

## Resolution Calling on the ACCJC to Grant City College of San Francisco Full Accreditation

Whereas, public institutions should be evaluated to ensure they provide quality services and are properly spending taxpayers' money,

Whereas, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) has been authorized by the United States Department of Education to be an accrediting agency to determine if colleges comply with standards of accreditation and thus are eligible for federal financial aid programs and, under California law, eligible to participate in the Cal Grant program,

Whereas, the ACCJC has been empowered by the State of California to ensure that the states' community colleges are providing students with a quality education and properly spending public funds,

Whereas, the ACCJC found City College of San Francisco (CCSF) failed to meet numerous accreditation standards and announced on July 3, 2013 that CCSF should have its accreditation terminated, which would have effectively forced the college to close as of July 31, 2014, <sup>1</sup>

Whereas, CCSF has had semesters in which it provided needed educational opportunities for over 100,000 enrolled students from diverse backgrounds in the San Francisco Region and for 79 years has been crucial to the economic and social development of San Francisco,

Whereas, the purpose of a college is to educate students,

Whereas, the U.S. Department of Education "goal of accreditation is to ensure that education provided by institutions of higher education meets acceptable levels of quality," <sup>2</sup>

Whereas, the 2012 ACCJC visiting team to CCSF "concluded" in its report "**that the instructional programs in credit and non-credit programs provide high-quality instruction** to meet the needs of the community while also demonstrating the college (sic) effort to meet the broad mission of the institution" which could be reasonably interpreted to mean that CCSF exceeded the U.S. Department of Education "goal for accreditation." <sup>3</sup>

Whereas, the 2012 ACCJC visiting team indicated the following in its report:

1. "...confirmed that City College of San Francisco offers degree programs that are appropriate to and congruent with its mission, are based on recognized higher education fields of study, and are of sufficient content and length to ensure quality. Noncredit classes and programs also are offered with appropriate rigor and in accordance with the college's mission," <sup>4</sup>
2. "**commended**" CCSF "**for several exemplary models of demonstrated educational quality** based on their program reviews, student learning outcomes and assessment results used for continuous improvement," and <sup>5</sup>
3. noted CCSF's "**exceptional CTE programs** including its highly regarded Culinary Arts Program, its excellent Computer Network and Information Technology Program, its Computer Science Program, its Engineering Program, the Graphic Communications Program, the Business Program, and multiple health career programs located primarily on the John Adams Campus," <sup>6</sup>

Whereas, in this same 2012 report, the ACCJC visiting team:

1. "confirmed that City College of San Francisco provides comprehensive and accessible student services to its students in accordance with its mission and purposes," and <sup>7</sup>
2. found "noteworthy...student support services that are demonstrating a strong connection to the campus communities through outreach and enrollment services, as well as student activities that demonstrate institutional progress towards improving student persistence and performance through retention efforts aimed at those students assessed as having the greatest needs," <sup>8</sup>

Whereas, additionally,

1. "The visiting team confirmed that City College of San Francisco provides specific, long-term access to sufficient information and learning resources and services to support its mission and instructional programs through a variety of formats, including library collections, media centers, computer labs, and other means,"<sup>9</sup> and indicated that
2. "There is rich evidence that library faculty and staff demonstrate that their courses and services meet students' learning needs by taking into account student-use demographics and the contribution of the library's activities to student learning and student satisfaction,"<sup>10</sup>

Whereas, a reasonable conclusion is that the above describes a college that is fulfilling its purpose which is to educate and serve students,

Whereas, despite being adversely affected by large budget cuts during the recession, CCSF maintained an ending balance every year in excess of state requirements and met its financial obligations,<sup>11</sup>

Whereas, after CCSF had been placed on show cause in 2012, voters approved local parcel tax Proposition A and state Proposition 30, resulting in additional revenue to CCSF that has strengthened its finances,

Whereas, all of the above is not to suggest that CCSF is free of problems because, like all large institutions, CCSF has issues that need to be addressed to enable it to better fulfill its primary purpose of educating and serving students,

