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COMMISSION  
for COMMUNITY and  
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

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June 28, 2005

Dr. Maria Sheehan  
Superintendent-President  
College of the Desert  
43-500 Monterey Avenue  
Palm Desert, CA 92260

Dear President Sheehan:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting on June 8-10, 2005, reviewed the institutional self study report and the report of the evaluation team which visited College of the Desert on Tuesday, March 15-Thursday, March 17, 2005. I am pleased to inform you that accreditation has been reaffirmed, with a requirement that the college complete a Progress Report.

The Commission asks that a Progress Report be submitted by **October 15, 2006**. The Progress Report should focus on the recommendations and concerns as noted below:

1. The college is urged to continue diligently with the efforts already underway through the Program Review process and to assure that all programs and organizational units develop, assess, analyze, and use student learning outcomes (SLO) information for program improvement. The college must especially place some urgency on the need to develop a process for student services. (Standards I.B; I.B.1; I.B.2; I.B.7; II.A.1.a, c; II.A.2.e, f, h, i; II.A.6; II.B.1; II.B.3; II.B.3.c; II.B.4; II.C.2; III.A.1.c; IV.A.5; IV.B.1.g; IV.B.2.b)

3. The team recommends that College of the Desert evaluate staffing patterns to ensure sufficient staffing in all areas to support the college mission. (Standards I.B; I.B.7; II.A.1; II.A.2; II.B.1, II.B.3.a, c; II.B.4; III.A.2; III.A.6)

4. The college must, with urgency, review the counseling and advising functions to ensure effective academic advising, general counseling services, and articulation activities. (Standards I.B; II.A.6.a, b, c; II.B.1; II.B.3; II.B.3.a, c)

6. College of the Desert must explore new efforts and initiatives to identify and address the barriers that limit the diversity of their faculty and to ensure that faculty reflect the rich diversity of their student body. (Standards I.A.1, II.A.1.a, II.A.2.d, II.A.3.c, II.B.3.d, III.A.4.b)

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7. It is recommended that the college increase the involvement of students in the shared governance process. (Standards I.B.4, II.B.3.b, III.B.1.b, III.C.1.a, IV.A.2)

The entire college community—including faculty, staff, administrators, and board members—is to be commended for the remarkable efforts to develop a comprehensive EMP and FMP and for passing an impressive local bond measure; retiring the deficit, and revamping the format of the budget so that it is easier to understand. The members of the Learning and Assessment Committee and the Curriculum Committee are to be commended for their conscientious and careful work over the past three years to establish a solid foundation for program review, student learning outcomes and assessment, and the curriculum approval process.

I have previously sent you a copy of the evaluation team report. Additional copies may now be duplicated. The Commission requires you to give the report and this letter appropriate dissemination to your college staff and to those who were signatories of your college self study report. This group should include campus leadership and the Board of Trustees. The Commission also requires that the team report and the self study report be made available to the public. Placing copies in the college library can accomplish this. Should you want the report electronically to place on your web site or for some other purpose, please contact Commission staff.

The recommendations contained in the evaluation team report represent the observations of the evaluation team at the time of the visit. The Commission reminds you that while an institution may concur or disagree with any part of the team report, the college is expected to use the report to improve the educational programs and services of the institution.

All colleges are required to file a Midterm Report in the third year after each comprehensive evaluation. College of the Desert should submit the Midterm Report by **March 15, 2008**. Midterm Reports indicate progress toward meeting the evaluation team's recommendations and forecast where the college expects to be by the time of the next comprehensive evaluation. The college also includes a summary of progress on college-identified concerns as expressed in the self study.


The college conducted a comprehensive self study as part of its evaluation. The Commission suggests that the plans for improvement of the institution included in that document be taken into account in the continuing development of College of the Desert. The next comprehensive evaluation of the college will occur during **Spring 2011**.

Finally, let me take this opportunity to remind you that federal legislation affecting accrediting agencies requires that accredited colleges conduct systematic assessment of educational outcomes (see especially Standards One and Two). A further requirement is that accrediting agencies pay close attention to student loan default rates.

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On behalf of the Commission, I wish to express continuing interest in the institution's educational programs and services. Professional self-regulation is the most effective means of assuring integrity, effectiveness and quality.

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Beno  
Executive Director

BAB/tl

cc: Dr. Gari Browning, Accreditation Liaison Officer  
Board President, Desert Community College District  
Dr. Shirley Kelly, Team Chair  
Evaluation Team Members