francisco community at large have seen first-hand the need for legislation such as AB 404 as well as broader accreditor reform to ensure fair accreditation for our colleges.

For these reasons, AFT 2121 is pleased to support AB 404.

Sincerely,



Timothy Killikelly
AFT 2121 President



Alisa Messer
AFT 2121 Political Director

American Federation of Teachers, Local 2121