

CHAIR
Harold Hewitt, Jr.
Chapman University

VICE CHAIR
William A. Ladusaw
University of California, Santa Cruz

Jeffrey Armstrong
California Polytechnic State University,
San Luis Obispo

Richard Bray
Schools Commission Representative

Linda Buckley
San Francisco State University

Ronald L. Carter
Loma Linda University

William Covino
California State University,
Los Angeles

Christopher T. Cross
Public Member

Reed Dasenbrock
University of Hawaii at Manoa

John Etchemendy
Stanford University

Dianne F. Harrison
California State University,
Northridge

Michael L. Jackson
University of Southern California

Barbara Karlin
Golden Gate University

Margaret Kasimatis
Loyola Marymount University

Linda Katehi
University of California, Davis

Deborah Lieberman
University of La Verne

Julia Lopez
Public Member

Stephen Privett, S.J.
University of San Francisco

Barry Ryan
West Coast University

Sharon Salinger
University of California, Irvine

Sandra Serrano
Community and Junior Colleges
Representative

Ramon Torrecilha
California State University,
Dominguez Hills

Jane V. Wellman
Public Member

Leah Williams
Public Member

PRESIDENT
Mary Ellen Petrisko

March 7, 2014

Dr. Gary Dei Rossi
Chief Executive Officer
Teachers College of San Joaquin
2857 Transworld Drive
Stockton, CA 95206

Dear Dr. Dei Rossi:

At its meeting February 19-21, 2014, the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) considered the report of the Special Visit team that conducted an on-site review of Teachers College of San Joaquin (TCSJ) October 1-4, 2013. The Commission also reviewed the Special Visit report submitted by TCSJ prior to the visit and the institution's December 20, 2013, response to the Special Visit team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you, Diane Carnahan, Dean, Sylvia Turner, ALO, Karyn Dexter, Director, Business Services, and Dave Sargent, Board Chair. Your observations were helpful in informing the Commission's deliberations.

The Commission's action letter of March 6, 2012, requested a Special Visit to review TCSJ's progress in four areas: the operations and effectiveness of the new governing board structure; the separation of TCSJ's financial accounts from the San Joaquin County Office of Education; strategic planning; and faculty diversity.

TCSJ has made good progress since the last interaction with WSCUC in two of the four identified areas. According to the team, TCSJ has "responsibly and transparently established separate financial accounts that will better inform management of resources." In addition, the team praised TCSJ for its accomplishments in increasing faculty diversity: hiring new faculty of color; compiling a database of experts, reflective of the characteristics of the student body, who can serve as guest lecturers and help enrich the curriculum; and identifying diversity as a priority in the strategic plan. As the team noted, these achievements "will help advance the diversity goals of the college." Two other commendations deserve mention:

Commitment to students and the mission of TCSJ. The team was impressed with "the deep commitment of TCSJ faculty to the college's educational purpose and mission" and the faculty's dedication to ensuring that students become "high quality educators and school leaders." The Commission joined the team in commending TCSJ for its personal attention to students and its emphasis on student learning.

Commitment to the WSCUC process. TCSJ was created through the lens of the P-12 educational model and continues to develop as a postsecondary institution. The college wants to situate its unique operating structure within the context of WSCUC policies and procedures and has genuinely embraced WSCUC Standards and the accreditation process as an opportunity to become a more successful institution. The team observed that TCSJ views WSCUC as a useful resource that can help the college “learn how to more effectively carry out its mission.”

The Commission endorsed the findings, commendations, and recommendations of the Special Visit team and wished to emphasize the following areas for continued attention and development:

Strengthen board governance. TCSJ is governed by the five-member San Joaquin County Board of Education (an elected body). At the time of the Special Visit, the team found that the board bylaws were not aligned with CFR 3.9 and the WASC Policy on Independent Governing Boards. Subsequent to the visit, the board approved revised bylaws that align with WSCUC standards and policies. The Commission is troubled by the operations and effectiveness of the TCSJ board. The board appears to be in the emerging stages of development and, as the team observed, “unfamiliar with higher education governance.” The Commission was pleased to learn that the college plans to make use of the resources of the Association of Governing Boards to strengthen the operations and effectiveness of the TCSJ board; however, much work remains to be done. The governing board for a college or university is a policy-making body responsible for the quality, integrity and financial sustainability of the institution and for ensuring that the institution’s mission is achieved. The Commission expects the TCSJ governing board to operate in a manner consistent with CFR 3.9 and WSCUC policy, including having in place appropriate committees; playing a meaningful role in the selection, evaluation and (if required) termination of the chief executive officer; creating mechanisms for assessing how well the board performs its governance responsibilities; and using those results to enhance the board’s effectiveness. (CFR 3.9 and Policy on Independent Governing Boards)

