



February 29, 2008

Dr. Carmen Fernandez
President
Northern Marianas College
PO Box 501250 CK
Saipan, MP 96950

Dear President Fernandez:

At its meeting on February 21, 2008, the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities (ACSCU) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges considered the report of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) team that conducted a Special Visit to Northern Marianas College (NMC) on November 14-15, 2007. The Commission also considered the report on the College's four-year Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education that was submitted by an ACSCU-appointed member of the visiting team, and it had access to the ACCJC action letter of January 31, 2008.

Following the October 2006 comprehensive review, ACCJC placed NMC on probation. The Senior College Commission echoed that action not only because of the significant institutional capacity concerns identified by ACCJC, but also because of issues in the School of Education that required attention. ACCJC noted the need for the following: administrative leadership, vision, planning and prioritizing; improved delivery of instructional programs to Tinian and Rota; training for the governing board; systematic program review; institution-wide engagement in assessment of student learning and program review; implementation of employee evaluation processes; and renovation or replacement of aging facilities. The School of Education needed to address its isolation from the rest of the College and improve its relationship with the local school district.

In its progress reports from spring and fall of 2007, and during the team's Special Visit last November, the College documented some progress on all fronts. In addition, problems specific to the School of Education appeared ameliorated. According to the ACSCU team member's report, the School has

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become engaged as a partner in campus-wide assessment efforts and, in this way, has become less isolated. A new director of the School has been installed, crushing workloads are being renegotiated, and relations with the CNMI public school system have improved. The School has made curricular changes based on assessment findings and will be the first program at NMC to submit a complete assessment report.

While progress has been made with respect to the School of Education, the ACCJC, when it met in January, found that adequate progress had not been made in a number of areas under its Standards. The Senior College Commission accredits only the four-year program in Elementary Education, relying on the underlying institutional accreditation from ACCJC. Thus, in order for NMC to retain its accreditation from the Senior College Commission for the bachelor's program, it will need to address satisfactorily the issues cited by ACCJC, and come into compliance with ACCJC Standards.

Consistent, therefore, with the ACCJC Commission, the ACSCU Commission took the following action:

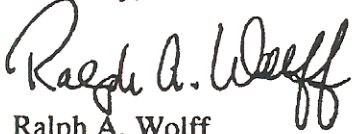
1. Receive the ACSCU Special Visit report
2. Continue the accreditation of the bachelor's program in Elementary Education
3. Require that the College satisfactorily address the ACCJC Show Cause order and retain its accreditation with ACCJC in order for the Senior College Commission accreditation to continue
4. Participate in the ACCJC scheduled Show Cause visit in fall 2008. In the report prepared for ACCJC, which is to be submitted also to the Senior College Commission, NMC should add a section or appendix describing any further changes or progress with respect to the School of Education, especially in relation to those issues that were reviewed in the most recent visit with the School.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the chair of the institution'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.

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Please contact me if you have any questions about the Commission's actions or the contents of this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ralph A. Wolff". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "R" and "W".

Ralph A. Wolff
President and Executive Director

RW/aa

cc: Sherwood Lingenfelter
Board Chair
Debra Cabrera, ALO
Members of the team
Barbara Wright
ACCJC