

February 3, 2009



**ACCREDITING  
COMMISSION  
for COMMUNITY and  
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

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Dr. Carmen Fernandez  
President  
Northern Marianas College  
P. O. Box 1250  
Saipan, MP 96950

Dear President Fernandez:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting on January 7-9, 2009, reviewed the Show Cause Report submitted by the college and the report of the evaluation team which visited on November 3-5, 2008. The Commission also heard testimony on the college's condition by President Carmen Fernandez and Board Chair Charles Cepeda. The Commission took action to accept the report, **continue the college on Show Cause**, and require that the college complete and submit a **Show Cause Report by April 1, 2009**. That report will be followed by a visit of Commission representatives.

**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 The institution must show cause why its accreditation should not be withdrawn at the end of a stated period.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. If the loss of accreditation will likely cause an institution to close, during the show cause period, the institution must make preparations for closure according to the Commission's *Policy on Closing an Institution*. During the period of the show cause order, the accredited status of the institution continues. However, the institution's accreditation will not be reaffirmed until the conditions which warranted the show cause are removed.

In order to avoid possible termination of accreditation at the Commission's next meeting of June 9-11, 2009, the Show Cause Report of April 1, 2009 must demonstrate the institution's resolution of the recommendations below:

**Recommendation 1.** The College should review existing planning processes in order to establish and implement a shared vision for the future of the College with agreed upon priorities that:

- a. develops and implements budgeting and resource allocations guided by institutional needs for human resources and services;
- b. includes the two centers on Tinian and Rota in the planning;
- c. integrates all aspects of planning, evaluation, and resources allocation;
- d. is driven by College mission and goals;
- e. relies on faculty and staff participation;
- f. is well documented and widely distributed.

(Standards I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.5, I.B.6, II.A.1, II.A.2, II.B.4, II.C, III.A, II.B, III.C, III.D, IV.A, IV.B, including various subsections)

Dr. Carmen Fernandez  
Northern Marianas College  
January 30, 2009  
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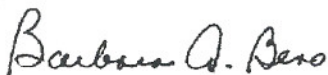
**Recommendation 2.** The team recommends again that the College institutionalize a coordinated, systematic process for evaluating program effectiveness. This process should include definitions of learning outcomes for all programs, a determination of program relationships to labor markets, and objective measures of student performance, which can inform and guide decisions to improve programs. (Standards I.B.1, I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.5, I.B.6, I.B.7, II.A.1, II.A.2, II.B.4, II.C, III.A, III.B, III.C, III.D, IV.A, IV.B.2.a, IV.B.2.b)

Under U.S. Department of Education regulations, institutions out of compliance with standards or on sanction are expected to correct deficiencies within a two-year period or the Commission must take action to terminate accreditation. While the abovementioned recommendations identified as deficiencies were also noted by the year 2006 and 2000 evaluation teams, the Commission has extended Northern Marianas College's time to correct these deficiencies for good cause. The college has completed a significant amount of work to resolve these issues and has hired outside consultants to assist it in designing its process for program review, student learning outcomes identification and assessment, and strategic planning leading to an integrated planning model. The college is also awaiting word from the Department of the Interior regarding funding that will be used to retire bonds issued for campus development.

I have previously sent you a copy of the evaluation team report. Additional copies may now be duplicated. The Commission requires that you give the report and this letter appropriate dissemination to your college staff and to those who were signatories of your college report. This group should include campus leadership and the Board of Trustees. The Commission also requires that all reports be made available to students and 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 Show Cause Report will become part of the accreditation history of the college and should be used in preparing for the next comprehensive evaluation.

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, Ph.D.  
President

BAB/tl

cc: Dr. Debra Cabrera, Accreditation Liaison Officer  
Mr. Charles Cepeda, Board President  
Dr. Sherrill Amador, Team Chair  
Evaluation Team Members  
Ms. Linda Henderson, U.S. DOE