

Accreditation at CSM

What is it and why do we do it?

Accreditation is NOT optional!

- All community colleges are REQUIRED to be accredited
 - The [U.S. Department of Education \(USDE\)](#) requires colleges/CSM to be accredited in accordance with the Higher Education Act of 1965
 - ACCJC is our official accrediting organization that reports accreditation to USDE
 - To provide federal financial aid, we must be accredited
 - To be accredited, we must comply with all ACCJC standards and eligibility requirements

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC.org)

- The purposes of regional accreditation include encouraging institutions to **improve** academic quality, institutional effectiveness, and, ultimately, student success
- The ACCJC focuses on community colleges, through the creation and application of **standards** of accreditation and related policies, and through a process of review by higher education professionals and public members
- ACCJC **evaluates** institutions to assure the educational community, the general public, and other organizations and agencies that the College:
 - Has clearly defined objectives appropriate to higher education
 - Has established conditions under which their achievement can reasonably be expected and appears in fact to be accomplishing them
 - Is organized, staffed, and supported so that it can be expected to continue to do so

The Accreditation Evaluation Process

- CSM conducts a self evaluation according to ACCJC standards (Complete in 2019) every 7 years
- Peer review
 - Other colleges accredited by ACCJC participate in a cycle of periodic evaluation by teams of peer evaluators
- Peer review teams conduct an evaluation
 - The evaluation is based on their review of our **Institutional Self-Evaluation (ISER)** in order to determine the extent to which an institution meets the ACCJC Standards
- Peer review teams, selected by ACCJC for their expertise, make recommendations to meet the Commission's Standards, make recommendations for improvement, commend exemplary practices, and provide both the college and the Commission with a report of their findings

Categories of Results from an Accreditation Visit

- Commendations
 - Recognition for exceptional qualities
 - Stand out Programs/Processes
- Recommendations (2 types)
 1. For improvement
 2. For compliance
 - Require a follow up visit

CSM's 2019 Accreditation Visit Results: Commendations

1. The commission commends the College on its significant and effective variety of learning support for students, including the Learning Center, discipline-specific labs, and library
2. The commission commends the College for its progressive and collaborative governance and planning processes leading to a culture of trust
3. The commission commends the College for its collaboration between its CTE programs and local industry partners. The networking, communication, and cooperation for the purpose of curriculum development, and program enhancement is impressive

CSM's 2019 Accreditation Visit Results: Recommendations

In accordance with federal regulations, compliance requirements must be addressed and the institution must demonstrate that it aligns with the standards **within 2 years**

- In order to meet the standard, the Commission requires that the college establish a **policy** defining regular and substantive instructor-initiated contact with students for Distance Education courses. The Commission requires that the college provide **professional development** opportunities for faculty to ensure Distance Education courses include regular and substantive instructor-student interaction

CSM Addresses the Recommendation

1. Policy defining regular and substantive instructor-initiated contact with students for Distance Education courses
2. Professional development opportunities for faculty to ensure Distance Education courses include regular and substantive instructor-student interaction
3. Write and submit a follow up Report for ACCJC
 - **Follow up report needs to be approved by all CSM governance committees and the SMCCD Board of Trustees**

Next Steps

- Welcome our visiting team in March
 - The team will review our policy
 - The team will review a random sample of our distance education courses for regular and substantive instructor-initiated contact
- The visiting team writes and submits a report to the ACCJC Commission
- The ACCJC Commission meets in June to review the team results and recommendations. A determination on our reaffirmation of accreditation is made