Whereas, all 15 members of the 2012 ACCJC visiting team, whose members included ACCJC President Beno's husband, recommended that the commission impose a milder sanction of "probation" instead of the harshest sanction of "show cause" that required the college to prove why it should not lose its accreditation,<sup>12</sup>

Whereas, the State Chancellor's office has recently rated CCSF above the state average in many areas of Student Success,<sup>13</sup>

Whereas, CCSF is better in areas of student success than the colleges of many, if not all, of the ACCJC commissioners,<sup>14</sup>

Whereas, in order to come into compliance with what the ACCJC sees as deficiencies, much time and many resources are being devoted to complying with the vague and ever-changing standards of the ACCJC as opposed to being used for the purpose of educating students and providing them with needed services,<sup>15</sup>

Whereas, the U.S. Department of Education in 2013 found "aspects of the agency's accreditation review process" to "not meet the Secretary's Criteria for Recognition" and determined that the ACCJC is "out of compliance" with the "requirements" of sections of the Higher Education Action of 1965, as amended,<sup>16</sup>

Whereas, the state audit in 2014 found that the ACCJC sanctions colleges at a rate far greater than other regional accreditors, roughly 53 percent compared to just over 12 percent for other regional accreditors in the United States,<sup>17</sup>

Whereas, this same state audit of the ACCJC concluded that the ACCJC was "inconsistent in applying its accreditation process" and lacks transparency in its deliberations,<sup>17</sup>

Whereas, The California Community College Chancellor's Task Force on accreditation issued a report in September 2015 calling for replacing the ACCJC that was unanimously supported by The Board of Governors (BOG), the state chancellor's governing body, and that among its findings are:

"The California Community College system and its member institutions have lost confidence in the ACCJC." and

"The structure of accreditation in this region no longer meets the current and anticipated needs of the California Community Colleges." <sup>18</sup>

Whereas, the ACCJC has fully accredited colleges out of compliance with many of its standards,<sup>19</sup>

Whereas, the ACCJC came up with a new policy in the summer of 2014, "restoration process," unique to CCSF, that will allow CCSF to remain open for two years with the requirement that it, unlike many fully accredited colleges, becomes 100 percent compliant with all accreditation standards as interpreted by the ACCJC, or face closure with no right of appeal, <sup>20</sup>

Whereas, Superior Court Judge Karnow found the ACCJC to have engaged in "significant unlawful practices" when it decided in 2013 to close CCSF as of July 2014, <sup>21</sup>

Whereas, the ACCJC's 2012 show cause sanction and then the closure decision in 2013 have caused great damage to CCSF, as reflected in its dramatic decline in enrollment that was once over 100,000 students, but now stands at under 65,000,

Whereas, recovery from this damage will take many years,

Whereas, prior to the ACCJC's closure decision in 2013, at a meeting held with CCSF's interim Chancellor Thelma Scott-Skillman and Special Trustee Robert Agrella, ACCJC officials heard critical comments about CCSF that provided ACCJC commissioners with a strong reason for deciding to close CCSF, <sup>22</sup>

Whereas, soon after the ACCJC announced its decision to close CCSF, Special Trustee Agrella was elevated by the Board of Governors to the position of Special Trustee with Extraordinary Powers (STWEP), placing sole power in governing CCSF in the hands of him alone instead of the democratically elected Board of Trustees, which was stripped of its authority and not allowed to meet, depriving the people of San Francisco of their voice over the operations of CCSF,

Whereas, in a letter dated October 11, 2013, STWEP Agrella declared that the ACCJC visiting team, in some areas, "understated" "the depth of problems" CCSF faces, <sup>23</sup>

Whereas, STWEP Agrella declared under oath on June 12, 2014 that **"City College is in substantial compliance with accreditation standards and eligibility requirements."** <sup>24</sup>

Resolved, we, chapter 2121 of the American Federations of Teachers, urge the ACCJC to immediately declare CCSF fully accredited until the time of its next normal scheduled evaluation in 2018.

