

Solano Community College Closure Plan

Background

On January 31, 2008, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) via the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) notified in writing that Solano Community College (SCC) had been placed on the status of **Warning**. At its meeting on January 9-11, 2008, ACCJC reviewed the SCC Progress Report dated October, 2007 and the report of the ACCJC evaluation team which visited SCC on Thursday, November 29, 2007. The purpose of that review was to assure that the recommendations made by the evaluation team were addressed by the SCC. Based on the review of the SCC progress report and ACCJC site visit, the Commission issued a Warning and requested that Solano Community College correct the deficiencies noted. The college was required to complete a Special Report in conjunction with a Midterm Report by October 15, 2008. A warning is issued when the Commission finds that an institution has pursued a course of action which deviates from the Commission's eligibility criteria, standards of accreditation, or policy to an extent that raises a concern regarding the ability of the institution to meet accreditation standards.

On February 3, 2009, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) via the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) notified in writing that Solano Community College (SCC) had been placed on the status of **Show Cause**. At its meeting on January 7-9, 2009, ACCJC reviewed the SCC Special Report dated October, 2008, the Midterm Report dated October, 2008 and ACCJC's evaluation team report which visited SCC on November 3, 2008. At its meeting on January 7-9, 2009, the Commission also heard testimony on the college's condition by Interim President Lisa Waits, Board Chair, Trustee A. Marie Young, Vice President Robin Steinback, and Mr. Steve Bruckman, representing the State Chancellor's Office. The Accrediting Commission acted to accept the Midterm Report, reject the Special Report, and placed Solano Community College on **Show Cause**. **Show Cause** is issued when the Commission finds an institution in substantial non-compliance with the Commission's Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, or policies. The institution must show cause why its accreditation should not be withdrawn at the end of a stated period. The burden of proof will rest on the institution to demonstrate why its accreditation should be continued. During the show cause period, the institution must make preparations for closure according to the Commission's Policy on closing an institution. The Commission also required SCC to submit a **Show Cause Report** April 1, 2009.

According to the ACCJC Constitution, under this status, the College must continuously demonstrate to the Commission that it is moving to correct

deficiencies in the college's adherence to the six (6) Accreditation Recommendations (AR) and seven (7) Eligibility Requirements (ER). Additionally, the Commission references the issues addressed in the Education Management and Assistance Corporation's (EdMAC) report. ACCJC directed the Solano Community College District (CCCD) to make preliminary preparations for closure according to the Commission's Policy on Closing an Institution.

ACCJC/WASC accreditation would likely result in a loss of state and federal funds, including all general fund and categorical apportionment revenues, financial aid, and maintenance funds. The magnitude of this in effect would cause all functions of the college to cease. Although technically, the district could remain as a legal entity, removal of funding could have the same effect as closing the institution. SCCD is taking every step and precaution to address all ACCJC recommendations so that the institution can demonstrate why its accreditation should be continued. However, due to the parallel requirement to address the Commission's policy on closing an institution, this Closure Report is being taken seriously and submitted to ACCJC by April 1, 2009. The SCCD will follow ACCJC's by-laws and procedures to develop a closure plan to ensure students' interests are protected. Therefore, the challenge is to develop a closure plan that would provide services to students and the community with the least disruption while the SCCD correct deficiencies as noted in the February 3, 2009 action letter.

The ACCJC Policy on Closing an Institution stipulates that "Before closing, the governing board should consider carefully such alternatives as merging with another institution, forming a consortium, or participating in extensive institutional sharing and cooperation." As a result, the appointed Special Trustee and the appointed Interim Superintendent/President have worked diligently to ensure that the interests of the students are being protected.

In the event the Closure Plan is needed to be activated by the beginning of fall session in July 2010, the SCCD would in a consultative process establish in advance the following:

- Each Constituency Group Will be Identified and Engaged (Planning and Consultation) – *Board and Administration*
- A Review of State and/or National Law Relative to Legal Responsibilities (Title to Real Property/Other Legal Responsibilities) - *Special Trustee, Board, and Administration*
- Alternatives to Closing (Merging, Forming Consortiums, Inter-Institutional Sharing/Cooperation) - *Special Trustee, Board, Administration and Shared Governance*
- Instructional Services Agreement (ISA) with an accredited college to offer contracted instructional services. A substantive change proposal would need to be approved by ACCJC for this to be a viable option – *Special Trustee and Administration*

- Governing Board Fully Informs all Affected Constituents. – *Governing Board and Administration*
- Provide for Student Completion of Programs and the Securing of Student Records – *Administration, Faculty and AR*

In adherence to the ACCJC's "Policy on Closing an Institution" requirements, the following is a list of the activities that the College needs to embark to ensure that transition for students is smooth.