Develop a stronger postsecondary identity and culture for the college and the board. As the team noted, TCSJ is “in transition moving from its P-12 roots to becoming an institution of higher education.” The college will want to become more familiar with and adopt proven practices and processes commonly accepted in higher education, create appropriate job descriptions for senior leadership, and actively engage with other institutions and organizations of higher education to keep abreast of current trends and issues. The Board will want to demonstrate an understanding of what it means to govern a higher education institution. (CFRs 3.1, 3.4)

Appoint a full-time president. Currently TCSJ functions with a part-time president and a full-time senior leadership staff. The Commission expects TCSJ to come into compliance with CFR 3.10 and appoint a full-time president who can develop a robust

executive leadership presence and who is actively engaged in governance, academic and financial oversight, strategic planning, and institutional advancement. (CFR 3.10)

Implement the strategic plan. TCSJ paused its work on strategic planning as a result of changes in personnel and delays in filling positions. The team identified “the need for significantly greater detail to be added to the strategic plan.” The Commission expects TCSJ to make systematic progress on the priorities identified in its strategic plan: academic engagement for student success; operations and governance; fiscal stability. TCSJ needs to develop a detailed action plan for implementation that includes refined timelines, required resources, identified lines of responsibility, and clear, specific, observable measures for determining when milestones are achieved. (CFRs 3.5, 4.1-4.3)

The Commission acted to:

1. Receive the Special Visit Report.
2. Request an interim report on leadership and governance, due March 1, 2015, including the following:
 - a. Board governance
 - i. A copy of the bylaws to confirm alignment with CFR 3.9 and WSCUC Policy on Independent Governing Boards
 - ii. Membership (names, affiliations, dates of terms) of board committees: audit; finance; academic affairs; and any other board committee established by the TCSJ board
 - iii. Copies of minutes of board meeting and the committee meetings for academic years 2013-2014 and 2014-2015
 - iv. Information about board professional development activities
 - v. Description of the process for the annual review of the president of TCSJ by the board
 - b. Job descriptions of the president and senior leadership of TCSJ
 - c. Progress in appointing a full-time president
 - d. Projected budget for implementing each of the initiatives identified in the strategic plan
3. Continue with the scheduled next interaction with WSCUC: the Offsite Review in fall 2016 and the Accreditation Visit in spring 2017.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the chair of TCSJ's governing board in one week. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be widely disseminated throughout the institution to promote further engagement and improvement, and to support the institution's response to the specific issues identified in them. The team report and the Commission's action letter will also be posted on the WSCUC website. If the institution wishes to respond to the Commission

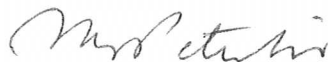
action on its own website, WSCUC will post a link to that response.

Please note that the Criteria for Review (CFR) cited in this letter refer to the *2008 Handbook of Accreditation*. The *2008 Handbook* continues to be available on the WSCUC website at www.wascsenior.org.

As the institution works on the issues cited in this letter, it should be mindful of the expectations that it will need to meet at the time of its next comprehensive review, which will take place under the revised Standards of Accreditation and institutional review process in the *2013 Handbook of Accreditation*. These expectations build on past practice and include, for example, student success, quality improvement processes such as assessment and program review, planning, and financial sustainability. However, the *2013 Handbook* also includes new foci: the meaning, quality, and integrity of degrees; student performance in core competencies at the time of graduation; and institutional planning for the changing landscape in higher education. TCSJ is encouraged to familiarize itself with the *2013 Handbook* and to approach its challenges in ways that will address both old and new expectations.

Finally, the Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the extensive work that TCSJ undertook in preparing for and supporting this Special Visit review. WSCUC is committed to an accreditation process that adds value to institutions while assuring public accountability, and we are grateful for your continued support of our process. Please contact me if you have any questions about this letter or the action of the Commission.

Sincerely,



Mary Ellen Petrisko
President and Executive Director

MEP/gc

Cc: Harold Hewitt, WSCUC Chair
Diane Carnahan, ALO
Mark Thiel, Board Chair
Members of the Special Visit team
Barbara Gross Davis, WSCUC Staff Liaison