#### Footnotes

1. closure letter [http://www.accjc.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/07\\_03\\_2013\\_City\\_College\\_of\\_San\\_Francisco.pdf](http://www.accjc.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/07_03_2013_City_College_of_San_Francisco.pdf)

2. DOE goal of accreditation under the title: Accreditation in the United States:  
<http://www2.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/index.html>

3. ACCJC 2012 Evaluation Report pg. 37 at:  
<http://www.ccsf.edu/ACC/Accreditation%20Evaluation%20Report%202012.pdf>

4. *ibid.* pg. 17

5. *ibid.* pg. 10

6. *ibid.* pg. 30

7. *ibid.* pg. 18

8. *ibid.* pg. 10

9. *ibid.* pg. 18

10. *ibid.* pg. 42

11. see CCSF Vice Chancellor of Finance and Administration Gerhard attachment page 7 CCSF's budget needs to be more thoroughly examined. Not noted in Gerhard's footnotes is that much more money than in the past is being spent on, among other items, outside consultants and for lawyers. Furthermore, budget problems are being exacerbated by policies/statements by the administration that discourage students from enrolling since most revenue is based on enrollment. See, for example, the email sent out to students by interim chancellor Scott-Skillman shortly after the closure announcement by the ACCJC in 2013. Ask yourself, if you were a student would you enroll at this college if other options were available. Even the ACCJC held open the possibility of CCSF remaining open after July 31, 2014. See second and third paragraphs of closure letter referenced in footnote 1.

12. LA Times: 8/22/2014 S.F. College evaluators proposed probation, not more severe sanctions  
<http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-sf-city-college-20140822-story.html>  
legal document: click what is on the left side of the article see page 10

13. April 17, 2014 CCSF press release  
[http://www.ccsf.edu/dam/Organizational\\_Assets/About\\_CCSF/Marketing/CCSFStudentSuccessPressAnnouncement041714.pdf](http://www.ccsf.edu/dam/Organizational_Assets/About_CCSF/Marketing/CCSFStudentSuccessPressAnnouncement041714.pdf)

14. April 23, 2014 CCSF beats accreditors on academic playing field at: (may need to click title in google) by

San Francisco Chronicle reporter Nanette Asimov

<http://blog.sfgate.com/education/2014/04/23/city-college-of-sf-beats-accreditors-schools-on-academic-playing-field/>

15. see comparison between 2002 standards revised in 2012 and 2014 standards at  
[http://www.ccsf.edu/dam/ccsf/images/academic\\_senate/AS\\_Docs/ListOfMeetings\\_2014\\_15/Other/NewOldStandardsComparison2014-12-31.pdf](http://www.ccsf.edu/dam/ccsf/images/academic_senate/AS_Docs/ListOfMeetings_2014_15/Other/NewOldStandardsComparison2014-12-31.pdf)

16. U.S. Depart of Education letter dated August 13, 2013 at:  
[https://www.insidehighered.com/sites/default/server\\_files/files/WASC-jr%20decision%20letter%20081313%20FINAL.pdf](https://www.insidehighered.com/sites/default/server_files/files/WASC-jr%20decision%20letter%20081313%20FINAL.pdf)

17. see summary of State Audit of ACCJC Report at: <http://bsa.ca.gov/reports/summary/2013-123>

18. state chancellor task force report page 8: <http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/Portals/0/reports/2015-Accreditation-Report-ADA.pdf>

19. See ACCJC Gone Wild at <http://www.accreditationwatch.com/>  
Starting on page 325 under title **Inconsistent Application of Sanctions - January 2015** (page may change as report is revised) see detailed charts

20. ACCJC letter on restoration status at: [http://www.accjc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/07\\_30\\_2014\\_Action\\_Letter\\_re\\_CCSF\\_Application\\_for\\_Restoration.pdf](http://www.accjc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/07_30_2014_Action_Letter_re_CCSF_Application_for_Restoration.pdf)

Letter of CCSF Chancellor dated July 28, 2014

Go to google search:

[https://www.google.com/?gws\\_rd=ssl#q=ccsf+chancellor+letter+to+accjc++july+28%2C2014](https://www.google.com/?gws_rd=ssl#q=ccsf+chancellor+letter+to+accjc++july+28%2C2014)

**3<sup>rd</sup> item with this title:** [\[DOC\]OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR - City College of San](#)

21. decision quoted page 17:

[sfsuperiorcourt.org/online-services/verify?f=cnq](http://sfsuperiorcourt.org/online-services/verify?f=cnq)

type in case number 533693 and go to Statement of Decision on February 17, 2015

22. See exhibit G labelled page 791 page 98 of court document found for case number 533693 (see previous footnote) listed as

NOV-17-2014	MEMORANDUM OF POINTS AND AUTHORITIES IN SUPPORT OF MOTION TO CONFORM COMPLAINT TO PROOF ADDUCED AT TRIAL (TRANSACTION ID # 56350343) FILED BY PLAINTIFF PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA EX REL DENNIS HERRERA, SAN FRANCISCO CITY ATTORNEY
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Disappointment over progress is expressed in reaction to a presentation by CCSF representatives Dr. Agrella and others.

Note: Unfortunately, full transcripts of testimony apparently are not available. Following are excerpts of a report on the testimony of ACCJC commissioners at the hearing in the case brought against the ACCJC by the San Francisco City Attorney at: <http://www.cft.org/your-work/community-college/news/924-the-people-vs-accjc-%E2%80%94day-by-day-report,-october-27-31.html>

#### Excerpts from day five of testimony

“The ACCJC then brought forward four commissioners to testify, and here is where things got interesting. Each one, in lockstep response to ACCJC attorney questions, announced that he or she had voted for show cause in 2012 and for termination of accreditation in 2013. Each one maintained that the evidence from the site team report and a meeting with “CCSF representatives” convinced them that CCSF was in danger of going under financially, and that its governance was “dysfunctional” and unable to deal with the situation. Each said they were disturbed, or shocked, or alarmed, that no progress had been made during the show cause period; that usually colleges understand the difficulty they are in during show cause and work hard to address the problems—but not City College...

Each commissioner also insisted that part of what had convinced them to vote the way they did was when the commission invited representatives of CCSF to address them. Frank Gornick said that during the meeting with CCSF representatives—“Supertrustee” Bob Agrella and Interim Chancellor Thelma Scott-Skillman—“they painted a picture of a college in disarray” in terms of its finances and governance. He said they told the commissioners that “there were individuals who were supportive of what needed to be done, but they were in an intimidating environment” created by unnamed but presumably powerful forces...

Timothy Brown, the only faculty member (from Riverside City College) among the commissioners on the stand, said that Scotts-Skillman and Agrella had told them about the “great resistance” by faculty to implementing necessary changes to Student Learning Outcomes to meet the SLO standard, and here cited the other statistic mentioned by three of the four witnesses—just 28% had complied with their SLO requirement. “Normally,” he said, “all the elements of the institution pull together on show cause; that didn’t happen here.”

The Deputy City Attorney then had Brown look through the site team report, which demonstrated that in their investigation they had found that the college had met or partially met nearly all the standards on which it had been

found deficient. She also asked if he remembered the line from the team report about the college's passionate commitment to correcting its deficiencies. He didn't recall. She told him this line was stricken by the report's reader, Barbara Beno. Brown recovered by asserting that the commission must make sure that a college is in full compliance at all times with all standards."

23. see Agrella letter below dated October 11, 2013

24. Agrella's testimony: go to:

[sfsuperiorcourt.org/online-services/verify?f=cng](http://sfsuperiorcourt.org/online-services/verify?f=cng)

type in case number 533693

scroll down to June 12 Agrella's declaration. It is toward the bottom of June 12 documents and the latter part of his declaration. See point #9

## **Documents**

1. Email referenced in footnote 11

From: <[stuactiv@ccsf.edu](mailto:stuactiv@ccsf.edu)>

Date: Thu, Jul 4, 2013 at 1:26 PM

Subject: Accreditation Update

To: [.....@mail.ccsf.edu](mailto:.....@mail.ccsf.edu)

Dear Students:

We have received the decision from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges. The Commission has decided to terminate City College of San Francisco's accreditation effective July 31, 2014, approximately one year from now.