- A Complete Analysis/Address of the Following Elements:
 - ✓ Student Completion (Under Review – Completed by 12-31-09)
 - ✓ Disposition of Academic Records and Financial Aid Transcripts – Completed by 12-31-09
 - ✓ Provisions for Faculty and Staff – Adhere to Appropriate Code Sections – Completed by 3-15-10
 - ✓ Disposition of Assets – Completed by 12-31-09
 - ✓ Obligation of Assets – Completed by 12-31-09
 - ✓ Coordination with the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) - Ongoing
 - ✓ Key Governing Board Obligations – If Appropriate, Review of Obligations by 6-30-09

A. Student Completion:

- For students who have completed 75% of an academic degree and educational program, arrangements shall be made to permit those students to complete their requirements for a degree and educational program elsewhere, but to receive the degree and educational program from the closed institution. Arrangements shall be made with ACCJC for continuation of the College's accreditation by the ACCJC for this purpose only. These steps (written ACCJC consent required) normally require the institution to continue as a legal corporate entity for 12-18 months beyond the closing date. Once the College's accreditation is terminated, they will no longer be authorized to award accredited degrees.
- Arrangements for transfers to other institutions will require complete academic records and all other related information gathered in dossiers which can be transmitted promptly to receiving institutions.
- Agreements made with other institutions to receive transferring students and to accept records must be submitted to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) for approval.
- Arrangements will be made with the appropriate federal or state grants agencies to transfer the grants to the receiving institutions. Appropriate agreements must be negotiated so that student-held scholarships, grants, or other available funds can be legally used or students must be fully informed.
- If accreditation is removed, a list of students who have completed 75% of an academic degree/educational program/certificate program by the end

of spring 2010 semester will be generated. Included with the final transcript, there will be a letter addressing the College's accreditation status and the student's eligibility for transfer. If applicable. The University of California and the California State University campuses as well other institutions will receive correspondence from the Superintendent/President on the College's accreditation status.

- The Office of Student Services will be responsible for notifying students who have completed 75% of an academic degree/educational program or certification program of their potential graduation/completion status. Students will be informed of their status for a degree/certificate and their option to receive a degree/certificate under Solano Community College or other institutions if they are to complete the respective curriculum. After a loss of accreditation, Solano students would have no other option except to transfer to another accredited institution.
- Since Solano Community College is a public institution, credits earned from the College will be accepted by other colleges and universities. The College will issue a letter for each student indicating the closure of the College and to ensure the acceptance of the credits by other accredited institutions. If applicable, the Superintendent/President of Solano Community College will send college closure notifications to the neighboring colleges (Napa Valley College, Los Rios Community College District, Yuba Community College District, and Contra Costa Community College District) for them to accept the students and their credits before any termination date.
- The College will provide each student with the most up-to-date transcript at the time of request. The College will also provide information to the students by an existing mail and telephone hotlines and posting on the College's website to inform students where they can retrieve a copy of their transcripts. Communication will also be made available in English, Mandarin, Spanish, Tagalog and Vietnamese.

B. Disposition of Academic Records and Financial Aid Transcripts

- The Solano Community College District will take steps to digitize and microfilm student files. Student records have been electronic since 1977. Solano Community College student records from 1977 through the academic year 2007-2008 are stored in the legacy "Santa Rosa" system. Much of that data has been moved and converted to the newly implemented SunGard Banner Student System. Both systems will remain available.
- Records from Vallejo Junior College and from Solano Community College through 1985 are on microfilm. Records of students with SSN's ending in 0001-0924 have been scanned, regardless of their years of schooling or graduation. Records of students with SSN's ending in 8218-9463 have been microfilmed, regardless of their years of schooling or graduation. Records from 2003 to the current date are scanned. Paper records that were scanned are accessible via the PaperClip digitization software

system. This system will remain running on campus and access will be provided.

- A vendor will be secured to digitize financial aid records, human resources records, and business office records as well in the continuation of digitizing the remainder and ongoing student records in the Admissions and Records Office. Financial aid records will be boxed by school year and stored at the Fairfield campus, Building 400, 4000 Suisun Valley Road, Fairfield, CA. where they can be easily accessible. Once the campus site is no longer available, arrangements will be made to house the records elsewhere. The financial aid records are also stored electronically and can be accessed through PaperClip, the Santa Rosa system or Banner by the college.
- The College will notify ACCJC and students of the location of stored records and accessibility once the process has been completed. The student records will continue to be stored at the Office of Admissions and Records at the Fairfield campus, Building 400, 4000 Suisun Valley Road, Fairfield, CA. The College will also work with the State Chancellor's Office to contract with an entity to electronically store all transcripts and provide the students with the process to order them.
- The Solano Community College District will announce the process and procedure on how students can obtain their transcripts through the news media in English, Mandarin, Spanish, Tagalog and Vietnamese and arrange for the Office Admissions and Records to be open for pickups as campus closure is in effect. The College District will set up a telephone "hotline" giving students instructions on how and where they can order transcripts. This information will also be on the existing College District website, which will be continuously maintained.

