

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,

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,"

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."

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,"
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
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,"

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

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,”

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,” 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,”

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,

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,

Whereas, the State Chancellor’s office has recently rated CCSF above the state average in many areas of Student Success,

Whereas, CCSF is better in areas of student success than the colleges of many, if not all, of the ACCJC commissioners,

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,

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 Act of 1965, as amended,

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,

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,

Whereas, the ACCJC has fully accredited colleges out of compliance with many of its standards,

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,

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,

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 75,000,

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,

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,

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

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.

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