

College of the Desert Accreditation Newsletter

Desert Community College District

April 18, 2023

Volume I, Edition II

Statement on the Benefits of Accreditation

Accreditation is the primary means by which colleges and universities in the United States assure and improve quality. Both accrediting bodies and the institutions they accredit must use the highest standards of professionalism to ensure that accreditation provides value to the institutions themselves, the students, the public, the government, and other institutions of higher education. However, perhaps the most important benefit of receiving an accredited status from an institutional accreditor enables an institution to qualify for federal grants and contracts, to distribute federal financial aid to its students, and for students' credits to be more easily transferred to other accredited institutions.

Visit our Accreditation webpage to view the latest information, upcoming meetings, schedule, and other affiliated Accreditation topics.

<https://www.collegeofthedesert.edu/about-us/accreditation/2025-2032-accreditation.php>

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What's New with Accreditation

The ACCJC Staff Liaison

For the current accreditation cycle, the Commission implemented a model plan and assigned an experienced ACCJC staff liaison to serve as the established point of contact ensuring that our institution remains consistent with the application of accrediting processes. This assignment enables each staff liaison to become entrenched in the unique mission, culture, and student populations at each of their assigned institutions, which subsequently, allows them to provide personalized support and guidance on accreditation matters. College of the Desert is fortunate to have been assigned Dr. Gohar Momjian. She has supported us with a broad range of activities throughout the accreditation cycle, including activities associated with the comprehensive peer review such as:

- Answering questions about the interpretation or application of the ACCJC Standards or policies in the context of the institution's mission
- Sharing perspectives and lessons learned from other institutions related to emerging issues and complex challenges to ensure a uniform response to evolving practices and questions from members
- Providing information and resources in support of the institution's Annual Reports, Annual Fiscal Reports, and Substantive Change Application submissions; and
- Providing institution-specific trainings and resources as needed, e.g., trainings to the governing board, faculty, staff, and administrators.

Additionally, Dr. Momjian can provide training and resources as the institution prepares its Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) and evidence. She can advise on key aspects of a site visit and accompany the peer review team at the final team visit and any additional visits in order to ensure clarity and consistency during the peer review process. Dr. Momjian ensures that the information provided to the Commission in support of their deliberations on institutions is complete and, as needed, enriched with nuance and context stemming from the staff liaison's knowledge of their assigned institutions.

<https://accjc.org/wp-content/uploads/Guide-to-Institutional-Self-Evaluation-Improvement-and-Peer-Review.pdf>

Common Accreditation Acronyms and Definitions

WASC - Western Association of Schools and Colleges

The Accrediting Commission for Schools is a world-renowned accrediting association and one of the six regional accrediting agencies in the United States, works closely with the Office of Overseas Schools under the U.S. Department of State. ACS WASC provides assistance to schools worldwide, primarily in California, Hawaii, Guam, Asia, the Pacific Region, the Middle East, Africa, and Europe.

ACCJC – Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

Accredits community colleges and other associate degree granting institutions in the Western region of the U.S. The ACCJC is one of seven regional accrediting commissions. The ACCJC is authorized to operate by the U.S. Department of Education through the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008.

ALO – Accreditation Liaison Officer

Individual(s) that ensures compliance with accreditation requirements is incorporated into the planning and evaluation process of the institution.



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