We will move forward immediately with the review process, per ACCJC's policy. What is important for you to know is that City College is OPEN and all programs and services are ACCREDITED.

Your units will transfer and your degree and/or certificate will be recognized as awarded by an accredited institution. This includes any transferable units you complete during the Fall 2013 and Spring 2014 semesters.

While we go through the review process, we will continue to serve you and our communities with the level of service and quality instruction you expect from City College. We are currently registering students for the fall semester, so if you haven't registered yet, we urge you to do so.

We know you will have questions. Please go to the Accreditation section of the CCSF website by following the link below use the form to email us your questions. We will respond with answers as quickly as we can. [http://www.ccsf.edu/NEW/en/about-city-college/Accreditation\\_2012/accreditation\\_questioncomments.html](http://www.ccsf.edu/NEW/en/about-city-college/Accreditation_2012/accreditation_questioncomments.html)

I want to remind you that City College is OPEN and classes are in session and will remain in session.

If this message has confused you or if you are concerned about your classes, transcripts and the future, for academic advising, please call Counseling at (415) 239-329 or Health Services at (415) 239-3110. You can find more information about these departments on the website at [www.ccsf.edu](http://www.ccsf.edu)

We encourage you to continue pursuing your dreams.

Dr. Thelma Scott-Skillman, Interim Chancellor

2. Agrella letter for footnote 22:



SAN FRANCISCO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

## City College of San Francisco

50 PHELAN AVENUE • SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94112 • PHONE: (415) 239-3000

October 11, 2013

Accrediting Commission for  
Community and Junior Colleges  
10 Commercial Boulevard, Suite 204  
Novato, California 94949

Dear Dr. Beno:

I am writing this letter from the perspective of having nearly 30 years of experience as a California Community College president during which I have had the privilege and honor of being the chair of a number of accreditation team site evaluations, have gone through numerous site evaluations of my own institutions, and now as the Special Trustee for City College of San Francisco.

During my tenure in California I have both observed and been a part of the evolution of the accreditation standards and firmly believe in the peer accreditation process. The standards, as they are now written and enforced, in my opinion provide excellent benchmarks for institutional measures of quality and performance. By design they encompass the totality of the institution with the intent of constantly striving for continuous quality improvement in all areas.

As the Special Trustee of City College of San Francisco, I feel I must comment on the controversy that certain third parties have brought to the college's current accreditation status of "Show Cause". Nothing that has been documented in the site evaluation team reports has been found to be without merit. Although there may be some minor areas of disagreement, overall the site evaluation reports have been found to be accurate and, unfortunately in some areas, even understated in the depth of problems the college faces. The peer review accreditation process revealed problems that are now being addressed to assure the long term viability of the college.

On behalf of City College of San Francisco, as well as my former institutions, I want to thank you and your staff for the cooperation we have received and willingness to meet with us to review the standards, policies, and procedures of the Commission to assist in maintaining CCSF's accreditation.

Yours Truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Robert F. Agrella".

Robert F. Agrella  
Special Trustee

DR. ROBERT AGRELLA, SPECIAL TRUSTEE  
DR. THELMA SCOTT-SKILLMAN, INTERIM CHANCELLOR

## **Endorsers**

San Mateo County Community College Chancellor Ron Galatolo

Former California Federation of Teachers President and expert on the ACCJC Marty Hittelman

Former candidate for the CCSF Board of Trustees Hanna Leung

Executive Board of the San Mateo Community College AFT chapter

San Mateo Labor Council

Board of Trustees of the San Mateo Community College District

City College of San Francisco AFT 2121

San Francisco Labor Council

Executive Council of United Professors of Marin AFT Local 1610