C. Provisions for Faculty and Staff

- In the event of closure, all certificated employees would receive their March 15 notices following Commission action on the Solano CC show cause report.
- In the event of closure, all classified employees would receive their 45-day lay-off notices.
- In the event of closure, the Solano Community College District would contact neighboring districts and colleges (Napa Valley College, Los Rios Community College District, Yuba Community College District, Contra Costa Community College District) for available employment and notify the faculty and staff on the openings.
- The College may consider an early retirement incentive to be processed for certificated and classified employees
- The College would continue to accept resignation or early retirements.
- The Solano Community College District administration is available, upon request, to write references for faculty and staff. In addition, the College District would disseminate information regarding other job opportunities to faculty and staff. Through lay-off notices, the College would be informing

all faculty and staff of the possibility of closure. The Human Resources Department would actively list job opportunities and work with faculty and staff in alternative placement. In the event the college loses faculty mid-term, the College would work with neighboring institutions to provide students the opportunity to complete courses.

- In the event of closure, all long-term off-site (credit/non-credit instruction) existing contracts/MOU's or Lease Agreement would be terminated with month-to-month continuations in some locations based on summer course offerings. All lease agreements would be reviewed and established in collaboration with any potential merger district upon notification of closure.

D. Disposition of Assets

- The Solano Community College District will remain as the legal entity to monitor the disposition of its assets if necessary.
- In the event of closure, the Solano Community College District will inventory all financial resources and assets. The College District will determine what resources and assets are to be disposed of after the basic needs of students, faculty, and staff are provided and which assets are to remain with the College District.
- The Solano Community College District will notify the US Department of Education upon closure and submit to the Department financial and performance reports within 45 days. The College District will notify the US Department of Education how records will be retained and stored.
- The College District will develop procedures for collecting any outstanding student loans; reconcile any over-awards, overpayments and/or withdrawal calculations.
- The College District will return all unexpended funds of all categorical programs to the respective agencies if these agencies require such action.
- The College District will work with the Solano Community College District Foundation to ensure that the assets would honor the intentions of the original providers including endowments and donors, and grantors. All donors and grantors will be notified of the College's disposition of endowments and donations.
- The College District will follow the state or federal laws regarding the disposition of funds and institutional assets if necessary. The College District will determine the value of real and personal properties. The College District does not anticipate the need to dispose assets to satisfy employee long-term retiree benefits, vacation and compensation time. The college district will satisfy vendor obligations as required by federal and state regulations.
- The College District will also explore with legal counsel the sales of physical plant, equipment, library, special collections, art, or other assets if necessary.
- In the event the College does not have sufficient finance resources to honor commitments, the Governing Board will determine the necessary

steps to proceed with possibility declaration of bankruptcy. At which time, the bankruptcy court judge will determine the dispositions of assets.

E. Obligations to Creditors

- The Solano Community College District will identify all outstanding creditor obligations for all funds, including the Measure G Bond Fund creditors if the College District deems this necessary.
- The Solano Community College District will process properly all claims and interests with creditors and other agencies if the College District deems this necessary.
- The College District will apprise all agencies of the institutions arrangements in order not to be subject to later legal proceedings if the College District deems this necessary.
- The College District will follow the state or federal laws regarding payments of creditors.
- The College District will develop publicly defensible policies for dividing the resources equitably among those with claims against the institution by involving potential claimants if the College District deems this necessary.
- In the event, the College District does not have sufficient finance resources to honor obligations to creditors, the Governing Board will determine the necessary steps to proceed with possibility declaration of bankruptcy. At which time, the bankruptcy court judge will determine the dispositions of assets.

Page | 7

F. Coordination with the ACCJC

- In the event of closure, the Governing Board of the College District and the Superintendent/President of the College will consult with and keep the ACCJC apprised of developments as the plan to close an institution progresses.
- The Solano Community College District will complete arrangements with ACCJC before the closure is in place in order to assure that students have transferred to legally authorized and accredited institutions including any partnership institutions. Student completion will be provided for as detailed in section A of this document.
- In the event of closure, the College District will submit a final closure report to ACCJC and determine where students' records will be permanently stored.

G. Key Governing Board Obligations

- In the event of closure, the Solano Community College Governing Board will take a formal vote to terminate the institution as determined by ACCJC's termination-of-accreditation decision and on the progress of the closure activities. The Governing Board will ensure that the current 75% completion students will be able to be graduated from Solano Community

College by completing their requirements elsewhere or through any approved partnerships. The Governing Board will take the legal action to set a deadline for completion of degrees and certifications, authorize the Superintendent/President of the College or District Chief Executive Officer to determine whether or not these requirements have in fact been satisfied; and make arrangements with ACCJC in advance regarding Solano Community College granting degrees. SCCD is clear that in the event of termination, the College will not be authorized to award accredited degrees nor enroll new students.

- The Governing Board will determine the date to file for bankruptcy if necessary and whether or not all obligations to students have been satisfactorily discharged.

Fruition

In the event of closure, during the final term the Solano College will provide the students with appropriate and necessary services in academics, the business office, the financial aid office, the registrar's office, counseling, and other essential support services. The Solano Community College District will notify management, faculty and classified staff which personnel are to be retained. The College District will make every effort to honor long-term financial obligations (loans, debentures, etc.) even though the parties holding such claims may choose not to press them. The Solano Community College District will continue to operate in its legal capacity regarding relevant personnel services, fiscal services, facilities services, and other related student services during and after the closure period until such time as all legal obligations are met.