



**ACCREDITING  
COMMISSION  
for COMMUNITY and  
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

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January 31, 2007

Corrected Letter

Mr. Danny Wyatt  
Acting President  
Northern Marianas College  
P. O. Box 1250  
Saipan, MP 96950

Dear President Wyatt:

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, at its meeting on January 10-12, 2007, reviewed the institutional self study report and the report of the evaluation team which visited Northern Marianas College on Monday, October 16-Thursday, October 19, 2006. The Commission acted to place Northern Marianas College on **Probation** effective immediately and to require that the college submit a Progress Report by **March 30, 2007**. In addition, the Commission requires that Northern Marianas College submit a second Progress Report by **October 15, 2007**. That report will be followed by a visit of Commission representatives.

Probation is issued when the Commission finds that an institution deviates significantly from the Commission's eligibility criteria, standards, or policies, or fails to respond to actions and conditions imposed by the Commission. The accredited status of the institution continues during the probation period. However, the institution's accreditation will not be reaffirmed until the conditions which warranted the warning are removed.

I also wish to inform you that under U.S. Department of Education regulations, institutions on sanction are expected to correct deficiencies within a two-year period or the Commission must take action to terminate accreditation.

The Commission is concerned that the administrative staffing of the college is insufficient in experience and number to meet the needs of the college. In addition, the college's insufficient instructional and student support services affect the quality of education at the two off campus instructional sites on Tinian and Rota. Specifically, breakdowns in the telecommunications system that is used to provide instruction on Rota results in students missing parts of classroom learning, and NMC has no practice or means of making up for the missed portions of class. This problem with telecommunications was evident during the 2000 comprehensive evaluation visit to Northern Marianas College. The college is required by accreditation standards to assure that education offered at all off campus sites is equivalent in quality to that offered on campus and is of sufficient quality to provide a sound learning environment and meet standards.

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Information in the reports submitted to the Commission suggest that Northern Marianas College is not meeting this requirement. Finally, the Commission is concerned that the governing board may not have sufficient understanding of accreditation to provide appropriate support to the college during this period when it is facing significant political and financial challenges. The Commission is concerned that the government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas has inappropriately imposed financial and personnel policy decisions on Northern Marianas College. The Commission wishes to remind the college governing board of the requirement that it be an independent board with full authority over college policy.

The Progress Report of **March 30, 2007** should describe how the college meets Eligibility Requirements #4 and #5, as well as how the college has addressed or plans to address the two additional Commission recommendations listed below.

**Eligibility Requirement #4 Chief Executive Officer:** The institution has a chief executive officer appointed by the governing board, whose full-time responsibility is to the institution, and who possesses the requisite authority to administer board policies.

**Eligibility Requirement #5 Administrative Capacity:** The institution has sufficient staff, with appropriate preparation and experience to provide the administrative services necessary to support its mission and purpose.

**Commission Recommendation 1:** Northern Marianas College must take appropriate steps to insure that the delivery system used to provide instruction to Tinian and Rota is completely reliable and works at all times, or discontinue offering classes via telecommunications. The College must also detail how it intends to provide educational services, including instruction and support services, that ensure the education obtained on those sites is the equivalent of that obtained on the main campus and meets all accreditation requirements.

**Commission Recommendation 2:** The governing board of Northern Marianas College must undergo sufficient training in accreditation requirements of the ACCJC.

The Progress Report of **October 15, 2007**, which will be followed by a visit of Commission representatives, should focus on continued compliance with Eligibility Requirements 4 and 5 and resolution of Commission recommendations #1 and #2, above; provide the Commission with an update on the Rota and Tinian sites; and demonstrate the institution's resolution of the following team recommendations:

**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., III.B., III.C., III.D., IV.A., IV.B., including various subsections)

**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.)

**Recommendation 3:** The college should provide quality assurance for instructional programs at distant sites and instruction through distance modalities. If alternative means of delivering equitable access to quality instruction is not available when technology fails, the college should suspend distance education at remote centers until new connectivity is established. (Standards II.A.1.b., II.A.2., II.A.2.d., II.C.1., II.C.1.a., II.C.1.b.)

**Recommendation 4:** The team recommends the college complete the cycle of developing, measuring, analyzing, and discussing student learning outcomes, and acting on the findings, as part of a continuous effort of improvement. (Standards I.B.1., II.A.1.a., II.A.1.b., II.A.2., II.A.3., II.A.5., II.A.6., III.A.6., III B.2.b., III.C.2., III.D.3., IV.A.5., IV.B.2.b.)

**Recommendation 5:** The team recommends the college implement the employee evaluation processes that are in place in a timely and formal manner in order to assure the effectiveness of its human resources and encourage improvement. (Standards II.A.2.a., III.A.1., III.D., IV.A.1., IV.A.4, IV.A.4., IV.B.)



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**Recommendation 6:** The college should pursue funding to renovate or replace aging buildings with facilities that are appropriate to meet the current and future needs of the college. Standards III.B.1., III.B.1.a., III.B.1.b., III.B.2., III.B.2.a., III.B.2.b., III.D.1.a., III.D.1.b., III.D.1.c)

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 team report and this letter dissemination to your college staff and to those who were signatories of your college self study report. This group should include the Chancellor, campus leadership and the Board of Trustees. The Commission also requires that the team report and the self study report 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 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. Northern Marianas College should submit the Midterm Report by **October 15, 2009**. Midterm Reports indicate progress toward meeting all of the evaluation team's recommendations and forecast where the college expects to be by the time of the next comprehensive evaluation. The report also includes a summary of progress on college-identified plans for improvement 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 Northern Marianas College. The next comprehensive evaluation of the college will occur during Fall 2012.

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, Ph.D.  
President

BAB/tl

cc: Ms. Jeanette Villagomez, Accreditation Liaison Officer  
Board President, Northern Marianas College  
Dr. Guy Lease, Team Chair  
Evaluation Team Members  
Ms. Linda Henderson, U.S. DOE

Enclosures