



## NEWS RELEASE

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# **CFT urges CC Board of Governors to repeal commission's monopoly over accreditation and restore local governance at CCSF**

*Statements by CFT President Joshua Pechthalt delivered earlier today at California Community College Board of Governors meeting:*

## **Repeal ACCJC monopoly over accreditation**

Chancellor Harris, President Manuel Baca, and members of the board; thank you for taking a moment to hear my views, delivered on behalf of the 25,000 community college members of the California Federation of Teachers, regarding agenda item 3.2, on a change to the accreditation regulations. I am speaking in favor of this change. As you may know, the CFT filed a complaint with the US Department of Education last spring regarding numerous violations by the ACCJC of accreditation standards, California law, and their own policies. Our claims about ACCJC's disregard for its own rules and accreditation norms drew a reprimand letter from the Department of Education to the ACCJC warning the agency to clean up its act.

In the meantime, however, the ACCJC has continued to violate many of the same norms and laws, while passing new policies to appear as if it is now in compliance. It continues, for instance, to field site visit teams to colleges without anything resembling balance between the numbers of administrative and faculty members, and compounds the violation by claiming "academic" status for administrators.

Two weeks ago the ACCJC faced a week long trial in San Francisco, where compelling evidence was presented showing that this accrediting commission's officers and staff recklessly attempted to destroy access to public higher education for 80,000 students with its unjustified "show cause" sanction, in a clear demonstration of disparate treatment for City College of San Francisco compared to other community colleges. We fully expect the judge to order a new review of City College, this time conducted in a fair and lawful fashion.

The ACCJC is an agency that is out of compliance and out of control. We realize that further steps will need to be taken before another entity might be able to perform the complex and important work of accreditation of California's community colleges; but this step is a necessary prerequisite to those other ones. It is past time to end the monopoly over accreditation exercised by a commission that has shown by its disregard for fairness, for law, for its own policies, and for the educational future of 80,000 students, that it cannot be trusted, and does not deserve to hold that position any longer. I urge you to approve this change to Title 5.

## **Local Governance**

The City College of San Francisco Board of Trustees needs to have its entire authority returned now. The plan in front of you today—having the newly elected Board of Trustees potentially waiting to be seated with full authority until July 2016 – is unnecessary and unacceptable. Chancellor Harris, you've repeatedly made public comments to the effect that City College is 95% of the way to completing the work it needs to in order to fully comply with accreditation standards. CCSF's elected Board of Trustees needs to be part of that effort, helping to lead it, now. That is what the voters said in the election just two weeks ago.

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Chancellor Harris, you also provided testimony to the San Francisco Superior Court that it was your understanding, through a communication with ACCJC President Barbara Beno, that the only way that City College could keep its accreditation would be if you replaced its Board of Trustees with a Special Trustee with Extraordinary Powers. Ms. Beno did not keep her end of the bargain and it should be null and void. We believe the authority of the Trustees never should have been usurped in the first place.

Public education is the foundation stone of democracy. Our public education system is meant to produce an informed citizenry capable of making the decisions necessary for our society to function and govern itself. That citizenry recently acted, electing several candidates to the San Francisco Community College District Board of Trustees.

It is at the very least ironic, and more to the point, just plain wrong, that the very institution charged with supporting democracy through education should itself be prevented from exercising democratic governance.

Please return full authority to the elected City College of San Francisco Board of Trustees early in 2015. Thank you.

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*The CFT represents over 25,000 faculty in thirty community college districts, and 120,000 educational employees at every level of the education system, from Head Start to UC. More info: [www.cft.org](http://www.cft.org)*